

Chapter 2: The Springfield Years - 1880-1885

FROM NEW YORK CITY TO SPRINGFIELD, MINNESOTA

But first, a stop in New Ulm

Auguste, pregnant before leaving Germany, was afraid her baby would be born en-route to America. So, according to a granddaughter of Auguste, Verona Bloedow,¹ "Auguste went to a fortune teller to ask if she would get to Minnesota before the baby came. The fortune teller told her, "You will be cared for."

The Bloedow family arrived in New York City on July 28, 1880. It must have been a great relief for Auguste to have reached the USA still carrying her baby. However, their son made his appearance before they arrived at Springfield, MN, their final destination.

From his obituary we read "August Frederick Bloedow, son of Ferdinand and Augusta Bloedow, was born August 3, 1880 in New Ulm. Soon after, he was baptized in the Lutheran faith at Springfield where his parents had settled when he was only a few weeks old."²

Bloedows continue on to Springfield

From a conversation of Otto F. with his cousin Vernon, it was deduced that the Bloedow family arrived in New Ulm by train. Otto mentioned that this is the only way they could have arrived so quickly in Minnesota from New York.

Otto F. comments that to go from New Ulm to Springfield in those days would probably take two days by wagon. To this he adds, "and bouncing a lady who's just given birth and her baby would not be so comfortable."

And he ran across a relevant railroad map in the Minnesota Historical Society. It showed that the

train that stopped in New Ulm would have Springfield as it's next stop.

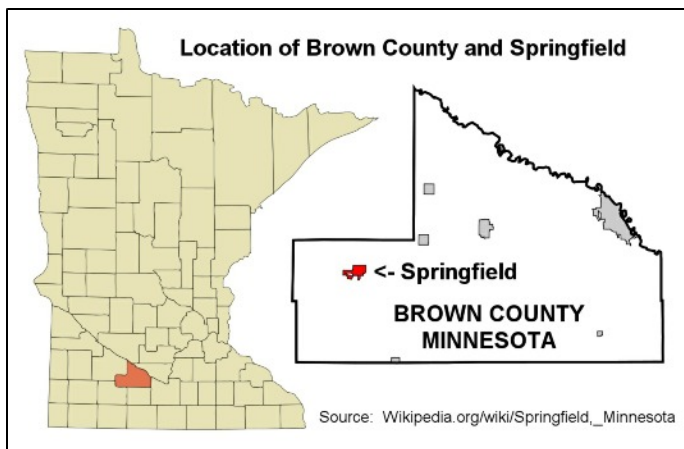
Auguste wanted to have her baby in Springfield, but the baby was up for an adventure and came in New Ulm, just 28 miles short of their first home in America.

How is it that the Bloedows chose Springfield?

Let's hear what Grandma Mary has to say:

When asked if her parents knew anyone in Springfield, Mary said "They knew the farmer Beyer and the Fishers. Mrs. Fisher was a cousin to mother [Auguste]. And they'd visit the Kettners." [Carolyn Bloedow Kettner was thought to be a cousin of Ferdinand.]

[Because they were slowed down by the birth of August, Beyers arrived in Springfield before the Bloedows.] When we got to Springfield Beyers picked us up and we went to the Fishers. They welcomed us in. Now both we and Beyer were there. We each with six children to feed. The Fishers had 4-5 kids. They had hardly enough for themselves. Says Mary, "Mrs. Fisher was a daughter of the old man Beyer."³ Grandma Mary continues: "Mrs. Fisher was so nice.



1 Verona's father was Ferdinand F. who was sixth child of Auguste and Ferdinand and brother of Mary

2 Quote from August's obituary published in Lamberton News, Lamberton, MN, January 23 1941, front page, column 1

3 Ages of the Beyer family: Johann 67 (farmer), Louise 44 (wife), Albertine 20, Auge 15, Paul E 9, Louise 8, Gustav 7, Julius 11 months. The Bloedow and Beyer families are both listed on p. 62 of Germans to America, by Glazier and Filby, vol. 36, July 1880-November 1880, page 62.

She told us [children] to go off to the garden. She had tomatoes and melons, all colors,” all of which the children had never known. Said Mary, “I never saw that before. Herman and I ate like pigs. They [the melons and tomatoes] tasted so good. I’ll never get over it. We woke up sick the next day.”

“Mrs. Fisher said there was a party got married. They live over there. They must be relation to you.’ [The name sounded like grandma; turns out it was a family named Grabow.] We went over there and sure enough right away she knew him. ‘Oh my God. That’s Ferdinand!’ She [Amelia] grabbed Pa. They lived in a clay house. Just one room.”

