



St. Louis Genealogical Society

# Quarterly

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*Johanna Friederike (Hufendick) and Theodore Louis Proske, with baby, Johann Friedrich, pose for a photo in St. Louis in 1865. Unfortunately, the baby did not survive long, but his baptism records led to a moving research experience for a family descendant.*

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# St. Louis Genealogical Society Quarterly

Spring 2024



## ***On the Cover***

The only surviving photo of this young family led to a moving research experience for a descendant. From Germany to St. Louis and back to Germany again, join author Jana Proske Brazeal as she finds some original records and reconnects with an ancestral home. Story begins on page 18.

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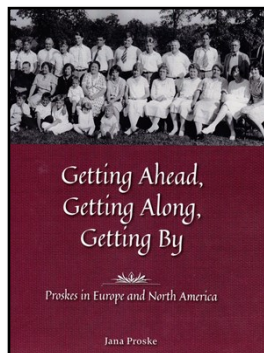
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# BOOK REVIEWS

***Getting Ahead, Getting Along, Getting By: Proskes in Europe and North America.*** By Jana Proske. Published by Accent Group Solutions, St. Louis, Missouri. 2022. Hardbound. 700 pages. \$90. Order via check or money order at [jana.proske57@gmail.com](mailto:jana.proske57@gmail.com).

The first thing you notice about this book is its size. At 700 pages, it is a large volume. The second thing is that it is full of illustrations: photographs of people, maps, documents, letters, newspaper clippings, and pictures of houses and other buildings. And then it will not take long to notice this is not your average family history book.



It dives deeply into the history, culture, food, and habits of people and the communities where they lived.

The Proske family in America emigrated from the town of Münsterberg in Silesia, located in what is now western Poland. Over the years, the town was part of Germany, Czechoslovakia, and Poland. Its population is both Polish and German. Proske was originally a Czech name. "This particular branch of the 'PROSKE' Clan originated in the ancient Kingdom of Bohemia at a time when the Province of Silesia was a part of that Kingdom."

The book is divided into five major sections:

- **Part I: Deep Roots**, which explores the origins of the Proske name and the history of Silesia and town of Münsterberg.
- **Part II: Our Line**, tracing Proskes in Europe from 1687 into the 1900s.
- **Part III: A New Land**, which discusses the Proskes who came to America and settled in St. Louis.
- **Part IV: The First Generation in America**, which consists of chapters detailing each of the nine adult children of Theodore Louis Proske.
- **Part V: What If?** This chapter explores the question, "What if they had stayed in Silesia?" It examines the twentieth-century history of Münsterberg and the Proske families who lived there.

Theodore Louis Proske came to America when he was nineteen, arriving at the port of Baltimore on 11 September 1857. He came to St. Louis five days later, arriving on 16 September 1857. He was married to Johanna Frederike Hufendick in 1864. Frederike died in 1872, and Theodore married Anna Marie Rose as his second wife in 1876. He had four children by his first wife, the first of whom died as an infant, and six children by his second wife, all of whom lived to adulthood.

Theodore kept a diary throughout much of his life, with entries from 1853 to 1900. And the author had it in hand as she prepared this text. In it, Theodore included the names (and some vital record dates) of his Proske ancestors: birth, marriage, and death information for all of his father's children, as well as infor-

## Book Reviews

mation about his own marriages and children. The original diary was written in German, and a full translation is presented in one of the appendices to this book. Each entry covers a year in Theodore's life, including his passage to America and his time spent with the Union Army during the Civil War.

The latter pages of the book are taken up with fourteen appendices which cover topics as wide-ranging as church and archival records, Theodore's diary, family letters, a collection of signatures, and newspapers and civil records from Münsterberg

As extensive as this volume is, it suffers greatly from the lack of any indexing. With 700 pages to explore and the occasional stream-of-consciousness telling of stories throughout the text, a name index would seem a must, and a subject index would also be most helpful. We understand that the author is preparing a separate name index as a pamphlet to accompany the book, which will make a most welcome addition.

As mentioned above, this is not your typical family history book, and you do not need to have Proske ancestors in your family tree to benefit from reading it. Anyone with Czech/Bohemian ancestry will welcome the insights into the history and culture of that area presented here. The author is a retired academic reference librarian, and she has used her reference skills and her personal interest in the region to present a compelling and often-detailed account of the life and times of its people.

*Reviewed by Ted Steele,  
StLGS volunteer*

***The Past is Prologue: The Family of Edes Powell Gilbert.*** By Edward E. Steele, St. Louis, Missouri. 2022. 629 pages, hardcover, illustrated. Available through the Gilbert family and at select libraries.

Edward "Ted" Steele has produced another extensively researched family history, this

time for Edes Powell Gilbert. Edes was born in 1932 in Brooklyn, New York, to a pair of very accomplished parents. She left a national legacy in the field of education when she retired. This included seven years as head of the school at Mary Institute in St. Louis, Missouri. She and her husband, Rex Wilson, had three children. As of the writing of the book, Edes continued to devote her time and talent to the fields of arts and education in St. Louis.

The result of a ten-year project, this book was written as a gift to Edes's children and grandchildren. Although a massive tome at more than 600 pages, Steele's book focuses on the family's stories and not simply "born, married, died" data, making for engaging reading. Numerous photographs, illustrations, and documents provided by Edes herself add to the appeal of the book. Steele does a nice job of providing documentation (albeit sometimes brief) at the end of each chapter for his sources.

Pedigree charts and family group sheets in each chapter are very helpful and keep the reader oriented to the family line being discussed. The book is divided into two parts. Part one covers the first five generations of Edes's ancestors, both paternal and maternal. I found a couple of stories particularly interesting. First is the account of Mary L. Ranney, born in 1871 in Chicago, Illinois. Mary, Edes's great-aunt, was an extraordinary woman who worked for an architectural firm as a drafter and designed her own home in Pasadena, California, in the Arts & Crafts Style. The building was included in a house tour in 2006. Later, she went on to become the founding head of the Westridge School for Girls in Pasadena where a Distinguished Alumnae Award was named after her. She was also the regular contributor of a literary column in the *Los Angeles*



# Book Reviews

*Express*. Mary returned to Chicago where she passed away in 1939.

While I was reading about Mary, the mention of her younger brother, Edes's grandfather William, piqued my interest. Born in Chicago in 1877, he left there for New York and by 1901 was working as a bookkeeper. William was also spending beyond his means, supplementing his income by stealing from his employer. He began to move from town to town to avoid capture but eventually confessed to his crime and spent three years in prison. This behavior continued with two additional employers, landing him in jail both times, once in San Quentin and once in Folsom Prison. Married and divorced twice as a result of his crime sprees, he died in 1957 and was buried in the family cemetery plot in Chicago.

Part Two addresses more distant ancestors and includes those for whom research was successful enough to create significant narratives. These branches of Edes's family tree deal mainly with her maternal ancestors, many of these lines going back to colonial America. Each chapter in the second part of the book traces the ancestral line of a chosen ancestor as far back as research would take it.

A bibliography, a name index, a subject index, and a list of credits for illustrations are provided at the end of the book, making it easy to access information in the text itself.

*Reviewed by Jane Theissen,  
StLGS Quarterly Editor*

**Welsh Genealogy Research**, By John Rowlands and Beryl Evans. Genealogical Publishing Co., Baltimore, Maryland. 2022. 4 pages. Softcover. Laminated. \$10.95.

This four-page laminated booklet is another in the ongoing series called *Genealogy at a Glance*, all written by experts in the field of genealogy. As with other booklets in this series, this one is jam-packed with information and will be an especially good starting point for those with Welsh ancestors. As the authors note, Wales has often been called “forever a

footnote” in the history of the United Kingdom, but it is a unique country with a distinct heritage that descendants of Welsh people deserve to know more about.

On the first two pages, you will find a bit of Welsh history and helpful sections on the language, names and naming practices, religion, and emigration. If you had Welsh ancestors, you will certainly need to know that there were no surnames in Wales until well into the sixteenth century and that the surnames used by most Welsh were quite limited, which explains why most of us just know Jones and Williams as Welsh names.

Although the Church of England dominated in Great Britain, in Wales other religious groups flourished, so your Welsh ancestors may have been Methodists, both Calvinist and Wesleyan, or Baptists. The Anglican Church made up only seventeen percent of the population by the mid-nineteenth century. Religious dissention was a prime factor in Welsh emigration, especially to Pennsylvania, already known for its tolerance of Quakers. Other emigrants were miners and iron makers seeking better living and working conditions. Almost always, these emigrants were listed as English on immigration records, making their true backgrounds harder to trace.

Additional sections in the booklet contain information on civil registration, parish registers, census records, nonconformist records, probate records, newspapers, and tithe maps, as well as a very short section of online resources at the end. This new booklet will increase your knowledge of your Welsh ancestors and get you started learning more about the country and its people.

*Reviewed by Ilene Murray,  
StLGS Publications Director*



# Feature Articles from Other Publications

Compiled by Mike Bridwell, Reference Librarian  
History and Genealogy Department, St. Louis County Library

**A**rticle subtitles are included where available. A note has been inserted in brackets in order to clarify the content of the article if it is not evident from the title. These periodicals are available for your use in the History and Genealogy Department temporarily located at the Daniel Boone branch of St. Louis County Library, 300 Clarkson Road, Ellisville, Missouri 63011.

## **American Ancestors** (New England Historic Genealogical Society)

Vol. 24, no. 3, Fall 2023

- The Boston Tea Party: The Story of the Robinson Tea Chest
- “A Box Worth Keeping”: The Story of the Robinson Tea Chest
- Documenting Family Connections to the Boston Tea Party
- Researching for the Boston Tea Party Descendants Program
- Discipline and Justice in the Continental Army: Records about Revolutionary War Courts-Martial
- “The fuss which you are making”: The Chelsea Carol Incident of 1949
- The Enslaved People of Eighteenth-Century Plymouth, Massachusetts

## **Missouri Historical Review** (State Historical Society of Missouri)

Vol. 118, no. 2, January 2024

- Benjamin F. Loan: Radical Generalship in Civil War Missouri
- “The Very Lower Depths of Hatred and Bitterness”: The 1968 University of Missouri-Rolla and Southwest Missouri State College Basketball Melee
- Faith, Family, Missouri Small Town Values and the Entrepreneurial Spirit: An Interview with David Steward
- From the Stacks: Research Center-Columbia
- Records of Indigenous Enslavement in the Ste. Genevieve Archives

## **NGS Magazine** (National Genealogical Society)

Vol. 49, no. 4, December 2023

- Techniques for Differentiating Identities
- The Foundations of Genealogical Research

- Finding the Elusive Maiden Name
- Tracing African American Identities
- Rediscovering an Immigrant’s Original Surname
- Making Sense of Name Inconsistencies

## **St. Clair County [Illinois] Genealogical Society Quarterly**

Vol. 46, no. 4, 2023

- An Overlooked Source for Family Research—Volunteering: You Just Might Break Down a Brick Wall
- 1834 School Land Sale Petition Near Mascoutah (T1N R6W)
- Meet Our Ancestors: Merkel, Schaefer, and Regelman
- Marriage Index 1951 (Bride Surnames: Pierson-Z)
- William and Elizabeth (Merod) Reichert—Family Sketch with Analysis
- Grand Juror Lists: 1896–1900
- 1838 School Land Sale Petition Near Belleville (T1N R9W)
- Chancery Case Files Index, 1870–1920, part eight

## **St. Charles County [Missouri] Heritage** (St. Charles County Historical Society)

Vol. 42, no. 1, January 2024

- Remembering Bob Schultz
- Femme Osage, the Valley & the Town
- Dr. Franc “Bullet” McCluer: President left mark on two campuses, world
- Etienne Bernard: Trapper raised a family in early St. Charles
- How one parish helped fund a war: St. Peters and the Third Liberty Loan
- The life and family of Archie Bowman: County man gave his life in World War II

## ***St. Louis City/County Biographies Project: Honoring St. Louisans***

**D**o you have ancestors who are part of St. Louis history? Do you know of St. Louisans who deserve to be remembered for their contributions to St. Louis City or County? Whether they did something newsworthy or were little-known outside their neighborhood, they played an important part in making St. Louis what it is today. We would love to help you share their stories.

St. Louis Genealogical Society has a feature on its website called St. Louis City/County Biographies that links to 300 biographies (and counting) of local citizens from the 1700s to those recently deceased. Biographies are brief (500 words or less) and can include a copyright-free photo or two.

