Lenhardt & Darlene Kungel

April 2016

There is a mistake in the July 1989 Review & Herald article written by Myron Widmer called *A Bit of Heritage*. The article says that a murderer was buried outside the Kulm Adventist Cemetery in Kulm, ND. This is the rest of the story…

A man committed suicide. Before that he had killed a couple and then hung himself, three people died that day. The Baptists or the Lutherans didn’t want to inter the murderer so the Adventists buried him in their cemetery. The Review article states he was buried outside the gates of the cemetery. That is not true. His grave is inside the fence. The reason the Adventists took him is because he was related to one of the Adventist members, a second-cousin to Mrs. Fred Grenz.

The murderer was married and had a baby girl, who was adopted by a couple in Minneapolis sometime after the murder. We don’t know if he had more children or what happened to his wife.

By 2003, this baby girl had grown up. She drove to North Dakota with the intent of finding her father’s grave. When she arrived in Edgeley, a funeral procession for Jim Toay was making its way through town, so she followed it. At the graveside she asked around about her father. She talked to Theresea Teske who told her that her father wasn’t buried here at the Diesem Cemetery, but perhaps at the Kulm Adventist Cemetery. She wanted to know why and asked about the murder and was told to contact Mr. and Mrs. Lenhardt Kungel, members of Kulm Adventist Church.

The Haupts had rented the Dobbler farm. This was during the depression years and that particular year the crops were looking better. Mr. Dobbler wanted the Haupts to move off the farm so he could return to farming his land, but the Haupt family had a lease until October. The day of the murder, around noon, Mr. Haupt drove the horses and cultivator home after working on a field of corn. Mr. Dobbler was waiting for him in the barn. As Haupt drove into the yard, Dobbler shot him and he fell off the cultivator. Haupt’s wife came running out of the house to see what was going on. Mr. Dobbler tried to shoot her too but the gun jammed so he killed her with a pitchfork. It was commonly believed by many that Mrs. Haupt turned to run when the gun jammed and was stabbed in the back.

It was said that the Haupts’ young children ran the quarter mile to Otto Fehling’s farm, Lenhardt Kungel’s uncle. The Fehlings wondered why they had come over and asked what their mother and father were doing. The children said they thought they were butchering chickens. Mr. Fehling knew that the parents would not let their young children come over alone and decided to investigate. He drove to the Haupt farm and arrived just after Johnny Knopp, the tax assessor. In those days the tax assessor would stop by farmsteads and the Haupts just happened to be on his route. The men saw chickens running around the yard and found the bodies of Mr. and Mrs. Haupt. Johnny Knopp opened the barn door and found Mr. Dobbler hanging from the barn rafters. Otto Fehling made a remark that it was a good thing Dobbler was dead or they probably would have done something to him themselves.

When Dobbler’s adult daughter called the Kungels, they told her where the grave site was and directions how to get there. She wanted to know why her dad committed the murders. She was raised by great parents and had a wonderful life but had always wondered about her heritage. She wanted the truth with nothing held back. Lenhardt told her the story as he knew it. From then on there were flowers found at Mr. Dobbler’s grave every year until around 2013. No one remembers the daughter’s name but now fear she is no longer alive or able to visit the grave.