

Family Reunions Through the Years

Besides being an enjoyable and rewarding day, or week, family reunions help to keep families bonded. The write-ups about the gathering can be a great source to find where the family originally came from and where the family members were living at the time. These can be great treasures for genealogists to find and might many wonderful tidbits of information. I shall share some reunion write-ups today and will probably share more in the future with the hopes that someone might find out something about their own family that they did not know until they read these. Hopefully, everyone will find something of interest even if you don't know the people.

According to the February 22, 1882 Monroe Sentinel, three younger generations of the Elisha Mosher family had enjoyed an old-fashioned reunion in Monroe the previous week. The arrivals started to arrive on Tuesday and continued until Thursday evening. Those who were present on Wednesday met at the Mosher residence, the old homestead, and enjoyed bountiful hospitality. All met at the J. D. Mosher residence for dinner and then there was a masquerade party and ball. There was another dinner, though more quiet, on Sunday at the home of Henry Durst. "The formalities of the re-union came to a climax and the good byes were said, and the sweet bye and bye, beyond the clouds, where the aged and the young shall meet to part no more." There was a list of those who attended from Indianapolis, Chicago, Janesville, Waupun, and Johnstown, Wisconsin besides those who live here. Three of the family circle sent their regrets that they could not be here. "Mr. and Mrs. E. Mosher received the congratulations of many warm friends here for their safe and long journey thus far, and the wishes for their future health and comfort." Elijah passed away ten years later in Monroe at the age of 91; he was the father of nine children and only two survived him. The mother of his children had passed away in 1868 and his second wife in 1896.

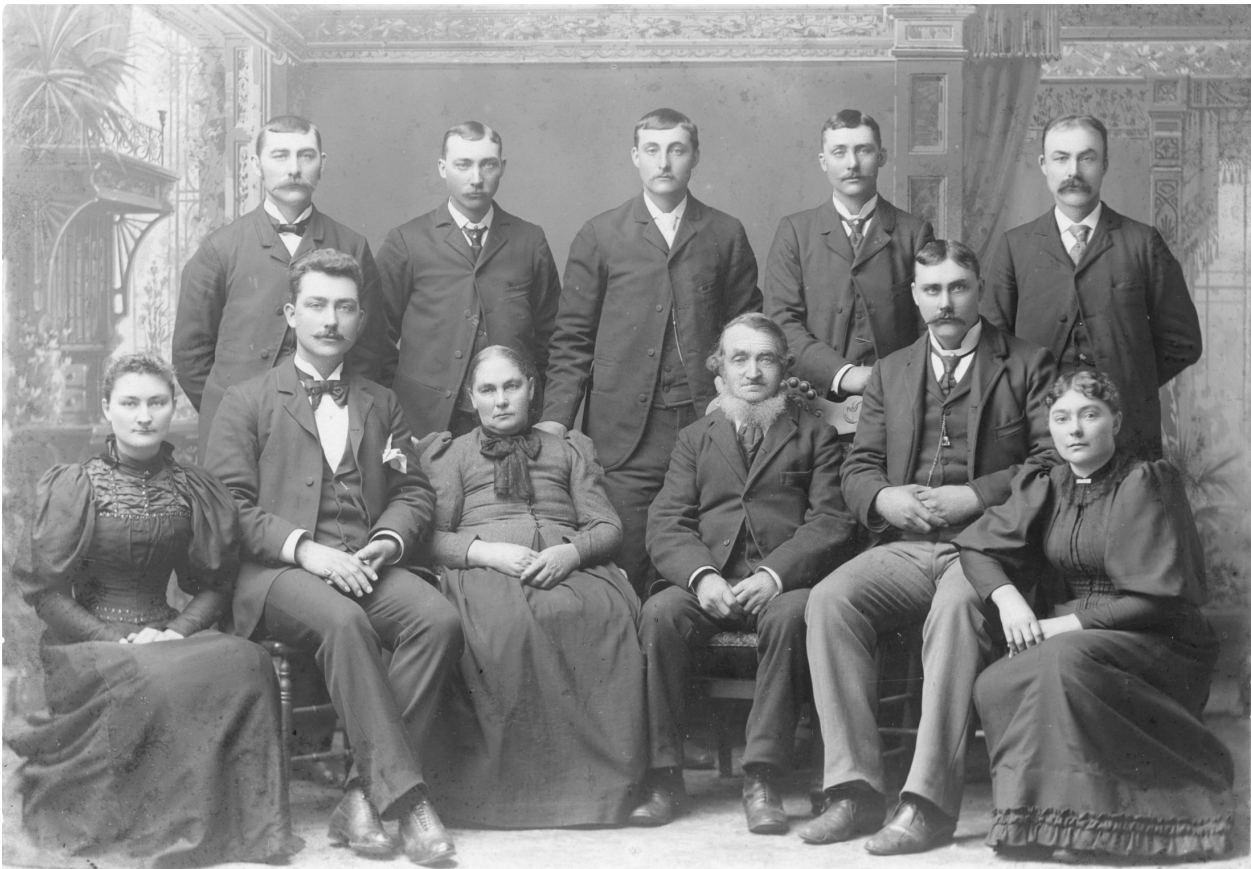
A short reunion writeup still gives a bit of detail. The following is from the November 11, 1907 issue of the Monroe Evening Times. It simply stated that the reunion was at the home of Mrs. Anna Knipschild on the Beloit Road [now 23rd Avenue] the previous day when all of her seven children, seventeen grandchildren, and one great-grandchild were present for the family dinner. Mrs. Knipschild was confined to her bed at the time by illness, but the event had a cheering effect and was greatly enjoyed by her. She passed away 19 months later on April 13, 1909 at the age of 71 and is buried next to her husband, F. Adam, who passed away in 1882.

One final reunion that has a bit of information that surprised me was printed in the Monroe Evening Times of February 3, 1914. Mr. and Mrs. Martin Geigel, Sr. held a large family dinner at their home on 619 West Pyne Street [now 9th Street] that day. It was the first time that their seven sons and two daughters had been together in 18 years. There were 32 guests in all, including 15 grandchildren. Mr. Geigel was to be 93 on May 7 and his wife was turning 83 on February 24; they had been married for 58 years.

The combined weight of the brothers was exactly 1,400 pounds, an odd statistic for a family reunion, which made the average weight 200 pounds. The names of the brothers, their weight, and the city where they resided at the time were then listed as follows: Mathias, 172, Monroe; Henry, 213, Renwick, Iowa; Martin, Jr., 181, Mt. Pleasant; Jacob, 202, Monroe township; Frank, 165, Algona, Iowa; John, 248, Monroe township; and Samuel, 219, Carbondale, Colorado. The two sisters were Mrs. Gust Norder, Juda, and Mrs. Dora Heitz, Sylvester township. It was nice that they did not include the weights of the sisters!

A helpful comment at the end of the writeup was that a group photograph of the parents, seven sons, and two daughters was taken at the Gloege studio after the family dinner. This might help a descendant to date a photograph or might help to put names to faces in a photo in their collection.

The family photo shown here was taken by H. G. White 20 years prior to the one mentioned here. If anyone has the a photo of the same people taken by Gloege, please let me know if I can borrow it and make a copy for the three family members who do not have it.



This family photo was taken by H. G. White 20 years prior to the one mentioned here. If anyone has a photo of the people taken by Gloege, please let me know if I can borrow it and make a copy for the three family members who do not have it.