“So we stayed there ‘til mother got back, y’ know. They didn’t have bedding for us. We got straw in then. Pa says, ‘You better look [the straw] over once. They might have crawlers y’ know.’ But it had nothing.”

“So the next day Pa went to the Fishers and they could shock. [Shocking is tying sheaves of grain into a bundle and standing them upright to dry.] It was just 23rd of August. During the time Ma came over. She had been 3-4 days out there.” [Had Mother stayed behind in New Ulm, or had she been caring for her baby at the Fishers?]

Who is this Grabow Family?

The person Grandma Mary mentioned in her story was Amelia Lueck Grabow - Auguste’s half sister! According to family history, Auguste’s mother died and Auguste’s father, Gotlieb Lueck, remarried before he came to America. Amelia, the daughter of Gotlieb and his second wife, immigrated as a single person, age 26, to America in 1879. (For the Lueck family lineage, see Chapter 13.)

Within a short time, Amelia married John Grabow. Interestingly, according to the census dated June 8, 1880, John Grabow was a “single/head of household.”¹ Amelia’s obituary states that she and John Grabow were married at Red Rock near Lamberton on June 1, 1880. How can it be that seven days later John is still single?

June 8, 1880 likely would be the date the census for this particular district was finally completed.

However, it would have taken a while to cover a census area. This could account for John Grabow being single when interviewed, but married by the time the census was eventually filed.

The Grabows and the Fishers

Otto F. relates , “as I scan terrible handwriting in the census records for North Star Township, out jumps Ferdinand Fisher. What crazy luck. It turns out that both the Fishers and Grabows lived in the same census enumeration district, both in North Star Township.”² How remarkable, to find both families practically on the same page. (North Star Township is contiguous to Springfield on the west side.)

One can say with certainty that the Fishers and Grabows were as thrilled to see Bloedows as Bloedows were to see them.

Auguste’s Siblings say “Welcome to America”

Astonishing as it may seem, with the arrival of Auguste, husband and family, the children and grandchildren of Gotlieb and wife Wilhelmina Schlabritz(ke) Lueck were living in America. Auguste’s brother Herman immigrated April, 1869 and married in Wisconsin in December of the same year. Her sister Wilhelmina immigrated in 1879 with husband and children to Cottonwood County. Half-sister Amelia also arrived in 1879. (Did she travel alone, or did she and Wilhelmina and family come together?)

One can only imagine the letters Auguste had been receiving from America inviting, cajoling, pleading, imploring her and Ferdinand to come to America.

Research questions for another time

According to oral narrative in the Bloedow family, Auguste’s father Gotlieb immigrated to America with his second wife Wilhelmina Lutlow. Did Gotlieb come with one or both of his daughters in 1879? Were he and his wife here to welcome Auguste and family to America? If Gotlieb did immigrate to America, we have as yet to find documentation. It is also thought that they settled on a farm in the Jeffers area of Cottonwood County. And it has been said that Gotlieb is buried in a cemetery near St James, MN. Family lore abounds, but is yet to be confirmed. Perhaps in the future a curious family member will pursue these leads.

1 Federal Census for 1880, North Star Twp, Brown County, MN. Survey date was June 8, 1880, just before the Bloedows arrived in Springfield. John is listed by himself on page 2, Supervisor’s Dist. No. 1, Enumeration Dist. No. 31, Schedule 1.

2 Fischers were on page 5 of 7, Supervisor’s Dist. No. 1, Enumeration Dist. No 31, Schedule 1.

We, this book's authors, have no photos of Auguste's parents, step-mother, siblings or half-siblings.

A place to live

From Mary's stories, we gather there was no house in Springfield waiting for them to move into. Instead, Mary says, "... *they put up a house in no time at all.*" Said Mary, "*We took Ma along to buy lumber. Gustie and Minnie took care of the little ones. Course the basement was a hole, just a hole dug out y'know, nothing at all.*" Mary says, "*In no time at all the house was up.*"

And possibly during their five years was it made a little more sound? Their house was situated by the railroad tracks, near what in later days would become the swimming pool park. It was on low land. Verona Bloedow wrote¹ that "when the river was at flood stage, the home was in it's path; before leaving the house, the mother opened all doors and windows to let the flood waters through. When the river was down, the family moved back."

Mary continues, "My sister (Minnie 17) and Bill (19) had worked right away for Krauzemann. They hired 'em both right away and they both worked together then til fall. They got a cow, a big pig about 400 lbs., and a couple sacks of potatoes. So we had meat and potatoes right away and milk."