Our biographies honor men and women who are famous, such as architect William Bernoudy and poet Sara Teasdale, to people you may recognize by name if you live in our city: Chouteau, Straub, Gannon, and Lackland. Most of our biographies, however, simply tell the stories of ordinary people who settled here and helped grow our community by working hard and raising families. Their descendants, or those who know about them, are ensuring their memories last.

On the St. Louis City/County Biographies page on our website <https://stlgs.org/research-2/community/st-louis-biographies>, you will find complete details on how and what to submit. Download a copy of the instruction flyer, and while you are there, take a few minutes to read about the lives of many other individuals who have called St. Louis home.

***“History is the essence of innumerable biographies.”  
Thomas Carlyle, 1838***

 St. Louis Genealogical Society Family History Conference

# Successfully Navigating Websites for Your Genealogy

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# Jean Baptiste Creely, 1757-1833, and Elizabeth Bienvenue dit Delisle, 1762-1806

By Ann (Carter) Fleming  
for the St. Louis City/County Biographies Project

**B**orn in Kaskaskia, Randolph County, Illinois, Jean Baptiste Creely III died on 14 June 1833 in St. Ferdinand, with burial at Old St. Ferdinand Cemetery. Jean Baptiste married Elizabeth Bienvenue dit Delisle on 17 May 1779 in Kaskaskia. Jean Baptiste was the son of Jean Baptiste Creely II and Angelique Pillet dit LaSonde and grandson of Jean Baptiste Creely I and Marie Francois Aiet.

Many French families migrated to either New Orleans or Canada, then traveled on the Mississippi River to St. Louis. They did not want to live under English rule, so they left Kaskaskia on the east bank of the Mississippi River for their future home on the west side of the river, which was then owned by Spain. Some families lived in St. Louis; others traveled up the Missouri River to St. Ferdinand.

While a grape grower in France, Jean Baptiste I worked as a charcoal marker shortly after his arrival in New Orleans in 1723 and then in Kaskaskia. Jean Baptiste II worked as a cooper and built a stone house in Kaskaskia. Jean Baptiste III moved across the river where he farmed in St. Ferdinand, growing wheat and corn in the common grounds while living in town. His wife, Elizabeth, was the daughter of Charles and Elizabeth (Guillemont dit LaLande) Bienvenue dit Delisle.

As a teenager, Elizabeth and her friend with her baby walked to a field to pick berries. The child was asleep, so the mother laid her in the grass to free her hands for berry picking. Suddenly an Indian appeared and grabbed the baby. As the child's mother charged toward the child and the Indian, the mother was killed with a tomahawk by another Indian. Hidden behind some bushes, Elizabeth was not in view of the Indians. She stayed as quiet as possible as the Indians moved away. Elizabeth was spared that day but apparently remembered every detail when interviewed for a newspaper article several years later.

When Elizabeth and Jean Baptiste married in 1779, the bridal couple signed a marriage contract, later filed with the probate court. The contract names parents and grandparents of the bridal couple, plus other relatives, all recorded in French. This couple had ten children: Elizabeth, Angelique, Joseph, François, Marie Therese, Infant [died young], Julie, Anne, Cecile, and Michael. Jean Baptiste married Marie James and had three more children: Jean Baptiste [died as an infant], Elizabeth, and Jean Baptiste; all grew up in St. Ferdinand.

The Jean Baptiste III probate file indicates that he owned a windmill on the Mississippi River, owned property, household furniture, horses, cows, and farm equipment, and three slaves, all together valued at \$745.

*(Documentation for this family includes burial, census, and church records, county histories, court records, deeds, marriage records, newspaper articles, probate records, and wills.)*

## What is a Dit Name?

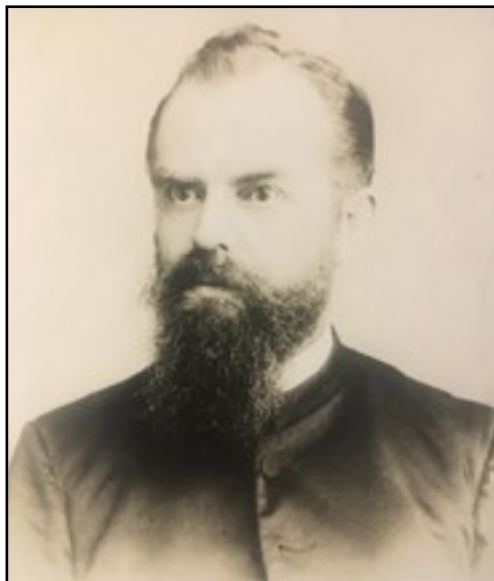
Pronounced "dee," it comes from the French verb "dire" (pronounced "deer") and translated as "that is to say" or "called." So, for example, Angelique Pillet's dit name was LaSonde. It was common for French settlers in North America to use both a formal surname passed down in their families through the generations as well as a dit name, one specific to an individual or family. Dit names were usually adopted to distinguish people from others with similar names or to honor places, friends, or relatives and were often used interchangeably with original surnames. If you are researching French ancestors in North America, you will want to know both names, because you may find them listed with one or both as surnames.

# ***Boniface Friederick Verheyen*** ***(Fr. Boniface, O.S.B.)***

By Joe A. Armour

**B**oniface Friederick Verheyen was born on 22 May 1844 in house number 16 and baptized Friedericus on 23 May 1844 at St. Martin's Catholic Church in Qualburg (near Kleve/Cleve) in Rhenish, Prussia. He was the son of Johann Verheyen and Bartholomea Zadelaer. His grandparents were Herman and Eva (Josten) Verheyen and Friedericus and Margaretha (Thunison) Zadelaer.<sup>1</sup>

In early 1849, his parents and four other families from their community left their



*Fr. Boniface, 1911; photograph used with permission of Bryan Smith.*

homeland because they feared the revolution going on in Germany.<sup>2</sup> Friederick, together with his siblings, Herman, Margaret, and Johanna,<sup>3</sup> accompanied the group as they travelled to the port of Havre, France, to board a sailing vessel to America. The others in the group included his uncle and aunt, Jacob and Johanna Verheyen, along with their daughter, Helena, as well as the Johann Verhaalen, and the William Wells and William Boll families. After a voyage of fifty-three days on board the

*Oregon*, they arrived in New Orleans on 27 April 1849.<sup>4</sup> The family traveled upriver to St. Louis, Missouri, then to Milwaukee, Wisconsin, before returning to St. Louis shortly after the Great Fire that ravaged St. Louis in mid-May 1849.<sup>5</sup> They had survived the long journey and voyage to the land of promise and opportunity, and they were now getting settled in their new home in America.

However, by the next year, this promise of a bright future was shattered when Friederick's father died. The records at St. Joseph Catholic Church in St. Louis reveal that his father, Joannes Verhayer [*sic*], husband of Bartholomea Sadela [*sic*], passed away on 14 August 1850 and was buried the following day.<sup>6</sup> His death left three small children: eight-year-old Herman, six-year-old Friederick, and four-year-old Margaret. To provide for her young family, his mother married a recent widower, Joachim Gamers "Garms," six weeks later.<sup>7</sup> Joachim was originally from Rees, Germany, which is close to Qualburg.<sup>8</sup>

Friederick made his First Communion and was confirmed at St. Joseph Church on 30 March 1856.<sup>9</sup> Then, or shortly thereafter, he probably began working, as was customary at the time. In 1860, the census shows him living in the Joachim Gamers household with his mother, Eliza, brother Herman, and eight-year-old half-sister Louisa, in the Eighth Ward of St. Louis.<sup>10</sup> There was no occupation shown for Friederick in the census, although later records indicated that he worked in several factories and in a planing mill with his brother where he was trained as a carpenter's apprentice.<sup>11</sup>

On 22 November 1862, Friederick went to St. Benedict's College in Atchison, Kansas, to begin his classical studies.<sup>12</sup> In later years, he recalled that he traveled from St. Louis, Missouri, to St. Joseph, Missouri, on the Old Hannibal Road and then transferred to the Missouri Valley (railroad). At the Missouri River,

## **Boniface Friederick Verheyen (Fr. Boniface, O.S.B.)**

he took a ferry, the *IDA*, across the river. Crossing the river must have been a harrowing experience for him because he still recalled the event many years later.<sup>13</sup> In 1865, he was sent to St. Vincent's Abbey in Latrobe, Pennsylvania, to begin his novitiate to become a Benedictine monk. There he made his profession of vows on 15 August 1866, and he remained at St. Vincent's to study philosophy and theology. Following these studies, he was ordained a priest on 26 August 1869 in Atchison, Kansas.<sup>14</sup>

Now, Father (Fr.) Boniface taught English grammar, rhetoric, elocution, and geography at St. Benedict's College in Atchison, Kansas. A few years later, the 1872 *Prospectus of St. Benedict's College* shows that his teaching duties also included penmanship, Latin, and natural philosophy.<sup>15</sup> After teaching all week, on Saturday mornings he and the other monks



*Boniface as a novice, 1864; photograph used with permission of Bryan Smith.*

started out on horseback to say Mass and administer the sacraments to Catholics in the surrounding settlements, often in the settlers' homes since there were few churches at the time.<sup>16</sup> It was said that he had visited the surrounding Kansas counties of Atchison, Jackson, Jefferson, Brown, and Doniphan, sometimes riding as much as sixty miles on a single weekend before returning to teach school on Monday morning.<sup>17</sup> During this time, he was commissioned as a scout by the U.S. Army and issued a pistol which was later displayed in the museum at the college.<sup>18</sup>

### ***Moving West with the Army***

Fr. Boniface continued teaching at St. Benedict's until 1875 when he volunteered to become a chaplain to the soldiers serving on the frontiers of Kansas, the Indian Territory (what is now Oklahoma), and Texas. There, he traveled on horseback and ministered to the Catholic, settlers, soldiers, and scouts in Forts Dodge, Elliott, Supply, and Zarah.<sup>19</sup> Fort Dodge was approximately five miles east of present-day Dodge City, Kansas. It was built in 1865 and served to protect travelers on the Santa Fe Trail as well as to provide a rest stop and supplies to traders and buffalo hunters.<sup>20</sup> Fort Elliott was established in the eastern part of the Texas panhandle in 1875.<sup>21</sup> Fort Supply was established in late 1868 and was located in present Woodward County in northwestern Oklahoma. It is just east of the Oklahoma Panhandle and is now a state historic site.<sup>22</sup> Fort Zarah was established in 1866 and officially abandoned in 1869. It was located about three miles east of present-day Great Bend, Kansas. A small town of Zarah consisting of a hotel, two saloons, a blacksmith shop, livery stable, post office, and several homes arose when the fort existed, but it eventually was abandoned in 1875. Texas cattle spent the winter there.<sup>23</sup>

On one of these trips with a squadron of U. S. Cavalry, they met 1,500 Arapaho Indians, one of whom had been a student at St. Benedict's College.<sup>24</sup>

## **Boniface Friederick Verheyen (Fr. Boniface, O.S.B.)**

On one excursion while traveling between forts, he and a companion needed to cross the Cimarron River in southwest Kansas to get to their night's destination several miles away. The river was frozen but not solidly enough for the team to cross. In danger of freezing if they stayed out in the open all night, Fr. Boniface ventured onto the frozen river to break up the ice himself so the team could traverse the river. As he was doing so, he fell in and rapidly became stuck in quicksand almost up to his neck. He managed to get out, but his clothes were all wet, so he stripped off his wet clothes, socks, and boots. Then he covered himself in a blanket for protection against the icy north wind, and the two continued on to their resting place for the night. Before reaching it, however, he felt good enough to shoot at a wolf.<sup>21</sup> Later, it was said that he spent many nights camped at the forts, in the open, or among the Indians and that he endured many trials that would have killed an ordinary man.<sup>25</sup>

He and two brothers from the college were sent to begin the foundation for another abbey in southwest Kansas. The prior had selected a location in Clark County along the military road from Ft. Dodge to Camp Supply in Indian Territory. As the brothers were constructing a sod house and making other preparations for the new abbey, Fr. Boniface continued his ministry to the soldiers at the forts. On his return from one of the forts, he shot an antelope which he gave to the brothers, providing a welcomed meal.<sup>26</sup> Later, the plans for the new abbey had to be abandoned when it was realized that the site was on the cattle trail and that the cattle would trample the fields.<sup>27</sup>

The location of these forts and of St. Benedict Abbey in Atchison, Kansas, can be viewed on a Google map at the following web address. Click on the blue pointers on the map to see the name of each of the places.

