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Mining Genealogical Gold

Finding Records of Your Territorial Ancestors (and the stories behind them)

Thou Shalt Not Kill

A History of Conscientious Objection: Revolutionary War to World War II

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IN THIS ISSUE

but first, a word from the editor, researcher, writer, graphic designer and publisher . . .

Dear Reader,

A Belated Happy New Year! In this issue you will find the following feature articles, some which are from the archives, ending 2023 with a look back at five years of publishing *Digging History Magazine*:

- Mining Genealogical Gold: Finding Records of Your Territorial Ancestors (and the stories behind them). This article highlights a condensed history of territorial America and how it all came together, followed by the amazing records available, such as territorial censuses, abundant resources at Ancestry, FamilySearch, Internet Archive and the Territorial Papers of the United States.

- Thou Shalt Not Kill: A History of Conscientious Objection: Revolutionary War to World War II. The long history of conscientious objection in America stretches back to colonial times, years before the Revolutionary War, when some of the first Europeans to sail across the ocean came to escape religious persecution and forced military service. While we are regarded as a tolerant nation which values personal liberty and free expression, that hasn't always been the case when it comes to those who, because of religious or moral reasons, decline to serve in times of war. World War I conscientious objectors (COs) were especially persecuted, one religious group, the Hutterites, in particular.

- 2018-2023: A Few of my Favorite ~~Things~~ Articles. Five stories from the archives (2018 and 2019) which I really enjoyed researching and writing. One in particular was a great "adventure in research".

- I hope you enjoy the issue! Even though it was rather late in coming out, I'm looking forward to 2024. The first two (or perhaps three) issues of 2024 will feature the 1930s and the Great Depression – lots of records to be discovered and lots of stories! Then, I plan to begin a special series, what I'm calling a "Parade of States", taking a look at individual state history, unique stories and how to find records.

As always, I am grateful for my faithful subscribers. You are a blessing to me!

Sharon Hall, Publisher and Editor

Mining Genealogical Gold

Finding Records of Your Territorial Ancestors (and the stories behind them)

by Sharon Hall

When the United States won the Revolutionary War with Great Britain and finally concluded the Treaty of Paris in 1783, it was in possession of not only the thirteen original British colonies, but provisions for setting the boundaries of the United States and what would eventually become Canada. The treaty, however, was more complex than dealing solely with Great Britain. The United States also negotiated treaties with France, Spain and the Dutch Republic.

For their part, Great Britain considered the final terms "exceedingly generous" as the United States, via Article 1 of the treaty, was granted full sovereignty:

His Brittanic Majesty acknowledges the said United States, viz., New Hampshire, Massachusetts Bay, Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia, to be free sovereign and Independent States; that he treats with them as such, and for himself his Heirs & Successors, relinquishes all claims to the Government, Propriety, and Territorial Rights of the same and every Part thereof. [1]

With complete independence, the United States also gained extensive boundaries – from the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River to the north and west to the Mississippi River and the 31° line across Florida to the south. On March 1, 1781 the United States began what is known as the Confederation period which lasted until March 3, 1789. Delegates dissolved the Second Continental Congress and wrote and agreed upon a document, known as the Articles of Confederation and Perpetual Union, which provided the initial framing of a future national government.

Rather than serving as a bicameral body as Congress functions today, it was unicameral and served both a legislative and executive function. Each state delegation had one vote and went to work with the business of building a united government. It was the Congress of the Confederation which officially approved the Treaty of Paris.

Northwest Territory

The governing body had its limitations, however, but the single-most important law they passed was the Northwest Ordinance of 1787. This was the first step in assigning territorial boundaries for later settlement and eventual statehood. The so-called Northwest Territory consisted of lands situated to the northwest of the Ohio River to the Canadian border,

including the Great Lakes regions ceded to the United States by Great Britain.

States which formerly claimed ownership of any of these lands relinquished them, ceding all unsettled lands to the government in order to place it under the public domain. Within time the process of settlement would begin, but until then the territory was governed primarily by Congress. It was a radical idea, albeit a tenable and temporary situation, but Congress wished to establish a system which would ensure orderly development.

According to historian Mary Beth Norton, their intent was to survey the land into townships of six square miles each, and divided by thirty-six sections of 640 acres (which equals one square mile). The sixteenth section of each township would be designated "school land" where any revenue derived from its sale would be used to support public schools, the first such instance of government providing educational aid. [2]

Article 3 actually encouraged education:

Religion, morality, and knowledge, being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged. The utmost good faith shall always be observed towards the Indians; their lands and property shall never be taken from them without their consent; and, in their property, rights, and liberty, they shall never be invaded or disturbed, unless in just and lawful wars authorized by Congress; but laws founded in justice and humanity, shall from time to time be made for preventing wrongs being done to them, and for preserving peace and friendship with them.

Section 9 of the Ordinance states:

So soon as there shall be five thousand free male inhabitants of full age in the district, upon giving proof thereof to the governor, they shall receive authority, with time and place, to elect a representative from their counties or townships to represent them in the general assembly: Provided, That, for every five hundred free male inhabitants, there shall be one representative, and so on progressively with the number of free male inhabitants shall the right of representation increase, until the number of representatives shall amount to twenty five; after which, the number and proportion of representatives shall be regulated by the legislature.

Perhaps most importantly Article 6 strictly forbade the existence of slavery:

There shall be neither slavery nor involuntary servitude in the said territory, otherwise than in the punishment of crimes whereof the party shall have been duly convicted: Provided, always, That any person escaping into the same, from whom labor or service is lawfully claimed in any one of the original States, such fugitive may be lawfully reclaimed and conveyed to the person claiming his or her labor or service as aforesaid.

This followed Article 4 which bound the territory forever "as a part of this Confederacy of the United States of America". Just like citizens of the original thirteen states, the territory's inhabitants would have the right to freely exercise their chosen religion and " always be entitled to the benefits of the writ of habeas corpus, and of the trial by jury" (Article 2).

Article 5 set forth their ambitions as to a vision of how the territory would be organized and later divided into states:

There shall be formed in the said territory, not less than three nor more than five States; and the boundaries of the States, as soon as Virginia shall alter her act of cession, and consent to the same, shall become fixed and established as follows, to wit: The western State in the said territory, shall be bounded by the Mississippi, the Ohio, and Wabash Rivers; a direct line drawn from the Wabash and Post Vincents, due North, to the territorial line between the United States and Canada; and, by the said territorial line, to the Lake of the Woods and Mississippi. The middle State shall be bounded by the said direct line, the Wabash from Post Vincents to the Ohio, by the Ohio, by a direct line, drawn due north from the mouth of the Great Miami, to the said territorial line, and by the said territorial line. The eastern State shall be bounded by the last mentioned direct line, the Ohio, Pennsylvania, and the said territorial line: Provided, however, and it is further understood and declared, that the boundaries of these three States shall be subject so far to be altered, that, if Congress shall hereafter find it expedient, they shall have authority to form one or two States in that part of the said territory which lies north of an east and west line drawn through the southerly bend or extreme of Lake Michigan. And, whenever any of the said States shall have sixty thousand free inhabitants therein, such State shall be admitted, by its delegates, into the Congress of the United States, on an equal footing with the original States in all respects whatever, and shall be at liberty to form a permanent constitution and State government: Provided, the constitution and government so to be formed, shall be republican, and in conformity to the principles contained in these articles; and, so far as it can be consistent with the general interest of the confederacy, such admission shall be allowed at an earlier period, and when there may be a less number of free inhabitants in the State than sixty thousand. [3]

What this provided was the basic framework of statehood and further established "equal footing" with the original thirteen states. As Norton observed, "Having suffered under the rule of a colonial power, congressmen understood the importance of preparing the United States's first 'colony' for eventual self-government." However, as Norton also astutely pointed out, the "ordinance was purely theoretical". [4]

Even though Article 3 pledged a good relationship with Indians, it didn't align well at all with Native Americans. The Miami, Shawnee and Delaware tribes vehemently opposed white settlement, refusing to cede sovereignty and the rights of their land to the United States. Settlers who ventured too far north of the Ohio River were attacked mercilessly.

Congress sold a large tract of land to the Ohio Company in 1788 which was intended to establish the town of Marietta at the confluence of the Ohio and Muskingum rivers. George Washington, a surveyor before leading the Continental Army, had personally seen the region's beauty and potential. In June of that year he wrote Richard Henderson, a Maryland merchant:

No Colony in America was ever settled under such favorable auspicies as that which has just commenced at the Muskingum Information, property and strength will be its characteristics. I know many of the settlers personally & that there never were men better calculated to promote the wellfare of such a community.

If I was a young man, just preparing to begin the world or if advanced in life, and had a family to make a provision for, I know of no country, where I should rather fix my habitation than in some part of that region. [5]

Instead of Washington's vision for this region an extended campaign, called the Northwest Indian War, forced the nascent nation into a position of defending its newly acquired land. It would be considered the Army's first Indian war. War was inevitable given that the Territory's first governor, General Arthur St. Clair, failed to negotiate a treaty with the Indians. In a series of battles the Indian confederacy waged war against the Army, inflicting what would come to be known as the worst defeat yet suffered on the American frontier as St. Clair lost more than six hundred men.

In 1793 Little Turtle, war chief of the Miami confederacy, declared peace would only be achieved when the United States recognized the Ohio River as the legitimate boundary between white and Indian lands. The federal government refused to acquiesce and in response dispatched legendary Revolutionary War hero, General Anthony Wayne, to put down the rebellion in order for peace negotiations to commence.

The Treaty of Greenville gave both sides what each wanted as the federal government won the right to settle land which would become the state of Ohio, while the Indians received a smaller northwest corner of the territory. This situation, however, made it ever more necessary to work toward establishing a national framework governed by the Constitution versus the Articles of Confederation.

As the federal government worked toward settling the newly negotiated lands, a series of events were set in motion beginning in 1800 when Indiana Territory was created on May 7. By early 1803 (March 7), Ohio was officially granted admission into the Union after the 1800 census enumerated over 45,000 people (excluding Native Americans); by contrast Indiana had only about 5,600 people and not yet ceded to apply for admission.

Over the five decades to follow, one by one, the Territory was settled. Instead of three to five states there were six: Ohio (1803); Indiana (1816); Illinois (1818); Michigan (1837); Wisconsin (1848) and Minnesota (1858).

Mississippi Territory

Following acquisition of the Northwest Territory, the federal government was looking to the "southwest frontier", which prior to 1798 most of this land was claimed by Georgia. In the 1730s the British founded the last of its colonies after settlers began arriving, led by James Oglethorpe, a former army officer. In June 1732 King George II issued a charter granting twenty trustees the powers to form a corporation, elect their own government, enact laws and taxes and issue land grants. From 1732 to 1777 the Georgia colony claimed lands stretching to the Mississippi River, although parts were disputed with Spain until 1795.

On October 27, 1795 the so-called "Pinckney's Treaty" between the United States and Spain was signed, defining a border between the United States and Spanish Florida. It also guaranteed the United States the right to freely navigate the Mississippi River and a direct

result was the formation of Mississippi Territory in 1798. This had been solidified by one other event – the Spanish relinquishment of the fertile Natchez District.

In 1798 a few settlers had already migrated to the region, living principally in the Natchez District and the region above and west of Mobile. In contrast around 4,500, including slaves, lived in the Natchez District while only around 1,250 lived around Mobile. The rest of the territory was inhabited by the Chickasaw and Choctaw nations. It was a primitive wilderness, yet migrants came for one reason only – opportunity.

The realities of the soil-depleted plantations of the older southern agricultural states made the rich, fertile lands of Mississippi quite attractive, not to mention that tobacco plantations were in decline as demand had dropped. In earlier years Europe depended on staples such as tobacco and rice, but after the cotton gin was invented in 1793 by Eli Whitney, Europe transferred its demand to securing a reliable source of cotton. That just wasn't going to be fulfilled in states like Virginia, North and South Carolina. As Charles Lowery, history professor emeritus at Mississippi State University wrote:

The rich soils of the Mississippi Territory, its favorable environment for cotton culture, and the high prices being paid in England for cotton, led to the genesis of the Cotton Kingdom, which was based on enslaved labor. Mississippi, with soil and climate ideally suited to cotton culture, became the center of southern cotton production and slavery during the first half of the nineteenth century.

Closely linked to the notion that Mississippi offered exceptional economic opportunities for the immigrant was the widespread belief that the Territory was an idyllic "Garden of Eden," an unlimited expanse of fertile country "like the land of promise, flowing with milk and honey."

One Mississippi immigrant described his new home as "a wide empty country with a soil that yields such noble crops that any man is sure to succeed." Another new settler wrote to family back in Maryland that "the crops [here] are certain . . ., and abundance spreads the table of the poor man and contentment smiles on every countenance." [6]

And so they came, thousands convinced they were coming to dwell in a "land of unsurpassed opportunity". The portion of Mississippi Territory which would later become the state of Mississippi grew to almost 27,000 persons by 1810, in contrast to the Mobile area gaining only around 3,000. Migration only slowed during the War of 1812. Following the peace treaty migration patterns picked up considerably, like nothing anyone had ever seen or imagined. It was a "Mississippi Fever" – "by horse, by wagon, by boat, and on foot, the flood of humanity swept into the Territory. One traveler, during nine days of travel in 1816, counted no fewer than 4,000 immigrants coming into the Territory during nine days of travel." [7]

Despite nationwide economic woes the entire territory was set to come into the Union as the states of Mississippi (1817) and Alabama (1819). The 1819 economic panic slowed down the migration although it picked back up in the 1820s and 1830s. By mid-century the state of Mississippi had firmly established itself as one of the nation's wealthiest states, all thanks to King Cotton and slave labor.

To check out more Mississippi Territorial records:

https://da.mdah.ms.gov/series/territorial

Louisiana Purchase

Just weeks after Ohio officially became a state on March 1, 1803, the United States completed the purchase of its largest land acquisition to date. On April 30, 1803 the map changed dramatically when Robert Livingston and future president James Monroe signed the Louisiana Purchase Treaty in Paris. Less than three weeks earlier an offer had been extended to Livingston – $15 million for the entirety of the Louisiana Territory. President Thomas Jefferson had only authorized Livingston to pay up to $10 million for New Orleans in order to gain control of the Mississippi River port. Instead, Napoleon Bonaparte, who had abandoned lofty ambitions for creating a mighty empire, urged his representative, François Barbé-Marbois, to make the offer.

It was a risky offer to be sure because Louisiana wasn't officially in French hands following protracted negotiations between Spain and France. For much of the last half of the previous century, the Louisiana Territory had become a "pawn on the chessboard of European politics".[8] It was an enormous region which had originally been claimed by Spain but explored by France. America had its eye on this vast territory, but Jefferson, in particular, was content to let it play out – even if he had to acquire it piecemeal.

However, when opportunity presented itself Jefferson could hardly object. The Louisiana Purchase would become known as his greatest achievement, albeit basically occurring as "the result of accident, luck, and the whim of Napoleon Bonaparte".[9] The transfer on December 20, 1803 in New Orleans marked a new era as France officially ceded sovereignty of the territory into American hands.

Shortly thereafter, on March 26, 1804, this vast tract of land was divided into two territories – the Territory of Orleans and the Louisiana District. On July 4, 1805 the Louisiana District became known (once again) as Louisiana Territory. Subsequently, when the Territory of Orleans officially became the state of Louisiana on April 30, 1812, it was renamed Missouri Territory to avoid confusion with the newly minted state.

It would remain as Missouri Territory until August 10, 1821 when the state of Missouri was admitted to the Union. Two years earlier, however, the Territory of Arkansas – originally spelled "Arkansaw" – was created on July 4, 1819 and existed until Arkansas gained statehood on June 15, 1836. What became of the remainder of the territory?

When Missouri was admitted the remainder became "unorganized territory" which would later become various states or (temporary) territories. As the Missouri territorial legislature was preparing to apply for statehood, however, a controversy of serious national import arose as to whether Missouri would come into the Union as a slave or free state. Balance of power

in the nation's capital was the primary concern since by this time northern states had gradually done away with the practice of slavery, an institution which stubbornly remained in the southern states.

Via the Missouri Compromise of 1820, enacted on March 3, 1820, Missouri was admitted as a slave state and Maine as a free state in exchange for a law which prohibited slavery elsewhere in what remained of the original Louisiana Purchase situated north of the 36°30' parallel. Eventually, this so-called "unorganized territory" would officially be admitted as states: Kansas, Nebraska, Iowa, the Dakotas, Wyoming and Montana. Other states which partially lay within the original Louisiana Territory – Colorado, Minnesota, New Mexico and Oklahoma – would be designated as territories before achieving statehood later in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Jumping back to the original Northwest Territory, that region was also sub-divided into territories – Wisconsin, Michigan and Illinois – before applying for and achieving statehood (Illinois - 1818; Michigan - 1837; Wisconsin - 1848). In 1819 the United States successfully negotiated a treaty with Spain to acquire Florida. In 1821 the Territory of Florida was organized and remained so until achieving statehood in 1845.

Texas, of course, came in after winning its independence from Mexico and then existing as a republic before entering the Union. The United States acquired much of the remainder of the west and southwest via the Treaty of Hidalgo which ended the Mexican-American War in 1848. Throw in a good dose of "manifest destiny" (covered in previous issues of the magazine) and that's how America became the United States – in a nutshell. Someday in the not-too-distant future I hope to begin a series of issues called "Parade of States" with more in-depth history and available records.

But what about records of your territorial ancestors? Do any exist? Actually, you might be surprised what you will find.

Finding Territorial Records

It should be mentioned up-front that some territorial records may be easier to find than others, especially online. To access these records you may need to physically visit a particular state's archive facilities or perhaps even make a trip to the National Archives in Washington, D.C. Some records at the National Archives may be digitized and available online, or at the very least an index, so a visit to Archives.gov is worth a try.

Territorial Censuses

According to Archives.gov, the federal government, via the 1880 Census Act enacted in March 1879, also requested a semidecennial census of states and territories "during the two months

beginning on the first Monday of June of the year which is the mean between the decennial censuses of the United States". The phrase "mean between the decennial censuses" referred to 1885, thus that year the states of Florida, Nebraska and Colorado and the territories of New Mexico and Dakota complied and the government paid half the salaries of enumerators in those states or territories.

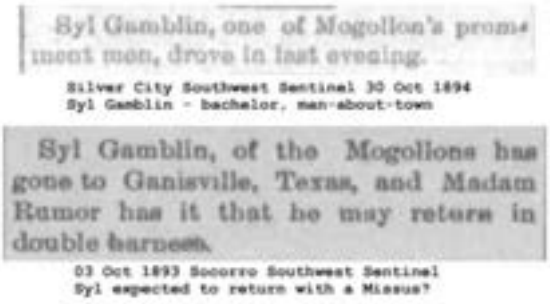
The 1885 territorial censuses for New Mexico and North and South Dakota are available online at Ancestry (MyHeritage only provides a brief summary, no images). In the case of the Dakotas, North and South would be granted statehood not many years hence (1889), while New Mexico didn't gain that distinction until 1912. In the case of the Dakotas which were enumerated with the rest of the states in 1890, the records of which were mostly destroyed by fire in 1921, this particular census serves as a substitute.

Had I thought of it at the time I wrote one of my "Tombstone Tuesday" blog articles back in 2013, I could have made good use of the 1885 New Mexico Territorial Census to help clarify the whereabouts of the article's main character, Sylvester "Syl" Gamblin. I had just begun the blog a few weeks earlier and had begun looking around for interesting stories and after my cousin mentioned some cemeteries in southwestern New Mexico, I decided to explore.

I looked through the entries at Find-A-Grave for the Alma Cemetery located in Alma (Catron County), New Mexico. I found two which I thought might be interesting. They were the only people named Gamblin in the cemetery and both had lived well into their 90s, so I thought they must have lived full and interesting lives. Here's the original story I wrote.

Emma was born on May 12, 1869 in Ohio (according to various U.S. Census records) and passed away on August 3, 1966. According to Syl's gravestone he was born in 1856 and died in 1947. In the 1860 Census, Sylvester Gamblin was three years old and living in Gap, Montgomery County, Arkansas. His parents were James and Emenella Gamblin.

In the 1870 Census, Syl lived in Texas, and in 1880 he lived in Center, Polk County, Arkansas, listed as a boarder with the Davis family. The missing data which could be gleaned from the 1890 U.S. Census records (burned in a fire in 1921) leaves some gaps in Syl's history and his migration from Arkansas to New Mexico Territory. However, according to various snippets in the *Socorro Chieftain* and the *Silver City Southwest-Sentinel*, Syl was in the area in the early 1890s:

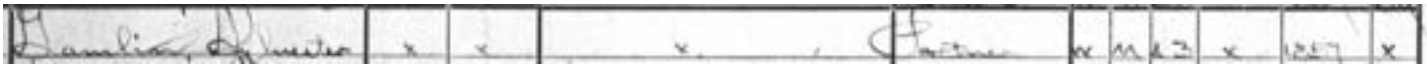

Syl Gamblin, one of Mogollon's prom-
inent men, drove in last evening.

Silver City Southwest Sentinel 30 Oct 1894
Syl Gamblin - bachelor, man-about-town

Syl Gamblin, of the Mogollons has gone to Ganisville, Texas, and Madam Rumor has it that he may return in double harness.

03 Oct 1893 Socorro Southwest Sentinel
Syl expected to return with a Missus?

I also found a source citation from the 1900 US Census taken in Nome, Alaska, listing Syl Gamblin as a partner in relation to the head of the household and working in the mining industry, along with several other men. That census was taken from May 1 to June 1, 1900. The date of birth, age and place of birth match Syl's vital data. So, apparently Syl had decided at some point to try his hand at mining in Alaska.



If true, he apparently didn't find riches in Alaska and sometime after June 1, 1900 he returned to Mogollon, as evidenced by a Tax Assessment List for taxes due from October 1, 1900 (the date his business commenced) to June 30, 1901.

In 1910, according to that year's census, Syl was still living in Mogollon and single. A mention of Syl in a book about a local law enforcement officer, Cipriano Baca, made a short reference to Syl but did not include dates. In this short blurb ("Cipriana" in the quote below was Cipriano Baca's daughter) the author mentions Syl:

Cipriana's best Mogollon friend was Hattie Shellhorn. "We were about the same age. Mrs. [Emma] Shellhorn later married the saloonkeeper – Mr. [Sylvester] Gamblin." Mrs. [John] Shellhorn was a widower from Ohio, and Gamblin was a bachelor from Texas, 18 years her senior. He had a playhouse built for Hattie, and the girls spent many hours playing dolls in the house, but the happy times were short lived.

Syl Gamblin knew plenty of hardship as well. The area around Mogollon was – and still is – prone to both fires and floods:

MOGOLLON FLOODED
BY HARD RAINS

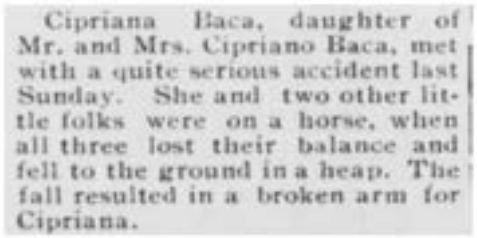
Reports have reached Silver City of the flooding of Mogollon as a result of the recent hard rains, says the Independent. The Gila river went on a tear and after washing out sections of its banks spread over the low tracts of land adjacent to it. At Mogollon the Syl Gamblin property was damaged to the extent of $150 and H. W. Johnson lost a similar sum in damage to his residence property. The woodshed and porch belonging to the property owned by Jack Lawson also suffered and eight cords of cut wood belonging to him were swept away. Considerable damage was also done to the breakwater on the Deep Down mill property and around the Kerr residence property, the sufferers were: V. Sozaola and John Croenne. The road in Chase canyon was badly washed. Owing to the high water along the Gila river, the Mogollon district was without mail for one week on account of the roads being impassable. Passenger and freight traffic was also suspended for the same length of time.

PLANTING STATION
NEAR SANTA FE.

In the program for field work for December, 1906, prepared by Gifford Pinchot, chief of the division of forestry of the department of agriculture, the following important piece of news to Santa Fe and to forest work in the territory appears:

17 Dec 1906 Albuquerque Evening Citizen

A little more research turned up some interesting information about Emma. Emma (maiden name Williams) married Charles Alfred Shellhorn on January 12, 1898. I noticed there were several Shellhorns buried in this cemetery as well. On January 3, 1899 their son Herman was born and died on July 12, 1899. Another child, Harriet, was born one year to the day after Herman's death, on July 12, 1900. Charles, whose occupation on the 1900 Census was listed as "teamster" died on February 9, 1908. I thought perhaps he worked in the mines and could have died on the job, although I could find no news article about such a disaster around that time.



Cipriana Baca, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Cipriano Baca, met with a quite serious accident last Sunday. She and two other little folks were on a horse, when all three lost their balance and fell to the ground in a heap. The fall resulted in a broken arm for Cipriana.

Socorro Chieftain - February 15, 1908

While searching for a news item about Charles Shellhorn's death, I came across this news item about little Cipriana Baca, Hattie's best friend (see book excerpt above):

This accident happened on the same day as Charles Shellhorn, Hattie's father, died. Hmm.

In 1910, Emma is listed as a widow on that year's U.S. Census, living in Mogollon and working as a housekeeper, with one child, Harriet, age 9. Harriet ("Hattie") died on October 14, 1918 and is buried in the same cemetery. I suspected Hattie was a victim of the 1918 Spanish Flu Pandemic, although according to her death certificate she died of pneumonia. Many people

in Mogollon fell ill and died that year, and it is known that in the fall of 1918 the flu strain was much more virulent and deadly.

So, by 1918, Emma had suffered one loss after another. Her entire family, including her first husband Charles had died. From the book excerpt cited above, it sounds like perhaps Syl had known Emma awhile before they married because he knew Hattie when she was younger. By the 1920 Census, Syl and Emma had married, he being 63 and she 51 and were living in Hansonburg, Socorro County, New Mexico where Syl worked as a stockman or stock raiser. Hansonburg was a mining district.

