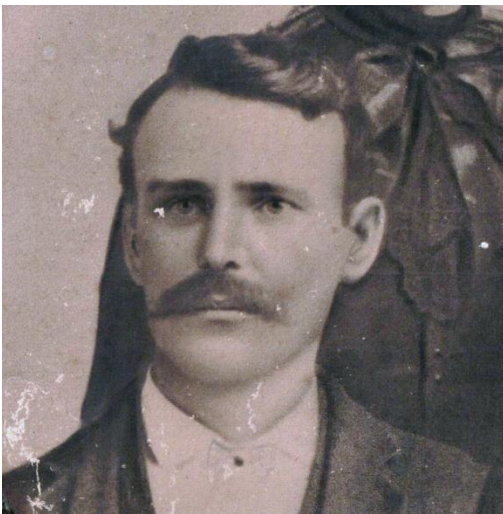




This photo shows the old Speidel Jewelry Store which had been a Richland County business since 1858. The couple is Charles and Mary Speidel. Charles was an optometrist as well as a watch-maker, and fit spectacles. Mary was also a watch-maker; both she and Charles had a desk on either side of the front door. Richland County History Room photo.

Charles Speidel Jewelry Store – 145 West Court Street - 1858.



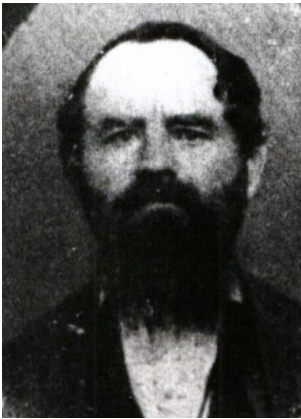
Charles Speidel. Mark Swingle photo.

Charles Speidel, jeweler, of Richland Center, was born in the city of Erie, Pa., Dec. 5, 1852, and was the son of Sebastian and Anna Barbara (Rilling) Speidel, both of whom were natives of Wurtemberg, Germany. The mother came to America with her parents, and they located in Erie County, Pa., while she was a child. Sebastian Speidel learned the trade of watch-making in Germany, and when he came to America he first worked at his trade in New York City for a time after which he moved to Erie, Pa., and started in business for himself.

Sebastian Speidel was twenty-two years of age when he came to America, and he met and married his wife soon after locating at Erie. He then moved his family to Richland County in 1856, making the journey by way of the great lakes as far as Milwaukee, and then by rail as far as the cars were then running, then drove a team the remainder of the distance to Richland City.

He followed the jewelry business at Richland City for a time and then moved

to Richland Center, but in 1860 he opened an establishment at Lone Rock, and still later at Boscobel, where he was residing at the time of the beginning of the Civil War. On Aug. 12, 1862, he enlisted as a private in Company C of the



Sebastian Speidel. Mark Swingle photo.

Twentieth Regiment, Wisconsin volunteer infantry, and he served until the close of the war, being mustered out on July 14, 1865, and reaching home the following August. The first engagement in which he participated was the bloody battle of Prairie Grove, Ark., in which the conduct of the regiment elicited the commendation of all by the gallant manner in which it charged a battery. The regiment subsequently moved to Missouri, and from there was ordered down the Mississippi river and took part in the siege of Vicksburg. After that it participated in the operations of General Banks in Texas; then operated in Louisiana and it was one of the regiments that forced the surrender of Spanish Fort and the capitulation of Mobile, Ala. After being mustered out of the military service, Speidel returned to Richland City, where he remained for a time, and then settled in Gonzales, Texas, and conducted a jewelry business there two years. He then returned to Richland County, and in 1867 engaged in the jewelry business in Richland Center, which he continued until the early 1880s, and

then lived in retirement the remainder of his life, dying in August, 1897, at the advanced age of seventy-three years. He was the first jeweler and watch-maker to establish himself in Richland County, and he was a first-class workman, as in those days a watch-maker was able to construct a watch in its entirety.



Front: Charles, Mrs. Sebastian (Anna) Speidel, Stephan. Back: Mary, Frederica, Kate. Mark Swingle photo.