**<https://www.google.com/maps/d/edit?mid=1DOalZMz8TlbW-WF48P-2ABK1ZI3gZ2fv&usp=sharing/>**

### ***Return to Teaching***

In 1877, Fr. Boniface was recalled to Atchison where he was appointed pastor of St. Benedict's Church from 1877 to 1878 while also teaching at the college. Outside of this and a few other short stints as pastor, he served as a professor at the college his entire career. According to his superiors, he lacked the ability for fundraising to effectively function as head of a parish.<sup>28</sup> However, this deficiency benefited the college where, instead, he taught history, literature, homiletics, physics, and chemistry (in addition to the other courses mentioned above) during his fifty-year teaching career. He was known as affable, warm-hearted, and intellectually curious, and he was a noted English scholar, historian, scientist, and translator of several works, among them, *The Rule of St. Benedict*. While at St. Benedict's, he was appointed the first prior of the abbey, a position he held on and off during the following years.<sup>29</sup>

He was always curious and desirous of learning new things. In his early years as a priest serving the outlying missions on weekends, he would stop to collect items of geologic or historic interest along the way. Noting any special features, he then put the items in his saddlebag. Back at the college, he sorted these items and started a museum with his findings. He later added to the collection by searching the nearby limestone bluffs, fields, and ravines for plants and other geologic items. He was said to always be a teacher, instructing students in the sciences and natural wonders.<sup>30</sup> In the 1883 *Prospectus for St. Benedict's College*, Fr. Boniface was listed as president of the Philomathic Society, an organization devoted to the love of learning.<sup>31</sup>

Fr. Boniface also had the opportunity to travel to Europe, visiting Italy, Ireland, England, France, and Germany.<sup>32</sup> Returning from his travels, he imparted to his students the enriched knowledge he had gained. From the earliest days in his teaching career, he prepared Magic Lantern or stereopticon (similar

## **Boniface Friederick Verheyen (Fr. Boniface, O.S.B.)**



*Fr. Boniface, 1886; photograph used with permission of Bryan Smith.*

to modern slide projectors) presentations of scientific interest from the pictures he took and developed in his own lab at the college. Fr. Boniface continued these presentations in his later years, as well. One of these talks was on the geysers in Yellowstone National Park in 1915 which he also shared with members of the surrounding communities. These talks were said to have been well-attended.<sup>33</sup>

Fr. Boniface's teaching reputation was noteworthy. He was asked to present and discuss his paper, "Methods of Teaching History in College," at the Conference of Catholic Colleges held in Chicago in July 1902.<sup>34</sup> His love of learning and his teaching abilities were well-documented in several articles written about him during and after his lifetime.<sup>35</sup>

While teaching, Fr. Boniface kept active in his priestly ministry by helping at the adjacent St. Benedict's Church and in parishes in the surrounding counties. His oratory skills were so renowned that he was called upon to give sermons on several occasions, including one in Council Bluffs, Iowa.<sup>36</sup> Fr. Boniface assisted with the laying of cornerstones, helped to dedicate new churches, and performed marriages and funeral services. He traveled untold miles saying Mass, providing comfort to those in distress, and giving the last rites to the dying. He

performed these priestly duties, it was noted, without "keeping count."<sup>37</sup>

### ***His Love of Family***

During this time, he kept in touch with his family in St. Louis, Missouri. He baptized his nephew and namesake, Boniface Frederick Verheyen, son of Herman and Mary (Crancer) Verheyen, on 6 August 1871 at St. Joseph Catholic Church in St. Louis.<sup>38</sup> He also officiated at the weddings of his nieces—Agnes Verheyen to Henry Zirkel on 30 May 1900 and Mary "May" Verheyen to Henry Kissel on 9 June 1908, both at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic Church (also called Mary Succor), located at 20th Street and Linton Avenue in St. Louis.<sup>39</sup> In the same church on 3 January 1909, he baptized his great-niece, Mildred Maria Zirkel, the daughter of Henry and Agnes (Verheyen) Zirkel. His nephew and namesake, Sgt. Boniface Verheyen, was the baby's male sponsor.<sup>40</sup> It is likely this was the last time Fr. Boniface saw his brother Herman alive. Herman would pass away two weeks later, and Fr. Boniface would officiate at the funeral.<sup>41</sup>

As a reflection of Fr. Boniface's love of nature and of his ancestor's roots in the Netherlands, he developed a flower garden at St. Benedict's College with more than a thousand varieties of bulbs, including fifty different types of tulip bulbs. With students' help, he organized the plantings so that there were constant blooms from March until May. As the students assisted in weeding and caring for the plants, he would instruct the pupils in science and nature.<sup>42</sup>

Fr. Boniface's fellow monks honored his Golden Sacerdotal Jubilee on 26 August 1919 at St. Benedict's College with a Solemn High Mass, a grand banquet, and a musical program, followed by a baseball game.<sup>43</sup> Four years later, he died suddenly at the abbey on 23 December 1923 of "diabetes and weakness of old age." He was buried in the cemetery on the abbey grounds in Atchison, Kansas.<sup>44</sup>

# Boniface Friederick Verheyen (Fr. Boniface, O.S.B.)

Fr. Boniface always loved to talk about the West. When he was recalled from the West, it was said that he was missed by the soldiers, scouts, and Indians who came to say goodbye. Throughout his life and work, he was intellectually curious and a dedicated learner. He was described as “an eminent English scholar, an eloquent preacher, and an interesting professor.” His obituary continued by reporting that he would be missed by his former students, who felt they had lost a friend.<sup>45</sup>

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## End Notes

(NOTE: All URLs checked prior to publication.)

1. “Deutschland Geburten und Taufen, 1558–1898,” database, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/a:1:NFJD-19W>), Friedericus Verheyen, 1844.
2. “Father Boniface Verheyen, O.S.B.: Jubilarian at St. Benedict’s College,” *The Atchison [Kansas] Daily Globe*, 26 August 1919, p. 5, cols. 3–5; digital image, *Newspapers.com* ([www.newspapers.com](http://www.newspapers.com)).
3. Johanna, born on 23 November 1848 in Qualburg, Rhenish, Prussia, was listed on the emigration records but not on the death records of St. Martin Church in Qualburg, nor on the passenger list of the *Oregon*. Presumably, she died somewhere on the journey to Havre, France.
4. “Louisiana, New Orleans Passenger Lists, 1820–1945,” *FamilySearch.org* ([www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)), manifest, *Oregon*, 27 April 1849, n.p., image 704, line 94, Johann ver Haalen; citing National Archives (NARA) microfilm publications M259 and T905 (Washington D.C.: NARA, n.d.).
5. “Father Boniface Verheyen, O.S.B.: Jubilarian at St. Benedict’s College,” *The Atchison Daily Globe*.
6. “Church Records, 1846–1897,” Shrine of St. Joseph, St. Louis, Missouri; digital images, *FamilySearch*, burials, n.p., Joannes Verhayer [sic], 15 August 1850, image 588; citing Family History Library (FHL) film number 1870935, item 5.
7. The name was officially “Gamers” but spelled variously as Garms, Gams, Games, Garms, Gaumirs.
8. “Church Records, 1843–1853,” Shrine of St. Joseph, St. Louis, Missouri; digital images, *Fami-*

*lySearch*, marriages (1850), Joachimus Garms and Bartholomea Sadelar, 86, entry 72, image 69; citing FHL film number 1870935, item 1.

9. “Church Records, 1843–1979,” Shrine of St. Joseph, St. Louis, Missouri; digital images, *FamilySearch*, First Communion and Confirmation, 1846–1961, n.p., Verheier Friedericus (1856), image 690, line 6; citing FamilySearch film number 1870934.

10. 1860 U.S. census, St. Louis County, Missouri, population schedule, St. Louis, 8th ward, p. 205 (penned), dwelling 970, family 1892, Joachim Games [sic]; digital image, *FamilySearch*, citing NARA microfilm M653, roll 652.

11. “Father Boniface Verheyen, O.S.B.: Jubilarian at St. Benedict’s College,” *The Atchison [Kansas] Daily Globe*; also “Father Boniface Died Suddenly: Was a Pioneer Priest in Kansas,” *The Rambler*, St. Benedict’s College, Atchison, Kansas, 15 January 1924, p. 1, col. 3; digital image, *Newspapers.com*.

12. Some records suggest that the year was 1863, which corresponds to his reported age of nineteen at the time.

13. “A Missionary Priest,” *The Atchison [Kansas] Daily Globe*, 16 April 1908, p. 2, col. 1–2; digital image, *Newspapers.com*.

14. “Father Boniface Verheyen, O.S.B.: Jubilarian at St. Benedict’s College,” *The Atchison [Kansas] Daily Globe*.

15. “St. Benedict’s College,” *Weekly Atchison [Kansas] Champion*, 13 July 1872, p. 2, col. 3; digital image, *Newspapers.com*.

16. “A Missionary Priest,” *The Atchison Daily Globe*.

17. “St. Benedict’s Golden Jubilee,” *The Atchison [Kansas] Daily Globe*, 26 November 1908, p. 3; digital image, *Newspapers.com*.

18. “20 Years of Work on the College Museum,” *The Atchison [Kansas] Daily Globe*, 25 August 1934, p. 12, col. 3; digital image, *Newspapers.com*.

19. “Fort Dodge,” *National Park Service* ([www.nps.gov/places/fort-dodge.htm](http://www.nps.gov/places/fort-dodge.htm)).

20. “Fort Elliot,” *Wikipedia* ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fort\\_Elliott](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fort_Elliott)).

21. “Fort Supply, Oklahoma,” *Wikipedia*, ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fort\\_Supply,\\_Oklahoma](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fort_Supply,_Oklahoma)).

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## Boniface Friederick Verheyen (Fr. Boniface, O.S.B.)

23. "A Missionary Priest," *The Atchison Daily Globe*.

24. "A Missionary Priest," *The Atchison Daily Globe*.

25. "St. Benedict's Golden Jubilee," *The Atchison Weekly Globe*.

26. "Benedictine Chronicle of Clark County," *The Catholic Advance*, Wichita, Kansas, 15 June 1940, p. 6, col. 1; digital image, *Newspapers.com*.

27. "Benedictine Pioneering: Ministry to 'Bleeding Kansas' Began in 1857," *The Atchison [Kansas] Daily Globe*, 11 August 1957, p. 29, col. 1; digital image, *Newspapers.com*; also Robert R. Dykstra, *The Cattle Towns* (University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln and London, 1968), 329.

28. Peter Beckman, O.S.B., *Kansas Monks: A History of St. Benedict's Abbey* (Atchison, Kansas: Abbey Student Press, 1957), 140.

29. "Father Boniface Verheyen, O.S.B.: Jubilarian at St. Benedict's College," *The Atchison Daily Globe*.

30. "Father Boniface Verheyen, O.S.B.: Jubilarian at St. Benedict's College," *The Atchison Daily Globe*.

31. "St. Benedict's College: The Prospectus for 1883," *The Atchison [Kansas] Weekly Patriot*, 7 July 1883, p. 4, col. 2; *Newspapers.com*.

32. Fr. Boniface Verheyen, O.S.B., transcription of note in personnel file, Benedictine College, Atchison, Kansas, that records his travels from Cherbourg, France, to New York, 13 to 21 December 1900, on the *Kaiser Wilhelm der Grasse*. Transcription created in 1994 and privately held by Joe Armour [ADDRESS FOR PRIVATE USE].

33. "Father Boniface Verheyen, O.S.B.: Jubilarian at St. Benedict's College," *The Atchison Daily Globe*; also "Lecture Well Attended," *The Courier-Tribune*, Seneca, Kansas, 2 December 1915, p. 1, col. 1; digital image, *Newspapers.com*.

34. "Conference of Catholic Colleges Held in Chicago," *The Catholic Advance*, Wichita, Kansas, 31 July 1902, p. 6, col. 3; digital image, *Newspapers.com*.

35. "Father Boniface Died Suddenly: Was a Pioneer Priest in Kansas," *The Rambler*.

36. "A New Catholic Church Dedicated," *St. Louis-Globe Democrat*, St. Louis, Missouri, 19 March 1888, p. 1, col. 5; digital image, *Newspapers.com*; also "Catholic Church Dedication At Severance," *The Kansas Chief*, Troy, Kansas, 20 September 1883, p. 3, col. 3; digital image, *Newspapers.com*.

37. "A Missionary Priest," *The Atchison Daily Globe*.

38. "Church Records, 1843-1979," Shrine of St. Joseph, St. Louis, Missouri; digital images, *FamilySearch*, baptisms 1862-1873, p. 324, no. 189, Bonif. Friedericus Verheyen, image 172; citing FHL film 1870934.