In the 1930 census I found Syl and Emma (74 and 55) living in Mogollon where Syl was enumerated as a carpenter. In the 1940 Census Syl is 82 years old and his occupation is listed as "miner" and living in Mogollon, Catron County, New Mexico. Hmm … perhaps Syl had been part of the Nome gold strike of 1900 after all and now he was trying his hand again at mining? Come to think of it, there was gold fever in Polk County, Arkansas in the 1880s and Syl lived in Polk County according to the 1880 Census.

The only remaining information I could find about the Gamblins is on their tombstones -- Syl died in 1947 and Emma in 1966. Perhaps Syl Gamblin was a restless soul, wandering near and far, in search of riches and success – or dare I say a "gamblin' man". Maybe when he found Emma he found real happiness and contentment at last.

The story received an "update" while researching a "Mining Genealogical Gold" article for my two-part New Mexico series (Volume 2020: Issues 4 and 5), and it involved the 1885 New Mexico Territorial Census. Even though New Mexico had been a territory for some time, this appears to have been the only territorial census ever taken.

In form, it looks much like the regular U.S. Census record which enumerated name, age, marital status, occupation, place of birth, and each parent's place of birth. While searching for an example I remembered a Tombstone Tuesday story I'd originally written for the Digging History blog. Having re-read the article I decided to search for the subject, Sylvester "Syl" Gamblin whose whereabouts between the 1880 census and a 1900 tax record was unclear to me at the time. Guess what? A search for the last name "Gamblin" actually resulted in a record for an "S Gamblin" in the mining town of Fleming in Grant County. While his and his parents' birth places didn't jive with previous census records, Gamblin's age is spot on at 28 years old in 1885 (born in 1856). I do believe this is one and the same person, and had I been aware of this territorial census, the original article would have had more continuity.

Throughout the nineteenth century a number of territorial censuses were conducted and Ancestry has others, like the Minnesota Territorial and State Census records: 1849-1855 and 1857, followed by state censuses in 1865, 1875, 1895 and 1905. In 1849-1855 it appears that only certain counties were included.

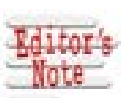
Because Minnesota gained statehood in 1858 I presume one of the primary purposes of the 1857 census was to determine how the territory's population was faring in terms of meeting the minimum number of residents to qualify. Minnesota Territory had officially been created in 1849 and included parts of what would eventually become North and South Dakota.

It's likely no surprise that many of Minnesota's early pioneer settler were of a hardy Scandinavian stock. Like Wisconsin, Minnesota eventually employed a strategy of advertising extensively via pamphlet and regional (and foreign) newspapers, directly targeting potential English, Norwegian, Dutch and German immigrants. However, it wasn't until 1853 before territorial officials pursued a serious campaign. One official prepared an exhibit to present at the New York world's fair that summer. By 1857 the territorial census showed well over 5,000 people enumerated who had been born in Norway; over 2,600 born in Sweden and well over 16,000 of German birth.

Using the keywords "territorial" and "census" in a search of the Ancestry catalog yields 15 records. Besides North and South Dakota, Minnesota and New Mexico, there are territorial records for Wyoming (1869) plus Cheyenne city census (1875 and 1878); Arizona (1864-1882); Oklahoma Territory (1890 and 1907); Mississippi State and Territorial censuses (1792-1866); and Washington State and Territorial censuses (1857-1892).

The territorial census form varied. For instance, the 1864 Arizona territorial census was "bare bones" while the Wyoming Territorial census of 1869 included name, age, occupation, birthplace, and citizenship status.

Oklahoma Territorial Census (1890)



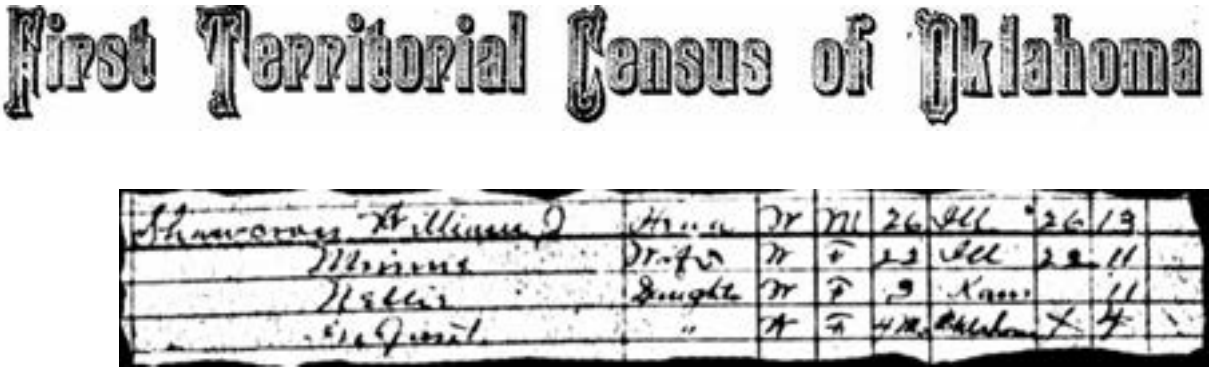
I told this story almost four years ago – I think I'll tell it again. It's a great reminder of a valuable substitute for the (mostly) missing 1890 U.S. Census – especially if you had ancestors living in Oklahoma Territory in the late nineteenth century.

The government hadn't an inkling in 1890 how important this special territorial census would eventually become. Just over a year after the government offered a land rush of unassigned lands, a census was conducted in the six "boomer" counties (Canadian, Cleveland, Kingfisher,

Logan, Oklahoma and Payne), plus Beaver which became known as the "Seventh County" after being part of Cimarron Territory from 1886-1890.

The database is available at Ancestry through subscription:

https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/8925/



William J. Shawcross, his wife Minnie and two young daughters were numerated in Logan County. William and Minnie were both born in Illinois and daughter Nellie was three and born in Kansas. The baby, born in Oklahoma was four months old. Thus, the Shawcross family had been in Oklahoma at least four months, likely longer if they were part of the land rush. As a matter of fact, it appears they were and the clues above, accompanied by some newspaper research, led to an interesting story.

William J. Shawcross was born in Illinois in 1864 and the Ancestry records thread indicates he was the son of Samuel and Mary Shawcross. In 1880 Mary is widowed and she and her four children (Nellie, William John and Samuel) and sister Lydia are living in Chicago. Mary is a vest maker and Lydia a dressmaker. The next census record for the brothers is the 1890 Oklahoma Territorial Census. Had the brothers struck out together, perhaps to Kansas?

Newspapers.com is an excellent web site for Kansas newspapers and a search for "Shawcross" yielded a cache of clues. The first reference to the name made me wonder if it might belong to Mary, based on her last known occupation of vest maker:

A Card.

I wish to state to the people of Anthony that I have sold my millinery store to Mrs. Shawcross who will hereafter conduct the business at the old stand on Jennings avenue. I can heartily recommend Mrs. Shawcross to all my old patrons and others who need anything in this line, as a pleasant and reliable lady to deal with, and ask that you give her a share of your patronage. All accounts not settled with me before July 4th can be settled with Mrs. Shawcross. Mrs. Dora Murray. Anthony June 30th 1885.[10]

While it might possibly be Mary in Anthony (Harper County), the first reference to William occurred in Cheyenne County one year later. However, Harper borders Oklahoma and Cheyenne is in the upper northwest corner of the state. On July 16, 1886 it was reported that deputy sheriff Shawcross had served papers and the following month he was seen escorting a horse thief "whom he had hand cuffed right up in style."[11]

William was making a name for himself and on November 3, 1886 he was married in Bird City:

Married

On the morning of the 3d inst., Mr. W.J. Shawcross and Miss Minnie Cummings, both of Bird City, were united in marriage at the residence of John Elliott, Judge D.W. Cave officiating. The groom is the present Deputy Sheriff of this county, and his conduct as an officer has ever been beyond reproach. The bride is well known in this vicinity, and has hosts of friends. Immediately after the ceremonies were performed, the bride and groom started for Atwood, accompanied by Mr. James H. King and Miss Nettie Elliott. The party returned Thursday evening. Will "set 'em up" to the boys, and everything resumed its usual equilibrium. The Frontiersman extends its congratulations. [12]

Around this time newspapers began referring to "W.J. Shawcross, Tonsorial Artist".[13] Whether or not this is the same person is unclear since William was still referenced as a deputy sheriff. In August 1887, "a young lady put in her appearance"[14] – Minnie had given birth to their daughter Nellie. By May 1888 William was listed among Bird City's city officers, serving as Marshal. By March 1889 he was looking for greener pastures – "Will and Johnny Shawcross are making extensive preparations for their overland journey to the Oklahoma elderado [sic]." As the two brothers "hit the road" friends and neighbors wished them "health and fortune".[15]

Oklahoma's land rush was of great interest in northwest Kansas as one correspondent for the *Cheyenne County Democrat* reported on the scene:

THE LAND OF PROMISE

Incidents and Accidents of Oklahoma

THE BIRD CITY DELEGATION

Billy and Johnny Shawcross came into town to enter claims while I was there and prevailed on me to go to their farms on a hunting trip, with wonderful tales of the wild deer and turkey that abounded in the copses. . . .

With one-half of the Oklahoma advertising, Cheyenne county would be densely populated today and Bird City, with its beautiful location and natural advantages, would discount Guthrie in size and permanency. . .

Along in the rare days of June you will see the Shawcross brothers pulling into Bird City from the south-east, healthier perhaps, dirtier unquestionably, poorer no doubt, but wiser boys. [16]

Clearly, Bird City was fond of Will Shawcross and predicted he'd be back home soon, but he decided to stick it out. In early 1890 rumors of Will having killed a man in Oklahoma territory were discounted. When Will and Minnie were enumerated in June their youngest daughter was only four months old. In November sad news was relayed back to Cheyenne County:

Word was received here one day this week, of the death of Mrs. Minnie Shawcross, caused by Typhoid fever. [17]

Will had barely settled in the Territory and was now a widower. While there are no mentions of remarriage, it's possible Mary was helping to raise his children since she received 160 acres of land in 1892. Brother John had filed for and received the same amount of land the previous year.

The name Shawcross came up in Oklahoma newspapers during the 1890s. Bill Shawcross (presumably William) was constable in Guthrie in 1897. Apparently, brother Sam and later John went to Colorado to mine gold. John was killed in a mine accident in the fall of 1898. Bill (William?) Shawcross was in Colorado during 1899 and much of 1900, returning in October.

A year later William J. Shawcross was caught in crossfire at a saloon brawl in Shawnee.

A PEACEMAKER IS SLAIN

William Shawcross in Trying to Stop a Row is Slain

John Lowe shot and killed William Shawcross in a saloon brawl here Saturday night about 9:30 o'clock. Shawcross was trying to stop a quarrel between John Lowe, city scavenger, and one Roy Hamilton. When Lowe shot at Hamilton, Shawcross stepped between them and received the bullet in the left side, dying instantly. Will Shawcross was a barkeeper in the House of Lords and was never known to be in a quarrel of any kind before. [18]

A coroner's inquest was held, whereupon jurors determined William Shawcross had died as a result of gun shot, fired by one John Lowe "without justifiable or excusable cause." The murderer would get a "quick trip to the penitentiary as the result of his awful deed . . . The blow to his family is a terrible one and Lowe himself when he realizes that he has taken the life of a man who was in fact his friend must suffer all the torments of the damned."[19]

Clearly, Will was much beloved, "a well known character in many Oklahoma towns having been a pioneer in many of them. He was a warm hearted, generous fellow who counted his friends by the score and his unfortunate taking off is sincerely regretted by all.

His parents and family are quite prominent in Colorado and at their solicitation the remains were taken to Guthrie for interment."[20]

Upon notice of his death Will's family began gathering, his sister Nellie traveling from Chicago to attend the funeral. Mary and Sam were traveling from Colorado, but no mention of his daughters. It appears, however, daughter Nellie married John O'Brien and she, like her mother, died rather young in Nebraska in 1919.

For this story, the 1890 Oklahoma Territorial Census was key in uncovering facts and records not (easily) found at Ancestry. Knowing that daughter Nellie was born in Kansas gave me reason to search newspapers there and voilà, an interesting story don't you think?

While this database is available at Ancestry, a searchable index (free) is available at the Oklahoma Historical Society web site:

https://www.okhistory.org/research/1890

It's always a good idea to look around for alternate sources. In this case, it's a free one. Gateway to Oklahoma History also has a number of territorial newspapers which could prove invaluable for tracing the whereabouts of your Oklahoma territorial ancestors.

Utah Territorial Case Files

Fold3 has an interesting collection of Utah territorial records – judicial records of four U.S. districts (Salt Lake City, Ogden, Provo and Beaver) prior to 1896 statehood. Prior to 1870 the federal government, shall we say, experienced difficulties in dealing with the Mormon community. According to the National Archives description, the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 had worked fairly well in establishing order in other territories, but when it came to Utah there were difficulties, due in large part to the Mormons establishing their own form of government, a "State of Deseret", in 1849, "and the federal attempt to graft its own authority onto the existing structure was a failure." Federal appointees were forced to work within the Mormon system as best they could, short of war to force compliance.

However, following the Civil War and the coming of the transcontinental railroad system, the federal government began asserting itself, especially in the courts. That's when Congress took its own steps by passing a series of laws targeting Utah Territory. First, they passed the Poland Act of 1874 which essentially fueled the prosecution of polygamists by empowering another act signed by Abraham Lincoln in 1862 which outlawed polygamy in federal territories. The Edmunds-Tucker Act of 1882 not only abolished polygamy, but made it a crime punishable by fine or imprisonment. Congress took the extra step in declaring it illegal for those who practiced polygamy to hold public office or serve as jurors. Between 1888 and 1893 hundreds of guilty verdicts were secured. The Mormon Church ended plural marriage in 1890.

One of the more sensational polygamy indictments involved George Quayle Cannon, a prominent member serving with the elite governing body known as the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. He was born in Liverpool, England and a member of the church since the age of thirteen when he and his family were baptized into the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. In 1842 the family immigrated to America and settled in Nauvoo, Illinois (his mother died during the voyage, however).

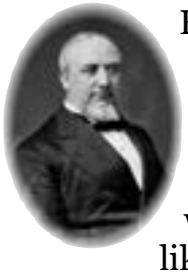
After his father died in 1845 and he returned to England to settle estate matters, he returned to the United States and traveled with other Mormons to the Salt Lake Valley, arriving in the fall of 1847. Two years later he was asked by Brigham Young to serve as a missionary in California, working to evangelize gold miners who had come seeking fortune. After several months he went to serve in the Kingdom of Hawaii for four years. Upon his return to Utah Territory he married Elizabeth Hoagland, daughter of a prominent Mormon leader.

He continued to serve in various capacities and oversaw the publication of the Book of Mormon in the Hawaiian language. When called upon to do so, he served in the Nauvoo Legion as a Lieutenant General during the Utah War (sometimes called the "Mormon War"), or more derisively as "Buchanan's Blunder". President James Buchanan sent federal troops in order to address the polygamy problem he had forcefully denounced and it didn't end well. One historian opined the conflict arose through a series of misunderstandings, resulting in:

a costly, disruptive and unnecessary confrontation between the Mormon people in Utah Territory and the government and Army of the United States . . . Had there been

transcontinental telegraphic communications at the time, what has been referred to as "Buchanan's Blunder" almost certain would not have occurred. [21]

George Cannon continued to rise in the hierarchal order of the Mormon Church and became a close advisor to Brigham Young. In 1872 he was elected to serve as the non-voting delegate from Utah Territory in the United States Congress. He remained in that office until 1882 when Congress passed the Edmunds Act. The passage of this law meant George Cannon, a practicing polygamist, wasn't welcome in the halls of Congress. His seat was vacated.



However, even after being elected to serve in Congress Cannon was pursued by federal authorities following passage of the Poland Act in 1874. By the end of 1874 he had been indicted for the crime of polygamy and ordered to pay bail in the amount of five thousand dollars. By that time he was married to six women (he fathered thirty-three children). However, church leaders, assuming the case might well be overturned by the territorial supreme court and in an attempt to shield the likes of George Q. Cannon from harassment and humiliation, decided to put forward another known polygamist, albeit much less well known (he had just married his second wife a few months earlier).

George Reynolds became their "test case" and the prosecution was indeed able to prove a plural marriage existed, but defense lawyers argued that Mormons considered plural marriage a divine institution. However, the judge didn't see it that way, rejecting their arguments; the jury subsequently found Reynolds guilty after only a half-hour of deliberations. And with that the federal government had its first polygamy conviction. The territorial supreme court overturned the decision because the grand jury had been improperly impaneled. But, the next year federal prosecutors filed again and secured yet another indictment.

By this time the Reynolds' second wife had fled and was nowhere to be found, but her prior testimony was allowed into the record and he was again convicted. This one stood and was appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court in 1876. Mormon leaders, George Cannon included, still believed the case would be overturned. *Reynolds v. United States* was upheld in 1879 and Cannon issued a lengthy review in defense of his strongly-held beliefs, insisting that those who practiced plural marriage were guilty of crime in the eyes of the federal government because they believed in "marrying women instead of seducing them, in rearing offspring instead of destroying them." [22] He strongly decried a law which would make it a crime to marry.

Cannon went into hiding later, a fugitive (along with other leaders) from federal authorities. He eventually surrendered in September 1888 and pled guilty to two counts of "unlawful cohabitation". He served six months in a Utah federal penitentiary. In 1894 President Grover Cleveland issued a blanket pardon via Proclamation 369 which pardoned and granted amnesty for all offenses of polygamy brought against members of the Mormon faith.

George Q. Cannon represented the most sensational case found in these files. During those years of increased enforcement of polygamy laws, the phrase "unlawful cohabitation" appeared many times in Utah newspapers. Other cases found in these files include instances of illegal voting, particularly women and one public official was indicted on bribery charges. These files are important because in searching for background on the more sensational cases I found it difficult to locate adequate (and reliable) source information. Instead, people like George Q. Cannon and George Reynolds are venerated as martyrs of the Mormon faith. Nonetheless,

there is quite a bit of fascinating history to be found in these files if you happen to be doing early Utah or Mormon research. Another source for Utah research, especially during the territorial era, can be found at this FamilySearch Wiki page:

https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Utah_Territorial_Records#Early_Birth_and_Death_Records_in_Utah

Territorial Papers of the United States

One of the best resources for finding information about territorial life – and maybe even find a tidbit or two about your territorial ancestor – is the massive collection known as the Territorial Papers of the United States. Most of the collection was compiled and edited by Clarence Edwin Carter (twenty-six volumes) and John Porter Bloom worked on the last two volumes (27 and 28). The volumes are generally organized like this:

Volume 1	*General*
Volumes 2-3	*Northwest Territory, north of the Ohio, 1787-1803*
Volume 4	*Northwest Territory, south of the Ohio, 1790-1796*
Volumes 5-6	*The Territory of Mississippi, 1798-1817*
Volumes 7-8	*Indiana Territory, 1800-1816*
Volume 9	*Territory of Orleans, 1803-1812*
Volumes 10-12	*Territory of Michigan, 1805-1837*
Volumes 13-15	*Territory of Louisiana, 1803-1821*
Volumes 16-17	*Territory of Illinois, 1809-1818*
Volume 18	*Territory of Alabama, 1817-1819*
Volumes 19-21	*Territory of Arkansas, 1819-1836*
Volumes 22-26	*Territory of Florida 1821-1845*
Volumes 27-28	*Territory of Wisconsin, 1836-1848*

However, it should be noted that as the preceding narrative has outlined, the territories shifted and changed over time which means certain territories were included across multiple volumes:

Alabama	Volumes 4, 5, 6 and 18
Arkansas	Volumes 13, 14, 15, 19, 20 and 21
Florida:	Volumes 22, 23, 24, 25 and 26
Illinois	Volumes 2, 3, 7, 8, 16 and 17
Indiana	Volumes 2, 3, 7 and 8

Michigan	Volumes 2, 3, 7, 8, 10 and 12
Minnesota	Volumes 2, 3, 7, 8, 10 and 12
Mississippi	Volumes 4, 5 and 6
Wisconsin	2, 3, 7, 8, 16, 17, 27 and 28 [23]

Bound copies of the Territorial Papers can be found in the genealogy section of many libraries these days, and they have also been digitized and available online at FamilySearch, Google Books, Internet Archive and Hathi Trust. As you can imagine it took a considerable amount of work to compile and edit, beginning with the first volume published in 1934. The project had its genesis in the early twentieth century (1911) and on February 28, 1929 President Herbert Hoover signed into law an act providing appropriations for the process of collecting and editing records pertaining to the various territorial governments.

In 1934 a cloth-bound copy was offered for sale by the Superintendent of Documents in Washington, D.C. at a cost of $2.00 per copy. By 1975 when the final volume was published it was being offered for $20.10. Today, the entire collection costs several hundred dollars. Personally, I have downloaded the entire collection for easy access, and I've recently discovered mention of one my ancestors and I suspect he may have had some connection to the family of Daniel Boone.

For as long as I can remember I've been told we are somehow related to Daniel Boone, a distant uncle (paternal side), but I've never been able to find that connection. For awhile I chased clues in one Boone line on my paternal side, but it didn't even appear that this line had little, if any, connection to Daniel Boone (at least not one that I could find). However, after moving to another paternal line I began to realize that one particular person, James Douglass, my fourth great grandfather, might well provide some sort of link to Daniel Boone.

So, I've been looking for a possible connection, but at one point after downloading the territorial records, I decided to see if I might find any mention of his name in the papers related to the Missouri Territory. I opened Volume 15 and searched for "Douglass" and found three men surnamed Douglass who had signed a petition to Congress, dated February 24, 1818. As inhabitants of the St. Ferdinand Township of St. Louis County, Missouri, a number of townsmen were requesting a post office.

"The town is known by the name of Florisant; the Township contains a population of eleven hundred souls, and a large amount of business is annually transacted here." [24] The nearest post office was fifteen miles away in the City of St. Louis. Alexander, William and James Douglass had all signed the petition. I believe them to be brothers, sons of Alexander William and Jane (Moore) Douglass, who had all been born in Kentucky (Lincoln and Madison counties – which is where I think there's a link to the Boone family). Daniel Boone had migrated to the same region of Missouri in 1799, then a part of Spanish-held Louisiana. I may yet find my Daniel Boone connection!

Another reference in Volume 15 mentioned "Major Douglass", Pay Master, who had just arrived from Kentucky. The letter in which he is mentioned is dated July 15, 1815. This made me wonder if any of the Douglass brothers had served in the War of 1812. A search at Fold3 revealed the names of James, William and Martin (another brother) who all served in Captain

David Musick's Louisiana Militia during the War of 1812. All were ranked as Privates; no mention of a "Major".

I searched for David Musick and discovered he settled in St. Louis County, Missouri as well (died there in 1837). This gives me more clues to pursue than I've had in some time. Whether or not this James Douglass is my ancestor remains to be sorted out. I know he eventually migrated to Johnson County, Missouri as evidenced by the 1850 census when his newly married daughter, Mary Ann Dunham and her husband (John) were living with him. However, there was also another James Douglass in Johnson County born around the same time.

I have also discovered a reference to a James Douglass of Virginia, a surveyor whose paths crossed Daniel Boone in the 1770s. Might this be my James Douglass's father (the 1850 census record says he was born in Virginia). Isn't genealogy fun? Definitely not for the faint-of-heart! Stay tuned – if and when I untangle it all, I'll certainly be writing about!

This is just one example of how the Territorial Papers of the United States may assist you in your research, especially ancestors who were early settlers in these various territories. For instance, a letter, a perfunctory communication between two government officials, might reveal a tidbit essential to helping you trace the whereabouts of a family member. The text of this correspondence, written from Shawneetown, Illinois and dated May 18, 1816, was somewhat apologetic.

Thomas Sloo of Shawneetown, a Revolutionary War veteran who had served under General Anthony ("Mad Anthony") Wayne and was then serving as the first Register and Receiver of the land office in Shawneetown, Illinois Territory, had missed mentioning something he had meant to include in the letter he written just the day before:

I Omitted Mentioning one Circumstance that the people of this Teritory [sic] are Extreemly Anctious [sic] about a Report has Reached us that Congress have passed a law Doing away the force of the Presidents proclamation Relative to Setlers on the U.S. lands Making it their Duty to Obtain a permit from the Register of the District in which the [sic] Reside. [This referred to an act which had been approved on March 25, 1816.]

If such a law had been passed, Sloo was asking if Josiah Meigs would "have the goodness to transmit me a Copy as Earley as may be Convenient". Then he apologized for the lateness of certain report:

Sir the long & painfull Indisposition of my family has prevented me from Making my Report I heretofore Stated to You the loss of our Daughter on the last day of January & on the 5th of April we lost our Son William with an inflamation in the Brain. Mrs. Sloo has been in a Delicate State of health Ever Since She has been at this place. She will spend the Summer at Cincinnati. [25]

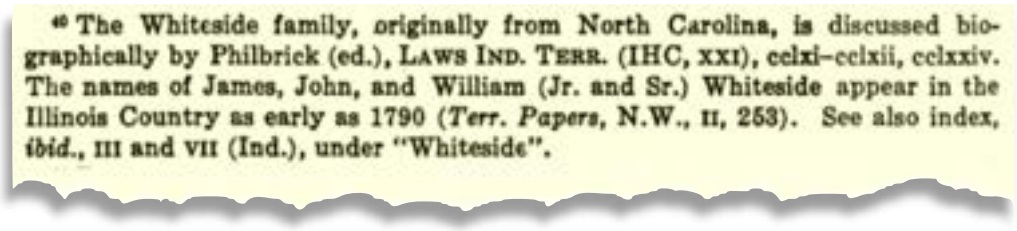
I did locate a Find-A-Grave entry for Thomas Sloo and his son William did indeed die in 1816, but there are no details. This letter found in Volume 17 relating to Illinois Territory provides a vital clue.

Another vital genealogical clue is found in this same volume in a footnote regarding the Whiteside family, originally from North Carolina. In 1815 certain inhabitants of the territory were requesting the designation of a congressional memorial for James Whiteside who:

. . . was employed by a part of your Memorialists to go to the Illinois Country to Locate & Improve for each of your Memorialists or their fathers respectively, which same James Whiteside did by the advice & Instructions of his Excellency Aurthur [sic] St. Clair Gov. of the Territory North West by the River Ohio.