Pa works for the railroad

In the next breath, Mary continues: "*Then shocking [of grain] was done so Mr Fisher took Pa to where they were working on the railroad. The Mankato section man was in charge. Mr Fisher says, 'I hear you need a man for the section.' 'Yah', says McKeever, 'I need a man over there.' So McKeever walked over [to the foreman] and said, 'I got a man for you but he can't talk no English.' The man nodded, 'Bring him over.' So he [the foreman]*



showed him how to spike the rail. Pa took one hit and packed it down. The foreman turned to his boss with a 'My God, McKeever, I want that man.'"

By now Grandma Mary is splitting her sides with laughter and adds, "I never forget that." She shakes her head. "I never forget that. They hired him right away."

When Ferdinand worked on the railroad in Springfield, one might think he was laying track for the new inter-continental railway. However, the first inter-continental railway was not built through Minnesota. Rather it was located south of the Dakotas and Minnesota. Built between 1863 and 1869, it connected the Pacific coast from San Francisco to Council Bluffs, Iowa on the Missouri River. From that point other railroads connected to cities through the Midwest and the East. (Source: Wikipedia)

By 1872, however, a connection had been built from main railroad lines to Springfield.² So after his arrival in 1880 in Springfield when Ferdinand was hired to work on the railroad, his work would have been in maintaining it. Maintenance involved replacing ties, firming up soft beds, and weather related repairs.³

Mary as hired help

Shortly after the family arrived in Springfield, Mary, at age ten, worked out as a domestic. As hired help she both cleaned and took care of children. "I was paid a quarter a week, or a few potatoes, something for the table. "One lady gave me yard goods (fabric sold by the yard) for Ma to make a dress." Said a very pleased Mary, "That was something. Course I was always working. One kid on one arm and one ..."

Mary was hired by a Mrs. Schneider. "I didn't like her. I didn't want to go. I didn't like the looks of her. Ma says, 'just go along.' And old lady Schneider said, 'Come now.' So I went. I cried. She acted so funny to me."

It seems before they even got to Schneider's house, Mary ducked out and headed for home. In the interview, son Bill Kuehl turns to Mary, "What did she say about you then?" "She said I was a fuchs [pronounced "fooks," in German fuchs means fox]. " Asks Bill, "did you have red hair?" "Oh, it was a little red brown."

1 From a brief biography written by Verona Bloedow

2 Source: City of Springfield, Historic Context Study, June 2011. By 1873 the rail line extended from New Ulm through Brown and Redwood county through Tracy.

3 Observations on Ferdinand's job with the railroad came from Otto F. Bloedow

Two sets of twins were born in Springfield ... and three buried there as infants

Gunny Sack held a baby

While living in Springfield, Auguste gave birth to two sets of twins. Only one of the four children survived into adulthood, that being Carl “Charlie”. (An infant had died in Germany as well.) Note the spelling of Bloedow.

Oral tradition in the Bloedow family has it that one of Auguste’s babies died during the winter months when the ground was frozen. It was not possible to bury the child until spring. And so the little body was wrapped and hung in a gunny sack in a shed until the ground thawed.

As if the baby’s death wasn’t enough for the mother’s grief, Auguste now would need to let months pass before she would bury her child.

Set 1 Carl (Charlie) Gustav Bledo Mother recorded as “Augusta” (note “a” in Augusta)

- born Jan. 8, 1883 Father’s occupation listed as “labor” (this was railroad work)
- died Aug. 28, 1967 Charlie lived to be 84

Frank Conrad Bledo

- born Jan.8, 1883
- died Aug. 25, 1883 Frank died of measles, age 7 months 18 days

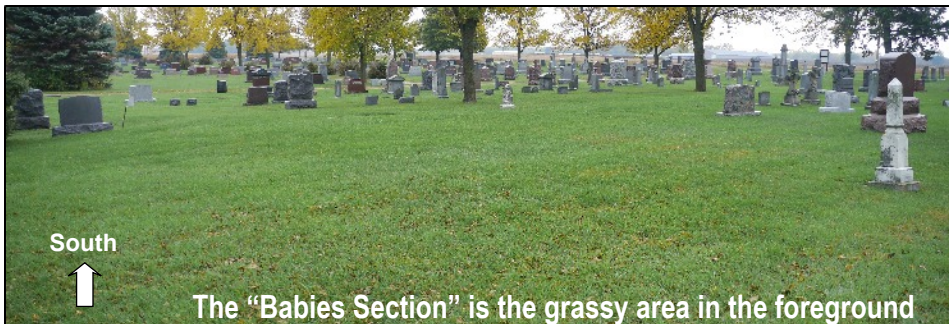
Set 2 Albert Franz Blado Albert & Emma recorded: “Children of Ferdinand and Auguste” (note “e” in Auguste)