39. "Aus der Gesellschaft," *Mississippi Blätter*, St. Louis, Missouri, 3 June 1900, p. 17, col. 1; digital image, *Newspapers.com*; also "Have Wedding Feast in Park," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, St. Louis, Missouri, 9 June 1908, p. 1, col. 2; digital image, *Newspapers.com*.

40. "Church Records, 1873-1992, Our Lady of Perpetual Help," St. Louis, Missouri; digital images, *FamilySearch.org*, baptisms 1873-1922, p. 1, line 2, Mildred Maria (Zirkel), 3 January 1909, image 683; citing FHL film 1870546, item 9.

41. "Onkel Tom zur Ruhe bestattet," *Amerika*, St. Louis, Missouri, 21 January 1909, p. 5, col. 3-4; digital image, *Newspapers.com*; also "Verheyen," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, St. Louis, Missouri, 19 January 1909, p. 14, col. 1; digital image, *Newspapers.com*.

42. "A Missionary Priest," *The Atchison Daily Globe*.

43. "Father Boniface Verheyen, O.S.B.: Jubilarian at St. Benedict's College," *The Atchison Daily Globe*.

44. "Father Boniface Died Suddenly: Was a Pioneer Priest in Kansas," *The Rambler*.

45. "Kansas Correspondence: Leavenworth, Kansas," *The Catholic Advance*, Wichita, Kansas, 5 January 1924, p. 4, col. 2-3; digital image, *Newspapers.com*.

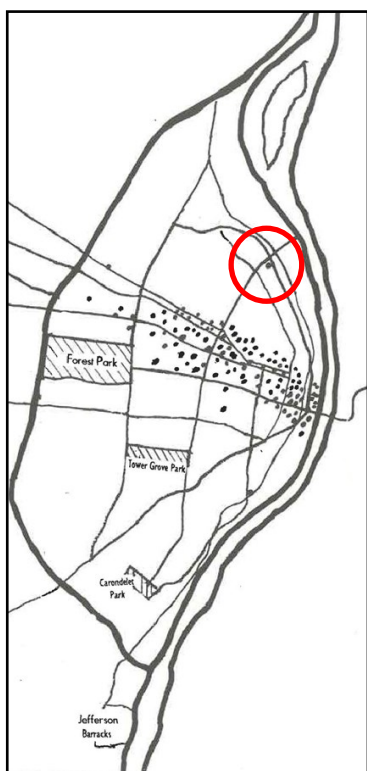


# The Jewish Orthodox Old Folks Home in St. Louis

By Carol Waggoner

The Jewish Orthodox Old Folks Home in St. Louis was incorporated in 1906 and opened in 1907.<sup>1</sup> It was located at 1438 East Grand in the city of St. Louis, at today's intersection of Grand Avenue and Blair Avenue. Situated just south of what is now Interstate 70, it was considerably north of where the majority of the Jewish community lived at the time, which leads one to wonder why that location was chosen.

In his history of St. Louis's Jewish community, *Zion in the Valley, The Jewish Community of St. Louis*, Walter Ehrlich included a St. Louis map titled "Jewish Institutions and Neighborhoods: 1807-1907" showing an isolated dot in the northern part of St. Louis city which is the



*Jewish Institutions and Neighborhoods, St. Louis, 1807-1907, the Central Corridor. From Zion in the Valley, the Jewish Community of St. Louis, p. 201; used with permission of the publisher, University of Missouri Press.*

[Orthodox Home shown in red circle.]

location of the Jewish Orthodox Old Folks Home.<sup>2</sup>

Like other urban areas of the early 1900s, St. Louis was not a pleasant or an easy place in which to live. Sanitary sewers, clean running water, and clean streets had yet to arrive. Streets were dusty and dirty, and citizens drank muddy water, smelled the slaughterhouses, and walked or traveled by horse or carriage through streets littered with all sorts of debris. Most importantly, at the time, coal was burned as fuel to power civilization, and as a result, residents breathed thick, black, contaminated air. The coal dust was everywhere and seemingly unavoidable.

However, this was also a time of tremendous change within the St. Louis region. A movement known as City Beautiful (1904-1940) ushered in a number of changes that continue to impact lives today. In 1904, the World's Fair in St. Louis opened, and the city's future was driven by the showcase the fair provided. The city first started purifying its water on 21 March 1904 and first experienced electric lights at the fair.<sup>3</sup>

Culturally, St. Louis was still a segregated society. While there were many ethnic groups represented within the city, neighborhoods were generally dominated by a single ethnic group, and most community interactions took place within one's own neighborhood. The "Central Corridor" evolved as the home of the Jewish population.<sup>4</sup>

In St. Louis, the Jewish community was not a single, united group. Rather, it was composed of two primary assemblies: the German ("Germanic" is a more appropriate term) Jews and the Russian ("East European") Jews. In that time of cultural segregation and stereotypes, the German Jews felt themselves far superior to the Russian Jews.

The German Jews had migrated primarily in the early to mid-1800s and by the early 1900s thought themselves to be better-educated, wealthier, and better-assimilated



## The Jewish Orthodox Old Folks Home in St. Louis

into mainstream culture, many adopting Reform Judaism. Russian Jews, who arrived between the 1880s and early 1900s, were poorer, less-educated, and less-assimilated. They brought with them their traditional Orthodox customs, including the necessity of maintaining a kosher diet. This deepened the split within the St. Louis Jewish population. As a result, the Russian Jewish community desired to establish a separate home for its elderly where they would be welcomed and able to live a traditional Orthodox lifestyle.

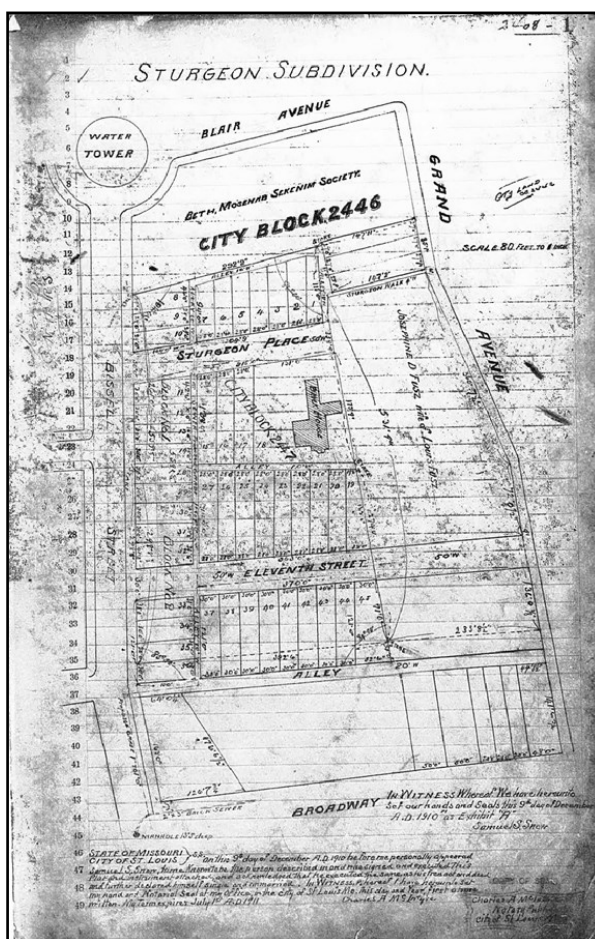
The German Jews had established the Home for Aged and Infirm Israelites at 3652 South Jefferson, south of Jefferson and Arsenal.<sup>5</sup> This institution did not serve its residents kosher meals. In *Book of Memories*, Dr. Z. Abrams describes the many salient reasons that the Orthodox Jewish community felt it needed its own home for the elderly—most specifically, where they could keep kosher.<sup>6</sup> This explains why the Jewish community needed a second home for its elderly but not why it was located so far to the north.

Chris Naffziger in the Recorder of Deeds Office for the City of St. Louis and author of the blog *St. Louis Patina: A Blog detailing the beauty of St. Louis architecture and the buildup of residue-or character-that accumulates over the course of time*, is extremely knowledgeable about the built environment of St. Louis. He was pleased to share his knowledge and time, and his information is paraphrased below.

The intersection of East Grand Avenue and Blair Avenue is in a neighborhood now known as College Hill. Truly a hill, this area is geographically higher than the surrounding area and is the reason that the city constructed a water standpipe known as Bissell Point Water Tower at Blair Avenue and Bissell Street. Interestingly, the area's geographic altitude placed it above the stifling coal dust which usually hung in the city's air as well as other urban stench. Offering a more pastoral envi-

ronment, this is the location where many wealthy St. Louis citizens chose to build their mansions.

One of those was the Spurgeon Mansion. Originally owned by Isaac Spurgeon, a prominent and wealthy St. Louis businessman who died in 1906, the property was sold by his heirs to *Moshav Z'keirim* (Old Folks Home Society), a Jewish Orthodox charitable organization.<sup>7</sup> The building was soon converted, be-



City Block 2446, Sturgeon Subdivision at the top of the map, located just west of Grand Avenue in the City of St. Louis. Note the water tower, which is still standing, at the top left. Image from City of St. Louis plat book; 1910, p. 2408; public domain.

## The Jewish Orthodox Old Folks Home in St. Louis

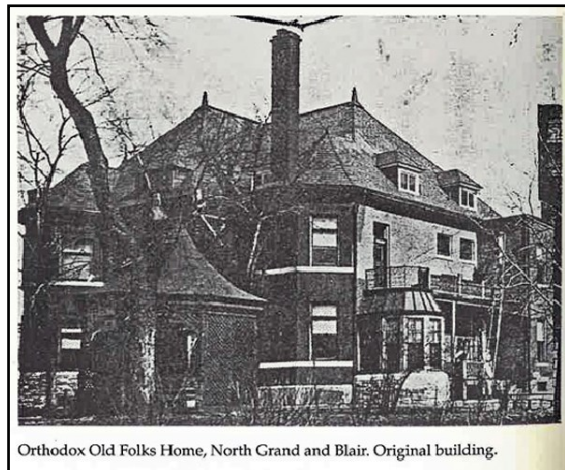


coming the Jewish Orthodox Old Folks Home. The site is easily identifiable in the map above from the 1910 Plat Book held by the Recorder of Deeds.<sup>8</sup>

Built in 1844, the mansion was originally known as the Beverly Allen mansion and can be seen above in plate 77 of the Compton and Dry 1875 *Pictorial Atlas of St. Louis*.<sup>9</sup>

The Spurgeon Mansion and its surrounding property were large enough to accommodate several residents in a relatively healthy environment, and yet it was close enough to be easily accessible by horseback or carriage. This existing structure soon became home to ten new residents

By 1960, the Jewish Orthodox Old Folks Home offered residents medical services, including physical therapy, nursing care, dentistry, and podiatry; a gift shop; arts and crafts; recreation; an auditorium and lecture hall; a day care lounge and program; and a library.<sup>8</sup>



*Original building of the Orthodox Old Folks Home on North Grand and Blair Avenues; image from Zion in the Valley, p. 170. Used with permission of the publisher, University of Missouri Press.*

# The Jewish Orthodox Old Folks Home in St. Louis

The original mansion was demolished in 1964, and the Wohl and Yalem Pavilions were constructed on the site. The complex was renamed the Jewish Home for Aged. Experiencing several significant upgrades and additions over its lifetime, the complex functioned as a Jewish senior living institution and as a site for weddings, banquets, fundraisers, dances, religious celebrations, and other entertainment for the broader Jewish community.<sup>10</sup> The Jewish Orthodox Old Folks Home served the community well during this period.

In 1973, the Jewish Home was sold to the Tower Village Corporation and then in March 1975 to the St. Louis Geriatric Center, part of the St. Louis Cedars complex for seniors in west St. Louis County. Sadly, today, the remaining structures on the original site are vacant. Chris Naffziger says the existing buildings are in deplorable condition and on the city's list for demolition.

*The author wants to thank Phyllis Faintich for her assistance in researching this article.*

9. Richard J. Compton, Camille N. Dry, illus., *Pictorial St. Louis, the great Metropolis of the Mississippi valley topographical survey drawn in perspective A. D., 1875*, reprint (St. Louis: McGraw-Young Publishing, 1997), plate 77, indicating house #4, owned by Mrs. Beverly Allen.

## About the Author

**Carol Waggoner** is a co-leader of the Jewish Special Interest Group of the St. Louis Genealogical Society and contributor to the *Quarterly*. She is a retired Urban Planning Consultant and volunteers for the City of Olivette on the Planning and Community Design Commission. Carol is a co-leader of the Temple Emanuel Women's Group for whom she recently gave a presentation on Jewish genealogy. In her spare time, Carol loves to bake bread and work on her family tree.