He made about fifty locations & Improvements & died on his return home to Kentucky – & that your Memorialists Moved to the Illinois County in the Years 1791–2–3–&4 – and made actual cultivation by themselves or agents on their respective Improvements (that was made for them by their agent James Whiteside in the year 90 Sometime in the Months of April of the same year . . . [26]

The first mention of James Whiteside was highlighted by a footnote which provided vital genealogical information and the added bonus of providing a clue where more documentation could be found:



[46] The Whiteside family, originally from North Carolina, is discussed biographically by Philbrick (ed.), LAWS IND. TERR. (IHC, XXI), cclxi–cclxii, cclxxiv. The names of James, John, and William (Jr. and Sr.) Whiteside appear in the Illinois Country as early as 1790 (*Terr. Papers*, N.W., II, 253). See also index, *ibid.*, III and VII (Ind.), under "Whiteside".

Those are just a few examples of what you might find in these volumes. We tend to view government documents as being rather dry, maybe even dreading having to slog through them. However, in the case of the Territorial Papers of the United States, you just might find something truly enlightening about your ancestors. Personally, I prefer the digital versions because I find them easier to search (time-wise especially). However, if you prefer to search the printed volumes, look for them in the genealogy section of your local library.

Have territorial ancestors? Give these administrative territorial documents a try and you might be surprised what you'll find. Happy Hunting!

Thou Shalt Not Kill

A History of Conscientious Objection: Revolutionary War to World War II

by Sharon Hall

conscientious objection noun

: objection on moral or religious grounds (as to service in the armed forces or to bearing arms)

Merriam-Webster Dictionary

According to Merriam-Webster, the first use of the term "conscientious objection" occurred in 1775, presumably meaning it was used during the American Revolutionary War. However, "conscientious objection is as ancient as the book of Psalms . . . . which stretches back to man's first days as a free thinker." [1] We Americans think of ourselves – and rightly so – as the "land of the free and the home of the brave". While we are regarded as a tolerant nation which values personal liberty and free expression, that hasn't always been the case when it comes to those who, because of religious or moral reasons, decline to serve in times of war. World War I conscientious objectors (COs) were especially persecuted, one religious group, the Hutterites, in particular.

The long history of conscientious objection in America stretches back to colonial times, years before the Revolutionary War, when some of the first Europeans to sail across the ocean came to escape religious persecution and forced military service. Notably, these were members of pacifist sects or so-called "peace churches" – the Society of Friends (Quakers), Church of the Brethren and Mennonites. These pacifists, along with other smaller sects like the Shakers and later the Christadelphians, would not participate in local militias, help build forts or fight Indians.

Members of the Church of the Brethren were also known as Dunkards. Uriah James Jones, Pennsylvania historian, provided this stark account of their unflinching pacifist beliefs:

They are strict non-resistants; and in the predatory incursions of the French and Indians, in 1756-63, and, in fact, during all the savage warfare, they not only refused to take up arms to repel the savage marauders and prevent the inhuman slaughter of women and children, but they refused in the most positive manner to pay a dollar to support those who were willing to take up arms to defend their homes and their firesides, until wrong from them by the stern mandates of the law, from which there was no appeal.

They did the same thing when the Revolution broke out. There was a scarcity of men. Sixty able-bodied ones among them might readily have formed a cordon of frontier defence, which could have prevented many of the Indian massacres which took place between 1777 and 1780, and more specifically among their own people in the Cove. But not a man would shoulder his rifle; they were non-resistants! They might, at least, have furnished money,

for they always had an abundance of that, the hoarding of which appeared to be the sole aim and object of life with them. But, no; not a dollar! They occupied neutral ground, and wished to make no resistance. Again, they might have furnished supplies. And they did furnish supplies to those who were risking their lives to repel the invaders – but it was only when the almighty dollar accompanied the demand.

After the massacre of thirty of them, in less than forty-eight hours, Colonel Piper, the lieutenant-colonel of Bedford county, made a stirring appeal to them. But it was of no avail; they were non-resistants, and evidently determined to remain such. [2]

For Dunkards there were no "gray areas". When one of their own killed two Indians after being attacked at his mill, other Brethren boycotted the mill to protest. Quakers were the most visible and well-known pacifist sect and they made their beliefs known over one hundred years before the Revolutionary War. A group of New York Friends, in no uncertain terms, informed local officials that "being in a measure redeemed of wars and stripes we cannot for conscience' sake be concerned in upholding things of that nature." [3]

There was no conscription employed during the war, but citizens were urged to join local militias, or "Associations". How individual colonies handled conscientious objectors varied. In Pennsylvania Quakers and Mennonites were assured their pacifist beliefs would be respected. However, the Pennsylvania Assembly adopted a resolution which levied a fine roughly equivalent to the time militia members spent in military drill.

From the July 2018 issue of *Digging History Magazine*, I wrote the following about two Quakers who rose to the occasion despite their strictly-held beliefs:

Drawing the Line:
Quakers in Conscientious Crisis

Genealogists researching family history who discover Quaker ancestry may assume they will find no Revolutionary War patriot service. That would be an incorrect assumption, however. For Quakers, members of the Religious Society of Friends, the volatile era leading up to and including the Revolutionary War presented unique challenges in regards to their tenets of faith.

While Quakers generally supported secular governance, they were opposed to any war conducted to support that government. It was simply forbidden to take up arms for any cause. Failure to adhere to these beliefs might result in excommunication.

How might a Quaker respond to growing British oppression? While others were beginning to protest with threats of violent retribution, Quakers took the path of resistance via non-importation agreements. In doing so, Pennsylvania and New Jersey, where large numbers of Quakers were concentrated, remained relatively peaceful. Quakers much preferred diplomacy to ameliorate escalating political tensions.

The so-called Townsend Acts of 1767 brought layer upon layer of taxation to American colonists, whether directly or indirectly. Everything not produced in the colonies was imported from Britain and a tax imposed on vital commodities such as paper and tea. Taxes raised were meant to pay the salaries of governors and judges to enforce the onerous laws laid upon the backs of colonists.

Despite efforts to promote a sensible royal government, Quakers were approaching the

point of being overwhelmed and forced to make an important conscientious decision.

Prior to 1768 direct involvement in promoting armed resistance would result in a Quaker's excommunication. By 1768 it became a matter of which side Quakers were taking. Historically, they had suffered much persecution. Now they were being pressured by fellow colonists to "Join or Die". Interestingly, "Join or Die" is thought to have been the first political cartoon created in America by Benjamin Franklin, a Quaker.

Following the skirmish at Lexington in April 1775 resulting in eight American deaths, tensions escalated across the colonies. Pennsylvanians, Quakers in particular, needed to decide where their loyalties resided – where they Loyalists or Patriots? As late as 1775 Quakers were still attempting diplomacy rather than entering into direct conflicts:

Having considered with real sorrow, the unhappy contest between the legislature of Great Britain and the people of these Colonies, and the animosities consequent thereon; we have by repeated public advices and private admonitions, used our endeavors to dissuade the members of our religions society from joining with the public resolutions promoted and entered into by some of the people, which as we apprehended, so we now find have increased contention and produced great discord and confusion. [4]

In the autumn of 1776 Philadelphia Quakers held their yearly meeting and drew their own line in the sand:

It is our judgment [it laid down] that such who make religions profession with us and do either openly or by connivance pay any fine, penalty or tax in lieu of their personal services for carrying on the war under the prevailing commotions, or who do consent to, and allow their children, apprentices, or servants to act therein, do thereby violate our Christian testimony and by so doing, manifest that they are not in religious fellowship with us. [5]

Furthermore, the group "affectionately desired" that Friends not engage in any trade or business transaction which might be seen as promoting war. Paper currency called "Continentals" had been created by the Second Continental Congress in 1775. Some Quakers refused to utilize the currency.

These were the views of what one might call "Mainline Quakers", yet there were others who would later organize as "Free Quakers" who would, rather than standing aside, would instead stand side by side fellow American colonists. For Free Quakers neutrality was simply not an option. Who were these Free Quakers?

Thomas Paine chose pen and paper to make the case for advancing the cause of liberty for all, despite his decidedly Quaker-influenced ideology. Near the halfway mark of his *Common Sense* pamphlet, he wrote:

Every quiet method for peace hath been ineffectual. Our prayers have been rejected with disdain; and hath tended to convince us that nothing flatters vanity or confirms obstinacy in Kings more than repeated petitioning – and nothing hath contributed more than that very measure to make the Kings of Europe absolute. Witness Denmark and Sweden. Wherefore, since nothing but blows will do, for God's sake let us come to a final separation, and not leave the next generation to be cutting throats under the violated unmeaning names of parent and child. [6]

Were Paine's conclusions mere resignation or a genuine call to armed conflict? His writings most assuredly rankled the British, yet bolstered Patriot sentiment in the Colonies. Within months of his anonymously-published 47-page pamphlet,

sales had risen to more than half a million copies.

Perhaps it even spurred once reluctant upper-crust residents of Philadelphia to action. Although their band was mockingly referred to as the "Lady's Light Infantry" or the "Silk Stocking Company", it was led by Captain Sharpe Delaney and Lieutenant Tench Tilghman.

Irish-born Delaney was the great-grandson of Anthony Sharp, a noted Dublin Quaker and wool merchant. Tench Tilghman's family was well off and loyal to the Crown, but when he participated in the non-importation resolutions Tories burned down his saddle-making shop. Fight he must!

Major General Nathanael Greene would struggle with the dictates of his Quaker faith while serving the cause of liberty. On May 8, 1775 his service escalated rapidly when he was promoted from Private to Major General of the Rhode Island Army of Observation. By that time he had already been excommunicated for his willingness to take up arms and fight the British. Greene would go on to become one of General George Washington's most loyal and reliable officers.

Rising from the ranks of excommunicated Quakers were two notable men: Owen Biddle and John Lacey. Southeastern Pennsylvania Monthly Meetings saw a drastic reduction of membership between the years 1775 and 1783 as 420 were given the boot. "In addition, 16 Friends were expelled for joining the British Army, while 15 of the original 420 changed sides in the conflict, were attainted for treason, and had their property confiscated." [7]

Owen Biddle's great grandfather, William Biddle, arrived in New Jersey in 1681, two years before William Penn arrived in neighboring Pennsylvania. Owen, the oldest of five children of John and Sarah (Owen) Biddle, was born in 1737. He and his younger brother Clement both served in the Continental Army. Clement raised a Philadelphia militia in 1775 known as the "Quaker Blues". In July 1776 Clement was commissioned as deputy quartermaster general for Pennsylvania and New York. At Trenton General Washington awarded him the honor of receiving the Hessian swords of surrender. [8]

In July of 1776 Owen was appointed by the Pennsylvania State Assembly to the Committee of Safety, responsible for Pennsylvania military operation. He later served as an assistant to Clement as the assistant commissary general of forage. Owen had a difficult job "laboring for three bleak years to obtain provisions for army horses and other draft animals, faced four chronic and intractable problems: a lack of funds, rampant inflation, a shortage of trained and trustworthy subordinates, and the apathy or hostility of many farmers." [9]

A 1780 reorganization of the Quartermaster Department forced the resignation of Owen Biddle and General Greene. Still, both brothers knew their country needed them. Clement was particularly determined to see it through to the end when he wrote to Owen on May 5, 1777: "I will never quit with Dishonour and am ready to render any Service which my Country may require of me." [10]

Owen Biddle had experienced several personal setbacks over the years, at one time forced to declare bankruptcy. The British burned down Peel Hall, his country estate. Creditors later seized his possessions to satisfy his debts. Despite having joined the Free Quaker movement, Owen decided to admit his original error and was allowed to rejoin his original Meeting without animosity on May 29, 1783. In the ensuing years he pursued various interests in education and science.

He died on March 10, 1799, having recently settled all of his debts.

Unlike Owen and Clement Biddle, John Lacey, Jr., the oldest child of John and Jane (Chapman) Lacey grew up in the remote areas of Bucks County. His immigrant ancestor, William Lacey, had arrived in the 1680s, settling near Wrightstown. The Lacey family were farmers and members of the Society of Friends.

John had little in the way of formal education and at the age of fourteen was sent to work in his father's mills and copper shops. In 1773 twenty-one-year old John traveled with his Uncle Zebulon Heston, a Quaker minister, to visit the Delaware Indians of Ohio. The two men traveled a thousand miles in about ten weeks and John kept a journal. It was his first opportunity to "see the world". Upon returning to Wrightstown, his father put him in charge of the family's mill operations.

The events of Lexington and Concord in April of 1775 stirred John Lacey. He was well aware of increasing British aggression, and even more importantly, that something must be done to defend his country. Surely realizing his actions would eventually cost him dearly, he joined and led the Second Battalion of the Bucks County Militia in July 1775. His Quaker family and friends pleaded with him to reconsider; he refused and was formally excommunicated on February 6, 1776.

By this time his formal military career had begun as he had been commissioned a Captain in the Fourth Pennsylvania Regiment. The regiment, led by Colonel Anthony Wayne, headed north to invade Canada. The entire campaign, which included General Sullivan's and General Benedict Arnold's forces, was a complete disaster. In November of 1776 John returned home to Wrightstown and resigned his commission. His dealings with Wayne had simply reached an impasse.

His return to public life was short-lived, however, as he was commissioned to lead county efforts to recruit state militiamen on March 22, 1777. Less than two months later John Lacey was appointed Lieutenant Colonel of his local militia. In October 1777 he fought as a volunteer at Germantown and later commanded a regiment which fought off the enemy for several days at Whitemarsh.

Lacey continued to participate in vital campaigns around Philadelphia and on January 9, 1778 he was promoted to Brigadier General, and at twenty-five years old the youngest general officer in the entire Continental Army. Following several close-calls with defeat and capture, General Lacey's field command wound down. In June 1778 he returned to his lieutenant duties in Bucks County and continued to harass the British in and around Philadelphia.

In the autumn of 1778 he was elected to the State Assembly, thus beginning his political career. However, in September of 1781 he was fully engaged again and ready to raise a militia to once again repel British advances. With the surrender at Yorktown the following month his service ended. He married Anastatia Reynolds in January of 1782 and moved to New Jersey to spend the remainder of his life.

While Owen Biddle had relented and sought reinstatement back into the Quaker fold, John Lacey never made any such attempts, nor did he ever formally join the Free Quaker movement. Biddle came from a wealthy family while Lacey prospered following the war, coinciding with his rising social status and business interests as an iron merchant. What they did share in common was an exceptional devotion to liberty, two men willing to serve their

country despite personal conscientious dilemmas posed by their pacifist Quaker faith.

For those Quakers who refused to pay the fine (or tax, if you will), their property was seized and they offered little or no resistance. In regard to Mennonites, some paid the tax while others steadfastly resisted, causing a schism. One minister, Bishop Christian Funk, insisted these taxes must be paid and he led the branch known as "Funkites" which became extinct by the mid-nineteenth century.

As far as records for Revolutionary War COs, if you have pacifist ancestors you may or not find few, if any, recognized by heritage societies such as Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) or Sons of the American Revolution (SAR). These societies require proof an ancestor swore an oath of allegiance supporting the war. For pacifists an oath taken by swearing allegiance was forbidden.

An example of a pacifist who you will find eligible for societal membership is Thomas Dodson, an Anabaptist minister in Pittsylvania County, Virginia.

Some colonies allowed Quakers to affirm (instead of swearing) allegiance, while others allowed it for Quakers, Mennonites and Dunkards. North Carolina also allowed Moravians to affirm allegiance with the other three religious sects. Massachusetts only required that Quakers did not offer aid to the British. Most agreed that those who chose not to swear or affirm allegiance should be subject to a higher tax, although after the war these onerous taxes were rescinded.

A May 8, 2021 paper written by John D. Sinks is an excellent resource for researching oaths of allegiance in regard to societal membership. You can find it on this page (search for "Sinks"):

https://www.dcssar.org/Publications

The Civil War and Pacifism

Unlike the Revolutionary War, conscription was employed to build the military forces of the Union and Confederate armies. In 1862 the North began a limited draft (via the Militia Act of 1862), conducted by individual states. On March 3, 1863 Congress passed the Civil War Military Draft Act, the first time in American history a national conscription law was passed.

In less than twenty-four hours a number of objections began appearing in newspapers. The *Chicago Tribune* noted "the only serious objection offered to the new conscription law is to the $300 commutation clause in the 13th section", which section read as follows:

Sec. 13. And be it further enacted, That any person drafted and notified to appear as aforesaid, may on or before the day fixed for his appearance furnish an acceptable substitute to take his place in the draft, or may pay to such persons as the Secretary of War may authorize to receive it, such sum as the Secretary of War may determine, not to exceed three hundred dollars, for the procurement of such substitute, and thereupon the said person furnishing a substitute or paying the money shall be discharged from any further liability under that draft. [11]

The *Tribune* pointed out, to clarify, that the $300 wasn't being paid into the Treasury of the United States, but rather would be paid to the man who agreed to serve as a substitute. The $300 was a "bonus" to such substitute who by law would receive the same remuneration as someone who was outright drafted ($100 + $13 per month).

A Pennsylvania newspaper reported:

The Friends, or Quakers, in New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland and Delaware have memorialized Congress, asking exemption from the draft and the procurement of substitutes, and from the fines which they deem a penalty imposed for exercising "the right of conscience against the shedding of blood."

The editorial response: "If they do not bear arms they should be made pay." [12]

That was the Quaker response. While the Mennonites took an official position in line with historical tradition, by this time the church hadn't been emphasizing this particular tenet as much as was the case in the eighteenth century. It had been quite a while since any new peace literature had been published by the Mennonites, and as one historian noted, "the period prior to the Civil War was one of spiritual decline . . . as a result a considerable number of them accepted military service." [13]

As it turned out, the new conscription law didn't sit well with New Yorkers either. I wrote an article in the April 2018 issue, entitled "Hell No, We Won't Go! The New York City Draft Riots". Here are some excerpts:

In July of 1863 a draft riot erupted in Manhattan. A post-riot report, referring to the melee as "Riot Week", claimed the riot, although primarily in opposition to the Draft, was also the result of outrage upon the "colored population".

It might be surprising that "outrage upon the colored population" would be part and parcel of a violent protest of the newly-minted federal conscription laws. Yet, indeed, the black population of New York City would pay a heavy price during Riot Week.

One might assume New York, a Northern city, would be predisposed to rally behind President Lincoln's struggle to save the Union and bring an end to slavery. After all, isn't that what we've been taught to believe?

While the state of New York had abolished slavery in 1827, it wasn't exactly good for Not that there were any cotton plantations to be found in the state, yet cotton accounted for half of the city's exports by 1822.

As a New York Historical Society exhibit, entitled "New York Divided: Slavery and the Civil War", explained just how dependent the state, New York City in particular, was on the slave-driven economy of the South, specifically cotton.

New York may have abolished slavery in 1827, but politically speaking, Democrats depended upon the New York City-Southern pro-slavery alliance. At the national level Democrats used suppression of the slavery issue as a way to keep the Union intact. Southerners were always welcome, and not above threatening withdrawal of their patronage should abolitionism be widely embraced in the City. New York State went for Abraham Lincoln in 1860 and 1864, yet in New York City he captured less than 35% of the vote.

Regarding the issue of slavery, New York City Democrats were clearly supportive of slavery. It wasn't at all uncommon to find mocking examples portraying blacks as inferior, whether in newspapers, theaters (minstrel shows) or at P.T. Barnum's American Museum.

This was the prevailing attitude in New York City toward the Negro race, whether free or enslaved. Slavery had been abolished in New York in 1827, yet it was obvious black people would not be allowed to rise above the prevailing prejudice of the day.

The Potato Famine had propelled hundreds of Irish to America's shores since the 1840s. When the Civil War came around, and with it the resulting changes in conscription laws, the Irish deeply resented wealthy men who could pay someone else to serve in their place while they were forced to compete for jobs with free black people. Even new immigrants were expected to serve. Black people, although emancipated on January 1, 1863, were exempt because they were not yet considered full-fledged citizens.

With the noose tightening around the South and the concomitant difficulties receiving materials (cotton, in particular) which supplied New York City's textile factories, heightened tensions with white Irish immigrants and blacks migrating to the North seemed unavoidable. Opposition to Opposition to the new draft law, which in New York City affected a large number of Irish descendants, and the "outrage upon the colored population" were clearly linked as most of the rioters were Irish.

The New York City Metropolitan Police report published post-riot concurred:

The riot which commenced on the first day of the Draft was ostensibly in opposition to it, but early took the character of an outbreak for the purposes of pillage, and also of outrage upon the colored population. [14]

The first lottery held on Saturday, July 11, had proceeded quietly. According to the police report hints of possible disturbances had been detected the week prior, inducing greater vigilance at the Seventh Avenue Arsenal with the addition of fifty policemen serving as guards. All was quiet until Monday, July 13, a mere ten days after the Gettysburg campaign concluded.

And then, all hell broke loose.

THE MOB IN NEW YORK

Resistance to the Draft – Rioting and Bloodshed.

Conscription Offices Sacked and Burned.

Private Dwellings Pillaged and Fired.

AN ARMORY AND A HOTEL DESTROYED.

Colored People Assaulted – An Unoffending Black Man Hung.

The Tribune Office Attacked – The Colored Orphan Asylum Ransacked and Burned – Other Outrages and Incidents.

A DAY OF INFAMY AND DISGRACE. [15]

The mobs assembled on the streets of New York, throwing whatever they could find to lob at the building where draft registration was taking place. As they rushed into the building records were seized and destroyed and then the mob marched down Broadway "armed with clubs, pitchforks, iron bars, swords, and many with guns and pistols. Every colored man they met had been abused and mercilessly beaten." [16]

It was estimated at least one dozen blacks were beaten to death throughout the city that first day. The most despicable act was the beating death of a cartman. A large mob beat him to death, hung him on a tree, burned his clothes and danced while his corpse incinerated.

A heavy rainstorm sent rioters home Monday night, but the following morning they returned with a vengeance until order was finally restored, with military reinforcements, on Thursday, July 16.

As many as 120 people were killed, most of them black, according to one historian, although some believed the number of dead and injured was exponentially higher. Millions of dollars in damage was inflicted upon the city. Clearly, the draft lottery was subterfuge to attack black people.

Perhaps both in response to "Riot Week" and opposition expressed by the various pacifist religious organizations, Congress passed an amendment to the Enrollment Act early in 1864 with a section which dealt specifically with conscientious objectors. According to historian Guy F. Hershberger:

It specified three alternatives to military service available to the CO: (1) assignment to duty in hospitals for the care of sick and wounded soldiers, (2) assignment to duty in the care of the freedmen, (3) payment of a commutation fee of $300 to be applied to the benefit of sick and wounded soldiers. In actual practice it seems that only the last of these three alternatives was used. [17]

Congress also discussed efforts to increase the probability of more colored soldiers joining the ranks of the Union Army. As of early January 1864 it was estimated that approximately fifty thousand were already on the rolls. Negro soldiers didn't exactly have the same freedoms as whites either, but the Army was desperate for volunteers by this time.

Back to the pacifists. While small in number (in both the North and South) compared to the populace at large, pacifists were persistent about ensuring their doctrines and practices were accounted for when it came to the draft. By far, Quakers were the most prominent pacifist sect which had to be addressed – and they populated both the North and South. Unlike Mennonites who had experienced a lapse in their "peace teachings", Quakers had steadfastly maintained their opposition to war and military service.

Several states had been accommodating toward pacifist sects and for the most part exempted them from military service, although most agreed some sort of payment must be made in place of service, much like the federal government's stance at the beginning of the Civil War. Maine stood alone as the only Northern state to exempt without any conditions.

Some Quakers opposed the tax because they believed it could ostensibly be used to support the war effort. While they believed "civil government to be a Divine ordinance, and that active or passive obedience to the laws is an incumbent duty", Friends were also encouraged to faithfully and firmly "uphold the plain Scripture testimony against all wars and fightings, whatever it may cost them, and to be on their guard how they strike hands with those whose spirit and actions are in direct opposition to it; or advocate a policy which, if carried out, may end in strife, and possibly in bloodshed." [18] Consistency was their watchword.

The subject of paying a tax which may or may not be used for war purposes was broached during the various yearly meetings in 1861. More often than not members agreed they had a duty to the government when it came to duties and taxes, but not the ones which were to be exclusively used for purposes of war.

At the Baltimore Yearly Meeting their views were expressed more succinctly:

We are all united in the belief, that as we are opposed to war, in all its aspects and consequences, and cannot perform military services of any kind, we therefore cannot consistently or conscientiously pay any fines imposed as a punishment for 'non-performance of those services,' or any thing connected therewith. [19]

By the following year they witnessed the call Abraham Lincoln made for 300,000 men to serve nine months, followed by the

Federal Militia Act of 1862. Most concerning was the absence of exemptions for conscientious objectors. By the end of that year most Quakers realized the seriousness of the situation. Meanwhile, the official response was to remain steadfast in their beliefs.

Petitions and memorials were forwarded to Congress, setting forth the peace testimony of the Society of Friends and the reasons why they could not accept the tax requirement. Protestations to the contrary, however, a number of Quakers did in fact serve during the Civil War.

A number of Quakers, who opposed both slavery and war, experienced the same issues which was dividing the nation. Even as most Friends "quietly awaited the unfolding of God's plan", a number young Quaker men enlisted in the Union Army. While the Quaker response included increased warnings against taking up arms, it doesn't appear these young men necessarily faced the automatic threat of disownment.

Might the somewhat muted response be due to the fact that Quakers, in addition to being strictly anti-war, also stridently opposed slavery? According to Thomas Edward Drake, a historian specializing in Quaker history, "no meeting could bring itself to be too strict with its young men who compromised one Quaker principle in order to fight for another. Freedom was almost worth fighting for; so was the Union." Should a young Quaker man be called up, and didn't "feel free to pay for a substitute", his local meeting was ready to support him should he get into any trouble with federal authorities. [20]

Some Quakers considered the war punishment from God for the sin of slavery. One strict non-resistant member, Levi Coffin, nevertheless opened his home as an enlistment location. Why did he do that? According to Drake, Coffin did so because he was of the belief "that the war would last until slavery was destroyed." That was indicative of Northern Quakers. What about the South?