- born Aug. 10, 1884 Ferdinand listed as a farmer. Birthplace is listed as “Town of Eden” (Perhaps Eden Township, Brown County, north-west of New Ulm)
- died Nov. 9, 1884 Albert died of ailment of the stomach, age 24 days

Emma Anna Blado

- born Aug. 10, 1884
- died Feb. 22, 1885 Emma’s cause of death is unknown, age 9 months 10 days

Frank, Albert and Emma are buried in the Babies Section of St Paul Lutheran Cemetery, Springfield, Minnesota



Babies Section of Springfield Cemetery

The Baby Section of St Paul Lutheran Cemetery is in the old part of the cemetery. It is where in earlier times babies were buried.

At the farthest north point of the middle road into the cemetery is a tool shed. As it faces the cemetery, kitty-corner to its south west is an open grassy area. It has no apparent visible boundaries. There are no grave markers. Here the ground is a little uneven, suggesting that the babies were buried in wooden coffins that have since disintegrated, slightly collapsing the ground above. A large evergreen tree grows on the northeast corner.

Motherhood

In all, Auguste and Ferdinand had thirteen children. The first child, William, was born in 1866, the last, Emil, in 1886. Auguste was 22 on the arrival of her first born. She was 42 at the birth of Emil. Auguste’s child bearing years covered a span of twenty years.

Thirteen children? That’s a lot of names. It was a common German practice to use names from Uncles and Aunts. There would be repeats from generation to generation. And if a child died, it was common practice to pass this name on to the next or another child born in the family.²

¹ Information is found in the Minnesota Historical Society, Minnesota History Center, St Paul, MN. The specifics for the Brown County **Birth Records** are: Frank - Book A, page 138, line 34; Charlie - Book A, page 138, line 35; Emma - Book A, page 162, line 30; Albert - Book A, page 162, line 31. Brown County **Death Records**: Frank -Book A, page 57, line 19; Albert - Book A, page 66, line 20; Emma - Book A, page 69, line 33, on Microfilm: 1857-1993, SAM 215, Roll 1.

² Observations from Otto F Bloedow



Blado

Bladow

Bloedow

Auguste

Augusta

Auguste - spelled with an “e,” then “a,” and back to an “e”

In Germany and upon arrival in America, Auguste spells her name the German way, ending with an “e”. When the move is made to Willow Lake township, however, we see her name on legal papers is ending with an “a”. In obituaries, her name once again is written ending with an e, as it would have been on her birth and baptismal papers.

In early America, “Bloedow” was spelled various ways

In this family book you may notice that on historic documents “Bloedow” is spelled in a variety of ways.

The spelling of Bloedow in German is **Blödow**, the first o having an umlaut (ö, two dots aligned horizontally above the first “o”.) The correct substitution for the “umlaut o”, is to follow the “o” with an “e”, as in Bloedow.

With Bloedow having a long “A” sound, it easily could be mistakenly represented with the letter “a”. And it often was.

On the Ship Manifest, the family name is written the German way as **Blodow**. It’s unclear whether there is or isn’t an umlaut on the first “o”. See page 1.4.

Auguste had two sets of twins in Springfield. Three babies died in Springfield as infants. Charlie was the only survivor.

- Birth certificates for Charlie and Frank show their names to be **Bledo**. See page 2.4.
- Birth and Death certificates for Emma, and Albert show their names to be **Blado**.

On both Ferdinand’s “Application for Citizenship” paper filed in Brown County and his “Citizenship” paper (pages 3.14 and 3.15) declaring that he was now naturalized (a citizen) granted in Redwood County, office staff wrote his name as “**Bladow**”. On his application, though, his signature is **Bludow**.

However, notice Ferdinand’s signature on his citizenship paper, which we think is written in Ferdinand’s own hand. Well ... it leaves one wondering.

It seems, however, that with the signing of land deeds by Ferdinand, then by each of the children, and by Augusta obtaining patents to pieces of land, a consistency in the spelling of the surname became standardized. Although from time to time there were still occasional misspellings in newspaper articles and obituaries of Mary and siblings, the spelling of the family name is now without question “**Bloedow**”.



Ferdinand and Auguste Bloedow
Ferdinand died in 1900 at age 62; Auguste in 1933, age 89
Photo courtesy of Otto F Bloedow

Circa 1899