Charles Speidel's mother Anna died on July 6, 1902, at the age of seventy-five. Sebastian Speidel and wife were the parents of five children, the names and other facts concerning whom are given as follows: Mary married John McCain and lived in West Salem; Frederica C. married Forest C. Pennel and remained in Richland Center; Charles; Kate married H. W. Eastland and was the proprietor of a millinery establishment in Richland Center; and Stephen who moved to Ladysmith.

Charles Speidel grew up in Richland County, being three years old when his parents established their residence at Richland City and received his education in the public schools. He learned the trade of watch-making with his father, beginning when he was fifteen years old and remained in his father's establishment four years. In 1873 he began his own jewelry business in Richland Center. He carried a full line of watches, clocks, sewing machines and spectacles. Charles Speidel was also an optometrist.

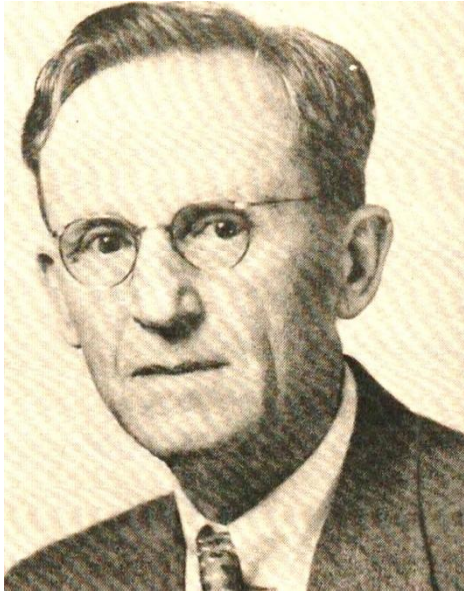


The Speidel Jewelry Store building 145 West Court Street - 1910. SandHill Marketing photo.

Charles Speidel was married on June 29, 1876, to Miss Minnie Cook, a native of Newark, Wayne County, N. Y., and a daughter of William and Margaret (West) Cook. William Cook came to Wisconsin with his family in 1865 and settled in Richland County, in the town of Rockbridge, he and his wife both being natives of the state of New York. Mr. Cook died in February, 1903, at the age of seventy-five years, and his wife died on Dec. 20, 1902. They were the parents of nine children: Walter lived in Riverview in Richland county; Wesley was a resident of the town of Rockbridge; Minnie; John, who moved to Minnesota; Bell married Ernest Richards and moved to Butler, S. D.; Frank died at the age of thirty, his home having been at Mound's Creek; Florence married Charles Brewer and lived in Richland Center; and Etta married C. W. Davis and was a resident of Richland county.

Mr. and Mrs. Charles Speidel had five children: Clarence died at the age of eight years; Edna worked as a clerk in her father's jewelry store; Edith was the wife of Frank W. Schwingle, a merchant in Richland Center; Lester was a jeweler by trade; and Clyde, the youngest, took over his father's jewelry business.

Charles H.F. Speidel was born on Dec. 5, 1852, at Erie, Pennsylvania, to Sebastain Speidel and Annie Barbara (Rilling) Speidel. He passed away on July 21, 1909, at age 56 and is buried in the Richland Center cemetery.



Charles had not been alone in running the business. His wife Mary West Speidel was well-known as a watchmaker which was an unusual occupation for a woman at that time. Their youngest son, Clyde, had been trained as a watchmaker and had entered the family business and was running the shop by 1910. Clyde ran the store until his retirement in 1959. His daughter Mary joined him in 1929 and owned and operated the family business upon the death of her father in 1961.

Mary Speidel is described as “a snappy, fashionable lady with a purpose in her step and a jaunty hat atop her graying hair.” She was a bonafide character well-known in

Richland Center; everyone who knew her has a favorite Mary Speidel anecdote that they relish telling. “An old tradition perhaps carried over from England, was the proprietor of a business to meet each customer at the door, call them by name, pass the time of day, and then proceed to accommodate them to their satisfaction. Upon completion of the transaction, customer and clerk would shake hands and the clerk would see the customer to the door. Mary Speidel continued this tradition for years after the practice had gone out of style. She passed away on November 19, 1999 at the age of 88.



The Speidel Home 322 North Park Street - 1863. Above left: Clyde and Mary Speidel.