

My Great-Grandpa Neustedt

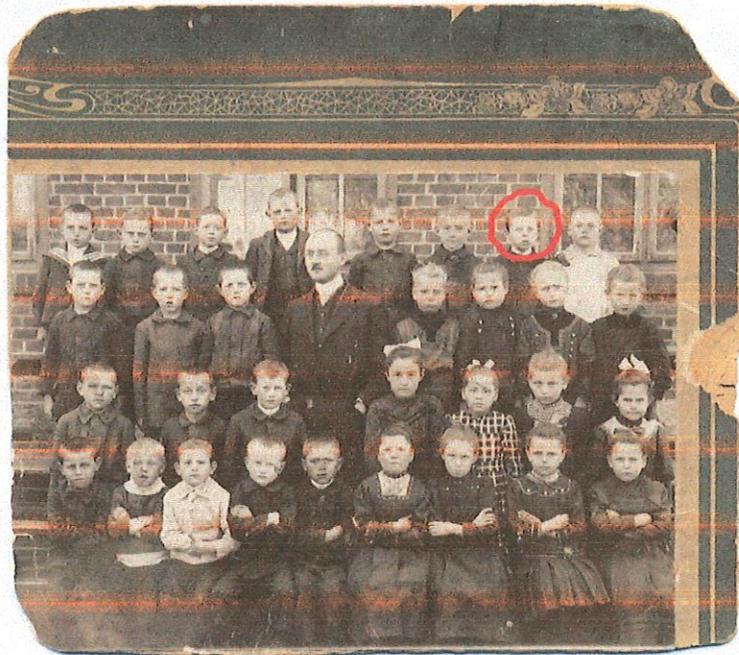
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In this historic, battered old school class photograph from Germany, I discovered my Great-Grandpa Hermann Neustedt. He is pictured second from the top right, highlighted by the red circle. He was 10 years old in this photo, which is the same age as me today. This photo dates back to 1914, over one hundred years ago, before World War I.

Initially, I was immediately drawn to this photograph because I could relate to it. I have had class photos every year since I was 4 years old. What struck me was how different this photo was. The children are not smiling, and the Principal looks quite strict and very serious.

I was wondering if these children were happy in school all those years ago?

Speaking to my dad, whose maternal Grandpa is pictured here, my curiosity and interest shifted to my Great-Grandpa Neustedt. My father started to explain to me how poor my

Great-Grandpa was, and that he was wearing his 'best' clothes for this photograph. Life became worse for my Great-Grandpa and his family after this photograph was taken when Germany was defeated in World War I, and it's country people fell on 'hard times'. As a result my Great-Grandpa, his parents and his sister emigrated to America from Hamburg in 1928. We found him and his family registered in the Ellis Island book of immigrants. From here my Great-Grandpa and his family moved to Ohio where eventually my Dad was born.

I realize that Great Grandpa Neustetd endured great hardship, and without his struggles, I would not be here today, in a life of plenty, showing a much happier face in my class photo!