

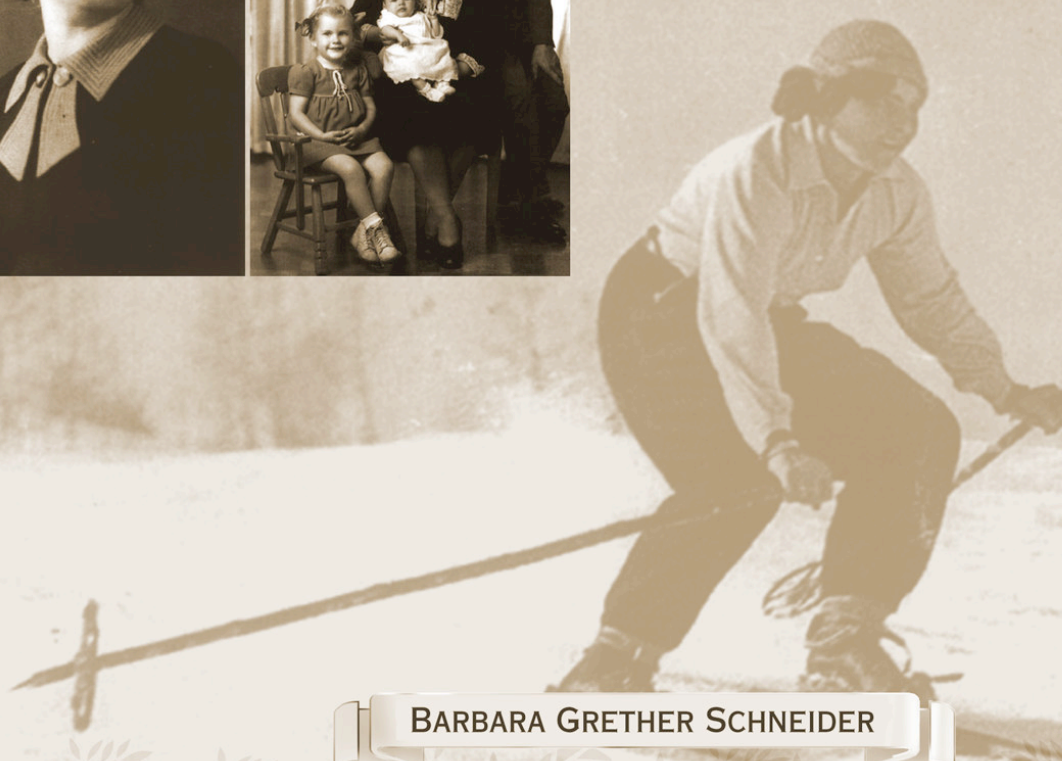
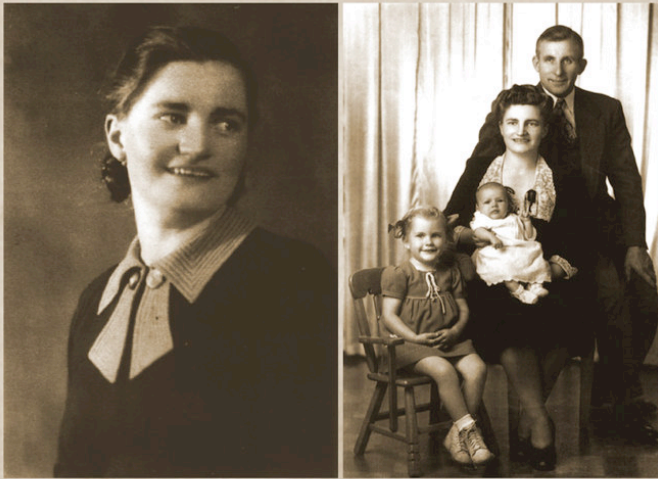


Barbara Grether Schneider

In 1949, 14 inches of snow blanketed the high desert, an unusual event for the region. Outlying area miners were marooned and only a few Twentynine Palms residents were equipped with 4-wheel drive vehicles or other means to get around. The snow effectively shut down the community. However, the snow did not stop Barbara Grether who had just moved to Twentynine Palms the year before and was an avid skier. To her, the snow brought back memories of her youth in Germany. For three days, Barbara delivered food to local residents who needed help. Her husband would drive her, as close to the residences as possible and then she would ski cross-country to reach families who had run out of food and fuel. Her selfless contributions to helping her neighbors during these crises characterized many of the residents of the high desert who had to depend upon their neighbors and friends to survive in this remote area.

Born in Bavaria as Barbara Mueller, she came to Douglas, Arizona in 1937 as an exchange

student. Later she moved to Los Angeles where she first took a job as a cook and later as a nanny for actor Oscar Homolka and his wife Florence Meyers. It was during this time she met and married Walter Gerther, a flower gardener in Bel Air. Walter, however, suffered from severe asthma and on a trip to Indio chanced upon a hitchhiker who told him about Twentynine Palms. After he dropped off the hitchhiker, Walter proceeded to Twentynine Palms where he immediately began to feel better. He called Barbara and quickly moved the family to the high desert. In Twentynine Palms, Walter felt so much better that they purchased Hollystone Tile Company, a cement block producing company. Barbara and Walter ran the cement block company, Desert Builders' Supply Company, for many years producing the stone blocks for many of the buildings in Twentynine Palms. Barbara, however, is probably best remembered for her generous efforts during the 1949 snowstorm that struck the high desert.



BARBARA GRETHER SCHNEIDER