

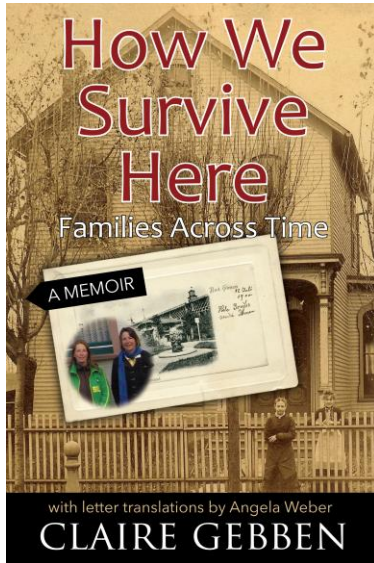


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116 Gladwin Avenue • Leonia, NJ 07605 • www.otrpr.com

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Contact: Jennifer Richards
201.242.9637
Jennifer@jrichardspr.com



HOW WE SURVIVE HERE

FAMILIES ACROSS TIME

A Memoir by

CLAIRE GEBBEN

Author of *The Last of the Blacksmiths*

“Claire Gebben’s memoir is a nice reminder of the centrality of history to a person’s self-identity and the common bonds of humanity that reach across time. The letters are compulsively readable and capture the essential familiarity of the human story, whether in nineteenth-century Germany or America, or in the same places today.”

—Dr. Thomas A. Kinney, author of *The Carriage Trade*

“**HOW WE SURVIVE HERE** offers an inspiring behind-the-scenes look at a journey to capture a family’s story on the page...Claire Gebben carries passion, humor, and a deep sense of care for those whose stories she will shape.”

—Ana Maria Spagna, author of *Reclaimers*, a Washington State Book Award finalist

“This memoir is not only about discovering mysteries of long ago, but about the growing awareness of middle age—a time which calls us to look back over our shoulder from where we came in order to see clearly where we are going.”

—Laura Pritchett, winner of the PEN USA Award and the Milkweed National Fiction Prize

According to *Time* magazine, genealogy is the second most popular hobby in the United States (after gardening) and also the second most visited category of websites (after pornography). “It’s a billion-dollar industry that has spawned profitable websites, television shows, scores of books, and – with the advent of over-the-counter genetic test kits – a cottage industry in DNA ancestry testing.”

These ancestral stories are extremely powerful and have the ability to change the way people see themselves in the world. Ask Claire Gebben, author of **HOW WE SURVIVE HERE: Families Across Time** (Coffeetown Press Trade Paperback Original; November 2018, \$21.95). In this adventurous memoir, Gebben (author of *The Last of the Blacksmiths*) shares her transatlantic quest to discover the truth about her ancestors’ lives. Via 19th-century correspondence, 21st-

century emails, and present-day relationships and encounters, Gebben weaves together a story of how we strive to survive amid experiences past and present, and within the broader sweep of history.

As far back as Claire Gebben can remember, her grandmother wrote letters to her relatives who lived in Freinsheim, Germany. Her grandmother's steadfast correspondence spurred a unique and abiding exchange among subsequent generations, especially between Claire and her German cousin Angela Weber. After her grandmother's death, Gebben's cousin traveled to the U.S. to share a treasure trove of 19th-century letters discovered in her relative's attic. These letters proved to be a genealogist's dream come true, as they offered a rare glimpse into their ancestors' blacksmithing and wagon-making trades and revealed family narratives and secrets that had been buried for over a century.

In **HOW WE SURVIVE HERE**, Gebben travels across the Atlantic Ocean and back in time to demonstrate how much things have changed from 19th-century Germany and the United States, and in another way, how much has remained the same. Readers learn of a bygone lifestyle and the kinds of artisan crafts and skills that have been lost to the machine age. Chief among those trades was the practical art of blacksmithing – a skill that Claire Gebben had to try out herself in order to understand her ancestors more fully.

It is Claire Gebben's hope that her new memoir will encourage people to investigate and then write about their own family histories. "Becoming aware of our family history deepens our understanding of who we are, enriches our present-day lives, and contributes to our ongoing legacy for the generations who follow." Immigration scholars, German and American historians, genealogy buffs, and craftspeople will be utterly captivated by **HOW WE SURVIVE HERE**.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Claire Gebben was born and raised on the southeast side of Cleveland, Ohio. After earning a BA in Psychology from Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan, she settled in the Pacific Northwest (Mercer Island, Washington), where she raised a family and worked as a newsletter editor, communications director and ghostwriter. In 2011, she earned her MFA in Creative Writing from the Northwest Institute of Literary Arts. Since the publication of ***The Last of the Blacksmiths*** in 2014, Ms. Gebben has been invited to speak at various venues regarding the untold stories of 19th-century immigration history, on creating legacies using family genealogies, and on research and writing. An adventurer at heart, she enjoys hiking, bicycling, traveling, and even on occasion, blacksmithing!

Discover more about Claire Gebben on her website: <http://clairegebben.com>.

For further information about HOW WE SURVIVE HERE , review copies, or to schedule an interview, please contact Claire Gebben: (206) 232-9754, ClaireGebben@gmail.com .

HOW WE SURVIVE HERE: Families Across Time

By Claire Gebben

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