## End Notes

(NOTE: All URLs checked prior to publication.)

1. Walter Ehrlich, *Zion in the Valley, The Jewish Community of St. Louis, 1807-1907* (Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press, 1997), v. 1, 406.
2. Ehrlich, 201.
3. Carol Ferring Shepley, *St. Louis, An illustrated Timeline: Blues, Baseball, Books, Crooks, Civil Rights, and the River* (St. Louis: Reedy Press, 2014), 102-103.
4. Erlich, 254-255.
5. Erlich, 204.
6. Dr. Z. Abrams, *The Book of Memories, History of St. Louis Jewish Institutions* (St. Louis: Farlag "Yidin," 1932), 12.
7. Chris Naffziger, St. Louis, Missouri [PHONE NUMBER FOR PRIVATE USE], to Carol Waggoner, telephone call, 29 March 2023.
8. Missouri, City of St. Louis, Plat Book, Sturgeon Subdivision Plat, page 2408, 9 December 1910; St. Louis Recorder of Deeds, St. Louis, Missouri.

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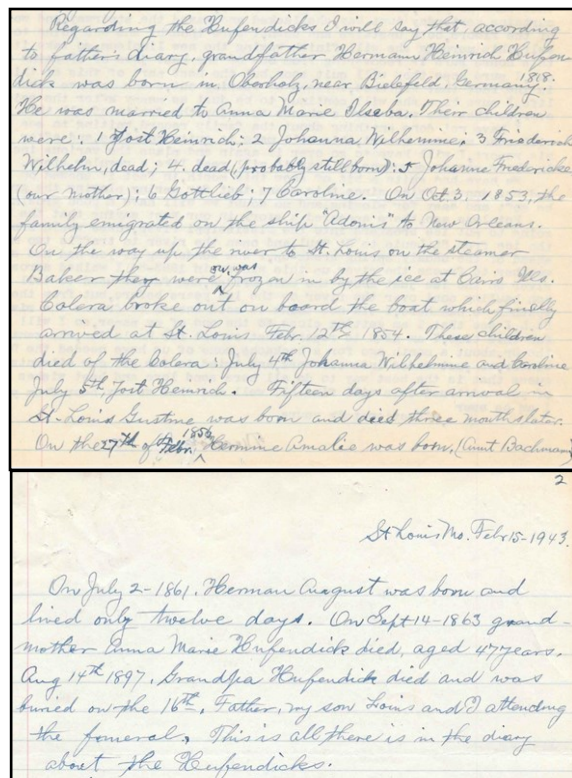
# The Hunt for Hufendicks

By Jana Proske

Cholera killed three of their four children. It was 1853, and the five members of the Hufendick family, Herman, Anna, Jobst, Hanna, and Johanna Friederike, arrived in New Orleans aboard the bark *Adonis*.<sup>1</sup> On the way up the Mississippi River to St. Louis, the steamer on which they were traveling, the *Baker*, became stuck in ice at Cairo, Illinois. It was then when the cholera hit. But it was not until July, after the family had arrived in St. Louis, that the children died. My great-great-grandmother, Johanna Friederike Hufendick, was the only surviving child. In addition, her mother, Anna Maria Margarethe Ilsebein Racherbäumer Hufendick, was pregnant during the journey, and fifteen days after arriving in St. Louis, she gave birth. But little Gustine died three months later. Only two of Herman Heinrich and Anna's ten children survived to adulthood: Johanna and Hermine Amelia, who was born in 1856.<sup>2</sup>

My hunt for Hufendick history began about 2004 when I found a letter Louis Herman Proske had written to his brother, Theodore Hiram Proske, dated 15 February 1943. Louis was the son of my great-grandmother Johanna. I had a point of departure from which to begin my search. The letter contained names, dates, and places of events in my ancestors' lives.

The letter states that Herman Heinrich Hufendick, my great-great-great-grandfather, was born in Oberholz. However, when searching on *AncestryLibrary.com*, I found a baptismal record showing Herford, Westphalia, as the residence of his parents, Casper Henrich Hufendieck and Anna Marie Ilsabein Bokermann. With this information, I contacted the *Archiv der Stadt und des Kreises Herford* to see if the couple appeared in the records there. Archivist Wolfgang Silger was most helpful. He was able to provide documentation of two generations back and also told me, "*Es gibt verschiedene Schreibweisen: Hufendick, Hufendiek, Huwendiek und Huvendiek. Gesprochen hören sie sich alle gleich an.*" [There are different ways of writing [the name]. Spoken, they all sound the same.]<sup>3</sup>



(In two parts) Letter which Louis Herman Proske wrote to his brother, Theodore Hiram Proske, on 15 February 1943. Letter in author's collection. Used with permission.

From one of my father's cousins, I learned that Herman Heinrich had a brother named Peter who also came to St. Louis but then moved to Quincy, Illinois. Interestingly, people from Quincy, Herford's Sister City, had recently visited Herford, so Herr Silger asked me to send payment for the research he had done for me to Quincy and they would forward it to him. I was amazed and delighted to see the old ties still binding after more than 150 years.

To paraphrase Winston Churchill, "never, never, never give up." I have found that it is such an important adage when doing genealogical research. I had heard that the records of the Old Bethlehem Lutheran Church cemetery in St. Louis had been destroyed in a fire. From Theodore Louis Proske's diary, I knew Bethlehem Lutheran was the Hufendick family church. A year or so after learning this, I sat

## The Hunt for Hufendicks



*Johanna Friederike (Hufendick), Theodore Louis Proske, Johann Friedrich Proske. Photo in author's collection. Used with permission.*

down at my computer and tried one more time to find them. After a bit of searching, voilà! There was the family! Gloria Detleff had compiled the burials and put them online. Here is the story, according to the website:

This church [Bethlehem Lutheran] operated the Bethlehem Lutheran Cemetery located in Baden, Missouri, at the corner of Bittner and Switzer Avenues from about 1849 until the 1960s. The cemetery fell out of regular use after about 1920 and became overgrown with weeds and had many grave-stones toppled over. Due to the lack of endowment funds to care for this cemetery, the church removed all the graves. Most were moved to its new and larger cemetery

at 9650 Bellefontaine Road in St. Louis County. (This county cemetery is non-sectarian.) The Baden cemetery property was then sold and there was talk of creating a park on this 5-acre lot. However, as of 2004, it is still undeveloped. The Records of Interment for the Baden cemetery were thought to have burned in a fire. Thus, when the graves from the old cemetery in Baden were removed, not all the remains could be identified. The unidentified remains were removed to the new cemetery and buried in a common plot.

Recently, the original interment ledgers and a newer ledger book were found. The database on this website was created using these ledger books.<sup>4</sup>

I had a field day. Missing from the records, however, was Anna Maria Margaretha Ilsabein Hufendick's burial. She died on 14 September 1863, according to the diary of her son-in-law, Theodore Louis Proske.<sup>5</sup> Theodore and Johanna Hufendick Proske's first child had been buried with Anna. "On Tuesday, 27 June 1865, inexorable death grasped my beloved son Fritz from our midst . . . and the following day, we tenderly laid him in the ground at the side of my mother-in-law in her grave."<sup>6</sup> Little Johann Friedrich Proske does appear in the records but not his grandmother Hufendick.

While on a tour of churches in the Soulard area of St. Louis, I wanted to confirm that little Fritz had been baptized at the font still used at Trinity Lutheran Church on South 8th Street. The tour guide explained that it had been in use in 1865 when the Proske child had been baptized. The only surviving picture of Johanna Friederike Hufendick Proske appears to have been taken the day of the baptism. I now had a photo of the font to go along with the family pic-

PROSKE, Friedrich	28 Jun 1865	6m4d	-	21	-	In Hufendick Lot. Spelled Prost in copied ledger.
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*Burial record of Friedrich Proske, from "Old Bethlehem Cemetery Burials" (<https://stlouis.genealogyvillage.com/dettleff-oldbethlehem.htm>).*

## The Hunt for Hufendicks

ture. In response to my request, the church secretary sent me the baptismal record via email.<sup>7</sup>

My Hufendick quest yielded two memorable experiences. First, I visited the baptismal font where Johann Friedrich was baptized in St. Louis, as well as the font where Johanna Friederike was baptized. Prior to my visit to Germany in 2005, my father's German fourth



Font at Trinity Lutheran Church, South 8th St., St. Louis, Missouri. Photo by the author. Used with permission.

<p><i>Last Name:</i> <b>Prosky</b></p> <p><i>First-Middle Name:</i> <b>Rudolph Johann Friedrich</b></p> <p><i>Date of Birth:</i> 1864/11/30 <i>Date of Baptism:</i> 1865/04/16</p> <p><i>Father's Name:</i> Louis <i>Mother's Name:</i> Johanne Friederike <i>Mother's Maiden Name:</i> Hufendick</p> <p><i>Sponsors:</i> Johann Broesamle; Rudolph Rindt; Mrs. Lisette Broesamle; Mrs. Charlotte Amalie Rindt</p> <p><i>Name also spelled</i> Huwendick</p>
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Baptismal record from Trinity Lutheran Church, South 8th St., St. Louis, Missouri. Image by the author. Used with permission.

cousin, Joachim Proske, did preliminary research. To my delight, he took me to the *evangelische* (Evangelical) church in Schildesche, Westphalia, where my great-great-grandmother was baptized in 1846. In an email dated 18 February 2018, the church secretary informed me this font was indeed the same one in use at that time and that it dated from the 17th century.<sup>8</sup>

The other high point was getting to see the house in which the Hufendicks lived before coming to St. Louis. Joachim had written to the *Heimatverein Brake* (an association of people from the same area) and learned that Brake 13 was still standing. The house first appeared in the 1556 land register of the county of Ravensberg. How did I know the family lived at Brake 13? Herr Silger had contacted the church in Schildesche and received Johanna Friederike's baptismal record which stated: "*Die Familie wohnt in Brake, Haus Nummer 13.*"<sup>9</sup>

Beginning with a letter written in 1943, I was able to find my way to the home in which my great-great-grandmother took her very first breath. What a thrill!

### End Notes

(NOTE: All URLs checked prior to publication.)

1. Manifest, S.S. *Adonis*, 19 December 1853, n.p., lines 47–51, Herman Havendick [*sic*] family; digital image, "New Orleans, Louisiana, U.S., Passenger Lists, 1813–1963," image 113, *Ancestry.com* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com)), citing *Passenger Lists of Vessels Arriving At New Orleans, Louisiana, 1820–1902*; microfilm publication M529, (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1958), roll 39, December 1–28, 1853 (List Nos. 400–447) and January 2–29 April 1854 (List Nos. 1–182), chronological by arrival date of vessel.

2. Louis Herman Proske to Theodore Hiram Proske, letter, 15 February 1943; privately held by Jana Proske [ADDRESS FOR PRIVATE USE], St. Louis, Missouri, 2023.

# The Hunt for Hufendicks

3. Wolfgang Silger, Germany [ADDRESS FOR PRIVATE USE], to Jana Proske, letter, 2004; privately held by Jana Proske [ADDRESS FOR PRIVATE USE], St. Louis, Missouri, 2023.

4. Gloria Dettleff, "Old Bethlehem Cemetery Burials," (2004), *History and Genealogy in St. Louis* (<https://stlouis.genealogyvillage.com/dettleff-oldbethlehem.htm>).

5. *Diary of Theodore Louis Proske from Silesia to St. Louis, Written between 1853 and 1900*, translated from German by Rev. Paul Lueders; English translation donated to St. Louis Genealogical Society by Jana Proske, 2009, 11.

6. *Diary of Theodore Louis Proske from Silesia to St. Louis*, 12.

7. Parish secretary of Trinity Lutheran Church, St. Louis, Missouri [E-ADDRESS FOR PRIVATE USE,] to Jana Proske, email, 2004, "Baptism of Johann Friedrich Proske," privately held by Jana Proske [ADDRESS FOR PRIVATE USE,] St. Louis, Missouri, 2023.

8. Parish secretary of Evangelisch-Lutherische Stiftskirchengemeinde Schildesche, Schildesche, Westphalia, Germany [E-ADDRESS FOR PRIVATE USE,] to Jana Proske, email, 18 February 2018, "Baptismal font at Evangelisch-Lutherische Stiftskirchengemeinde Schildesche in Schildesche, Westphalia," privately held by Jana Proske [ADDRESS FOR PRIVATE USE,] St. Louis, Missouri, 2023.

9. Wolfgang Silger, Germany, [E-ADDRESS FOR PRIVATE USE,] to Jana Proske, email, 19 February 2004, "Hufendiek," privately held by Jana Proske [ADDRESS FOR PRIVATE USE,] St. Louis, Missouri, 2023.