Again, according to Drake, "Friends occupied a position delicate to the point of being dangerous." They were, after all, known to be highly critical of slavery. What kept them from turning on the South and turning their loyalty toward the Union? Instead, they remained as inconspicuous as possible, "neither aiding nor obstructing the South's war." Like the North, the South imposed taxes ($500 vs. $300) for those who refused to enlist. Moreover, those who resisted were treated harshly by the military. [21]

The North Carolina Yearly Meeting felt especially vulnerable in the "peculiar" position they occupied. In a published account of their trials, North Carolina Friends felt "they had a double portion of enmity to bear." Some were threatened or imprisoned. The account of a Quaker man identified only as "J.D." was a terrifying example:

In the spring of 1865, about forty men, professing to be in search of conscripts, came to a mill belonging to J.D., of Cane Creek, Chatham county. The miller was first hung up by a rope three times to force him to betray his sons, who were hidden. Upon hearing the screams of the miller's wife and children, J.D. went out to the crowd. The same information was demanded of him, but he assured them of his entire ignorance as to their retreat. He was at once seized and carried into the barn. A rope was tied around his neck, and thrown over a beam, while he was mounted upon a box. Then beginning to tighten the rope, they said, "you are a Quaker, and your people, by refusing to fight, and keeping so many out of the army, have caused the defeat of the South," adding,

that if he had any prayers to offer, he must be quick, as he had only five minutes to live. J.D. only replied, that he was innocent, and could adopt the language, "Father forgive them, they know not what they do." They then said they would not hang him just then; but proceeded to rob him; then ordered him under a horse-trough, threatening to shoot him if he looked up. While lying there, he could hear them hanging up the miller three different times, till the sound of strangling began. After finally extorting a promise from him to find his sons, they left, charging J.D. to lie still till they came back with some others to hang. They did not return, however, but went on to one of his Methodist neighbors, whom they hung until unconscious, and then left him in that state; and the next night they found one of the missing conscripts, whom they hung until dead. Such were the persecutions at the hands of violent men, of which many instances could be given. [22]

Clearly, Southern Quakers were far more imperiled than their Northern counterparts, and some in the South migrated elsewhere, at least during the war years. In 1862 Confederate authorities considered offering non-military service to pacifists, but later that year decided the Confederacy would be better served by levying a $500 tax (or alternatively, furnish a substitute) instead. Neither option sat well with Quakers. Some relented and paid, while some were conscripted. Of those who were conscripted, upon refusing to drill they were imprisoned.

The Hockett brothers of Guilford County, North Carolina, birthright members of the Society of Friends, endured inhumane treatment. Jesse and Himelius Hockett were conscripted in the spring of 1862 and steadfastly refused to pay the tax. They were issued frequent furloughs and were continuously advised to pay the tax. In April of 1863 they were taken to the provost-marshal's office and again advised to pay the tax. After declining yet again they were imprisoned in solitary confinement without food or water. Officials intended to keep the pressure on and one general warned them that he would have his "orders carried out or he will see us dead and buried." [23]

Army doctors intervened, but they were shuffled around to various camps and prisons in North Carolina. Periodically, they would be ordered to drill but they refused. Instead they were subjected to punishment and ridicule. The brothers later recalled:

"We were taken out . . . and required to clean up the streets . . . which we refused to do; and we were harassed about the streets with logs of wood tied on our shoulders for about two hours, and then ordered to the guard-house. . ." Later "a forked pole was thrust around [Jesse Hockett's] . . . neck, and upon the prongs, as they projected behind it, a heavy block of wood was fastened." [24]

On more than one occasion Himelius was "suspended for hours by his thumbs" and both received bayonet wounds as a result of their steadfast refusal to take part in the war. After seven months a group of friends had seen enough and paid the tax, but the experience had exacted a great deal of physical and mental damage on their lives.

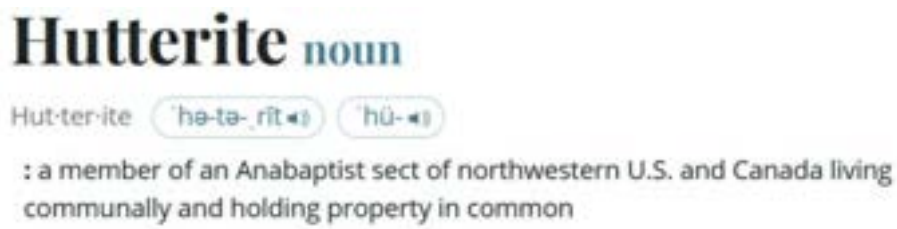
This period also saw a number of men, called "War Quakers" who joined the Society of Friends, ostensibly to avoid service (although some had been informally associated with Friends before the war). One so-called "War Quaker", William T. Hales of Wayne County, joined a Monthly Meeting in 1862 and was conscripted in 1864. However, local Confederate authorities refused to acknowledge his newfound religious affiliation. Upon conscription he refused to drill and was punished by a diet of only bread and water

for a month. He was then "bucked" – "that is, doubled his lefts over his chest, tied his hands over his legs, and thrust a pole over his elbows under his knees. . . . For further punishment, he was tied at nigh to a tree before the Confederate lines within rifle range of Union pickets." [25]

Needless to say, North Carolina Quakers welcomed the war's end. Some had steadfastly refused to pay the tax, while others violated their principles and purchased exemption – only to later regret the lapse.

Such was the Civil War experience for Southern Quakers. It would be another half-century before Quakers and other pacifist sects would have to defend their faith so passionately. One group who had lived peaceably on the prairies of southern Canada and northern parts of the United States since the 1870s, came under intense persecution during World War I. Two brothers in particular are to this day still considered martyrs for their faith.

The Hutterite Martyrs



Like the Amish and Mennonites, Hutterian Brethren trace their roots back to the Anabaptist movement of the sixteenth century, which in turn was born out of the so-called Radical Reformation which went beyond what even well-known Protestant reformer Martin Luther taught. Like Luther, the radical reformers were highly critical of the Roman Catholic Church, in particular the practice of granting indulgences. Unlike Luther, however, the Radical Reformation gave rise to several more radical movements throughout Europe, such as the Anabaptist sect in Germany (and Switzerland), and later the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), founded by George Fox.

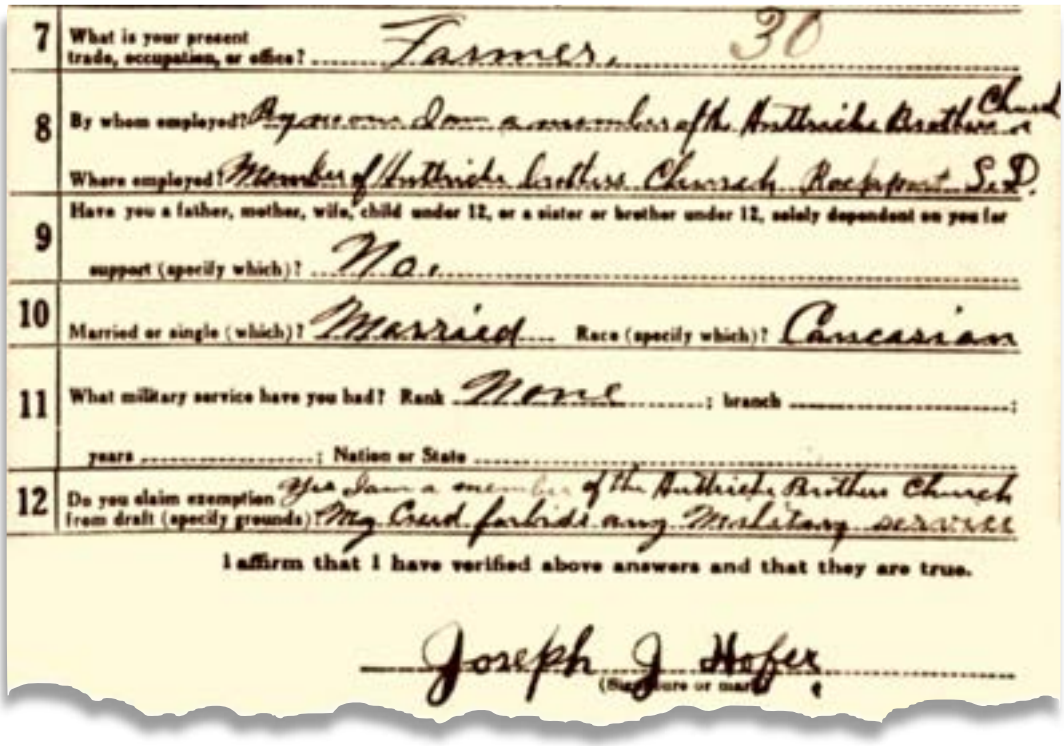
As one religious historian noted, Anabaptists are Biblicists, who "seek to remain as close as possible to the Bible". [26] While retaining the "original vision of Luther . . . [they] enlarged it, gave it body and form, and set out to achieve it in actual experience." [27] According to the Bearing Witness Stories Project, a web site dedicated to preserving the "stories of costly discipleship in ways that inspire greater faithfulness to Jesus Christ and strengthen the church's unity":

The Hutterites are descendants of a large group of Austrian peasants who broke away from the Catholic church in the sixteenth century, living in self-sufficient communities and vowing allegiance to God over man. As pacifists, they refused to fight in any war, to hold public office, or to take oaths. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries they were martyred by the thousands, but by the nineteenth century had emigrated to Russia, where they lived peacefully until the late 1800s. [28]

In the late 1800s a special exemption from military duty was repealed. With six years to get their affairs in order (and leave the country), many of the Hutterite faith did just that, looking to America, "the land of the free, a land that had been founded on the principle of individual

liberty of conscience, a land settled by men who had fled from the four corners of the earth to escape religious persecution." [29]

Most Hutterites settled in South Dakota by 1874 and established their colonies, living mostly in peace for over forty years until the summer of 1918 after Woodrow Wilson's conscription act was passed. Like all men of draft age, brothers Joseph, Michael and David Hofer, and their brother-in-law, Jacob Wipf, registered and were ordered to report for duty at Camp Lewis in Washington state on May 25. Their registrations were essentially identical when it came to claiming exemption from the draft.



7 What is your present trade, occupation, or office? Farmer. 30

8 By whom employed? By no one. I am a member of the Huttriche Brothers Church
Where employed? Member of Huttriche Brothers Church Rockport S.D.

9 Have you a father, mother, wife, child under 12, or a sister or brother under 12, solely dependent on you for support (specify which)? No.

10 Married or single (which)? Married Race (specify which)? Caucasian

11 What military service have you had? Rank None; branch ;
years ; Nation or State

12 Do you claim exemption from draft (specify grounds)? Yes I am a member of the Huttriche Brothers Church My Creed forbids any Military service

I affirm that I have verified above answers and that they are true.

Joseph J Hofer
(Signature or mark)

By Whom Employed: "By no one. I am a member of the Huttriche Brothers Church."

Where Employed: "Member of the Huttriche Brothers Church in Rockport, S.D."

Do you claim exemption from draft (specify grounds): "Yes, I am a member of the Huttriche Brothers Church. My creed forbids any military service."

When they departed for Camp Washington on May 25, 1918 little did they know what harrowing experiences awaited them. Wipf and the Hofer brothers traveled by military train and on the way were accosted by a group of young soldiers who decided to harass them by taking them one by one and cutting their beards and their hair down to the scalp. After arriving at the camp they refused to don a uniform, drill or perform work of any kind. This resulted in confinement in the guardhouse, their hands manacled.

On June 10 they were court-martialed and immediately sentenced to twenty years of hard labor at Alcatraz, the military prison situated in the San Francisco Bay. Upon arrival they again refused to put on a uniform and instead were wearing only underwear, confined to a dank, dark basement and given only bread and water. When they refused to work guards "strung them up so high that their feet barely touched the floor." [30]

There they languished until November (note the war ended at the "eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month") when military authorities ordered the four men transferred in chains (with armed guards) to Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. Upon arrival they were herded like cattle, prodded by bayonets in the cold. After being overheated in the railroad car and then chilled during the forced march, they became ill.

Joseph and Michael Hofer were transferred to the military hospital and their wives notified by telegram. Due to a miscommunication their wives went to Fort Riley. By the time they reached their husbands on the evening of November 28, the men could barely speak. Joseph died the next morning.

If their situation was not ignominious enough, Joseph was shipped back to South Dakota, clothed in military khaki which he had steadfastly refused to wear. Michael died on December 2 and a few days later David was released and allowed to return home. Jacob Wipf wasn't released until April 13, 1919.

Historians consider this incident to be the most extreme and egregious example of abuse toward conscientious objectors during World War I. Joseph and Michael were buried at the Friedhof Rockport Colony Cemetery in Hanson County, South Dakota, their graves noted by simple markers identifying them as "martyrs".

Their obituary, if you could call it that, provided the briefest acknowledgment in the local newspaper: "The two sons of Jacob Hofer of Rockport died in a Wash. camp and were buried at home." The entire incident might have only been remembered and memorialized in the Hutterite community had it not been for the relationship between two men – one a Mennonite journalist and the other owner of piano hardware company in Chicago.

Together, Theodore Lunde (businessman) and Jacob G. Ewert (journalist) published pamphlets and articles relating the egregious treatment of the Hofer brothers and others like them who conscientiously objected to military service. A number of books have since been written on the Hofer brothers and other World War I conscientious objectors. See the footnotes for a reference to a *Mennonite Quarterly Review* article by Duane Stoltzfus which highlights several sources.

As far as records are concerned, you will find some case files from World War I at Fold3. Search for "conscientious" and filter by selecting United States and World War I. The FBI also investigated incidents of "alleged conscientious objections" (also at Fold3).

Regarding efforts to tell the Hutterite martyrs' stories, one might wonder if publicity made any difference in how COs were treated during the next major world conflict.

Pacifism: Never a Popular Choice

In United States history, pacifists have always been viewed with some degree of disdain, despite the fact we are supposed to the nation where people are free to practice their chosen faith. But, when it comes to military service the issue of pacifism becomes divisive. During World War I it was a particularly prickly subject. One editorial in a Kansas newspaper was

especially critical, referring to Hutterites as "one mess of cowards", lumped together with members of the "Church of God", whose members were:

"both so onnery they won't fight even though an enemy invade our sod. "Independent Bible Students," who read and sigh and croon, also the spineless "Friends," "Quakers," "Mennonite" – all are expressed by "Cowardly poltroon" because they're too onnery to fight.

A man who won't fight to defend his home has empty rooms in his noodle dome, and if each will wash off his yellow stains, I'll give him a nickle [sic] to buy some brains . . . A man who will dodge behind such flimsy flim flam and refuse to act the part of a citizen true, and fight for home and "Uncle Sam," ought to be bayonetted through and through.

What right has a man to embrace a creed and wear long hair and whiskers too by which to shirk in time of need, the duties of a citizen loyal and true? [31]

This dismissive missive was signed by Dr. I.B. Julian, a physician from Salina, Kansas. As far as World War I sentiment goes, and given what happened to pacifists like the Hofer brothers, this appears to be the pervasive attitude. However, by the time World War II rolled around and America joined the conflict, the military had a new program which gave young COs the opportunity to serve their country in other ways.

According to The National World War II Museum web site, roughly sixteen million served throughout World War II. Of that number around 60 percent were drafted and less than 40 percent were voluntary enlistments. Of those who preferred not to serve – perhaps fearing combat or the need to stay home and take care of their families – a certain percentage were pacifists with political beliefs which clashed with military service.

Nevertheless, they were faced with three options – serve, "find war work, or end up in jail if they refused induction." As in previous wars, another (and larger) segment were conscientious objectors. They too had limited options: "join the armed forces and serve in a non-combat role (usually as a medic), volunteer for the Civilian Public Service program, or go to jail." These "limited options" seemed far better than the persecution young men like the Hofer brothers faced during World War I.

Conscientious objectors were required to register as such at their local draft board – and around 43,000 did so, although not all CO applications were accepted. Generally speaking, he had to be a member of a Peace Church such as the Quakers, Mennonites, or Church of the Brethren. It had to be for religious reasons – personal feelings did not count.

Of that number about 6,000 refused to cooperate with the Selective Service – over 4,400 were Jehovah's Witnesses who ultimately went to jail. Approximately 25,000 went ahead and enlisted or allowed themselves to be drafted, but chose to serve in non-combat roles. The most famous of these was Desmond Doss whose story was told in the critically-acclaimed movie, *Hacksaw Ridge* (2016). [32] Doss was a Seventh Day Adventist.

Registering as a conscientious objector wasn't exactly a simple process. Even before the United States entered the war following the attack on Pearl Harbor, the "knottiest and most delicate problem" facing local draft boards was who qualified to legitimately request status as a CO. In Cincinnati, Draft Board No. 11 was in the same jurisdiction as a non-sectarian school, God's Bible School. In early January 1941 three-fourths of the enrollees were already

claiming to be conscientious objectors (the school included a high school, college and a seminary). The local board had the task of deciding who was truly deserving of CO status and the ones who were only attempting to avoid military service.

Those registering as COs needed to absolutely have the requisite training, records and background to prove they were in fact actual conscientious objectors. The Army had a special form which applicants were required to complete. It was, however, a "very exacting form, so exacting, in fact, that one conscientious objector who read it declared that, after all, he could not conscientiously say that he was a conscientious objector." [33]

The phrase "conscientious objector" was used over a quarter of a million times in newspapers from 1941-1945. In early 1941 a number of Oklahoma newspapers were reporting over 54,000 registrations at local draft boards with only 43 who had claimed CO status. Those were being deferred for the time being because the federal government had not completed its planned alternative work program (Roosevelt had officially approved it on December 19, 1940).

In the meantime, the official Washington, D.C. narrative was: "The conscientious objector is not to be persecuted in any way because of his scruples, but neither is he to be pampered, or given some earlier assignment than falls to the lot of men who have no objection to military service for their country." [34]

Of the total number of registered COs, around 12,000 chose alternative service in order to serve their country through the Civilian Public Service (CPS) program, part of the 1940 Selective Service and Training Act. CPS was the work of a group representing the historic peace churches, set up to provide "work of national importance" for conscientious objectors. In April 1941 Roosevelt authorized the "work of national importance" and the first camps opened the following month, some of which were former Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camps.

Around 150 camps were activated and operated by the Peace Churches in concert with various government agencies from 1941-1947. While not all men lived at the actual camps, their work was organized through one. Some of their work included:

- Six camps worked with the U.S. Forest Service on fire prevention, trail building and pest control.
- In Wisconsin 550 COs worked in the dairy industry.
- A number of COs worked with the Bureau of Reclamation to construct dams.

In August 1942 began working in understaffed mental hospitals. While not necessarily physically demanding these assignments weren't without problems. In the 1940s victims of mental illness were subject to abuse in these institutions. Orderlies were known to strike patients – something which COs found abhorrent. At one point they began smuggling in cameras to document the abuse which was published in the May 6, 1946 issue of LIFE (beginning on page 102).

The article entitled, "Bedlam 1946: Most U.S. Mental Hospitals are a Shame and a Disgrace", included a stark narrative accompanied by depictions (actual photographs) of neglect, restraint, useless work, nakedness, overcrowding, forced labor, idleness and despair. Not surprising, it caused a national uproar. The "undercover" work of these COs brought about much-needed changes in mental health care.

Another group of COs served as "guinea pigs", participating in studies which tested the efficacy of various medicines and treatments, as well as pesticides.

As the Allies advanced across Europe they found scores of starving people. A small group of COs (36) volunteered for a starvation study which is still considered landmark work in this particular field. Yet another small group of COs worked in the dangerous field of fighting forest fires in remote areas of the northern and western United States as "smokejumpers" trained to parachute into the conflagration.

CPS was generally considered to have been a successful program, although according to the National World War II Museum site: "Despite their willingness to perform vital, and at times, life-endangering work, many COs were subjected to daily harassment, being considered "yellow bellies" and cowards, having those epithets thrown at them by civilians bitter at their refusal to fight." [35] Some things never change.

Finding Records

As far as records are concerned, I found some records at Ancestry by searching the catalog for the keyword "conscientious". There are some scattered databases which have records, several of which appear to be related to World War I.

Searching for "conscientious" at Fold3 results in hundreds of records which can be filtered by country and conflict. Many of the World War II records are part of the National Archives and available online.

And, of course, you can go directly to the National Archives web site and search for "conscientious objector". For instance, there are records pertaining to the 1940 Selective Service and Training Act which were adjudicated by the Department of Justice (not available online, however).

Because some conscientious objectors garnered local (and perhaps national) interest, a search in newspaper archives may provide vital information. Many of the sources utilized in researching and writing this article can be found at Internet Archive (see Footnotes).

ESSENTIAL TOOLS FOR THE SUCCESSFUL FAMILY RESEARCHER

by Sharon Hall

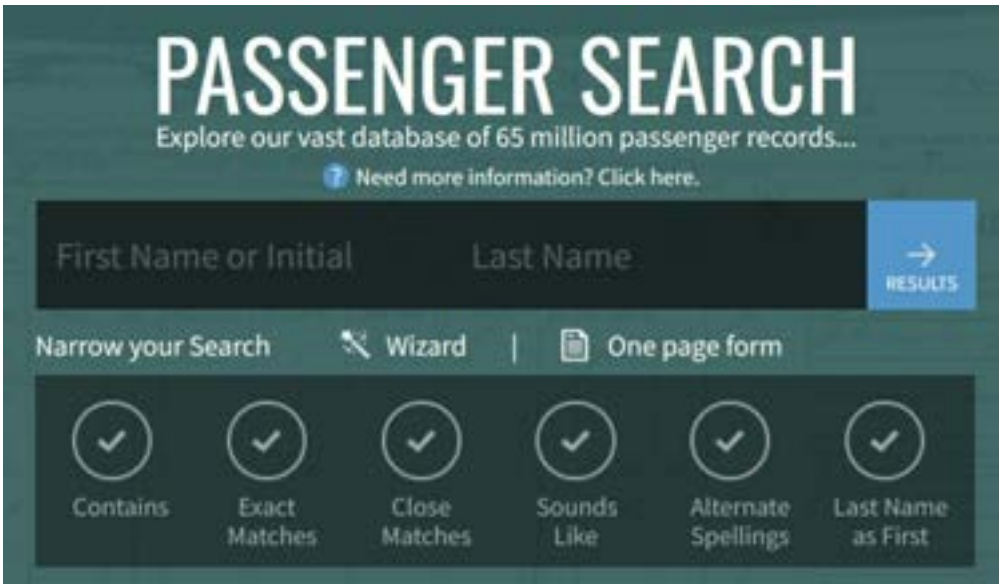
Ellis Island Records

The Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island web site is where you go to purchase ferry tickets for a ride out to the historic site. It is also a great site for genealogists searching for immigration records of their ancestors. At the web site you will find a place to search indexed records which you can use in conjunction with those found at Internet Archive (as discussed in the last issue). Let me show you how.

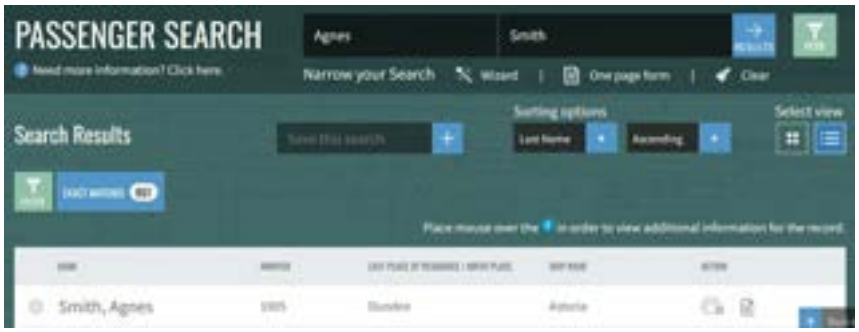
Go to the web site: https://www.statueofliberty.org/ellis-island/ and click "Discover". There you will find the searchable passenger data base by scrolling down the page and clicking "Start Your Search" (or go directly to the page:

https://www.statueofliberty.org/discover/passenger-ship-search/)

to access the "Connect to Your Heritage Page". Scroll down this page to the link "Search Passengers" to begin. This database has some unique features to assist you with narrowing down the search for your ancestors. I haven't been to this web site in some time and this is a great improvement.

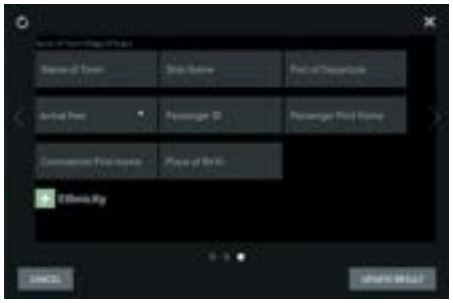


The simplest method is to search for First Name or Initial and Last Name and then click "Results". However, you may need to fine-tune your search at the outset if your ancestor had a name which could have been spelled various ways or it was too common to yield a targeted result. First, though, just a simple search by typing the basics to demonstrate the need for using the available tools. For instance, a simple search of "Agnes Smith" yielded over 800 possibilities.



If you know a bit more about your ancestor, such as approximate date of birth or age and marital status, which port, date of arrival and so on, begin narrowing the results by using the "Wizard". A new search window pops up which allows you to select options and advance to the next frame or update the current results.

