



TARRANT COUNTY TXGENWEB

Barbara Knox and Rob Yoder, County Coordinators

Copyright © 2012. All rights reserved.

Dayton's Antiques

1420 Throckmorton
Fort Worth, Texas

Copyright © Kay W. Davis
Email: kaywd@flash.net

Grandma Forster (as she was called) was really Susana Margaretha Beringer when she was born in Treschklingen, Baden, Germany, on 29 May 1848. She later married three times -- to Foshall, Faulhaber, and lastly, Foster. She emigrated from Germany with her parents and siblings on the U.S.S. New York and landed in New Orleans, Louisiana, in early December 1871. They traveled to Texas and first settled in Mexia but left because all their attempts at a water well only produced oil! After moving to Fairfield for a while, they later moved to Dallas, and in 1876 came west to Fort Worth.

Sue was an early Tarrant County wheeler-dealer real estate woman of sorts in downtown Fort Worth. She and her first husband, Henry Foshall, bought land on Throckmorton before they first moved to Fort Worth from Eagle Ford on the Trinity River about 6 miles west of Dallas. There he had owned a funeral home/furniture store/saloon. They had matched white horses for their white hearse, and a pair of black horses for their black hearse. They disassembled their Eagle Ford structure to reassemble in Fort Worth and loaded every plank onto the famous "first T & P train" headed to Fort Worth in 1876. Whether they helped to lay the final track is unknown to this writer. However, they certainly did bring their own planks to build a new structure on their Throckmorton property since there was little building lumber to be had in the town. They had heard that "lumber was scarce on the frontier."

Family tradition has it that Sue and Henry Foshall met on the ship and 6 months later, their marriage was recorded in Fairfield, Freestone County, Texas, on 19 March 1872, by MG Thomas P. Gilmore. They settled into their new plank home near the south end of town in "Panther City" not far from the railroad line and began a railroad salvage business as well as a family. On the 1880 census, Henry was reportedly an artesian well-borer with 3 children under the age of 8. Sue was keeping house and they already had several tenants. By 1884, Henry died at the early age of 45 and was buried in Pioneer Rest Cemetery. [No headstone has been found at this time.] Family tradition also states that he was such a large man at 6'4" and over 300 pounds that Sue had to bury him in a piano box.

Following Henry's death, Sue continued her railroad salvage and boarding house businesses and began to dabble in real estate herself. By 1886, Sue had bought two more downtown commercial lots in the E.M. Daggett addition. She began upgrading her salvage business and added more tenants to her boarding house business. By this time she had married her second husband, Paul L. Faulhaber, on 29 September 1886, but the marriage was short-lived. Annulment records show that following the birth of their child Fay, she filed for and was granted an annulment on 1 December 1888. She paid him \$500 to "get out of her life" according to her granddaughter Doris DeLaMar.

By the 1900 census, twenty-four unrelated boarders and three servants were reportedly living there with Sue, her third husband, John S. Forster, and her three daughters, each having a different father. My father, Russell Ward, who was born in 1905, could remember entertaining the boarders during dinner by standing on his head or dancing and doing gymnastics for a nickel. He also sold newspapers on the corner to have some extra spending money. Sue and her three daughters and a few servants cooked and served daily for the 35+ residents. Of course they had housekeeping and linen chores for them as well.

At some point in time [unknown to this writer] the plank building was replaced by a red brick two-story building with a flat roof. Boarders' rooms were both upstairs and down, but the dining area was downstairs near the front of the building. The shape of the building was an irregular rectangle [narrower in the back to accommodate the property line] and the size was that of a small hotel. The kitchen was later added toward the back of the downstairs area, and even later, indoor plumbing was added. Certainly the addition of electricity and running water facilitated all human chores and personal duties.

From this writer's memory beginning in the 1940's and after the demise of Sue Forster, the building took on a more modern look and large plate-glass windows were added when daughter Fay and her husband E. C. Dayton upgraded the contents to fine antiques. Bit by bit, the boarders moved out and the entire downstairs was turned into a large and respected antique business. Traders from all over Fort Worth and Dallas came to know and respect the Daytons for their knowledge of fine china and crystal. Several chickens and roosters scratching around near the back door seemed to be a tangible oxymoron for the elegant bric-a-brac inside.

One room in the interior of the downstairs shop was fairly discreet for that was where the most valuable silver and cut-crystal items were kept -- away from the more casual customers. There was no natural light in the room, and when the lights were illuminated the room glistened with shiny silver items and crystal reflections dazzled the eyes. Only "special" customers were allowed in this area. The rest of the shop had wooden shelving up to 6' high throughout and several hired ladies would weave in and out through the aisles dusting all day long. Ceiling fans were placed strategically throughout the large area and hung down from the embossed metal ceiling tiles. The wooden floors were worn from many stuttering footsteps. A large cabinet Victrola was centered in the shop near the cash stand and records were always on hand to add music to the shop. The only other music was the sound of bells that jangled as customers came and went through the front door.

Fay and E.C. kept an eloquent apartment upstairs and as her sisters lost their husbands, they each returned to live in the upstairs "boarding" rooms on the land where they had been born. A large

common restroom served all. The narrow and steep steps leading up to the living quarters were covered with linoleum and had narrow strips of metal on the edges to keep from wearing. The stairwell was long, narrow and dark and over-looking the stairwell from above was an indoor window, which allowed ventilation for the kitchen in the Dayton's apartment. Flavors of German cooking were always wafting down the stairwell, and through the screen door, which opened into the store below. A separate entry to the outside was at the base of the stairs, and the screen door to the antique store was off to one side.