*The Hufendick house, Brake 13; photo by Joachim Proske. Used with permission.*

## About the Author

**Jana Proske** is a retired academic reference librarian. She has been researching her family history for more than forty years. She studied German in high school and college, which proved to be a boon for her research. Jana is the author of *Getting Ahead, Getting Along, Getting By: Proskes in Europe and North America*, reviewed on page 2 of this issue.

## Cholera

The Hufendick family, like so many living in crowded, unsanitary conditions, fell victim to cholera, a disease that still plagues people worldwide. Caused by a bacterium called *Vibrio cholerae*, cholera is spread via contaminated water or food. It causes severe acute diarrhea that can kill fairly quickly due to dehydration if left untreated. Because most people in the nineteenth century had no idea how cholera spread and few had access to clean water in areas where too many people were living, the disease was rampant in cities and frequently killed most of its victims. Today, we know that the keys to avoiding cholera are clean water, proper sewage, and good personal hygiene. We also know that rehydration is essential, and we have developed vaccines for prevention when traveling to areas where cholera is prevalent.

# ***A Cache of Photos and Documents from Several Families: Carlson, Day, Fortier, Garrett, Schirmer, Stopher, and Wilson***

By Shirley Wadell

**A**lthough St. Louis Genealogical Society does not encourage people to send in lost photos or documents, sometimes they arrive anyway. A man in Michigan discovered a cache of St. Louis-based items at an outdoor antique show, and because they had identifying information on them, he sent them to the society. I have done some preliminary genealogical research on the families in hopes of uniting these documents and photos with living family members.

## ***Schirmer***

The first item is a confirmation certificate for Herbert Henry Schirmer dated 28 March 1926. This document, which measures sixteen by twelve inches, is in full color with a gold embossed seal at the bottom. The confirmation took place at St. John's Evangelical Church of Mehlville, Missouri. The church was established south of St. Louis by German settlers.<sup>1</sup>

Also included is a black-and-white graduation photograph of Herbert Henry Schirmer, six by nine inches, in a cardboard frame. The photography studio's name and location are printed on the frame: "A. Wuensche, 421 W. Schirmer St., St. Louis, Missouri." According to the website "Early St. Louis Photographers," the photography studio of Alvin Wuensche was located at 421 W. Schirmer in 1915.<sup>2</sup>

In the photo, Herbert is wearing a dark suit with white shirt and tie, sporting a flower boutonniere on his lapel. He is perhaps fourteen years old, standing next to a table and holding a graduation diploma. This studio image appears to have been taken in approximately 1926.

A Missouri death record shows that Herbert H. Schirmer was born on 6 October 1911 in Mehlville, Missouri, and died on 17 January 1964. He is buried in Calvary Cemetery in St. Louis.<sup>3</sup> Herbert's parents were William Bernard Schirmer Jr. (1883–1971)<sup>4</sup> and Margaret Martha Rose Guehring Schirmer (1880–1959).<sup>5</sup>

The next black-and-white picture, four-and-a-half by six-and-a-half inches, framed in a dark brown cardboard cover, is of a toddler, Lawrence Schirmer. Written on the front flap in cursive is "Mrs. Katie Schirmer." Written on the back of the image in cursive is "Lawrence Schirmer." Lawrence appears to be about three years old. This adorable little boy is dressed in shorts, a long-sleeved shirt, socks, and black shoes. He is sitting in a child's chair with a sweet grin on his face. According to his World War II draft registration, Lawrence was born on 26 September 1928 in St. Louis, Missouri,<sup>6</sup> so this picture was probably taken about 1931. Lawrence's parents were William E. Schirmer (1907–1962)<sup>7</sup> and Mildred S. Geiler (1908–1971).<sup>8</sup>



*Confirmation certificate and graduation portrait of Herbert Henry Schirmer*



## ***A Cache of Photos and Documents from Several Families: Carlson, Day, Fortier, Garrett, Schirmer, Stopher, and Wilson***



*Lawrence Schirmer*

### ***Garrett***

An eight-by-five-and-a-half-inch black-and-white picture of Raymond “Ray” Edward Garrett is framed in a light brown cardboard cover, with “Raymond Garrett” written on the cardboard in cursive. DeSoto Studio is stamped on the front of the frame at the bottom. Raymond is dressed in a three-quarter sleeved, white, buttoned-down shirt, suspenders, black tights, and black laced boots. He is holding a bat and seems to be between the ages of nine and twelve. Raymond’s Missouri death record shows he was born 10 February 1903 in Des Moines, Iowa,<sup>9</sup> and died on 29 August 1936

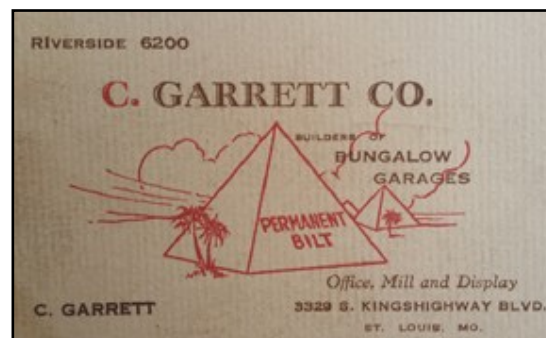
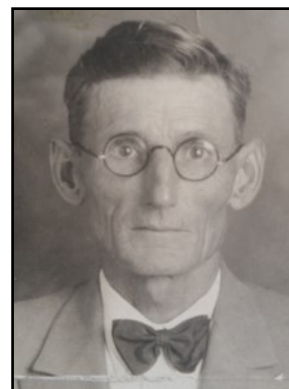


*Raymond Garrett,  
circa 1913*

of rheumatic heart disease, so this photo could have been taken between 1912 and 1915.

The small black-and-white snapshot of Cyrus Newton Garrett has “C. N. Garrett your grandpa Garrett” written on the back. Cyrus Garrett married Anna Linton on 8 June 1892 in Bucklin, Linn County, Missouri.<sup>10</sup>

Cyrus is pictured wearing round wire-rimmed glasses, a dark bowtie, a suit jacket, and a white buttoned-down shirt. He appears to be between thirty and forty-five years of age in this photo. The Social Security Application and Claim Index lists his birth as 1 September 1870<sup>11</sup> and shows his parents as John W. Garrett and Louisa Moore. This photograph was probably taken sometime between 1899 and 1914. In addition, there is a business card which reads, “C. Garrett & Co, Builders of Bungalow Garages.”



*Cyrus N. Garrett above;  
C. Garrett business card below; likely they are  
related, but unproven at this time.*

# A Cache of Photos and Documents from Several Families: Carlson, Day, Fortier, Garrett, Schirmer, Stopher, and Wilson

## Day Wedding

The image below is a professional wedding photograph of Ruth Pearl (Killes) and Francis Bernard Day and their wedding party. Information on the back of the picture reads: "Wedding photo of Francis & Ruth Day, Carna Studio, St. Louis, Mo. Clemens Day on far left of photo. Charles Day on far right of photo. They are brothers of Francis Day." An article in the *Naborhood Link News* gives a detailed description of the wedding of Miss Ruth P. Killes and Francis P. Day on 8 December 1945.<sup>12</sup>

Francis was the son of Charles F. Day of High Ridge, Missouri, and had just returned from serving two years in the Ninth Air Force. Francis's two brothers, Clemens Day, the best man, and Charles Day, the groomsman, were part of the wedding party. Mrs. Juanita Roos was the matron-of-honor and is standing next to Clemens Day on the far left in the photo. Miss Clementine Anderson, a cousin of the bride, is standing next to Charles Day on the far right. Ruth is listed as the daughter of Mrs. Agnes Killes of 6006 Pennsylvania Avenue. The article gives details of the ceremony, the attire of the wedding party, and where the couple would reside after the nuptials.



*Francis and Ruth Day with their attendants.*

## Day Documents

Among the items in this collection are two documents for Eva Day, who was approximately fourteen years old at the time.<sup>13</sup> The first is an original "Master's Certificate for Good Handwriting of America" for Eva Day dated 12 April 1929. This document measures fourteen-by-sixteen inches and has a ribbon across the top reading, "Class 1929." An interesting article in the online version of the *Reader's Digest* explores the history of handwriting over the past one hundred years and explains that in 1921, manuscript writing, or print script, was introduced in schools, teaching children to print before they learned cursive writing.<sup>14</sup> It is likely that this certificate was for Miss Day's cursive penmanship since it was awarded the same year she completed grammar school.

The second document is a "St. Francis de Sales School Grammar Course of Study Completion" certificate also for Eva Day, dated 16 June 1929. This certificate measures sixteen-by-fourteen inches, is in black-and-white, and has an original embossed seal. St. Francis de Sales parish church, open from 1867 to 2005, was located in St. Louis City.<sup>15</sup> The parish school began in 1869 and later expanded into a middle school and a high school. The grade school merged with other parish schools in the area in 1973, and the high school was closed in 1974.<sup>16</sup>

A graduation-day class photograph features Francis Bernard Day (second row, second from right). This is likely a grammar school class, making Francis approximately fourteen years old. His Missouri death certificate shows that he was born on 29 May 1923 in Missouri.<sup>17</sup> On that document, his parents are listed as Charles F. Day and Eva E. Garrett. Thirteen students, four girls and nine boys, along with one adult male (possibly the teacher), are smiling for the camera. The black-and-white image is twelve-and-a-half-

## ***A Cache of Photos and Documents from Several Families: Carlson, Day, Fortier, Garrett, Schirmer, Stopher, and Wilson***



*Graduation Day photo: Francis Bernard Day, 2nd row, 2nd from right.*

by-eleven inches and is framed in a light-brown cardboard border with a three-fold cardboard covering.

A black-and-white wedding photograph of Charles Francis Day and Alma C. (Houke) Neff, his second wife, measuring eight by ten inches, is included in this collection. On the back of the picture is written: "Wedding Photo—Charles F. Day and Alma C. Houke—Block Bro's Studio." No date is shown on this image, but the *Belleville Daily Advocate*, dated 24 October 1930, shows that a marriage license had recently been obtained by the couple.<sup>18</sup> Alma died on 10 June 1945 in St. Louis, Missouri, at the age of fifty and was buried at Sunset Memorial Park Cemetery.<sup>19</sup>

The next picture in the Day collection is a photo of Maude Elizabeth "Maudie" Fortier Read (1899–1945).<sup>20</sup> The image is black-and-white, four-by-six inches, and is enclosed in a six-and-a-half-by-eleven inch brown cardboard covering with an oval-shaped frame. Written in cursive on back of the image is [punctuation added for readability]:

*To the right: Charles Francis Day and Alma (Houke) Neff on their wedding day.*

Maude Fortier. Martha, Bertha, Louisa Day, and Robin Joseph Wright had dinner with her on their wedding day June 16, 1918.

Maude was Martha Day's cousin on her dad's side of the family.

Matilda J. Day was William Isaac Day's sister.

Matilda married William O. Fortier.

William Isaac Day was Martha Day's father.

Research, however, shows that Matilda J. Day was not William Isaac Day's sister but rather his daughter.