In the first pop-up select gender and marital status, click the arrow and advance to the second pop-up (or update result). In the second frame you can use the sliding bars to select year of birth, age at arrival, year of arrival, month of arrival and day or arrival (if you know these facts); otherwise, advance to the next frame. In the final pop-up you have the option to provide additional information, such as name of town where they resided, ship name, port of



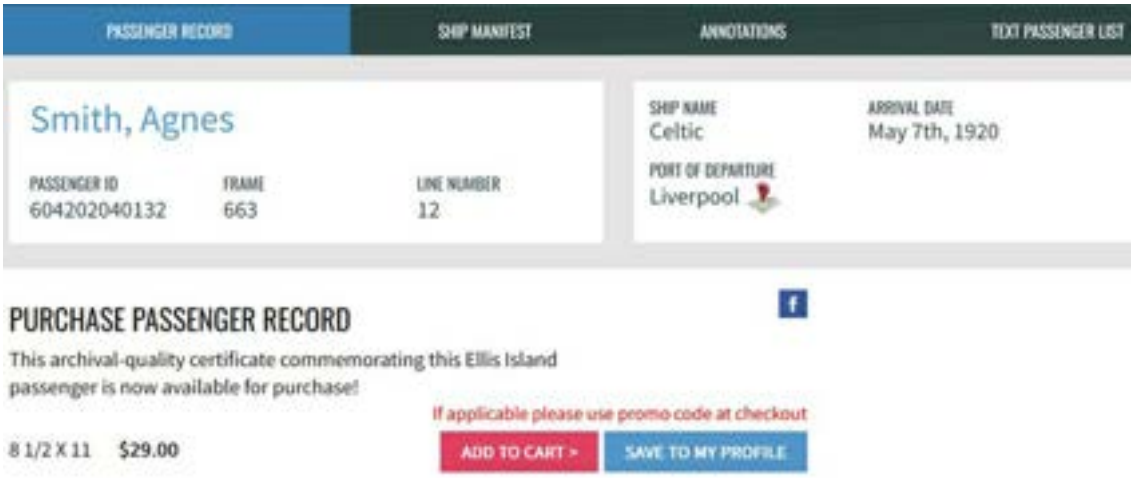
departure, arrival port, passenger ID, passenger first name, companion first name, place of birth and ethnicity by clicking the "+" box. Update Result.

Let's say Agnes Smith was from Scotland (perhaps Dundee) and she was single. I would select "Female", "Single" in the first pop-up. In the second pop-up I believe when she arrived in 1920 she was perhaps twenty years of age. I set the applicable coordinates (by sliding from the left and right for a range) and advanced to the third pop-up and typed "Dundee" in the town of origin box. Update Result:

The search has been narrowed considerably (3 results). Interestingly, all three women arrived on the *Celtic*. There is a limit as to how much you can view via the search result. Do that by hovering over the "Information (*i*) icon" to the left of the name.

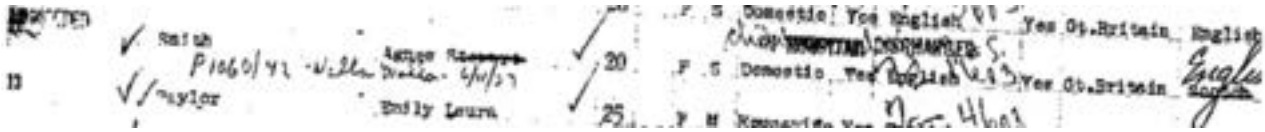
As you can see this doesn't provide much information, other than what you already knew. To view the complete record you will need to create a free account (if you haven't done so already) to login. Once you've created an account, you will be able to click on the "Action" icons (Passenger Record and Ship Manifest).

This will open up quite a bit more information and may assist in pinpointing which of these women named Agnes Smith is the one you are researching. Clicking on the "Passenger Record" icon you will see a bit more information.

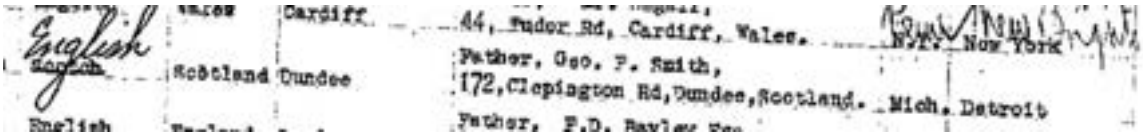


While the information you will view is free with an account, there are opportunities to purchase copies of various images. Take note of the frame and line number and click on the Ship Manifest tab. This Agnes Smith is found on line 12 of frame 663 (individual frames to scroll through are found on the right-hand side). Note: I discovered that I actually needed to access frame 662 first to see her name – frame 663 is a continuation of the passenger record).

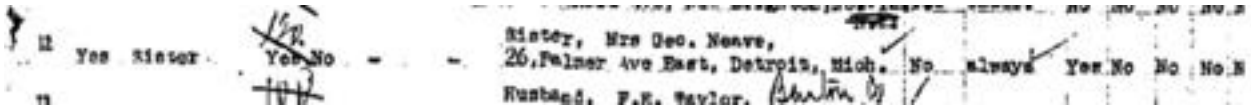
By clicking on Image 662 and then hovering the mouse over the image (which will automatically enlarge the image for ease of viewing), I find line 12 and a great deal more information regarding this Agnes Smith. She is indeed a twenty-year old single woman, a domestic servant, who claims citizenship in Great Britain.



As I scroll over to view more of the record, I find her last presumed residence was Dundee, Scotland. In addition, the name and address of her nearest relative and the state and town of her final destination.



Now advancing to Image 663 I find the name and address in Detroit where she will be traveling to:



Lots of genealogically-relevant information!

If you prefer to peruse the passenger list in text format, click on the "Text Passenger List" tab. For annotations, for example, to correct what you believe to be incorrect information, click the "Annotations" tab. The Ellis Island Foundation is currently collaborating with FamilySearch improve the process of annotating and correcting indexed records. For instance, you might want to correct a name spelling or perhaps provide a different residency address.

If you haven't been successful locating Ellis Island records at Ancestry or FamilySearch, try this vastly improved web site.

Immigrant Ship Research

Now that you've found great resources for finding Ellis Island passenger lists, you might want to do a bit of research on the ship which brought your ancestors to America. Using Agnes Smith as an example, records indicate she arrived on May 7, 1920 after departing from Liverpool. However, there is no other information except the ship's name, *Celtic*. It would be helpful to know which line the ship sailed under. I like to use a bit of newspaper research first.

I went to Newspapers.com and searched "Celtic" in May 1920 in New York, New York. The first result dated May 16, 1920 informed me the ship sailed for the White Star Line. A great companion resource for immigration research is ShipIndex.org.

Visiting the site as a guest will grant you access to hundreds of citations referencing thousands of ships. Let's take a look at what you can view for free.

ShipIndex.org: a vessel research database

According to the web site landing page, "ShipIndex.org simplifies vessel research. Whether you're a genealogist, a maritime historian, a researcher, or just curious, we can help you learn more about the ships that interest you. We tell you which maritime resources, such as books, journals, magazines, newspapers, CD-ROMs, websites, and online databases mention the ships that interest you. We enhance these references by noting which ones include illustrations or crew and passenger lists, and where you can find or purchase the resource." [1]

I typed "Celtic" in the "Search Ship Name" box and received the following results. Four different ships named "Celtic" were found.

Just by viewing these snapshots and the fact that the ship I'm looking for sailed under British registry, it's most certainly the *RMS Celtic*. I click on that photo for more information.

To find out a bit more about this ship, I click "View this vessel on Wikidata" which takes me to a reference page with a number of links (scroll down the page for the Wikipedia entries). There are fourteen Wikipedia entries in various languages. I select "en" and find that indeed

the *RMS Celtic* was owned by the White Star Line, having been first launched on its maiden voyage on July 25, 1901.


WHITE STAR LINE.

OLYMPIC, 46,359 Tons.

THE LARGEST BRITISH STEAMER.

SOUTHAMPTON & CHERBOURG to NEW YORK.

On FRIDAY, JUNE 24th.

AMERICAN SERVICES.

SOUTHAMPTON AND CHERBOURG TO NEW YORK.

LAPLAND	April 22	LAPLAND	May 27
FINLAND	April 29	ADRIATIC	June 16
ADRIATIC	May 13		

Red Star Line steamers. Passengers only. Will not call at Cherbourg.

LIVERPOOL TO NEW YORK.

LIVERPOOL	April 24	ARMENIAN	May 15
CELTIC	April 28	NEVADIAN	May 24
CELTIC	May 7	CELTIC	June 3
BELGIC	May 1		

Liverpool Post and Mercury 21 Apr 1920

The ship was quite large, capable of carrying almost three thousand passengers. It wasn't the fastest ship, but at the time the company was "aiming to favour size, luxury and comfort, to the detriment of speed." According to the article, the *Celtic* was assigned the route from Liverpool to New York. By again utilizing Newspapers.com I was able to determine when the ship left Liverpool (search for "Celtic" in April 1920 in Liverpool, England).

According to the April 21, 1920 issue of the *Liverpool Post and Mercury*, the *Celtic* departed on April 28. By this time, the ship had undergone a refit following World War I when the Celtic was converted to an auxiliary cruiser (a merchant ship equipped with guns). When the Admiralty determined it wasn't useful in this capacity the ship was used for troop transport. The refit was performed after World War I service (and being torpedoed and then repaired).

According to Wikipedia:

In 1920, after work to restore her original decor was finished, Celtic resumed the Liverpool-New York route. To adapt her to new types of clientele and to the drop in the number of immigrants to the North Atlantic, her capacity has been greatly reduced to 350 first class, 250 second class, and 1000 third class passengers. [2]

That's quite a bit of information about the ship which carried Agnes Smith to America and so far it's free. It may well be this will provide you all the information you need, but more resources are available by subscription. In the case of the *Celtic*, there are several additional resources but you will need to purchase a subscription of varying length. For instance, for $8 a month (until you wish to cancel) you have unlimited access. There are also fixed time periods available (two weeks - $6; three months - $22; six months - $35; and one year - $65).


Celtic (British passenger liner)

Title Shipwrecks: An Encyclopedia of the World's Worst Disasters at Sea More entry

Author David Ritchie

Publisher Checkmark Books, New York, 1996

ISBN 0816034630, 9780816034634

Page 43-230

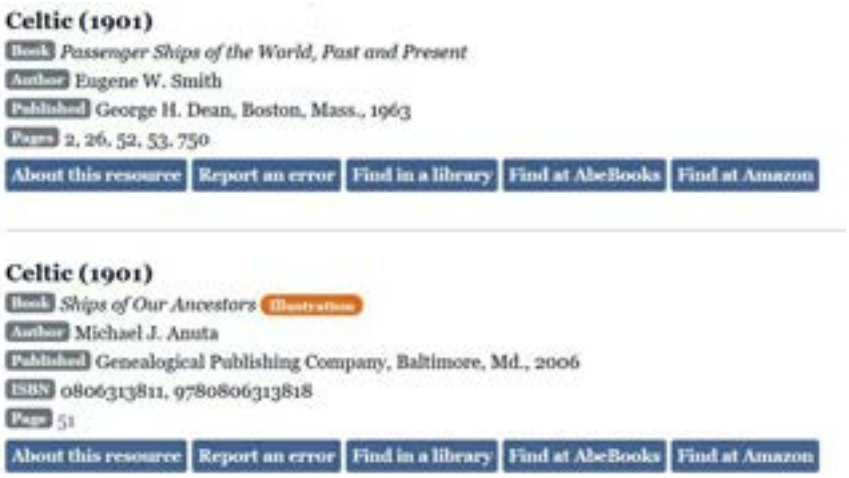
About this resource | Find in a library | Find at AbeBooks | Find at Amazon

Celtic (cit 1901) Subscribe to view

Celtic (II) (White Star Line) Subscribe to view

Celtic (Liverpool, 1901, Steam; ON: 113476) Subscribe to view

With a subscription you will be able to fully view the specific resources which document more of the ship's history.



Again, you may not need these additional resources and what you've discovered has been done totally free. As an aside, I found the book, *Ships of Our Ancestors*, referenced above at Internet Archive (free to borrow). This book contains over 350 pages of photos of various ships which transported immigrants.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RMS_Celtic_(1901)

New at MyHeritage

MyHeritage recently announced the addition of an exclusive collection of almost four million German marriage records (1874-1899). Not only are record images available by MyHeritage is the first company to have also completely indexed the collection. The collection presently features marriage certificates exclusively from the districts of Münster, Detmold, and Arnsberg and they hope to expand their collection soon by adding certificates from Cologne and Düsseldorf, according to the web site.

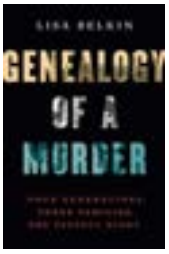
In some cases a particular record will provide considerably more than just marriage information, like occupation, address and more.

In November alone MyHeritage published over 17 million records from 36 collections around the world – Australia, Belgium, the Channel Islands, England, France, Germany, Scotland, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United States.

The records include obituaries, marriages, court records, deaths, tax registrations, births, census registers, and emigration records. Some of the collections also include images. Here are the details and descriptions:

https://tinyurl.com/4mt8byme

May I Recommend . . .



Genealogy of a Murder: Four Generations, Three Families, One Fateful Night

Anytime I see "genealogy" in the title of a book I am immediately intrigued. This one is quite unique, however, called "hauntingly powerful" in one review. Admittedly, I wasn't sure quite what to expect, given the brief description: "The multigenerational tale of three families whose paths collide one summer night in 1960 with the murder of a police officer."

What I discovered was a well-researched account, a genealogical one at that, which one almost never sees in family history research. Many researchers are only interested in records, sometimes skipping over the stories and circumstances which shaped the lives of their ancestors. Lisa Belkin first heard the story when she went to have a meal with her mom and her new husband, Alvin Tarlov.

She had written a book with a story which reminded Alvin of a story from his own life, something which after hearing his narrative, Belkin set out to write a book which detailed the intersection of the lives of three families and multiple generations and how they all converged one fateful night in 1960.

Alvin was at least indirectly involved, and no doubt, in some way must have felt responsible for the murder of a young policeman. How could a young army doctor who was doing research at a prison hospital have been responsible for the death of someone he didn't know? Interestingly, the three people – the prisoner, doctor and policeman – were all the same age, born in the early years of the Great Depressions. However, each man's life turned out strikingly different.

More fascinating than the brief narrative her new stepfather shared, Belkin was intrigued about what had occurred years before that fateful night. What kinds of experiences had shaped their lives. As it turned out these three men were descended from late nineteenth and early twentieth century immigrants.

Throughout the telling of this long and winding story, Belkin became keenly aware of how we hardly ever dig deep enough to discover the hows and whys of certain life events. The fact that this one ended with a police officer's murder was especially compelling.

While it might not be everyone's cup-of-tea, I found it a good reminder of how shallowly we treat genealogical research and ignore history and events which shaped the lives of our ancestors. As one reviewer wrote, "We are all the products of our family histories, and events which took place long before our births often reverberate through the years into our own lives. Belkin's history of the events that led to a murder is a good reminder of that."

Windfall: The Prairie Woman Who Lost Her Way and the Great-Granddaughter Who Found Her

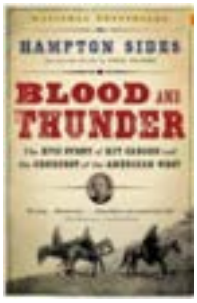
If one reads the glowing reviews provided at Amazon, you might think this book is largely about the evil oil and gas industry, rather than what it was originally intended – one woman's search to find out what happened to her great-grandmother Anna Sletvold Haraseth. Granted, author Erika Bolstad spent perhaps one-third of the book disdaining the oil and gas industry, all the while aware that she and her family might

well (someday) benefit from a windfall via this industry.

Full disclosure – I largely skipped through those chapters because it doesn't particularly interest me. However, I did enjoy the chapters where she discussed the background and research conducted on her great grandmother. It was a story which far too many women experienced in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as they were ordered confined in an insane asylum, sometimes for the rest of their lives. Later in the century there were actually medicines developed to help someone like Anna, who likely suffered from severe postpartum depression. Instead, in the early twentieth century she was adjudged insane and confined in the North Dakota asylum for the remainder of her life.

Another part of the book was more like a travelogue as Bolstad and her legally blind husband traveled throughout the Midwest before arriving in North Dakota for additional research. It was interesting and informative. However, each "section" of the book could just as well been developed into a separate book, or perhaps essays.

This review isn't so much a criticism, just a note that it might not be quite what is expected, given the book's full title. The genealogical research, however, was superb, informative and well documented, and I truly appreciated that aspect.



Blood and Thunder - An Epic of the American West

Kit Carson was illiterate yet he learned to speak Spanish and French, as well as various Native American languages. In our minds we imagine this legendary American being a tall, swaggering, tough-talking scout and Indian fighter. Instead, he was none of those things. He was a small, soft-spoken man, and although he spent months away from home at a time was a loving husband and father.

His legendary life was the subject of many a "pulp novel". Once he was shown a book just published with his supposed image on the cover, his arm around the waist of a slender and buxom young woman, surrounded by the bodies of vanquished savages. He took the book, put on his glasses and looked at the cover. He put the book down after studying it and said with a wink, "Gentlemen, that thar may be true, but I hain't got no recollection of it."

Christopher Houston Carson was born in Kentucky in 1809, the same year as the 16th President of the United States, Abraham Lincoln. His family headed west to Missouri the following year, becoming neighbors of the sons of Daniel Boone. His father, Lindsey, was killed in 1818 when a large tree limb fell on him killing him instantly. Some of the children were already grown, but Rebecca Carson was left with ten children to provide for. Kit was only seven but he quit school to help his family by hunting and working in the fields.

When he was able to surreptitiously sign up to work with a large caravan heading to Santa Fe, his life would change forever. He worked every kind of job – hunting, cooking for the caravan, fur trapper, scout and in later years employed as a United States military officer in the Indian wars. After Carson finishes his assignment as a scout for John Fremont and his expeditions to California and Oregon, a significant portion of the book is then centered on New Mexico history.

The book contains fascinating details about the life of Kit Carson – pulp fiction it's not. The author, Hampton Sides, is careful to treat his subject with respect and dignity (and maybe a little awe). The use of actual

accounts of Carson's life from his oral interviews and the diaries of those who served with him throughout his lifetime are meticulously woven throughout the book.

Every other chapter or so, the author writes about the Navajo people and their struggles with the invasion of their land and the attempts to get along with the white man.

The book was exceptionally long (624 pages) but I never felt it was tedious. The author's writing style is what one reviewer called "friendly". His writing flowed easily in describing Carson's life, intertwining it with the events surrounding the "manifest destiny" of the country and those who played a part in the expansion west. If the conquest of the west is something that interests you, I would highly recommend the book.

Here are some recent books which have been read, are being read, or planned future reads scheduled for reviews in future issues of the magazine (you might want to check them out as well):

Identical Strangers: A Memoir of Twins Separated and Reunited, by Elyse Schein and Paula Bernstein

Killing the Witches: The Horror of Salem, Massachusetts, by Bill O'Reilly

The Orphans of Davenport: Eugenics, the Great Depression and the War over Children's Intelligence, by Marilyn Brookwood

The Kidnap Years: The Astonishing True History of the Forgotten Kidnapping Epidemic That Shook Depression-Era America, by David Stout

How Our Ancestors Died: A Guide for Family Historians, by Simon Wills

The Last Campaign, by H.W. Brands

The Forever Witness: How DNA and Genealogy Solved a Cold Case Double Murder, by Edward Humes

Call Me John: A Genealogical Mystery Based on a True Story, by Michael Schoenholtz

Brave Hearted: The Women of the American West, by Katie Hickman

Chenneville: A Novel of Murder, Loss, and Vengeance, by Paulette Jiles

Founding Partisans: Hamilton, Madison, Jefferson, Adams and the Brawling Birth of American Politics, by H.W. Brands.

American Visions: The United States, 1800-1860, by Edward L. Ayers

2018-2023

These are a few of my

Favorite ~~Things~~ Articles

To wrap up five years of publishing Digging History Magazine, here are a few of my favorite articles (the shorter ones :) from the first couple years).

I'm looking forward to 2024 and new series, beginning with the 1930s and Great Depression era, followed by the advent of a new series I'm informally calling the "Parade of States" – issues which highlight the history of individual states, including finding records (and, of course, the stories behind them).

Sharon Hall, Publisher & Editor, Digging History Magazine

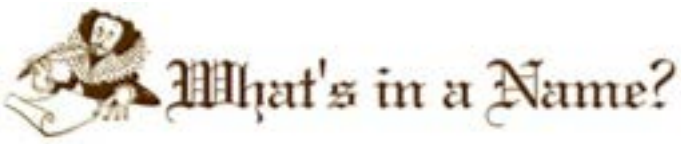
From the Archives . . .

SIGNATURE STORIES: the Civil War in Arkansas and a FAMILY TRAGEDY

This story is personal to me – a tragic story which resulted in the murder of my fourth great-grandfather, David Rupe, of Sebastian County, Arkansas. From January 2018, the first issue.

Searching for that EUREKA! Moment: Who Where You, Roy Simpleman?

This article from the March 2018 issue was the story of a "research adventure" I had with someone I've never met. While I ultimately played a minuscule role, it was quite an adventure I thought readers would enjoy. As an editor, this "adventure" ironically began with a misspelled name.



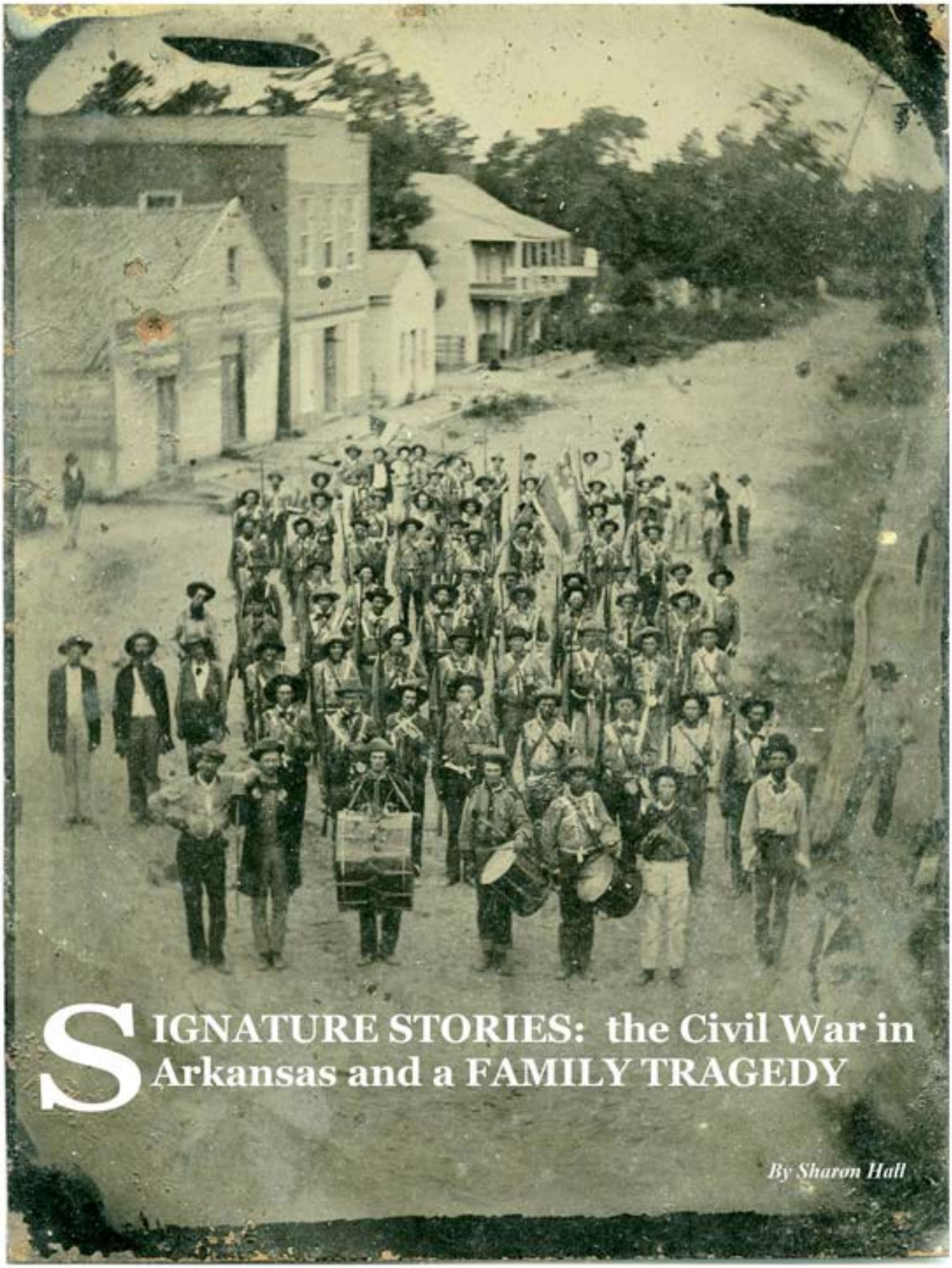
This article was published in the January-February 2019 issue, a special story I came across while researching a friend's African-American ancestry.

Dreamers and Drifters, Gunslingers and Grifters: Simply a Great Mad Rush

This article was published in the August 2018 issue, one that featured Alaska and the gold rush of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It featured the stories of some young dreamers, the drifters, a gunslinger (my distant cousin Wyatt Earp), and one of the slickest grifters of that era. I'm featuring the "Dreamers" in this excerpt, a story I wrote after discovering a cache of correspondence. It's a touching story.

The Immigrant Miners of Dawson, New Mexico

A "Dash" article published in the March 2018 issue, the poignant story of immigrant miners, some "fresh off the boat" who died in a tragic mining accident in 1913.



SIGNATURE STORIES: the Civil War in Arkansas and a FAMILY TRAGEDY

By Sharon Hall

As a family history researcher I am always looking for creative ways to tell the stories of my client's (and my own) ancestors.

Recently I've added a new dimension to ancestry research by collecting ancestor signatures. When the time comes to format a pedigree chart, I have been incorporating these on the chart -- something unique to document history besides a bunch of dates and places. Each one will tell a different story.

Awhile back I was formatting a few signatures of my Rupe ancestors and was thinking about their stories – call them "signature stories" if you will.

One set of signatures was included in a series of affidavits averred to by four members of the Rupe family of Sebastian County, Arkansas in support of George Abbott and his claims for property "appropriated" during the Civil War.

George Abbott was a miller living in either Sebastian or Scott County until February of 1864 when he went to Fort Smith. Abbott was deeply opposed to secession and his sympathies were solidly Union. Like many others in the South (Arkansas was a divided state) who considered themselves Unionists, Abbott was harassed by Rebels.

At Fort Smith he worked for the Union cause and claimed this as evidence of his loyalty. His petition to the Commissioner of Claims, established under the act of March 3, 1871, stated in April of 1864 members of the 9th Kansas Cavalry (as well as two Arkansas units) camped near his home in Sebastian County and appropriated: one mare ($150); two thousand pounds of fresh beef ($120 or 6 cents a pound); and one hundred bushels of corn ($150). He was requesting remuneration in the amount of $420.

