

## The Fritzen Family During World War II



**Johann Fritzen (Achim's father).**

*By Ethan Ballard*

World War II brought immense hardships to people around the world, including food and fuel shortages, rationing, and economic instability. Many civilians were forced to flee their homes and become refugees, while others were subjected to brutal oppression, forced labor, and genocide. The war brought profound grief and loss, as families and communities mourned the deaths of loved ones and struggled to rebuild in the aftermath of destruction. Among some of the families that experienced some of

this was the Fritzen family. Achim Fritzen, the husband of Mary Jane Groberg, had several memories about his family's time during the war. He pointedly remembered his parents' compassion towards others at the time. At the time, there were prisoners of the war that were sent to work in German industry. The working and living conditions were decent for some and abominable for others. At one time, Johann (Achim's father) allowed a few English, French, and Italian men to work in his garden. He would then feed them and speak to them in English and/or French. This would have been a great act of kindness towards these men and, according to Achim, "This type of kindness was very dangerous, especially to speak in their languages." Amelia Earhart once said, "A single act of kindness throws out roots in all directions, and the roots spring up and make new trees." This was most certainly true in this case, and very needed too. The fact that they had this compassion for others despite the hardships in their own life is truly remarkable. The severity of the situation is exemplified by the fact that school was canceled for nine months and Achim's dad narrowly escaped death at one point. As time went on, the inevitable finally happened, Johann was transferred to a different town to help more with the war efforts. It was a trying time for the Fritzen family, and Achim, being the oldest, felt a weight descend onto his shoulders.

Despite the war being over, the trials the family had to face were not. On May 3, 1945, soldiers approached the cabin that the Fritzens were in. They then proceeded to ask Johann if he had been a Nazi. Johann answered in the affirmative. Martin Luther King Jr. in a particular instance declared, "The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of



**Achim, Bodo, Anny (Achim's mother), Heimtraut, Gerlinde, 1941.**

challenge and controversy." Johann's answer to this question speaks to the kind of man he was. He did not wish to be a Nazi as time went on, but once you joined, getting out was not so easy. Johann could have easily lied due to this fact, but being the man he was, he had a standard of integrity and honesty to uphold...and he did. He would end up dying in a Russian Prison camp before seeing his family again. The family would then see another death a short time later — the death of the youngest son, Detlef. Achim's mother, Anny, at this point must have been crushed. She had now lost her husband



**Anny Fritzen Nowak, Mary Jane & Achim Fritzen with daughter, Anny, in Germany, 1973.**



and child yet couldn't afford to give up. She truly was an amazing lady. Anny continued to add to her resume as the family escaped westward. On the journey many more challenges were overcome, some being starvation, evading capture, etc. They eventually reached their final destination; a place called Rheidt. With time, living conditions improved and Anny attempted to make life for her children as normal as possible. Moving west proved to be a very important decision because had they stayed, they would have been stuck in East Germany with the Berlin Wall. East Germany had less than ideal living conditions and at the time was a Soviet-controlled communist regime that deprived people of basic freedom. Instead, the family lived in a nation marked by general prosperity, democracy, and opportunity. Their standards of living would only improve from here.

In conclusion, "Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts." (Winston Churchill). This quote highlights the importance of perseverance in the face of challenges and setbacks. It reminds us that success and failure are not permanent states, but rather, they are part of the ongoing journey towards achieving our goals. The courage to keep going, even in the face of adversity, is what ultimately leads to success. The Fritzen family exhibited this perfectly. They had their hardships without a doubt, but kept going and kept moving forward. Their story is motivation and teaches key values of perseverance, honesty, integrity, among other things. Understanding our family stories is highly important and, in the words of Maya Angelou, "In



**Anny Fritzen Nowak with grand daughter Rosalee Fritzen.  
Idaho Falls, 1975.**

order to know where we're going, we need to know where we come from."

### Editors Note

We invite you to make tax-deductible contributions to the Groberg-Holbrook Genealogy Association.

If each child of Delbert and Jennie gave \$100 or more and each grandchild \$50 or more, it would go a long way. Many can give more, some perhaps less, but it would be wonderful if everyone contributed something.

Please send your contributions to:  
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1605 S. Woodruff Ave.

Idaho Falls, ID 83404

or via PayPal to dvgroberg@gmail.com, Venmo to @Thomas-Groberg



**Jacob Ballard (Mary Jane Fritzen's grandson) & Taylen Zahnow wedding.  
Spokane, Washington, December, 2022.**

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## Family Updates

We turned the family updates over to Claire and Allyson (Rick & Rosalee Ballard's daughters) who came up with a survey. The results indicate that we love to travel, are very bad at jokes, and spend too much time in school.