Maude's parents are William Oliver Fortier<sup>21</sup> and Matilda Jane "Tillie" Day Fortier.<sup>22</sup> Maude was married to Elmo Emerson Read (1897–1973).<sup>23</sup> The 1920 U.S. federal census for Ford County, Illinois, lists Alma [*sic*] Read and his wife, Maude, renting a farm and living next door to his father, Charles Read, and Charles's wife, Viva.<sup>24</sup> By 1930, Maude is recorded on the U.S. federal census as divorced and living with her parents and her two children, Violet, age five, and Leone, four years



## ***A Cache of Photos and Documents from Several Families: Carlson, Day, Fortier, Garrett, Schirmer, Stopher, and Wilson***

old.<sup>25</sup> The 1940 U.S. federal census for Chebanse, Kankakee County, Illinois, shows that Maudie Reed was a widow, age thirty-seven, living with her daughter Violet, age fifteen.<sup>26</sup>

The final image in this group is a photograph of twenty-seven family members in front of a house. It was taken in 1908 in Piper



*Maude Fortier*

City, Ford County, Illinois. Measuring eight by ten inches, the black-and-white photo is glued to light-tan cardboard. Written on the back of the image in cursive is "Isaac Wesley Day and Margareta family and Caroline Clark Day's children and grandchildren." This same image is found on *Ancestry.com* titled "Fortier Families 1908 1," with the following description:

William & Tillie in center; Mattie to Tillie's left, Rosalyn and Earl to Mattie's left with children Earl and Edgar; Mattie's Margaret and Maude in front of Tillie and Mattie; John, Robert and Willie in back; Unknown portly gentle-



man, woman and child. The man and woman to the furthest [*sic*] left are Anne and Emmanuel. The others need to be identified as to whether [they are] Fortiers or Days. Location: Piper City, Ford, Illinois, USA<sup>27</sup>

"William & Tillie" are William Oliver Fortier and his wife, Matilda Jane Day. Marguerite Matilda "Mattie" Fortier<sup>28</sup> is one of their daughters, and Rosalyn Margaret Fortier is another.<sup>29</sup> Rosalyn's husband is Earl F. Rulison,<sup>30</sup> and their sons are Earl William Rulison<sup>31</sup> and Edgar R. Rulison.<sup>32</sup>

"Mattie's Margaret and Maude" refers to Margaret Ellen Jane DeMoss Hildenbrand,<sup>33</sup> Mattie's daughter, and Maude Elizabeth "Maudie" Fortier Read,<sup>34</sup> Mattie's sister. "John, Robert and Willie in back" are Mattie's brothers: Isaac William "Willie" Fortier,<sup>35</sup> Robert Richard Fortier Sr.,<sup>36</sup> and John Charles Oliver Fortier.<sup>37</sup>

These are just a few of the items in this large set of records for the Carlson, Day, Garrett, Fortier, Schirmer, Stopher, and Wilson families. If you are interested in any of these original documents and photos, please contact Ilene Murray at the St. Louis Genealogical Society office at [publications@stlgs.org](mailto:publications@stlgs.org) or 314-647-8547.

# A Cache of Photos and Documents from Several Families: Carlson, Day, Fortier, Garrett, Schirmer, Stopher, and Wilson

## End Notes

(NOTE: All URLs checked prior to publication.)

1. St. Louis Genealogical Society, "St. Johns Evangelical UCC Mehlville," *St. Louis Genealogical Society.org* (<https://stlgs.org/research-2/congregations/ucc/ucc-churches/st-johns-evang-mehlville>).

2. David A. Lassos, *Early St. Louis Photographers* (<https://stlouis.genealogyvillage.com/tracylewis.htm>).

3. "Missouri Death Certificates 1910–1972," digital images, *Missouri Digital Heritage* ([www.sos.mo.gov/archives](http://www.sos.mo.gov/archives)), City of St. Louis, Missouri, death certificate, file no. 4633, registered no. 235 (1964), Herbert H. Schirmer; Missouri State Archives, Jefferson City.

4. "Deaths," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 25 April 1971, p. 59, col. 1, William B. Schirmer; digital image, *Newspapers.com* ([www.newspapers.com](http://www.newspapers.com)).

5. *Find a Grave* ([www.findagrave.com](http://www.findagrave.com)), memorial 212883042, Margaret Martha Rose Guehring Schirmer (1880–1959), created by "My Family Circle," citing Saint Johns United Church of Christ Cemetery, Mehlville, St. Louis Co., Missouri.

6. "U.S. World War II Draft Cards, Young Men 1940–1947," digital images, *Ancestry.com* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com)), Lawrence Schirmer, serial no. 1123, Selective Service Board 9, St. Louis Co., Missouri; citing *WWII Draft Registration Cards for Missouri, 10/16/1940-03/31/1947*, National Archives, St. Louis, Missouri.

7. *Find a Grave*, memorial page 47767388, William E. Schirmer (1907–1962), created by Susan Ing, citing Saints Peter and Paul Catholic Cemetery Old, St. Louis City, Missouri.

8. *Find a Grave*, memorial page 93255244, Mildred S. Geiler Schirmer (1908–1971), created by "Katie," citing Saints Peter and Paul Catholic Cemetery Old, St. Louis City, Missouri.

9. "Missouri Death Certificates 1910–1972," *Missouri Digital Heritage*, City of St. Louis, Missouri, death certificate, file no. 33145, registration no. 9047 (1936), Ray E. Garrett.

10. "Missouri U.S. Marriage Records 1805–2002," *Sirus [sic]* N. Garrett and Annie E. Linton, 8 June 1892, citing Records for Linn, Missouri, 1857–1896, 102, Missouri State Archives; Jefferson City, Missouri.

11. "U.S. Social Security Applications and Claims Index 1936–2007," *Ancestry.com*, Cyrus Newton Garrett (1 September 1870).

12. "Society," *Naborhood Link News*, St. Louis County, Missouri, 19 December 1945, p. 8, col. 2; *Newspapers.com*.

13. *Find a Grave*, memorial page 47197626, Eva F. Day Neff (1914–1993), created by Peggy Ray; citing Calvary Cemetery and Mausoleum, St. Louis, Missouri.

14. Debbie Wolfe, "How Handwriting Has Changed Over the Last 100 Years," *Reader's Digest* ([www.rd.com/list/how-handwriting-has-changed](http://www.rd.com/list/how-handwriting-has-changed)), updated 16 January 2024.

15. "Closed Parishes," *Archdiocese of St. Louis* (<https://archstl.org/archdiocesan-archives/closed-parishes>), St. Francis de Sales-St. Louis City.

16. "St. Francis de Sales' History & Future," *St. Francis de Sales Oratory* (<https://institute-christ-king.org/stlouis-about>).

17. "Missouri Death Certificates, 1910–1972," *Missouri Digital Heritage*, City of St. Louis, Missouri, death certificate, no. 18520 (1968), Francis Bernard Day.

18. "Social News," *Belleville [Illinois] Daily Advocate*, 24 October 1930, p. 6, col. 2, Marriage Licenses, Charles F. Day and Alma Neff; *Newspapers.com*.

19. "Missouri Death Certificates, 1910–1972," *Missouri Digital Heritage*, City of St. Louis, death certificate, file no. 18643 (1945) Alma C. Day.

20. *Find a Grave*, memorial page 44011779, Maude Elizabeth "Maudie" Fortier Read (1899–1945), created by Charlotte Kensil; citing Brenton Cemetery, Piper City, Ford County, Illinois.

21. *Find a Grave*, memorial page 126483185, William Oliver Fortier (1859–1930), created by Jan Dishon; citing Brenton Cemetery, Piper City, Ford County, Illinois.

22. *Find a Grave*, memorial page 126483204, Matilda Jane Tillie Day Fortier (1858–1939), created by Jan Dishon; citing Brenton Cemetery, Piper City, Ford County, Illinois.

23. *Find a Grave*, memorial page 44009747, Elmo Emerson Read (1897–1973), created by Charlotte Kensil; citing Brenton Cemetery, Piper City, Ford County, Illinois.

# A Cache of Photos and Documents from Several Families: Carlson, Day, Fortier, Garrett, Schirmer, Stopher, and Wilson

24. 1920 U.S. census, Ford County, Illinois, population schedule, Pella township, E.D. 13, p. 3A (stamped), dwelling 48, family 49, Alma Read [*sic*]; digital image, *Ancestry.com*; citing NARA microfilm T625, roll 368.

25. 1930 U.S. census, Onarga, Iroquois County, Illinois, population schedule, Onarga village, E.D. 38, p. 9A (stamped), dwelling 238, family 238, Maude E. Read in the household of William O. Fortier; digital image, *Ancestry.com*; citing NARA microfilm T626.

26. 1940 U.S. census, Kankakee County, Illinois, population schedule, Chebanse village, E.D. 46–50, p. 4A (stamped), family 73, Maudie Read; digital image, *Ancestry.com*; citing NARA microfilm T627, roll 824.

27. “Fortier Families 1908 1,” photograph; digital image, *Ancestry.com* ([www.ancestry.com/mediaui-viewer/tree/58455781/person/32034579879/media/ebff71c9-a7d6-4cff-af0e-3bfca37dc9ac](http://www.ancestry.com/mediaui-viewer/tree/58455781/person/32034579879/media/ebff71c9-a7d6-4cff-af0e-3bfca37dc9ac)), Matilda Jane Day, “stree” family tree, posted by “spiff1208.”

28. *Find a Grave*, memorial page 115732709, Margueritte Matilda Fortier Demoss (1882–1946), created by Vickye Blatherwick; citing Brenton Cemetery, Piper City, Ford County, Illinois.

29. *Find a Grave*, memorial page 149967003, Rosalyn Margaret Fortier Rulison (1885–1963), created by “Michael D”; citing Brenton Cemetery, Piper City, Ford County, Illinois.

30. *Find a Grave*, memorial page 149966972, Earl F. Rulison (1882–1967), created by “Michael D”; citing Brenton Cemetery, Piper City, Ford County, Illinois.

31. *Find a Grave*, memorial page 149966892, Earl William Rulison (1905–1964), created by “Michael D,” citing Brenton Cemetery, Piper City, Ford County, Illinois.

32. *Find a Grave*, memorial page 45269252, Edgar R. Rulison (1907–2005), created by “joe Harrington;” citing Mound Grove Cemetery, Kankakee County, Illinois.

33. *Find a Grave*, memorial 34092161, Margaret Ellen Jane DeMoss Hildenbrand (1903–1997), originally created by “RememberMe”; citing Brenton Cemetery, Piper City, Ford County, Illinois.

34. *Find a Grave*, memorial page 44011779 for Maude Elizabeth “Maudie” Fortier Read.

35. 1900 U.S. census, Ford County, Illinois, population schedule, Pella township, E.D. 70, p. 4B (penned), dwelling 80, family 81, William O. Fortier, digital image, *Ancestry.com*; citing NARA microfilm T623, roll 301.

36. *Find a Grave*, memorial page 126483139, Robert Richard Fortier (1889–1938), created by Jan Dishon; citing Brenton Cemetery, Piper City, Ford County, Illinois.

37. *Find a Grave*, memorial page 67734020, John Charles Oliver Fortier (1891–1917), created by Honoring Family and Friends; citing unknown Illinois burial site.

## About the Author

**Shirley Wadell** began researching her family history in 1989 and has been a member of StLGS and other genealogical societies for several years. She takes a special interest in photography and documenting graveyards. She has written numerous articles for the *StLGS Quarterly* with an emphasis on reconnecting lost photos and heirlooms with their families.

**Please Note:** The St. Louis Genealogical Society does not actively solicit old photographs or other family heirlooms. If you come across articles of this type, please attempt to locate the family on your own. As a volunteer organization, we have no one who can be in charge of these items. If, however, you have tried to locate the appropriate family members and cannot, we welcome the donations, knowing they will be safe with us and hoping they will find their rightful homes.

# Frances Ann “Fannie” (Acton) Brown

By Shirley Wadell

On the St. Louis Genealogical Society’s (StLGS) “Lost and Found” webpage, a photograph of a young woman caught my eye. The back of the image includes her name and the name of the photography studio: G. D. Wilson’s Double Light Rembrandt Gallery of Art, Corner Sixteenth Street and Franklin Avenue, St. Louis, Missouri. Based on the woman’s clothing, it appears that the photograph was taken between 1875 and 1877. In this portrait, Fannie is wearing a blouse with a black velvet collar and white lace around the inside with large dark buttons down the front. Her dark hair is parted in the middle and pulled back into a bun. She is wearing earrings and a ribbon locket. Fannie looks as though she might be between the ages of sixteen and eighteen years old.

Even though Fannie’s maiden name of Acton is not common, her married surname Brown is, so it was easier to start research with her maiden name. The first stop was *Ancestry.com* where I found several U.S. federal censuses listing Fannie. The first record was an 1860 census for Missouri that included Edward Acton, age thirty, living with his wife, Jane, age twenty-eight, and their two children, three-year-old Edward and one-year-old Frances A. Edward’s occupation was listed as a porter. His real estate value was \$800, and his personal estate was worth \$100.<sup>1</sup>

The 1870 U.S. census recorded Edward, now forty years old, living with his wife, Jane, age thirty-five, and their three children, Edward, age thirteen; Frances A., age eleven; and George, age nine. Edward Acton worked as a clerk at a leather store. His real estate was valued at \$7,000 and his personal estate at \$600.<sup>2</sup>

Ten years later, Fannie, now twenty-one years old, was enumerated with her husband, John Brown, twenty-nine years old, and their son, Richard, who was one year old.<sup>3</sup> The couple married sometime before December 1878, based on the age of the child. No marriage record was found. According to this census record, John Brown worked as a contractor,



*Photograph of Frances A. (Acton) Brown, held by St. Louis Genealogical Society*

and the family residence was located at 2114 Biddle Street in St. Louis City. Their second child, also a son, was born on 17 September 1881 in St. Louis, and he was named John Brown.<sup>4</sup>

On 28 April 1882, the *St. Louis Globe Democrat* published an article entitled, “A Very Happy Family,”<sup>5</sup> which reported that Jane Acton, Fannie’s mother, filed a complaint of alleged cruelty by her husband, Edward. Due to her paralysis, she was unable to care for herself and had requested she be moved to a better health care facility. She went on to explain that her husband refused to allow anyone entry to their home to visit her.