Abbott's petition also included a sworn statement whereby he further established his loyalty to the United States by denying he had ever supported the Confederate cause. Had that statement not been true it's unlikely he would have ever received anything in return.

Abbott had friends and neighbors to support his claims, and instead of appearing in Washington, D.C. before the Commission of Claims, "so great a distance from their homes", they would provide signed affidavits.

George Washington Rupe (my third great grandfather and George Abbott's brother-in-law) and his brother Lewis would serve as primary witnesses. To make his case Abbott told how he had been harassed by rebels – at various times he believed the Confederate Army had stolen four horses, a wagon, about twenty head of cattle, approximately thirty hogs, a gun, saddle and two bridles. Of course, he never received any payment.

Major Gibson threatened to kill George Abbott and my great grandfather George Rupe because they were milling and grinding corn for federal troops. Major Gibson, however, was killed by Union soldiers as he made his way to carry out the threat.

Abbott seemed to have been quite generous with both his time and supplies in service of the federal troops. I would imagine George Rupe and his family did the same.

This brought to mind another ancestor who also lived in Sebastian County, Mary Ann (Story) Hooper, my fourth great grandmother. Mary Ann was born on July 24, 1819, the daughter of a Kentucky doctor. In 1904 just before her 85th birthday she was featured in a newspaper article entitled "A Remarkable Arkansas Family".

At the time of the article a "careful count" of her descendants totaled 450, six generations which included one great-great-great grandchild).

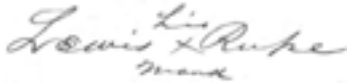
To her friends and family she was known as "Aunt Pop", a woman of charity to those in need. She had lived in Arkansas for about fifty years and in addition to raising her own large family had made herself a blessing to neighbors as well.

In that span of time she had served as midwife for over one thousand births, traveling through all sorts of weather "to the aid of her sisters". During the Civil War she fed hungry soldiers on both sides, no matter their allegiance.

While neither Abbott nor anyone else had actually seen the Kansas group take the provisions, George Rupe had seen them on a road out of Fort Smith and recognized the horse, a chestnut sorrel. Upon reaching the mill he told Abbott what he had seen.

Although Rupe hadn't seen the other supplies (beef and corn) he believed his father, my fourth great grandfather David Price Rupe, and his brother Lewis had seen the cattle in the government's possession. As to the corn, Rupe just knew how much had been in the crib and it was all missing. George Rupe signed his affidavit:

His brother Lewis gave his statement and signed with his "mark":



In August of 1864 Abbott had departed Arkansas, escorted by U.S. troops to Missouri. He traveled all the way to St. Joseph to escape rebel harassment, and ostensibly, he claimed, because he was loyal to the United States government. There he remained for about fifteen months before returning to Scott County in 1866.

David P. Rupe backed up Lewis' claim by stating his son had seen claimant's cattle in September of 1864. David further investigated and found the cattle in the possession of a Fort Smith woman who told him she had been given the cattle for keeping until they were to be transferred to Kansas. He made no attempt to retrieve the cattle, knowing the woman was the wife of a soldier, and times being what they were, many were heading north to escape the rebels. David signed his affidavit on December 6, 1872:

One more Rupe affidavit, of David's son Ransom who had served the Union Army during the first two years, evokes an entirely different story, and a sad one at that. However, before I relate it I'll wrap up George Abbott's story. My ancestors' affidavits notwithstanding, Abbott didn't receive all he was claiming to be owed. In the end he received only $125 in 1875.

Ransom's affidavit brought to mind a story I found while researching the Rupe family of Sebastian County. Less than six months after signing these affidavits the Rupe family experienced a devastating tragedy. On June 3, 1873 The Daily Gazette reported:

David Rupe, an old and respected citizen of Sebastian County, was foully murdered a few days ago. Two sons of the deceased were arrested as the guilty parties. One was released, and the other held for trial before the circuit court.[1]

A subsequent article provided more details:

Sometime ago we published an account of the killing of old man Rupe and the arrest of his son Ransom for the murder. He was sent to jail at Greenwood. A few days ago he knocked the jailer down with a bottle and made his escape. Ransom is now at large.

On Friday night last, Sam, another son of old man Rupe, committed suicide by shooting himself through the left breast, with a rifle gun. He lived a few hours after he committed the deed and told how he placed the gun and touched it off with his toe. He declared his intention of killing himself beforehand, as the people need rain and he said they couldn't have it until he died.[2]

What was Ransom and Samuel's motive for killing their father? It's unclear. Whether Ransom was ever punished is also unclear; he died in Mena, Arkansas in 1895.

Tragedy beyond belief, stories evoked by a set of ancestor signatures.

Searching for that EUREKA! Moment: Who Where You, Roy Simpleman?

by Sharon Hall

I am the newsletter editor for my local genealogical society's newsletter and occasionally write a column entitled "Adventures in Research: Sometimes You Just Have to Keep Digging". In the story related below, I played a minuscule role, but it's such a fascinating story I think you will find it interesting and informative.

As an editor, this "adventure" ironically began with a misspelled name.

Who Were You Roy Simpleman?

On July 5, 2015 I received an email from a reader at my Digging History blog on one of the very first articles I wrote in October of 2013. After learning about the Dawson, New Mexico coal mine disaster one hundred years previous, I decided to write a Tombstone Tuesday article entitled "The Immigrant Miners of Dawson, New Mexico". [Editor's Note: Another favorite article; see page 78.]

I usually wrote those articles focusing on a single person, or perhaps a husband and wife. Instead, for that article I wrote about the tragic deaths of immigrant miners, some who had literally just gotten off the boat days earlier. Over two hundred and fifty men perished that day.

One of the survivors was a miner whose name was reported by newspapers as Roy Simpion. As it turns out, that was either a misprint or misspelling of his name. The email I received in July was from Roy's great grandson Doug Simpleman.

Doug wrote me a bit more about his great grandfather, adding that Roy later worked as a mine rescuer before being paralyzed and passing away a few years later. Doug also shared how proud he was of his family's mining history which he believes stretches back to the days of Spanish Hidalgos sent to Mexico by King Charles of Spain.

Doug had noted that I provide ancestry research services and wondered if I could help with the translation of some Mexican records. At that time he felt a dead end had been reached in his own research.

I informed him I had access to Mexican records at Ancestry.com, however my Spanish was rusty. I also told him about a member of the genealogy society I belonged to who was an experienced LDS researcher (Roger Ward) who might be able to assist him. I promised to contact him and also to follow up with some research for marriage records at the Albuquerque Genealogy Library when I visited at the end of August.

Doug related how Roy Simpleman wasn't his great grandfather's real name. He had located a church baptismal record but no father's name was listed. Roy's birth name was actually Refugio Badial and his mother's name, Ramona Badial, alone, was listed which meant he was illegitimate.

He also found the name of Ramona's parents: Eucebio and Cevera (Nilo) Badial, and Eucebio's father was named Benito. Those were all the records he had found, yet family "lore" had been

circulating for years indicating the family's history could possibly be traced to an Italian priest with the Badiali surname who immigrated to Spain and later he and/or his descendants immigrated to Mexico.

Doug was also aware that Benito had worked in the silver mines around Guanajuato, Mexico in the early 1800s. His goal was to prove whether the family's history could indeed be traced back to an Italian priest and to also discover who fathered Refugio (Roy).

In a series of emails I began asking questions about his research and what theories he had regarding his great grandfather. His research indicated a name change for the 1910 census when Roy Simpleman was enumerated in Koehler, New Mexico.

Roy had married a girl named Emily Rounsley whose mother may have been French or Northern Italian. Doug suspected prejudice against an Italo-Latin name may have been the rationale although he had yet to prove his theory. He thought perhaps Refugio had gotten into some kind of trouble around the age of sixteen and a name change was a way to escape his past.

Doug always believed Roy was born in November of 1893 because he was baptized in December 1893, although Roy would later record July 4 of that year as his date of birth (and claimed to be a US natural-born citizen). Also, he had been born in Guanajuato and baptized in Chihuahua — "a heck of a distance!", Doug exclaimed!

This sequence of events also occurred around the time of the overthrow of Porfirio Diaz's government. Perhaps it was related to political instability and turmoil within the region?

A few days later Roger sent a message after he found some additional information, confirming Doug's suspicion that Refugio had been born illegitimately. Since he was listed as "naturale" without a father's name — versus one like "hijo legitimo" or "h.l." — if a church wedding hadn't occurred the child was indeed illegitimate in the eyes of the church regardless of whether the parents intended to marry.

Several weeks went by and after a futile search in Albuquerque I emailed Doug to say I hadn't found Roy's marriage records which I had hoped to find. On September 19 I received an email at 7:02 a.m. from Doug thanking me for my (and Roger's) help.

Seven minutes later at 7:09 a.m. I received a newly created email from Doug with a subject line:

BREAKTHROUGH!

Doug had just Googled "San Pedro Corralitos", the name of a Mexican mine. He provided a link to a Facebook page, an article in Spanish which mentioned the mining representative's name: George Zempelman. Could this have been Refugio's father?!?

I replied to Doug's email, ecstatic that he had uncovered what might well be a vital piece of his family history puzzle. I also wanted to know more about the New York capitalist who employed George Zempelman.

After scanning through some newspaper articles and various other references, I noted stories about political unrest and clashes with mining corporations and land companies. This well might have been reason for Refugio's parentage to have been kept secret. Locals likely were disdainful of corporate tactics and it makes sense Ramona wouldn't have wanted to give her son the name of someone who worked for them.

In the next email I sent back to Doug (this was all taking place on September 19) I put forth a theory for him to consider. I had discovered there were Mormons in that area of Mexico — might the company have contracted the services of a local, say perhaps a Mormon by the name of Zempelman?

Meanwhile, I continued to research and found an entry at Find-A-Grave for George Bernhard Zimpelman. Born in Bavaria, Germany, George was a lieutenant in the 8th Texas Calvary Regiment during the Civil War. At one time he was briefly sheriff of Travis County and a land speculator, owner of land that would eventually become the LBJ Ranch.

He started Zimpelman & Bergen, a land title company which later became known as the Gracy Title Company. One of his sons was George Walter Kyle Zimpelman ("George Kyle") and it seemed more logical that Refugio's father could have been the younger George.

It appears I wasn't so far off about my Mormon theory. George Kyle Zimpelman died in 1906 in Salt Lake City at the age of thirty-five. George Kyle's daughter Waldine was a member of LDS and also died in Salt Lake City years later.


Young George Walter Kyle Zimpelman

George Kyle's first child wasn't born until 1900 after his marriage to Jane Reece in 1898. Refugio had been born in 1893 — see how the puzzle pieces seemed to be connecting?

Doug contacted me again in mid-October with an update. He had been told an interesting story by one of his uncles and the uncle believed Doug's theories were spot-on. The uncle said that Doug's grandfather had told him many years ago that Roy's father was a mining engineer who was just passing through the area.

Doug then discovered that indeed George Kyle Zimpelman was a mining engineer, a graduate of Texas A&M, who later moved to Salt Lake City and married a Mormon girl. EUREKA!!

I have to say that day in September was one of the most exhilarating research forays I'd had in awhile. We were emailing back and forth furiously for about four hours.


Young Roy

Toward the end of our hours-long exchange, I asked Doug if any of the pictures he'd found revealed any family resemblance. He laughed and said "no" because he was mostly Italian — he looked like a "Jersey boy."

Doug Simpleman is proud of his heritage, as well he should be. His grandfather Lee Roy Simpleman (Roy's son) raised six children who went on to serve their communities in successful public, private and military careers.

Among Lee Roy's grandchildren and Roy's great grandchildren are engineers, biochemists, toxicologists and teachers.

Lee Roy had been raised by his grandmother Ramona for the first five years of his life (reasons unknown), so she has always held a special place in the family's history. On September 19, 2015 Doug Simpleman believed he had finally uncovered the real story.

Still, Doug wanted definitive proof of his lineage and had plans to submit to a Y-DNA test, one that tests the paternal line. Y-DNA passes directly from father to son to grandson and so on without change. Doug attempted to contact possible relatives to participate in the test and found at least one man in Alaska who was considering it. That was November of 2015.

Regardless of whether he found others to participate, Doug was determined to take the Y-DNA test. A few months went by and on March 17, 2016 I received an email from him informing me of the test results which had taken three months to process. That day was also Doug's forty-fourth birthday.

For Doug the story had gotten "cooler" as the test results revealed without a doubt he was the great-great grandson of George Walter Kyle Zimpelman, Roy's birth father.

This also meant he was the great-great-great grandson of George Bernhard Zimpelman, an early Texas settler.

I conducted more research on George Zimpelman and found numerous references to him in newspapers, much of it at the Portal to Texas History web site. George, the son of Johan Jacob Zempelmann of Bavaria, was born on July 24, 1832 (birth record states July 26, 1832). His mother, Maria Salome Hochdoeffer, was a granddaughter of a general under the Emperor. [1]

Exactly when George immigrated to the United States is a bit unclear as I found conflicting information. One source indicates he arrived in 1846 with his uncle and aunt. They settled for a time in New Orleans where George worked as a dry goods clerk. In 1847 they relocated to Austin, the capital of what was by then the twenty-eighth state of the United States. Power had been transferred from the Republic of Texas to the State of Texas on February 19, 1846.

This source claimed George's family had unfortunately died shortly after arriving in Austin after being exposed to disease in Galveston, leaving him on his own at the age of fifteen. By 1854 he had mastered the skills of carpentry before abruptly changing to gunsmithing. In 1856 he began farming and raising stock around Austin until the Civil War. [2]

Yet another source claimed George arrived in the Republic of Texas in 1845, having read published reports in Germany, he struck out on his own:

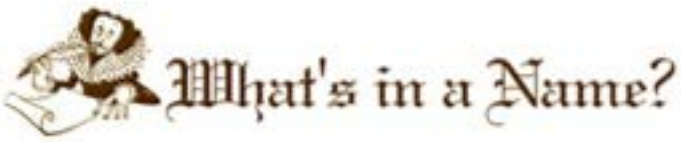
Much had been published in Germany about the new republic of Texas, and young George Zimpelman, having caught its spirit, decided to make his way thither, and he came to Texas in 1845, locating on the Colorado River, where he purchased a plantation. In 1856 he located on a plantation near Austin, where he pursued stock-raising and agriculture until the breaking out of the Civil War. [3]

This source seems a bit far-fetched as it seems to imply an adolescent George Zimpelman purchased a plantation on the Colorado River in 1845! Perhaps it was only poorly worded, the account provided by a Terry's Texas Rangers historian in a 1911 issue of *Confederate Veteran* magazine.

Nevertheless, it has been noted through multiple sources that George Bernhard Zimpelman enlisted in Company D of Terry's Texas Rangers (8th Texas Cavalry) in July of 1861. He was sworn into Confederate service on September 5, 1861, serving from October 1861 until May 1865. Despite being only a private he was well-known as a brave fighter and often selected as a leader. In one battle he was wounded twice, and although maimed for life chose to remain until the end of the war.

Upon his return to Texas George Zimpelman served as Sheriff of Travis County, a dangerous and difficult job during the Reconstruction era. He had land dealings all over the state and even made a little Texas history with his involvement in the so-called El Paso Salt War.

A little side note — I was flabbergasted to discover I had written the story about the Salt War one month after writing the story about the Dawson mine explosion which started this whole saga with Doug. I had no idea the two stories would be linked with George Zimpelman!



by Sharon Hall

Seawillow

Seawillow is a rather lyrical and poetic sounding name isn't it? I ran across this name while researching a friend's African American ancestry. Where in the world did this name come from? Wouldn't you just know it – there's a story behind it!

A search for the name at any newspaper archive site reveals the name appears to have been used most often by Texans – and rightly so, since the story from which the name evolved occurred around Beaumont in 1855. She was the very first baby girl given this special name.

October 22, 1855 must have been a stormy day to be born along the Neches River, which meanders southeast over 400 miles from eastern Van Zandt County, emptying into the Gulf of Mexico below Beaumont. Today, the area averages well over 40 inches of rain per year and flooding occurs on average every five years.

The day Reverend John Fletcher and Amelia (Rabb) Pipkin's daughter came into the world was a perilous one as flood waters trapped them on a raft, along with several family slaves, the situation dramatically heightened since Amelia was about to give birth. The oft-told story is related at the Find-A-Grave page for Seawillow Margaret Ann Pipkin Wells [edited]:

The day Seawillow was born there was a disastrous flood on the Neches River in Beaumont, Texas. The Rev. John F. Pipkin and his pregnant second wife, Amelia Rabb, and some of the family slaves were swept along on a raft. Just before the birth of his daughter, a human chain was formed by the slaves to fasten the raft to a willow

tree. The Reverend looked up through the branches of the Willow tree and gave thanks to God for the safe delivery of his daughter in the midst of the flood water. Thus, the name Seawillow. [1]

In 1942 one of John's sons, Stephen Walker Pipkin, was interviewed and related how he was born in the family home "maintained on Briar Island"[1], located in the southwest part of Orange County. S.W. had just purchased his father's former ranch property.

John Pipkin had a significant influence all those years ago, earning the sobriquet "father of Beaumont churches."[2] For some time following his arrival from Arkansas in the early 1850s, he was the only preacher in those parts. Despite his staunch Methodist faith, he "was not guided by denominational fetters, but extended to all who needed wise counsel or humane help in sorrow, sickness or death, and who served at baptisms, marriages or funerals as the general ministrant of Beaumont."[3] Like many other preachers of the day John was bi-vocational, operating a saw mill and also served three terms as County Judge for Jefferson County.

John, the son of Reverend Lewis and Mary Pheraby (Beasley) Pipkin, was born in Sparrow Swamp, Darlington District, South Carolina on August 14, 1809. After his first wife died he married Amelia Rabb, a widow, in 1844 in Conecuh County, Alabama. By 1850 the family was living in Ouachita County, Arkansas.

After Amelia died on January 23, 1867 of pneumonia John's married daughter, Nora Lee Holtom, wrote a letter to her uncle Stephen Warner Pipkin asking whether he could take Seawillow (or board her for a year) so she could attend school with her cousin Mary. John would gladly compensate for her care. However, by 1870 Seawillow was living with John and his new wife Mattie.

Seawillow grew up in Beaumont and later taught school in Caldwell County (Luling and Lockhart). On November 22, 1883 she married Littleberry Walker Wells. On February 22, 1886 their first daughter was born – Seawillow Lemon – and the first of several descendants named Seawillow.

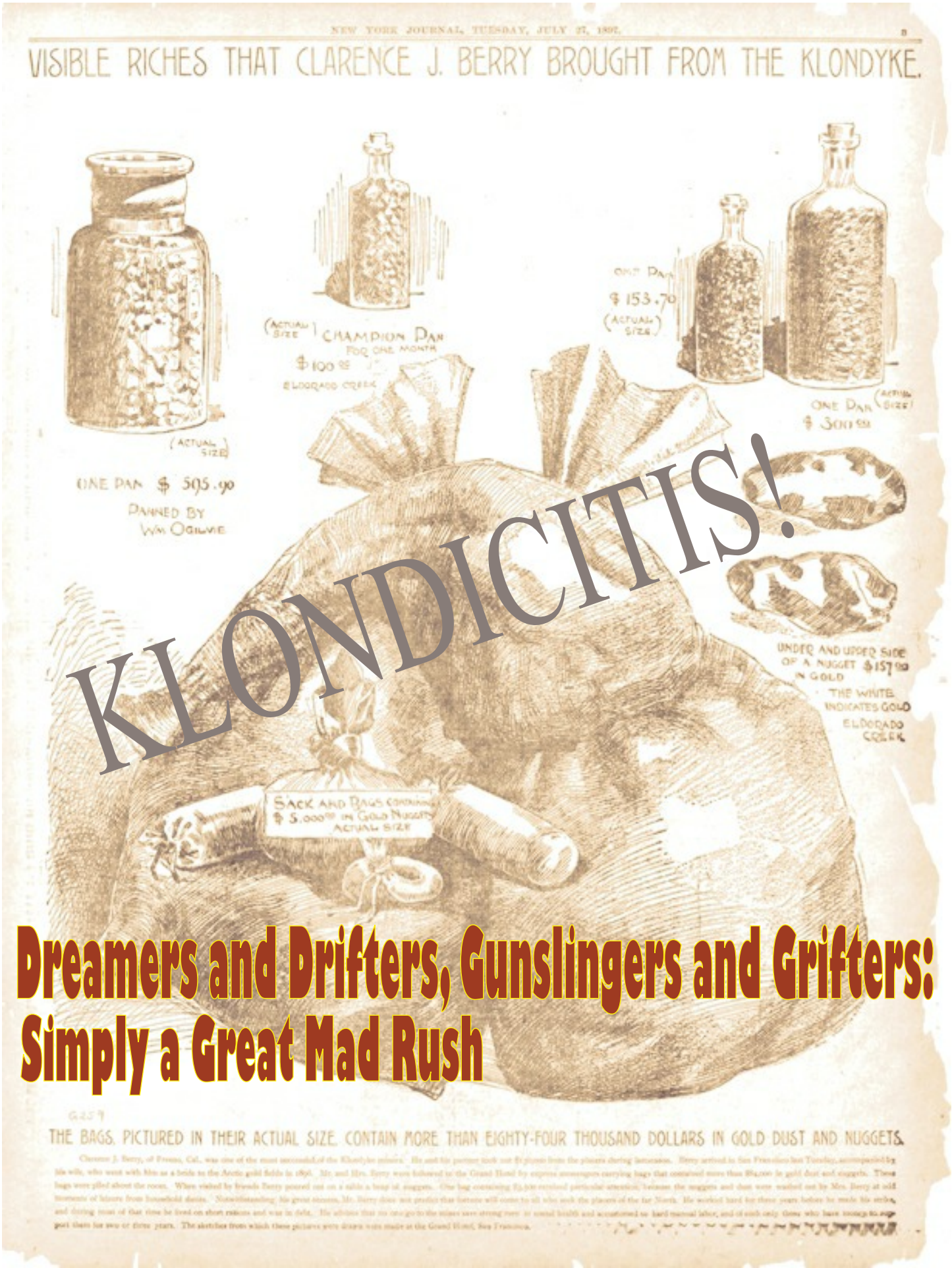
The farming community where they lived continued to grow and by 1899 required a post office. It was named "Seawillow". Littleberry died on January 30, 1900 and Seawillow on May 30, 1912, both buried in the Wells Cemetery in Seawillow.

My friend's great grandmother, Seawillow Hubert, was born on December 14, 1880 in Orange County. Although I haven't been able to find a direct connection to the Pipkin family, it's certain possible one of her ancestors was either a slave of John Pipkin's or the story of how his slaves had helped save his daughter's life became legend among slaves and former slaves.

Through the years, Seawillow Hubert's name was spelled (or transcribed) variously as "Serilla", "Suvilla", "See William" or "Seawillow". It was a bit difficult to discern what her actual name was, but this Seawillow's Find-A-Grave entry clearly records her name. I had to know where that name came from, so thus the little "side adventure".

Not only did I learn the likely origins of her name, I learned quite a bit of history about the Beaumont area and the Pipkin family. While I usually write these types of articles about surnames, this turned out to be quite interesting learning the history of someone's forename.

As I always like to say, keep digging!



Dreamers and Drifters, Gunslingers and Grifters: Simply a Great Mad Rush

In recent years we've seen an increased interest in Alaskan gold – with cable reality shows to prove it. Back in the late 1890s interest in Klondike and Alaskan gold fields was fueled by a malady known widely as "Klondicitis".

Headlines like these began appearing in American and Canadian newspapers in the summer of 1897. It was a fever and it was catching! From Honolulu, Hawaii:

IT'S KLONDICITIS

The Disease That Threatens the Country [1]

From New Jersey:

"KLONDICITIS", HIS COMPLAINT [2]

From California:

KLONDICITIS

Five Victims of the New Disease Sent to Asylum [3]

This doesn't appear to be tongue-in-cheek. John L. Carriere, Secretary of the State Commission in Lunacy, had ascertained within the past few weeks that five men suffering from Klondicitis had become charges of the state.

Meanwhile, in Chicago:

VROOMAN HAS KLONDICITIS [4]

"Frozen out of the Presbyterian church and starved out of the People's church, all in one year, and I am through with preaching," so said Reverend Frank M. Vrooman. He was turning his back on the pulpit for good.

From Salt Lake City, ignorance wasn't "bliss":

IGNORANCE LAMENTABLE

It Is Shown By The Men Who Have Klondicitis

IT IS SIMPLY A GREAT MAD RUSH[5]

Both trails, the one over Chilkoot and the other over White Pass, were blocked. Mr. Thomas Magee, a well known and conservative businessman had made some astute observations – the ignorance of those flocking to the Klondike was lamentable. Of the 400 passengers who had recently sailed from San Francisco, very few had any idea how to get to the Klondike after landing in Dyea or Skaguay. Mr. Magee was correct in his observations, but that didn't stop thousands from trying.

From Oshkosh, Wisconsin – a sure cure:

Sure Cure for Klondicitis

Underwear Bargain That Out-Bargains All Bargains. [6]

The Josslyn Store was selling ladies' fall undergarments for 25 cents each - "More profitable than finding Alaskan nuggets"!

A little poetry:

Klondicitis.

'Twas not so very long ago
When good old friends would meet us,
Stop and tell about that strange disorder
Called appendicitis.

And sudden like 'twas boomed along.
And every one would greet us
With the cheering information that
They had appendicitis.

It grew to be a perfect fad,
And friends began to treat us
With all the latest details of
The fad—appendicitis.

Another fad now stares at us,
It's just about to greet us,
It's not a malformation, but
Gold fever—Klondicitis.

'Tis safe to say that ere a year
Does of our warm youth cheat us
We all will have, or will have had,
The new fad -Klondicitis.

—New York Truth.