### The Older Fogies

**Brian & Anny Case**  
**Rick & Rosalee Ballard**



	<b>Brian</b> <i>Spokane County Prosecutor's Office Spokane, WA</i>	<b>Anny</b> <i>Gonzaga University School of Education Spokane, WA</i>	<b>Rick</b> <i>Ballard Orthodontics &amp; sundry ventures Sandpoint, ID</i>	<b>Rosalee</b> <i>Ballard Homestead Ballard Orthodontics Nursing Part-time Sandpoint, ID</i>
<b>Favorite place you've visited</b>	The AirBnB cherry orchard in BC, Canada	Krakow, Poland	Israel	Tikal, Guatemala
<b>Favorite movie</b>	Man of La Mancha	(PBS TV) All Creatures Great & Small	Saturday's Warriors??	Anne of Green Gables
<b>Favorite hymn</b>	Brightly Beams Our Father's Mercy	Redeemer of Israel	The Spirit of God	The Spirit of God
<b>What would you do with a million dollars?</b>	Retire	Finish the house, create scholarships for refugees	Build a homeless shelter for women in Sandpoint and buy a nicer boat	Donate to LDS philanthropies and take fun family history trips
<b>Favorite color</b>	blue	green	midnight blue	teal
<b>Favorite joke</b>	Why do ducks have flat feet? To stomp out fires. Why do elephants have flat feet? To stomp out flaming ducks.	A dumb joke about Larry the Mushroom who was a fungi.	Be true to your teeth or they'll be false to you.	Knock, knock who's there? Boo Boo who? It's okay you don't need to cry
<b>Favorite animal</b>	aardvarks	yellow labs	ostrich	pandas
<b>Favorite thing about last year</b>	Working on the house with family and friends	When Claire & Allyson stayed at our house for two weeks	Camping with the family	Seeing the Passion Play in Germany - or visiting Israel
<b>Looking forward to this year?</b>	See above.	Finishing the remodel (Hope springs eternal)	Boating with the family	Helping Emily get ready for college



## The Young Couples

**Lindsey & Sean Ballard**

**Jacob & Taylen Ballard**



	<b>Lindsey</b> <i>Disney Aficionado, EMT Grad Student Orlando, Florida</i>	<b>Sean</b> <i>Finishing master's in occupational therapy in Utah</i>	<b>Jacob</b> <i>BYU student, swim team, Newlywed, Provo, UT</i>	<b>Taylen</b> <i>Studying nursing, Works at Utah Valley Hospital, Provo, UT</i>
<b>Favorite place you've visited</b>	Disney	Boston	Disney or Alaska	Hawaii
<b>Favorite movie</b>	Ace Ventura Pet Detective: When Nature Calls	The Count of Monte Cristo	At World's End (Pirates of the Caribbean 3)	Mama Mia
<b>Favorite hymn</b>	If You Could Hie to Kolob	I Believe in Christ	More Holiness Give Me or Nearer My God to Thee	Angels We Have Heard on High
<b>What would you do with a million dollars?</b>	Pay off student loans	Buy a house	Get Taylen things; buy a house; have kids	Get a farm with cows, sheep, horses, and a dog
<b>Favorite color</b>	yellow	green	blue	blue
<b>Favorite joke</b>	You - 'cuz you're a walking joke	Surely you can't be serious and don't call me Shirley	Only fools are positive	What do you call a fake noodle? An impasta.
<b>Favorite animal</b>	Not any in particular	dogs	Shark or snake	turtle
<b>Favorite thing about last year</b>	Going to Disney	Going to BYU football games	Marrying Taylen	Marrying Jacob
<b>Looking forward to this year?</b>	Sean being done with school	Graduating from my master's program	Camping in the summer	Getting a new hobby

## The Young'uns

**Emily, Ethan, Claire & Allyson Ballard.**



	<b>Emily</b> <i>Graduating from Sandpoint High &amp; heading to BYU-Provo</i>	<b>Ethan</b> <i>9th grader, Newly-licensed driver, Soccer player</i>	<b>Claire</b> <i>6th grader, Gymnastics, Social butterfly</i>	<b>Allyson</b> <i>4h grader, Tap dancer, Avid reader</i>
<b>Favorite place you've visited</b>	Peru	Honduras, Mexico	Mexico	Mexico
<b>Favorite movie</b>	Spiderman: No Way Home	Indiana Jones	Lots (too many to name?)	High School Musicals
<b>Favorite hymn</b>	Who's On the Lord's Side	I'm a Pilgrim, I'm a Stranger	Where Love Is	Who's On the Lord's Side or Where Love Is
<b>What would you do with a million dollars?</b>	Travel	Invest it	Me . . . and charity	Lifetime cruises
<b>Favorite color</b>	blue	green	Blue hues	Orca blue
<b>Favorite joke</b>	Nothing in particular	Not anything in particular	Why did the chicken cross the road? To get to the other side. Why did the gum cross the road? Because it was stuck to the chicken's foot	What's the difference between superman and a fly? Superman can fly, but a fly can't superman
<b>Favorite animal</b>	Dogs and pandas	All of them	Panda or small puppy	Dog or dolphin
<b>Favorite thing about last year</b>	Going to Peru	vacations	cruise	Royal Caribbean Cruise
<b>Looking forward to this year?</b>	graduating	soccer	Getting my ears pierced	Disneyland