Upstairs there was a long hall off to the left, which led past a rooftop graveled-path garden, accessible only through a window, and straight ahead into a small eating room, which housed a niche for the icebox. The eating area held a table with two chairs, and a sideboard. The floors in the halls and kitchen-eating area were of linoleum and walking quietly was impossible. In the kitchen there was a gas stove, off to the left the window over-looking the stairwell, and on the north wall a sink and drain board area. The upstairs kitchen only had the smallest room for two to work in it at one time. The sisters could not ever sit down to dinner together at one time and often took their meals in their own rooms with only their radios to keep them company.

To the other side of the stairwell, back to the hallway, there was a large bathroom and a storage area where dishes and china were kept. South of the hall was the master suite with an elegantly furnished living room, carpeted with oriental rugs and furnished with massively large Victorian furnishings, tapestries, and heavy velvet drapes. There was an elegant and heavily carved piano, which few were ever allowed to play. The appointments were very often ceramic or gilded cupids and the oil paintings on the wall were in heavily ornate frames. Beyond that formal living area was the master bedroom which Fay and E.C. Dayton occupied until their health forced them to a downstairs suite.

At the top of the stairway, off to the right, a short hall led to an open lobby with a sky-light overlooking a majestic round table with carved legs that always held an expensive antique of some sort, brought up and changed out as Fay pursued her trade. Off this lobby, six or eight boarding rooms opened up to the common area with separate screen doors and privacy doors. Every room had windows opening to the outside, so when all doors and windows were open a constant breeze cooled the tenants. Eventually window units were installed in some of the bedrooms to cool the aging sisters.

Two of the sisters had rooms that backed up to one another and they shared a common closet, one door opening in to one sister's room, and the other opened into the other room. The common closet made for a great tunnel or hiding place for this writer at the young age of five or six. Exiting through a window to the rooftop garden was also a delight and the crunch of pebbles underfoot and the gentle breeze made for a nice outdoor adventure. The garden pots and plants were sitting helter-skelter and many seashells and conch shells were interspersed along the narrow pathway. The veritable nature walk was quite a treat for a youngster in the middle of downtown Fort Worth -- a "secret garden" of sorts.

As time went on, and as each of the sisters moved back to the boarding house [now antique store], they enjoyed each other's company once again. Ironically, each sister, except Fay, eventually fell down the steep stairwell, broke a hip, contracted pneumonia and died. Fay always thought that

would be her fate as well, but another plan prevented that from happening. When the City of Fort Worth began making plans with the county for the Tarrant County Convention Center to be built, Fay's nephew, Russell Ward, was hired to purchase the fourteen city blocks needed for the project. His Aunt Fay's property was part of the land that was to be purchased. This same boarding house/antique store was where he had grown up as well. Although the property had been in the family for over 75 years, it was time to move on and allow the city to modernize and make room for a grand meeting place for locals and tourists. Russell Ward convinced his aunt, Fay Dayton, to sell the property and buy a house and retire. The deal was completed, Fay Dayton moved to a residence in Meadowbrook, and the antique store was bulldozed. Strangely enough, and unfortunately, the property, which is located on the outskirts of the convention center project, still sits empty today.



Charles Foshall



Fay Foshall



Sue Forshall Forster



Fay Faulhaber Dayton and husband, E. C. Dayton, inside Dayton's Antiques



Sue Foshall with daughters, Christine Foshall and Fredricka Foshall



Susan Behringer Foshall Foster came over in steerage at about age 23.



Half-sisters, Faye Falhaber Forster, Lily Forster and Elfrieda Foshall, ca. 1908-10



Lillie and Fay, fishing

I am delighted to be the custodian of these photos. These were in my aunt's belongings when she died, and fortunately, my great-grandmother labeled them so that we know who they are. Sue Behringer Foshall and husband #1 (Henry Fred Foshall) are buried in Pioneers Rest Cemetery in Fort Worth, TX. He had no headstone that I could find, but she does.

Perry, Texas is where the Behringer family settled. Their names are in the Methodist Church ledger there which the pastor let me photograph but not photocopy. The emigrants -- Johann Ernst Behringer and wife Christine Barbara Huber Behringer are buried in the churchyard there. Most of their children that came with them to America (in steerage for 30+ days) settled around Perry, Reisel, and Waco eventually. They came to America in the GSS New York and landed in New Orleans in December, 1871. They took the train to Mexia and tried to settle there but after a couple of weeks trying to drill a water well, (they only could get oil) they moved on to Fairfield where the oldest Behringer brother had settled back in the 1840s.



Their children who traveled with them aboard the ship in 1871 included:

- Susana Margaretha Behringer (Sue) - b. 29 May 1848 (that's my great-grandmother)
- Gottlieb Adam Behringer - b. 9 June 1850
- Johann Katherina Behringer - b. 30 Jan 1852
- Christine Barbara Behringer - b. 9 Oct. 1857
- Katharina Margaretha Behringer - b. 12 Dec. 1859
- Ernst Adam Behringer - b. 19 Sept. 1862
- Georg Christoph Fredrick "Freddie" - b. 16 May 1867



Because the tombstones are difficult to see I'll put the info here:

Johann Ernst Behringer – b. 4 Oct. 1825
Treschklingen, Baden, Germany, d. 11 Nov.
1896 - Perry, Falls, TX

Christine Barbara Huber Behringer – b. 16
Nov. 1823 Treschklingen, Baden, Germany,
d. 12 Nov. 1908 - Perry, Falls, TX