The Daily Herald (Delphos, OH) 13 Oct 1897, p6

Obviously, more was going on in the world besides the Klondike gold rush, but newspapers had been overtaken it seemed. The first two pages of the July 31 issue of *The San Francisco Call* were all about gold – from South America to the far northern reaches of North America. Here a few snippets which illustrate just how prominent the subject was across the country:

- The troop ship Willamette was being transformed into a passenger vessel capable of transporting one thousand miners from San Francisco to Dyea, Alaska.
- A potential Klondicitis "cure" of sorts was brewing. Now that so many were converging on the Klondike (and Alaska), an issue long shoved aside was suddenly becoming more urgent. There had in fact a long-standing controversy concerning the exact border lines between Alaska and the Yukon Territory, with the Yukon belonging to the British (Canada).

Why all of a sudden was it so important? Primarily, it threatened to quash the dreams of thousands of would-be sourdoughs. Canada was preparing to begin charging duty fees for all outfits. Come over either Chilkoot or White Pass and you had to pay the Canadian government for the privilege of poking around for gold, even if you eventually ended up in Alaska.

For certain, Seattle was up in arms. It didn't matter whether someone was bringing in supplies which would be used in the Yukon or in Alaska – the Canucks were exacting a duty on each and every comer. Seattle officials were especially perturbed because they supposed Victoria, British Columbia was trying to steer outfitters away from Seattle. After all "the vanguard of the Alaska immigration from the East" was now firmly ensconced in Seattle. Officials well knew they would be missing out on a piece of the action should outfitting shift to Canada. Something must be done!

- Pneumonia would be a fierce enemy for anyone wishing to stay through the harsh winter.
- Someone was working on a shorter route to the Klondike, a way to avoid Chilkoot altogether.
- Hey people, don't forget – there's still plenty of gold in California. No need to rush off north and risk life and limb.

In Newark, New Jersey two young boys have run away, bound for the Klondike. Paul Lemaitre and Cyrus Willock were off to seek their fortunes at the tender age of fourteen. Paul's father had discovered a note in a bureau drawer. In "simple but emphatic language" Paul told his father just what he and Cyrus were planning: "We ain't going on any dime novel trip. We have read the newspapers, and we believe what they say about the gold in Alaska." Mr. Lemaitre said the boys had taken $500 with them but it was unclear where they had acquired it. The boys had determined to walk from Newark to New Jersey and catch a boat headed north. Mr. Lemaitre wasn't planning on attempting to stop them as they would probably tire and return on their own. [7]

Of course, not everyone who trekked north was successful – many a tenderfoot, and for that matter, many an experienced old miner came away empty-handed. Without a doubt, there was gold way up 'thar in the Klondike and Alaska – dreamers just knew there was.

The Dreamers

As Thomas Magee had so astutely observed, not many had a clue what to do once they reached the land of gold. It's doubtful many knew much about the region at all, and more

specifically its geography and geology. The Yukon River, third largest in North America, has its source in British Columbia and then meanders over two thousand miles through Canada and Alaska – 1400 in Alaska and 900 in Canada, according to Alaska.org.

As historian Pierre Berton (born in Whitehorse, Canada in 1920) wrote, "[I]t was the river that fashioned the land, and the river that ground down the gold."8 The Yukon River flowed for approximately two thousand miles with thousands of "tentacles", each one carving out its own path through many a canyon. Look at a topographical map of the region and you'll see it. Much like Minnesota, the "Land of 10,000 Lakes", this was the land of 10,000 rivers, streams and creeks.

The river contained minerals which were easily carried off to the sea, "and even the veins of gold that streaked the mountain cores were sandpapered into dust and flour."[9] Sourdoughs called it just that – "flour gold" – minute grains of yellow flour. A shovelful wouldn't even make a small nugget.

The nuggets, the gold that hadn't yet been ground to fine dust, could end up anywhere:

The finest gold was carried lightly on the crest of the mountain torrents until it reached the more leisurely river, where it sank and was caught in the sandbars at the mouths of the tributary streams. The coarser gold moved for lesser distances: as soon as the pace of the current began to slacken, it was trapped in the crevices of bedrock where nothing could dislodge it. There it remained over the eons, concealed by a deepening blanket of muck . . . [T]hus the gold lay scattered for the full length of the great Yukon River, on the hills and in the sandbars, in steep ravines and broad valleys, in subterranean channels of white gravel and glistening beds of black sand, in clefts thirty feet beneath the mosses and on outcroppings poking from the grasses high upon the benchland. [10]

Gold was everywhere, yet finding it was difficult, even for the most experienced miner. What would possess someone with little or no mining experience to take the risks? In the late 1890s it may have had something to do with economic volatility, following a series of "panics". With headlines like this, who could blame them for at least trying:

ESTIMATED YIELD $5,000,000

Dust and Nuggets Taken Up in the Klondike Placer Fields [11]

Thirty-four Hebrews were willing to leave behind family and property to walk (and work along the way) to the Klondike. A few mentions of their imminent departure were made from June 30, 1897 to October 1,1897 (in an Australian newspaper). Whether they ever reached the Klondike is unclear. Most likely they never made it.

Some who went had a dream and were just plain lucky. Finnish immigrant and South Dakota resident William Kolju had been on the verge of starving in February 1897. He had spent the winter building fire after fire to melt the frozen dirt so it could be shoveled. In May the water came in torrents and after cleanup Kolju had $17,000 in gold dust – and $20,000 more after selling his claim. [12]

Some experienced more heartache than luck.

Jesse Edgren was a newly-minted young lawyer with big dreams. He had studied law at the University of Wisconsin and was admitted to practice as an attorney on December 22, 1896. Whether he ever practiced law is unclear, but at some point in 1897 he made his way to Seattle, perhaps to see firsthand the gold and hear the stories.

A letter written by a family member (the archived document is missing a signature, but seems likely to be his sister Dottie) in July of 1897, while admitting that Jesse can certainly do what he thinks best, but in her opinion he needs to reconsider. In the letter to Jesse, dated July 30, 1897:

Dear Jesse,

I rec'd your lovely long letter Tuesday last, and was not at all surprised at its contents…

I suppose you cannot help getting excited over the gold possibly to be found in Alaska. I have no doubt there is gold there, but certainly everybody cannot get rich, for as the Record says all the best claims are now taken.

Of course, my dear Jesse, I don't want to discourage you from doing what you think is best, but many questions have to be answered and if the answers when all made are more on the side of going to Alaska than not, I should go. In the first place you have not been used to hard physical labor. Your constitution doesn't seem fitted to hold out under a long strain of such work with the attendant privations and hardships. Then also have you money enough to stand the drain of so much time if you should not find anything?

The letter goes on to remind Jesse of their father who had made money by mining, but he had been a blacksmith accustomed to rigorous labor. And, don't forget father lost $4,000 worth of dust in one night by someone stealing it.

You and I are the only ones left, she said, and I wouldn't hear from you for long intervals and would worry whether you were dead or alive. She continued to waiver back and forth between "it's your life, do with it as you think best" to "please don't go!":

But as I said, you may do just as you think best. No person ought to take upon himself the awful responsibility of deciding another one's fate for him, and so I say again, if you feel that you are able to stand the strain to your purse and body required to engage in digging gold, go try your luck if you think best. You always have been lucky, and perhaps you might be so again. But that is mere conjecture. Then you might be entirely broken in health on coming back and be good for absolutely nothing. Of course if I got to feeling miserable I should do something for it immediately whether in Washington or Alaska. Well, we will let the matter drop and let you decide what to do. I want you to do what is for your best good, when once you have decided what that is. . . I hope you will have the best success. I inclose [sic] a slip I cut out this a.m. And shows the hard part of the gold struggle.

Was Jesse's sister typical of others who tried to dissuade a family "dreamer" from joining the mad rush to the Klondike? From the letter it appeared Jesse had borrowed some money, perhaps from Dottie herself. He seemed to have his own plans, regardless of what family thought of them, however.

Everyone knew for sure he had caught the fever when he arrived back in Madison with a little tin box of pea-sized nuggets in early September. He had secured the gold from a miner who had recently returned to Seattle with about $200,000 in gold. The nuggets, worth about $150, were to be exhibited in a Madison drug store.

He may have had "Klondicitis" but he wasn't foolish (surely Dottie was relieved at that!). He knew leaving for the Klondike at that late date was a fool's errand. Still, he proclaimed that nothing but death would prevent him from going the following spring.

He was also training a team of Madison dogs to take with him. A friend was making the

harnesses. Whether or not he and Lepha Mae Bennett were engaged before he left for Seattle the first time, his plans now also included marrying Mae early the following year and heading off together to the Klondike. Given the challenges ahead, one wonders whether she was as excited as he.

It would seem so. On the evening of February 26, 1898 Jesse Edgren and Lepha Mae Bennett were married at the home of her parents, Captain and Mrs. James Bennett. Immediately after the ceremony they caught a train to Seattle to "contemplate going to the Klondike country in the spring."[13]

On the train riding through Minnesota Mae wrote a chatty letter to Dottie. After a layover in St. Paul they were on the way to St. Cloud. She and Jesse had just met the "pleasantest party of people", a company of men from Rochester, New York. Jesse struck up a conversation and the newlyweds were offered accommodations on the car chartered by the men.

They were fortunate to have secured the quarters, making for a much more enjoyable trip to Seattle. Mae was thoroughly enjoying herself! On March 10 she wrote another letter to Dottie from Seattle.

She had enjoyed the train ride across their glorious country: "It is so inspiring to look up to these everlasting hills, and broad waters, surely our Lord has lead us into pleasant pastures."

Apparently, the newlyweds didn't linger long in contemplation. On April 18 the couple was "near Chilkoot" and Jesse had grown a beard and moustache; much to Mae's dismay the moustache was "the rub".

They had met many people, some more pleasant than others, especially "men of culture and standing." One of them, a soloist at Chautauqua, New York, was especially fond of her hospitality as she "happened to be the only possessor of cocoa in camp." A fair exchange – he sang "bits of opera" (*Il Trovatore*) and read Shakespeare to her.

Oh, how she wishes Dottie could visit when they strike it rich – she could have her own claim! Never mind what she might have heard about the Klondikers – most men Mae had met were quite chivalrous. She already had a rich miner in mind for her dear friend. "He'll have close on to a million when his claims are worked up."

Despite the excitement and the hard work which lay ahead for them, Jesse and Mae and some of their friends planned to return the following spring to attend the World's Fair together in Paris. Hopefully, they would have struck it rich by then.

On May 24, 1898 residents of Madison were informed that James Bennett had just received word from Mae that she and Jesse had safely crossed over Chilkoot Pass. From a letter dated May 30 in Dawson City, Northwest Territory, and published in a Madison newspaper, Jesse admitted to being a "tender-foot", but an enthusiastic and hopeful one.

Jesse and Mae had arrived in Seattle (or as Klondikers called it the "robbers' den") on March 4. They found the streets crowded with people from all over the world and prices high – too high for obviously inferior product. For example, fares ranged from $25 to $50 and freight was charged at the rate of $17 per ton.

Two thousand pounds was not, however, charged at $17 per ton because freight went by measurement and not weight. No matter how well you packed your goods it would cost at least $35 per ton – pay it or go north without any grub. The boats were crowded:

Talk about sardines in a box, twelve Chinamen sleeping in a room eight feet square, politicians at a caucus meeting,

such a comparison would be meagre [sic] and vague. Freight and baggage, dogs and horses, men and Jackasses all crowded together, they almost become as one. [14]

The voyage up from Seattle to Dyea hugged the coastline and the scenery wasn't just beautiful – it was grand! It took eight days to reach Dyea after stopping at Fort Wrangle, Juneau and Skaguay. Once they reached Dyea on March 17, the young couple wasted no time, starting immediately for Lake Bennett, about 35 miles away.

Up they went to Sheep Camp (UP being the operative word), where they found an "odd mixture of gamblers and Klondikers. Thousands of tents are pitched on from 15 to 40 feet of snow. A strange life! Climbing the mountain top for wood and boughs for your bed, drinking water composed mostly of dead horses, digging your outfit out from under the snow; is it any wonder that many turn back?"[15]

They had actually experienced a close call in April when the deadly Palm Sunday avalanche buried scores of people (see this month's "Ghost Towns of the Last Frontier" article [Dyea] on page 55). Mae had rushed off a letter to her parents the day after, reassuring them and hoping in the meantime the Bennetts hadn't received news of the disaster and assumed they'd been buried alive. Thousands of people had their outfits buried but Jesse and Mae's was safe, as were they.

At Scales, a small "tent city" at the bottom of Chilkoot Pass they found a scene which Jesse described in some detail – of packers waiting their turn to ascend the perpendicular three-quarter mile incline. As the saying goes, a picture is worth a thousand words:

It took one hour to climb up the incline and but four minutes to climb down – "the method of coming down is to sit down, shut your eyes, trust to luck and let her go Whether you go sideways, backwards or up-side down, you are sure to reach the bottom either dead or alive This is the only fun in all the journey, the only place where an Englishman loses his dignity."[16]

Of course, reaching the summit meant it was downhill all the way now, although downhill wasn't as easy as one might think. It was often harder to hold back than pulling up.

After a tortuous journey through a rocky canyon they came upon Lakes Lindeman and Bennett where most everyone paused to build boats which would take them through dangerous rapids and on to the Yukon, and finally Dawson and the Klondike.

Jesse well knew that he and Mae had been fortunate, as many others never made it through the rapids, let alone making it all the way "in". He finished the missive with: "A stout heart and a strong arm are necessary for the journey. Let us hope they may be ours."[17]

The newlyweds' excitement was palpable and after arriving safely in Dawson they would write letters home, describing in great detail their life in the Klondike. Mae's

letters were printed in various Wisconsin newspapers. Earlier, Jesse had provided his observations and in a letter received in Madison on August 25 she provided her own:

Here they were "in the great Mecca of goldseekers without any damage whatever."[18] They were well, happy and hopeful.

Getting through the White Horse rapids had been a "terror", and although she would have liked to have "run the rapids", Mae had promised her family she would not. She and the dogs were set ashore and walked around. Their boat made it through safely, although others weren't so fortunate. Five boats were wrecked and all their cargo at the bottom of the stream. Traffic was brisk through this harrowing passage, on average every two minutes a boat would shoot through. Then the pilot must do his job and keep them off the rocks.

Mae waited for five hours to see their boat. Around five o'clock in the evening she saw it coming through the rapids and wondered if the pilot would make it through. Her heart stood still when she saw two oars tossed up. The boat, however, righted itself "just in time to miss by a hair's breadth a jagged rock."[19]

After passing through another series of rapids, not quite as harrowing as the last, she remarked how expert and oarsman Jesse had become. "It takes a good one to row a boat with a ton [and] a half of provisions, three people and five dogs, with oars twelve feet long."[20] Dottie needn't have worried about Jesse performing strenuous labor!

At Fort Selkirk they met a party of Indian lads who had just brought in some fresh moose. They paid fifty cents a pound – Mae thought it easily worth five dollars a pound. She had never eaten anything so fine in her life!

About two weeks later Jesse and Mae arrived in Dawson – "the great, the golden Dawson". They slept in the boat that night and took in Dawson the following morning – what a place it was! Eighteen thousand people!

Prices were high for everything – ten times higher than back in the states. Eggs were five dollars a dozen, while lemons and oranges were six dollars a dozen.

They wasted no time finding work. Within a week Mae had secured a position managing an ice cream parlor for ten dollars a day. All she was required to do was weigh out gold dust and supervise. Jesse was making about fifteen dollars a day and they were busy from "seven to eleven." Of course, it little mattered as one o'clock in the morning was the same as noon. Ah, the land of the midnight sun!

Mail delivery was rather infrequent, and when mail did arrive thousands would stand in line. Mae, however, had avoided the long lines through an official she knew and slipping in a side door. The first letter was theirs and she cried for joy!

Waiting for mail in Dawson

The main street of Dawson was much like the crowds seen in Chicago where everyone was rushing around "after the almighty dollar" – except there was very little coin in Dawson. Only a *cheechako*, a tenderfoot, would be carrying coin. In Dawson a man would hand over his gold sack to the merchant so the amount due could be weighed out.

Mae had observed that no one asked the price of anything – just take what you want and here's some gold. She was having so much fun weighing out gold, throwing it around like flour!

As this particular letter was being hand-carried by a friend when he arrived back in Seattle, she guessed by the time her family received it she and Jesse would probably be in business for themselves and have a nice house. Renting a small house of twenty by twenty-five feet cost fifty dollars a month. They would instead buy.

There were quite a few Americans in the Canadian town of Dawson (ten to one of all other nations), and when the Fourth of July rolled around, the fireworks began at midnight. Americans knew what that sound meant and began cheering, firing off guns and pistols – anything to celebrate.

After all, how grand was it to put on such a show celebrating America and liberty "in the former enemy's country". It was grand and it was inspiring. Even the Brits acquiesced and hoisted the Stars and Stripes, under the Union Jack of course.

Mae had words occasionally with soldiers posted in Dawson – how dare they speak of America's soldiers as untrained. The letter mentioned they had heard of American troops landing in Cuba. By the time the letter was published the Spanish-American War had ended, an indication of just how slowly news from home was received.

Jesse had written his own letters to family, one dated July 31 and another September 25, 1898. Perhaps still working on acclimation to his new environs, Jesse was "guessing" it was July 31:

His initial impressions of Dawson:

Probably by this time, some of the gold of the Klondike has reached Seattle, and you have read over again the old story of how and where it was gotten. Where, or where, is all this gold found? Not far from Dawson City, where the Eldorado, Bonanza, Dominion . . . and many other little creeks flow, where the mosquitoes thrive, and where moose and caribou use to roam.

He penned his 18-page missive from their cabin with a full view of "Nugget City". The cabin, situated at the foot of one mountain, faced another mountain three miles away. The Yukon River flowed to his right and in the distance he could hear "the buzz of the saw mills, the only music that charms a Yukoner's ear."

Dawson was a city of tents, about 500 log cabins, warehouses made of tin, a few frame houses, some frame, log and tent stores and dance halls.

The streets of Dawson City would be fit for a king if the king was use to mud and water. When you speak of mud and water you describe the streets of Dawson City. Many rich men walk the streets every day; probably there are more men who are broke walking the streets every day than in any city in the world. Rich and poor, striking is the contrast, wonderful example of extremes. Still, God intended that it should be so.

Jesse had nothing but disdain for the mosquitoes, although there weren't any in Dawson – not a one.

Up to the mines, however, they are as thick as gray-backs upon a Spanish soldier, as nuggets in the pocket of a lucky Klondiker. As Bingham says, "they are rattlesnakes with wings on them, nasty, hellish things.

Biting always biting, buzzing, snarling like a bullet from an American soldier's gun they always hit the mark and never let up until you are dead.

His dogs loved to bark and play, the birds to sing – but all the mosquitoes could do was bite, bite everything. "Night up here is like the day, and the day reminds you of the night."

Across the river, the Klondike river, is situated the principal suburb of Dawson. The name of this suburb is elevating and reminds one of great things. Shakespeare seems to live again . . . I was about to say that the name this suburb is Louse-town. Mae went over there once and has been researching and digging every since.

This was an interesting passage because the "suburb" he mentioned was also known as Klondike City, but affectionately called "Lousetown" – home to Dawson's purveyors of the world's oldest profession. Laura Beatrice Berton, a teacher who took a job in Dawson in the early 1900s described the illicit lair:

At the back doors of the tiny frame houses, the whores, laughing and singing, calling out to each other and chattering like bright birds, were making their toilets for the evening. Some were washing their long hair – invariably bright gold or jet black – drying it in the sun and leisurely brushing it out. Others were just reclining languorously and gossiping with their neighbors. Some were singing lyrically. All were in their chemises. Our eyes started from our heads as we gazed down on them, for these garments were quite short, scarcely down to the knees, and every woman's legs were quite bare. The chemises were also sleeveless, which seemed equally immodest, and cut with a low round neck. As they were made of colored muslin – pink, blue and yellow – the effect was indescribably gay. [21]

What Mae was "researching and digging" is unclear – there were other businesses there – but Jesse provided no further details as to what Louse-town really was. Perhaps he wasn't yet aware of its reputation.

He had plans to use his dogs that winter to carry goods and earn some money. Not too keen on freighting for himself, he thought he could make a good living at it and he would soon go prospecting.

Contrary to Mae's assertion they would buy a cabin, they were paying $25 a month to rent a small 130 square foot cabin, one of the nicest in Dawson. Five months in a tent had its charms, but the cabin was like a palace.

Their bed was made of canvas, a big cot of sorts. The cabin had a nice floor, but no brooms to sweep it with – they didn't yet exist in Dawson. With lace curtains around the bed and cupboard, they were "as cozy and as happy as two little mice, diamonds bright, roses all in bloom."

They had even purchased some nice china – exceedingly tired of eating off tin plates. The china was easily worth $50 but he had acquired theirs from a Negro woman selling out for only $2.50. The set included four cups and saucers, a bread plate, platter and a "fancy pitcher".

They had the finest china that not even the old-timers had. Salmon was plentiful and they had salmon steak at least once a day (on their fine china, of course).

News of American victories had reached Dawson, although the war was winding down. Within two weeks of his late-July letter, hostilities ceased on August 13. Americans in Dawson were celebrating – "every heart was full of patriotism and their eyes full of tears." The American and British flags floated side-by-side. Jesse, however, "had the good fortune to swipe the American flag". It would now float on a high pole which was nailed to his cabin. "If anyone asks you where Jesse and Mae lives in Dawson City, tell them that they live in

the cabin above which floats "The Star-Spangled Banner."

The letter turned personal (it would be shared with other family members) when he urged them not to believe the stories they heard about the Klondike. "We are all right, and are doing well. No matter what anyone says, remember that we will tell you what is true. When we get enough – when we make a stake we will return." He believed many people, "weak in spirit and the faint at heart" would soon be leaving. When they were gone everything would boom again. Jesse was an optimist.

On August 29 Mae wrote to her family, much of it published in various Wisconsin newspapers, keeping the folks at home apprised of their adventures.

It was cold in Dawson (Ugh!) that morning and the leaves were already autumn red and yellow. She knew snow would begin falling soon and "'[T]hen will we be a community apart from the rest of the world."[22]

Bad news as well – since the United States had the exclusive mail to the Yukon, there would be little or no mail service during the winter. Whether or not mail was delivered would depend on the weather.

Mae's family had to have been concerned about her safety and the inherent dangers of living in such a remote location, but Mae nevertheless shared some harrowing bear attack accounts she had heard. Three men had been camping and were awakened one morning by something lifting the tent flap. Assuming it was a dog, one of them yelled "Mushon" (a much-used term in the Klondike). Intending to throw a stick at the dog, he was met by a huge Silver-Tip bear, one of the most savage.

The men had no weapons and had they climbed a tree the bear would have followed. Something had to be done and quickly, so he grabbed the sugar sack and started throwing handfuls at the bear. While the bear was enjoying the sugar another man came up from behind and decapitated the bear with an ax – "chopped his head off! Not way off, but broke his neck."[23]

Another man hadn't been so fortunate on Dominion Creek. Walking through the woods with a rifle on his shoulder he was suddenly confronted by a big Silver-Tip. He fired four times, but didn't kill the bear. Instead, "the bear hugged him to death, then fell dead beside the man."[24]

On one hand, Jesse was telling everyone not to worry about them or believe the stories, while Mae seemed to delight in relaying, in great detail, tales which likely scared the bejeebers out of the folks back home. She did seem to be rather high-spirited.

Jesse, in his letter dated September 11, continued to assure his family and friends that he and Mae were doing well, despite the howling winds and the soon-to-come snow.

In our little cabin we are warm and happy as if we were sitting on a sofa in the parlor at home, except that all of those that we love are not with us. In front of me on the top of the cupboard shelves I can see the following canned goods: Tomatoes, cabbage, corn, oysters – the beefsteak and onions are all gone, but there is plenty down town. We are also proud possessors of a broom and a table-cloth. After living in a tent for so long, a cabin seems like a palace. Our rich claim is still somewhere in the future, but is sure to come. [25]

Jesse explained his plans for winter work. It wasn't something to be dreaded – he was rather looking forward to hauling provisions out to the miners. Actually, it was more difficult to get out there in the summer (the mosquitoes might have been a deterrent). Miners worked through the winter and money would be flowing, and next to mining for $10-15 a day, the work of a freighter with

a good dog team paid the most. How brilliant he had been to bring his own team!

Not that driving a dog team at -20 to -30 below zero was a picnic, but there were places to stop along the trail where one could warm up and get something to eat. He had already been offered a considerable amount of money for his team, but if they were worth that much to someone else, how much more were they of worth to him?

He knew he could make a good living. Yes, prices were high, but so were wages. And, he rather thought it "nice not to have any pennies or nickels for change. One feels more like a man handling bigger money."[26]

On September 25 Jesse wrote perhaps the last letter his friends and family would receive that year. He had not done much except prospecting since quitting the restaurant business (perhaps one of his odd jobs?). He had not prospected in vain, but had not much news as yet since his claims were in litigation.

He and Mae had plenty to eat and ate everything put on the table. Plenty of canned goods, and oh have you heard – moose and caribou are delicious! Don't worry family, we won't starve!

The letter, not as long as some of his others, began winding down with a retraction of sorts. They had planned to come home in the spring, but now there was only "a bare possibility of me returning over the ice in the Spring." Still, Jesse and Mae expected to get home by the next fall. It might just be a visit, but they hoped to stay.

Given what would occur in about three months, it now seems somewhat cryptic. While none of the letters researched in writing this story mention it (nor was any newspaper found to mention it), Mae was pregnant. With no evidence of what was happening in the lives of these young dreamers, her family could only speculate as to their well being. We know for sure they were now even more isolated from Outside (as Klondikers called "civilization"), and their families had already been made aware of unreliable mail service during the harsh winter months.

According to an article in the *Wisconsin State Journal* in early February 1899:

MRS. EDGREN DEAD

Bride of a Year Ago Passes Away at Dawson City.

DETAILS NOT RECEIVED.

Only a Brief Telegram, Sent from Seattle – Death Probably Occurred in December – Last Letter Received Here Oct. 23.[27]

Word had been received the evening before via circuitous route – "the news coming in a telegram from Seattle, where it was sent by letter, from Captain Jack Crawford, to an acquaintance of his, with instructions to telegraph the family here."[28] The telegram, short on details, led everyone to believe Mae had died sometime in December. It would seem very much out of character for vivacious, ebullient Mae not to have shared the exciting news with her family, but it appears she and Jesse kept the pregnancy a secret.