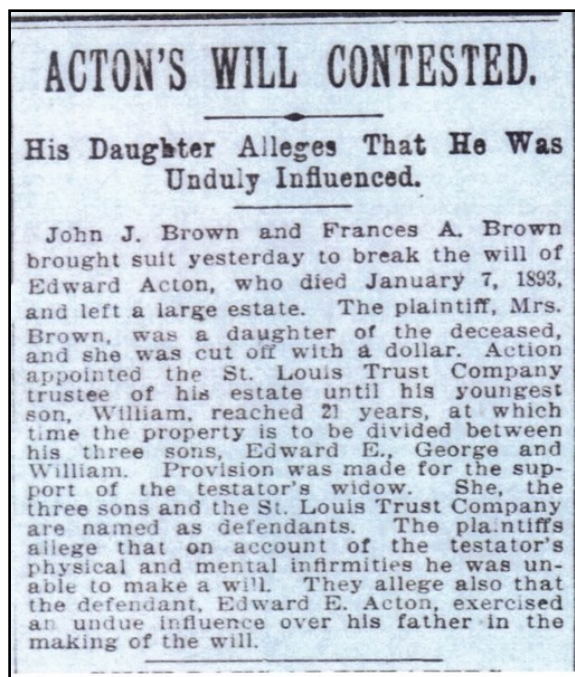
In the same issue of the newspaper below this article, the *St. Louis Globe Democrat* reporter who attempted to visit Mrs. Acton reported his encounter with Mr. Acton outside the residence. Mr. Acton stated that his wife was in bed and not receiving visitors. The reporter asked Mr. Acton why his wife would request assistance from the court and protection from him. Mr. Acton’s reply was that his “blackguard” sons had “put their mother up to this.” Mr. Acton further explained that he would appear in court as requested to discuss this matter with the judge but that his wife would not be present.

## Frances Ann “Fannie” (Acton) Brown

The court case between Edward Acton and his wife proceeded, as reported in the *St. Louis Globe Democrat* of the following day.<sup>6</sup> Edward Acton appeared in court but informed the judge that his wife was too sick to appear. When she was later brought to the court on the consent of her doctor, her daughter Fannie met her mother there, and both acted as if they had not seen each other in a long time. One question was asked of Mrs. Acton: Where did she want to go—with her children or her husband? She replied that she wanted to go with her children.

However, a week later, her petition to the court had been dismissed, and Mrs. Acton returned to her husband's home.<sup>7</sup> Before the year's end, a marriage license was granted to Edward Acton and Mary Harman.<sup>8</sup> Edward and his second wife had a son, whom they named William, on 19 June 1884.<sup>9</sup> The 27 January 1883 edition of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* reports that 263 divorces took place in St. Louis courts during the previous year. Fannie's parents, Edward Acton and Jane (Oakes) Acton, were among the couples listed.<sup>10</sup> Jane (Oakes) Acton died on 27 March 1883,<sup>11</sup> less than three months after the divorce.

In his will dated 14 July 1892,<sup>12</sup> Edward Acton left his daughter, Frances “Fannie” (Acton) Brown, the sum of one dollar. The rest of his estate was to go to his widow, Mary, and his three sons. Edward Acton died on 7 January 1893, the cause of death listed as “softening of the brain.”<sup>13</sup> He was sixty-three years old at the time of his death. Mr. Acton's will was probated on 10 January 1893.<sup>14</sup> Two-and-a-half years later, on 18 August 1895, the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* reported, in an article entitled “Acton's Will Contested,”<sup>15</sup> that Frances A. Brown and J. J. Brown, her husband, contested the will of her father. They contended that he was not of sound mind when he constructed the will and that her brother, Edward, had influenced the change in their father's will. I could not find any other information to confirm whether the case of Frances



Article from the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* (Newspapers.com)

and her husband, John Brown, against her father's will was ever settled.

### **The Brown Family**

By 1900, the Brown family was living at 2605 Gamble Street in St. Louis. John J. Brown, age fifty, was living with his wife, forty-one-year-old Frances M., and their three children, Richard, age twenty-one; George Edward, age fifteen; and Jennie, age thirteen. Also in the household was a cousin, Osmund O'Mearo, age thirty. John J. Brown and Frances M. had been married for twenty-two years and had five children, three of whom were still living. John's occupation was listed as “excav” [excavator].<sup>16</sup>

By 1910, the couple's child, George E. Brown, was twenty-six years old and the head of the house at 2702 Stoddard Street. The household also included his wife, Lida M., age twenty-three: their three-year-old son, Richard H.; George's mother, Frances A., fifty years of age; and his sister Jane F., age twenty-three.<sup>17</sup>



## Frances Ann “Fannie” (Acton) Brown

According to this census, Frances had been married for thirty-two years, but her husband was not listed with them. That year, Fannie’s husband, John Brown, was listed as a lodger at 2626 Gamble Street. He was sixty years old, had been married for thirty years, and was working as a “contractor-excavating.”<sup>18</sup> No explanation was found as to why the couple had separate residences.

In January 1920, Frances A. Brown was living with her daughter, Jane, and Jane’s husband, William C. Groff.<sup>20</sup> William was thirty-one and was employed as a service manager of a motor car company. The rest of the household at 3822 Ashland Avenue was composed of thirty-three-year-old Jane, their children, Jane, age three; Marian, age two; and William C., age three months. Frances was recorded as married, but her husband, John J. Brown, was again not listed as living with her. In 1920, John J. Brown was residing at 5334 W. Market, which he owned.<sup>21</sup> He reportedly owned a real estate business and lived with his unmarried sister, Mary F. Brown.

John J. Brown died on 11 May 1923.<sup>22</sup> His death certificate listed him as married, and his occupation was listed as a contractor. His residence was 5330 North Market, and his parents were listed as Richard Brown and Julia O’Mearo. John was buried at Calvary Cemetery in St. Louis.

In 1930, Frances A. Brown was listed as a widow, living with her daughter Jane F. Groff, age forty; her son-in-law, William C. Groff, age forty-two; and her five grandchildren: Jane F., age fourteen; Marian H., age twelve; William C., age ten; Muriel C., age eight; and Richard T., age three.<sup>23</sup> The family resided at 3817 Ashland Avenue. William owned this home, which had a value of \$4,250, and he still worked for the motor car company.

Frances Ann (Acton) Brown died on 29 November 1931 at the residence of her daughter, Mrs. William C. Groff.<sup>24</sup> Her Missouri death certificate listed her residence at 3817 Ashland Avenue. She died at the age of

seventy-two years, seven months, and twenty-nine days from kidney disease. Her parents were recorded as Edward Acton, born in Ireland, and Jane Oakes, born in Ireland. Fannie was buried at Calvary Cemetery.<sup>25</sup>

If anyone is interested in claiming this picture of Fannie Acton, please email Ilene Murray, publications director of the St. Louis Genealogical Society, at [publications@stlgs.org](mailto:publications@stlgs.org), or call the St. Louis Genealogical Society office at 314-647-8547.

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### End Notes

1. 1860 U.S. census, St. Louis County, Missouri, population schedule, St. Louis City, 9th Ward, p. 450 (penned), dwelling 1872, family 3942, Francis A. Acton in the household of Edwd. Acton; digital image, *Ancestry.com* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com)); citing NARA microfilm M653, roll 650.

2. 1870 U.S. census, St. Louis County, Missouri, population schedule, St. Louis City, 9th ward, p. 468 (stamped), dwelling 1452, family 2324, Francis Acton in the household of Edward Acton; *Ancestry.com*; citing NARA microfilm T132, roll 819.

3. 1880 U.S. census, St. Louis (Independent City), Missouri, population schedule, E.D. 90, St. Louis, p. 7D (penned), dwelling 37, family 72, Fannie Brown in the household of John Brown; *Ancestry.com*; citing NARA microfilm T9, roll 721.

4. “Missouri, U.S. Birth Registers, 1847–2002,” Record Images for St. Louis, 1877–1881, p. 59, no. 6204, John Brown (1881); digital image, *Ancestry.com*; citing *Missouri Birth Records*, Missouri State Archives, Jefferson City.

5. “A Very Happy Family,” *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, 28 April 1882, p. 3, col. 3; digital image, *Newspapers.com* ([www.newspapers.com](http://www.newspapers.com)).

6. “Husband or Children?” *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, 29 April 1882, p. 8, col. 4; *Newspapers.com*.

7. “Notes,” *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, 6 May 1882, p. 10, col. 5; *Newspapers.com*.

8. “About Town,” *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 16 December 1882, p. 3, col. 2; *Newspapers.com*.

9. “Missouri, U.S. Birth Registers, 1847–2002,” Record Images for St. Louis, 1880–1889, n.p., line 32, William Acton (1884), image no. 2; *Ancestry.com*.

## Frances Ann “Fannie” (Acton) Brown

10. “Divorce Day,” *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 27 January 1883, p. 12, col. 2; *Newspapers.com*.

11. *Find a Grave* ([www.findagrave.com](http://www.findagrave.com)), memorial page 104230961, Jane Oakes Acton (1827–1883), created by Tami Glock; citing Bellefontaine Cemetery, St. Louis County, Missouri.

12. “Missouri, U.S., Wills and Probate Records, 1766–1988,” St. Louis (city), Record of Wills, v. V–W, 1891–1898, p. 213, Edward Acton (1893); digital image, *Ancestry.com*; citing St. Louis City Probate Court.

13. “Missouri, U.S., Death Records, 1850–1931,” Record Images for St. Louis, 1892–1893, p. 461, no. 232, Edward Acton (1893); digital image, *Ancestry.com*; citing *Missouri Death Records*, Missouri State Archives, Jefferson City.

14. “Gleanings,” *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, 11 January 1893, p. 5, col. 5; *Newspapers.com*.

15. “To Contest Will,” *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, 18 August 1895, p. 23, col. 2; *Newspapers.com*.

16. 1900 U.S. census, St. Louis (Independent City), Missouri, population schedule, E.D. 310, 20th Ward, p. 4B (penned), dwelling 52, family 78, Francis [*sic*] M. Brown in the household of John J. Brown; *Ancestry.com*; citing NARA microfilm T623, roll 897.

17. 1910 U.S. census, St. Louis (Independent City), Missouri, population schedule, E.D. 301, Ward 19, p. 11B (penned), dwelling 158, family 234, Frances A. Brown in the household of George E. Brown; *Ancestry.com*; citing NARA microfilm T624, roll 820.

18. 1910 U.S. census, St. Louis (Independent City), Missouri, population schedule, E.D. 301, Ward 19, p. 12B (penned), dwelling 28, family 28, John Brown; *Ancestry.com*; citing NARA microfilm T624, roll 820.

19. 1920 U.S. census, St. Louis (Independent City), Missouri, population schedule, E.D. 421, Ward 21, p. 10A (penned), dwelling 144, family 237, Frances Brown in the household of William C. Groff; *Ancestry.com*; citing NARA microfilm T625, roll 958.

20. 1920 U.S. census, St. Louis (Independent City), Missouri, population schedule, E.D. 547, Ward 27, p. 6B (penned), dwelling 118, family 141, John J. Brown; *Ancestry.com*; citing NARA microfilm T625, roll 958.

21. “Missouri, U.S., Death Certificates, 1910–1969,” St. Louis, certificate no. 17259, John J. Brown (1923); digital image, *Ancestry.com*; citing *Missouri Death Certificates*, Missouri State Archives, Jefferson City.

22. 1930 U.S. census, St. Louis (Independent City), Missouri, population schedule, E.D. 99, Ward 21, p. 9A (penned), dwelling 129, family 223, Frances A. Brown in the household of William C. Groff; *Ancestry.com*, citing NARA microfilm T626, roll number not provided.

23. “Deaths,” *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, 1 December 1931, p. 16, col. 1, Frances Ann (nee Acton) Brown; *Newspapers.com*.

24. “Missouri, U.S. Death Certificates, 1910–1969,” St. Louis, certificate no. 39764, Frances A. Brown (1931); *Ancestry.com*.

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Brian Derton	Saint Louis, MO	Mary Rand	Saint Louis, MO
Sally & David Difani	Saint Louis, MO	Methuria L. RaShad	Sauk Rapids, MI
Milla Dinan	Eureka, MO	John Robinson	Pevely, MO
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