The news, of course, was a "startling shock" to her family and friends. She and Jesse had been married less than a year and all their letters "all gave cheerful account of life in the frozen north, and were full of hope for their future prospects."[29]

Just how long it took for Jesse's letter of January 12, 1899 to reach the family is unclear. The twelve-page handwritten letter was heartbreaking to be sure. Here, in its entirety:

Dear Father & Mother & Dear Sisters:

A few weeks ago we wrote and told you that we had an addition to our family – a cat. Let me repeat – In our cabin there moves and breathes something that did not move and breathe there when we last wrote. I would not take a good deal for it. It is a soft, a sweet little thing – it is a baby. Yes, a baby – the prettiest little bouncing girl-baby you ever saw. All the gold in Klondike, the pearls of the sea, the diamonds of the world could not buy it. Mae, its darling mother, is sleeping, quietly sleeping at the present time. My dear father and mother, my pretty dear little wife, your little soldier girl is in Heaven with the angels with her God.

Father! Mother! Sisters! Be brave. Be brave for the sake of your son, for the sake of our child, Mae's daughter, of Mae Eldorado Edgren.

My heart is broken. The pleasure of my life is gone. I am drifting along a river of tears down to the ocean of sadness.

Suffered! I have gone through more than I ever thought the human heart could stand.

I would gladly give my life, rather than break this news to you. Don't break down. Keep strong for the child's, for your broken-hearted son's sake.

O God in this hour give me strength to write, let me live long enough to tell the dear father and mother and sisters what I have to say:

Now, father and mother, if I do not break down, I shall try and tell how it all happened.

The baby was born on December 22, 1898. Why did we not tell you this? Mae and I discussed it many times and it was her wish that you should not know. She knew that you would worry, oh so much, and on account of the uncertainty of the mails, she thought, we both thought that months of unnecessary worry might be the result. I wanted her to return to her father and mother until after the birth of our child; but as several ladies had gone thro' the same thing here, she thought she would be all right. Brave, brave girl – an angel on earth. Fate seemed to be against her. About ten days before the baby was born, she was taken down with typhoid fever.

Childbirth and typhoid fever. Either one meant death.

For many days and nights we fought with death. Money was not spared. The best physicians in town attended her. Two skilled nurses and myself watched over her bedside. The danger of the childbirth was safely passed over. The typhoid fever killed her. The childbirth only weakened her, took away her strength, so that she could not battle with the fever.

If it had not been for the fever, everything would have gone well. Everything that could be done in here was done.

O, I cannot write. I cannot write. O, it is so hard for me. We were getting along so nicely. Everything looked so bright. Our married life was such a happy one. We understood each other perfectly. We loved each other I suppose as few ever love. And now my home is broken up – my beautiful little wife, the treasure of my heart, my Mae, is dead.

A month ago I was the happiest boy in the world. Today everything looks dark. I am a sad, lonesome man, brokenhearted. Only one thing keeps me up – the baby. It is the sweetest little baby you ever saw – the very picture of its mother.

It is very good – never cries only when it wants its dinner. At the present time it is being kept by Mrs. Dr. Mosier who is a doctor and a professional nurse. She has a very nice cabin and the baby is getting

the best possible care. It is being fed on Mellin's Food and condensed milk.

Everyone is very, very kind to me and the baby. A Mr. Hamburger, who used to live in Madison, a Jew, one of the best of friends I ever had, has taken a great interest in the baby. He has made it about a hundred dollars worth of presents. He says he cannot help it, and so I let him do it. I shall bring the baby home on the first boat that leaves here next spring which will be about June tenth. In the meantime it will receive the best that money can do for it.

Please do not ask me at the present time to tell you about the funeral. I cannot. I shall send you clippings from the papers.

Among the people who have been especially kind to me while Mae was sick was the following:

Capt. Jack Crawford
Mrs. Martin (nurse)
Mrs. Stephenson (nurse)
Dr. Cassells
Dr. Dunn (Pres. Of Assoc, of Drs.)
Dr. Benson
Mr. Needham
Messrs. Strights, Nicholson, Mr. Flammers, from Delhi, Mrs. Simons and O, so many people.

Father and mother, it is hard. I think I can sympathize with you. I cannot write. My eyes are flooded with tears, my heart is bursting with sorrow.

If I were only at home! Here I am up in a cold, dreary country, homeless, penniless, for during Mae's sickness our little pile of dust melted away and I am $500 in debt. However, the money does not trouble me. I have many friends it is true. O, but I long for the love of my little wife, of your little soldier girl. Life will never be the same to me – I doubt whether I can ever be happy again.

But I shall try and live for our child's sake, and put all my energies in that direction. If it will only make a woman half as good and brave and loving as its mother, my effort I shall feel will not be in vain.

Do not blame me, dear father and mother for bringing your darling away up here – here to die. God knows I feel bad enough – I am suffering enough.

My little darling is gone. The pride of my heart, the sunshine of my life, my brave, true Mae is no more.

Dear father, Mae was a brave, good and dear wife. She trusted full in her father and mother, and when I think that she, that I cannot return her to them it seems that my heart would break. Dear father, I know that Mae's wish would be that you keep up your courage and do as much for her little child as you have done for her.

"In far away Alaska where the Yukon River flows,

And large bowlders [sic] stand midst wealth and might,

In a land with wealth untold, in a grave that's lined with gold,

Mae is sleeping in the Klondike vale tonight."

My sad duty is done. I thank God that I had power to do it.

From your sad and broken-hearted son,

Jesse

This and other letters will be sent out by a special messenger who will be given instructions to save no expense to make quick time.

On February 11 the newspaper provided further details communicated via letters from Jesse and Captain Jack. Mae had died on January 3, less than two weeks following

Mae Eldorado's birth. Jesse had been unable to speak of the funeral; Captain Jack provided details:

I have just returned to my cabin from the grave of your beloved child. All that mortals could do has been done. At 12 o'clock noon today we placed her on the sled. Old Glory wrapped around her elegant form and casket, and her own six coal-black, faithful dogs hauled her remains to the church, and thence to the cemetery on top of the hill. A beautiful sermon was preached by the Methodist minister, Mr. Heatherington, after which I attempted to deliver a short eulogy, buy my voice was choked and tears blinded me. Not a man, woman or child in the church that did not shed tears. [30]

O, she was lovely in death her pure, white face as if chiseled in marble, holding in her cold hand the little flag her soldier papa gave her when leaving home. She will hold it until the Angel Gabriel sounds reveille, and when you meet again she will raise Old Glory and exclaim: "See, Papa! I have still got your little flag."

In addition to writing the heartfelt note to Mae's he later sent along a photograph of the funeral procession.

Captain Jack Crawford, one of the more colorful characters of the Klondike, was known as "The Poet Scout". He had rubbed shoulders with many well-known characters such as Mark Twain and William Frederick "Buffalo Bill" Cody. A teetotaler, he fought in the Civil War and was later appointed Captain of the Black Hills Rangers militia. He had learned about gold mining in the Black Hills and spent two years mining in the Klondike without success between 1898 and 1900.

Captain Jack, a prolific writer, hadn't much book learning as a child. According to cowboy poet James Barton Adams who wrote the forward to Crawford's book, *Whar' the Hand o' God is Seen and Other Poems*:

What education he possesses was picked up in the wild school of Nature and through association with army officers and their wives at the several frontier military posts at which he was stationed while in the government scouting service. Before learning to read after returning from active service at the front in the great Civil War, the page of a printed book was to him but a jumble of unmeaning black characters massed upon white paper. To use a homely colloquialism, he did not "know B from a bull's foot" until taught the alphabet by a Sister of Charity when, near the close of the War, he lay upon a hospital cost suffering from a gunshot wound received in battle. Considering all of this, the work between the covers of this volume must appeal to the educated reader as being truly remarkable. [31]

In honor of Mae's passing he wrote a poem addressed to her parents:

Sweet May is Dead!

To her beloved father, Captain James Bennett:

Sweet May is dead, your solider girl;
Your sunny, household pet;
Transplanted from a world of peril,
A rose in Eden set.

She knows no pain, and could you see
Beyond the spangled blue,
Your soldier girl would surely be
On guard to welcome you.

Sweet May is dead to earthly pain,

God willed that you should sever,
But you shall meet and live again,
Forever and forever.

And when the angel sounds tattoo,
Be ready, comrade mine,
To meet your solider girl in blue.
With hope and faith divine.

An eloquent man, Captain Jack had a special tenderness for Jesse's plight and little Mae Eldorado Edgren. He staged a show with proceeds going directly to Mae. Before Mae left with Dr. Mosier the following spring, miners lined up and contributed gold nuggets totaling $400, "riches" which she received after turning twenty-one years old.

Mae Eldorado had the distinction of being the first known white child born in the Klondike. Much was made of it and for years to come she was known as "The Klondike Baby". As Jesse had mentioned in his letter to Mae's family, little Mae Eldorado (who he strangely referred to as "it" throughout the letter) was cared for by Dr. Mary Mosier, a physician living in Dawson City. When Mae's parents requested the child be returned to them, Dr. Mosier accompanied her to Seattle.

Accounts published several years later in various newspapers offer more details surrounding Mae's death. In December 1904 the *Milwaukee Sentinel* featured an extensive article about Jesse and Mae and the child known as the first white child of the Klondike. In the article, written by Belle Blend, the story relates how Jesse and Mae were working a claim at Eldorado Creek when Mae Eldorado was born:

May Eldorado Edgren, whose father is Jesse L. Edgren of this city, was the first white child born in the Klondike. When only a few days old she was carried on a dog sled over 200 miles by way of a mountain trail, while her mother lay ill and dying on another sled. The one hope they had at that time for Mrs. Edgren – which proved to be a groundless one – was to get her to the Dawson City hospital. . . . The anxiety of having a tiny baby and a sick woman fighting for life was almost unbearable. The trail was broken in many places and what had been slush in the early spring had turned to chunks of ice in the middle of winter. . . On the day that the party left Eldorado creek, in the latter part of December, 1898, the thermometer registered 60 degrees below zero. Capt. Jack Crawford, whose fame as a mountain poet has grown outside of the northwest country, was with Mr. Edgren, and it was to him, as well as the other kind friends at the camp, that the baby owes her existence. It was only by the most careful watching and tender care that the small spark of life could be kept from going out. [32]

Pictures accompanied the article, including one of the camp on Eldorado Creek near where Mae Eldorado was born. It is quite possible it took Jesse some time before he was able to relate the entire story. After all, in the letter to the Bennetts he had repeatedly exclaimed, "I cannot write!" and could not offer details of the funeral.

Jesse and pregnant Mae apparently decided to try their luck at prospecting on Eldorado Creek that fall. The *Sentinel* account continued:

Going up to the camp on Eldorado creek they made a merry party. They had not intended to stay until the winter set in, but [with] typhoid fever breaking out in the camp they were obliged to change their plans. On the journey Mrs. Edgren wore a suit made from heavy chinchilla. The skirt was cut short and high, thick leggings protected her limbs from the ice and rocks in climbing the mountains. She wore a stocking cap on her head which could be supplemented by the fur hood of her ulster. . . The Edgren party experimented with

some success in placer mining, and it is said that Mrs. Edgren could shake the pan, when she was interested in experimenting, with as much dexterity as the skilled miners. The pay dirt, as the gold ore is called in miners' vernacular, is put in a pan prepared for the purpose, with some water, and is swirled around until the heavy particles fall to the bottom. . . It is all a game of chance, however, the millionaire of yesterday oftentimes being the pauper of tomorrow, vice versa.

In 1936 Fond du Lac native Thomas Cale, who at one time had served as Alaska's first full-term congressional delegate, related his memory of the events:

There was pathos aplenty in those times. "I met a highly educated young couple from Madison," Cale recalls. They had left the university and married the summer before. As I remember, the man's name was Edgren. The young woman was beautiful and talented, but wholly unsuited to the hard life of the trail, and she died in the autumn of 1898 giving birth to a daughter. The mother was buried on the lower slopes of a mountain, but strange to relate, the child lived and grew to be a strong, healthy baby.

The wee tot came to be considered the property of the entire community and there was not a rough miner in the region who would have hesitated to give half this possessions if necessary for the welfare of the child. Finally the parents of the dead mother had the child sent to Seattle where they met her and brought her back to Madison. An old Irish lady who had mothered the baby escorted her. An Indian with the child strapped to his back brought her over the pass to Skagway, where the vessel was boarded.

I well remember the deep regret of the boys. Some of the boys had organized a crude band. As they took the little lass away, the band played "The Girl I Left Behind Me." Even the most stoical of the men was not ashamed that day when tears trickled down their cheeks.

Later I looked up the family in Madison. The girl was then 7 or 8. As I was ready to leave, she went out in the garden and returned with a handful of flowers. "Mr. Cale," she said, "when you get back to Alaska, will you please put these flowers on my mama's grave?" Poor child, no one will ever be able to tell the exact spot where her mother rests." [33]

Although this story varies somewhat, they are Thomas Cale's recollections. With his account and the one published in 1904, there is a clearer picture of what actually took place.

It's unclear whether Jesse ever returned to the Klondike. The *Sentinel* account indicated he had not, but in 1901 he was said to be taking a position with a syndicate owning claims near Cape Nome and expected to return to Alaska. He had also just opened an ice skating rink in Madison. It would feature electric lighting and heated by a bonfire in the center of the 100,000 square foot skating space. The bonfire on the ice was a trick he had learned in the Klondike. [34]

In 1905 he was introduced as a "pioneer miner in the Klondike" at an event in Janesville. "He told of one small claim near Dawson which he had bored nine holes and disgustedly sold for $62.50 from which he afterwards saw $116,000 taken out." In retrospect, he advised going to look over a prospective claim before investing and added "after doing so the man would know no more about it than he did in the beginning."[35] Understandably, Jesse had soured on gold prospecting.

With benefit of a few years hindsight and overcoming an overwhelming sense of regret, perhaps Jesse had come to terms

with his youthful missteps. But, what a toll had been exacted!

Jesse remarried sometime between 1900 and 1910. In 1910 he and wife Minnie were living in Milwaukee with Mae and Florence Buck, Minnie's daughter from her first marriage.

In 1910 an employee of his mail order business in Milwaukee was struck by an elevator while leaning over the shaft to call to an operator. The man was nearly scalped. The family made news in 1911 when they were forced to flee a hotel fire in Chicago. Several times reference was made to Mae as the "Klondike baby".

Sadly, another story recalled the Klondike baby in 1915 when Jesse Lewis Edgren died on June 1. According to a poem entitled "The 1898 Gold Rush" Jesse died of lockjaw. Mae Eldorado, now a young lady in her teens, was bereft of both natural parents.

When Captain Jack died in 1917, newspaper accounts again recalled the "Klondike baby". From tragedy to tragedy, her name and story remained in the news for several years. In March of 1920 newspapers reported Mae had come into a "small fortune" of $350, the amount of gold dust and nuggets collected for her in 1899.

Sadly, in 1921 Mae Eldorado was stricken with tuberculosis and doctors had little hope for her recovery. Her grandmother, Bethia Bennett, died on June 19; Mae was in residence at a Madison sanitarium.

Two months later Mae Eldorado Edgren died at her aunt's home in Madison. A year later her stepmother Minnie died on September 23, 1922. Tragedy had overshadowed this family for more than twenty years.

The Edgren and Bennett families were, of course, not alone in their tragedy. Headlines and phrases like "died at Dawson City" or "died in the Klondike" were numerous in the fall of 1898 and the winter and early spring of 1899. However, the 120 year-old story of Jesse and Mae Edgren was a particularly poignant one which this writer thought needed to be shared. We are *. . . uncovering history one story at a time.*

Jesse, Mae (and their dog Major) pictured with Captain Jack Crawford

Mae Bennett Edgren

Dr. Mosier and Baby Mae

Many thanks to Alaska's Gold Lode, a database of Alaskan primary sources. To view the entire "Jesse L. and Mae Bennett Edgren papers, 1896-1921" collection upon which this story is based (now archived and found in the "Wayback Machine"):

https://education.alaska.gov/temp_lam_pages/library/gold/browseaction.cfm?CID=Jesse%20L%2E%20and%20Mae%20Bennett%20Edgren%20papers%2C%201896%2D1921#

THE DASH

The Immigrant Miners of Dawson, New Mexico

On October 22, 1913 a massive coal mine explosion occurred in Dawson, New Mexico at the Stag Canyon Fuel Company's Mine No. 2. This month's "Dash" pays tribute to some of the immigrant miners who perished on that horrific day. The story becomes even more heart-wrenching after perusing their immigration records and contemplating had these men known what was ahead would they have come to America at all.

In looking for the grave records for that fateful day (what little there are), name after name lists October 22, 1913 as the date of death. Above that would be a notation regarding birth as "Unknown". Most were buried with only a Miner's Cross and no grave stone. A memorial was erected in the cemetery listing names of the dead. The list of immigrants killed included those from Greece, Italy, Russia, Hungary, Austria, Slavic nations, Ireland, Mexico and Bohemia.

What brought these immigrants to America? Economic conditions abroad in the early 20th century were less than perfect for many. From 1912 to 1913 the First Balkan War was fought, a precursor to World War I which began in 1914. During the first two decades of the 20th century, there were revolutions, realignments and upheaval – the world was in a state of turmoil, especially in Europe.

Because most of the immigrant miners had not lived and worked in the United States very long, the search for U.S. records was somewhat futile. There is, however, some interesting information to be gleaned by just researching the passenger lists of immigrant ships.

Emmanuoil (or Emmanuel) Anezakis

Emmanuel Anezakis sailed into New York harbor on March 4, 1912 on the immigrant ship *Athinai*. He had departed from Piraeus, Greece on January 31, 1912. Emmanuel was 25 years old and had less than $50 (amount is illegible) with him on arrival. His hometown was on the island of Crete – Lakos (sp?). He had purchased his own ticket and had a ticket to his final destination of Dawson, New Mexico. [1]

Waiting for Emmanuel in Dawson was his cousin Thelfano, Box 101, Dawson, NM. Thelfano was also killed in the explosion (Thelfano's surname is listed as "Andrios" at Find-A-Grave).

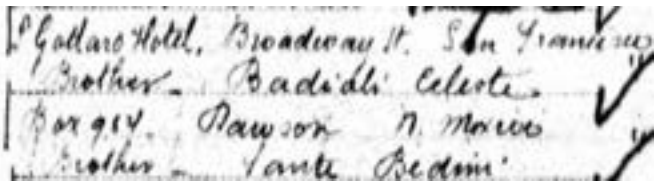
Antonio Badiali

Antonio Badiali, aged 23 and a laborer, arrived on April 11, 1913 in New York harbor after departing from Le Havre, France on April 5, 1913 on the immigrant ship *SS France*.

Antonio's hometown was Monfestino, Italy. His father Bedini(?) Anselmo is listed as his nearest relative. NOTE: in the column regarding marital status it first indicated "S" for single but an "M" was placed over it indicating he was

married. There is no wife with him, however, and she is not listed as his nearest relative.

Antonio arrived with $30 in his pocket and his destination is Dawson, New Mexico where his brother Celeste awaited his arrival (Box 984, Dawson, NM). Celeste Badiali was listed among the dead on October 22.[2]



Enrico Simoncini

On September 6, 1913, Enrico Simoncini departed from the port of Le Havre, France headed to America on the *La Savoie* immigrant ship, arriving on September 13, 1913 in New York. He was 24 years old, single, 5 feet 9 inches tall with brown hair and eyes and fair skin. His occupation was listed as "miner". He could read and write and his hometown was Villafranca, Italy. His nearest relative is listed as his father, Pietro, who also lived in Villafranca. Enrico had paid for his trip and and arrived with $25 and a paid ticket to his final destination of Dawson, New Mexico.

Awaiting Enrico in Dawson was his cousin (also named) Pietro Simoncini whose address was Box 991(?), Dawson, NM. It appears that Pietro had, for several years, gone back and forth between Villafranca and Dawson. He first arrived in America on July 17, 1893 (age 21). He is also shown on passenger lists in 1904 and 1907. Pietro arrived back in America on November 4, 1911 (age 39) and was returning to Dawson, New Mexico.

In a little over a month after his arrival in America, Enrico Simoncini was killed in the massive explosion in Mine No. 2 of the Stag Canyon Fuel Company. [3]

Francesco Merlotti

In 1902, Francesco Merlotti arrived for the first time in America on May 24 in New York harbor. He had begun his journey at Le Havre, France on the immigrant ship *La Savoie*. Francesco was 16 years old and from Turbigo, Italy. He arrived with $30, having paid his own fare and had a ticket to his final destination of Castle Gate, Utah. The passenger record indicated he would be joining his brother-in-law in Castle Gate.[4]

On December 16, 1911, Francesco Merlotti again arrived in New York harbor, this time with his wife, Regina. He had gone back to Italy to bring his wife to America. Francesco listed his father Antonio as his nearest relative, living also in Turbigo. [5]

In less than two years after returning from Italy with his wife, Francesco was killed in the mine explosion. An interesting side note – on Saturday, March 8, 1924, an explosion occurred at the coal mine in Castle Gate, Utah. This was the first mine that Francesco likely worked in 1902.

Two Other Individuals of Note

Two other men killed on that day are interesting enough to mention, although one was not an immigrant. The mine superintendent, William McDermott (listed as Irish) was also killed. He was buried in the Masonic Cemetery in Trinidad, Colorado. He had been preceded in death by his wife in 1902 (died at the age of 30).

Another person killed that day was Henry P. McShane, 19 years old. He was the son of Mrs. E. R. McShane, widow of William McShane, and one of the major shareholders in the Stag Canyon Fuel Company. Henry McShane apparently didn't want to be known as one of the "idle rich":

McShane gave up his life because he did not want to be classed among the "idle rich." His mother is wealthy and her son would have inherited her fortune. Young McShane liked the coal mining business and last summer decided to come to Dawson for actual experience. He was put to work like any other man and shown no favors. He worked and hobnobbed with the miners in No. 3 shaft, few of whom knew who he was.[6]

During the rescue, hundreds of miners and rescue workers converged on the scene from near and far. Striking Colorado miners came to help, as well as miners from the neighboring states of Arizona and Utah. There were, of course, several newspaper accounts of the events surrounding the disaster. One story in the *Lincoln Daily News* of October 24, 1913 was particularly riveting:

Conditions in Stag Cannon (sic) mine number two are becoming worse. They are killing the rescuers who have braved death constantly during the past twenty-four hours in an effort to save some of the 260 men imprisoned by Wednesday's explosion.

At 6 o'clock this morning two rescuers and helmet men, William Payser and Jim Laird, died in the fire-filled shaft. They had been on duty since 8 o'clock last night and had refused to come out when ordered. Their refusal cost them their lives....

.... The number of men rescued alive still stood at twenty-six at 10 o'clock. Forty-two bodies had been taken out and it was estimated that 260 had perished, including the two rescuers who died this morning. The dead will be buried together this afternoon – if enough coffins can be obtained. Coffins are coming form Denver, Las Vegas, El Paso, from Trinidad and other points. In box cars, on flat cars and even in baggage cars of the transcontinental flyers, they are coming. The coffin supply for several weeks of Colorado, New Mexico and western Texas is to be used, all at once, in Dawson. Embalmers from distant points are hastening here. Shrouds and embalming fluids are at a premium.

The air in the mine is very bad and fears are felt for 120 rescuers in the inner passages. Despite the fact that all wear oxygen helmets, a majority of those who emerged from the shaft reported conditions desperate and coal dust thick, threatening a new explosion to add to the horrors already endured....

... Groups of women and children gathered at the pit mouth at daylight today, eagerly watching for the

appearance of rescuers with corpses. They are being kept back by ropes. The explosion must have been more severe than had been thought as the tops of several men's heads were blown off.

If the lives of any more men are saved the credit will be due to Joseph Smith, former superintendent of the mine, who left the employ of the Dodge-Phelps company, owners, eighteen months ago. Smith lives in Trinidad, Colorado, but as soon as the news of the disaster reached him, he boarded the first train and arrived here yesterday. Since then he has been almost constantly in the mine. He knows the underground passages intimately and has spent his entire time directing the rescuers.... Shortly before noon today he slept for the first time since he heard of the explosion....

....An incident that has aroused hope is the fact that a mule came out of the mine alive during the night. The animal emerged of its own accord and immediately brayed for something to eat. It was not hurt....

.....A thrilling story of the death of Laird and Payser was told by Roy Simpleman and Walter Kerr, who accompanied them into the mine last night. The four men were working together in entry 14 east, when Laird dropped. Simpleman said: 'The heat and smoke were terrible and I cannot now understand how I lived through it. Laird had no helmet and when he dropped we told Kerr to rush away and get help. Payser and I worked for several minutes to revive Laird, but was no use. Finally I turned to Payser and said, 'he's dead, Billy; let's get out of this hell hole.' We started away and just then Payser's knees gave way beneath him and he sank to the ground. 'I guess I'm gone too, kid' was all he said. I waited I don't know how long for somebody to come and finally Kerr returned but we could do nothing and after a long time we fought our way out.'

Even more heart-wrenching, from the *Reno (Nevada) Gazette-Journal*:

Scenes at the mine today were particularly pathetic. Added to the women who have pressed the guard lines since Wednesday were added the wives of the volunteer helmetmen, some of whom piteously beseeched their husbands to turn back. [8]

Funeral services were held this afternoon over the second group of dead miners. The first rites were observed over the long line of plain black caskets, laid out on the floor of the temporary morgue.

The burying of the dead has brought keener realization of the horror of the disaster to the townspeople. Business was suspended for two hours during the services and hundreds of men, women and children gathered at the morgue. [9]

This, of course, wasn't the first accident or tragedy to strike the town, nor was it the last.

Tragically, on February 8, 1923, another explosion occurred in Mine No. 1, killing another 120 miners. Eventually the town dwindled away and became a ghost town. Still, we must not forget its place in history, nor the immigrant miners of Dawson, New Mexico.

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Mining Genealogical Gold: Finding Records of Your Territorial Ancestors

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Thou Shalt Not Kill: A History of Conscientious Objection: Revolutionary War to World War II

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