



St. Louis Genealogical Society

Quarterly

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Summer 2023



Jacob and Johanna Verheyen and son Frank; the ongoing saga of a German immigrant family continues in this issue.

The St. Louis Genealogical Society

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On the Cover

We introduced you to the Verheyen family in our previous issue, and their immigrant saga continues as we follow two brothers and their families from Germany to the Midwest. Story on page 40.

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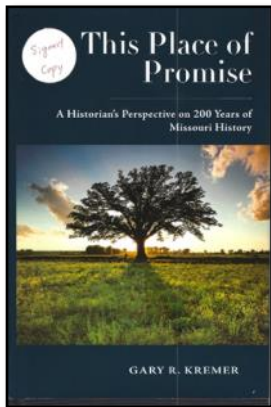
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BOOK REVIEWS

This Place of Promise: A Historian's Perspective on 200 years of Missouri History. By Gary R. Kremer. University of Missouri Press, Columbia, Missouri, 2021. 328 pages. Hardcover. \$35.00.



Birthdays are a special time, and I, along with many other citizens, was excited to celebrate the 200th birthday of Missouri's statehood. The State Historical Society of Missouri (SHSMO) was given the task of planning the yearlong celebration and did a marvelous job. The St. Louis Genealogical Society's St. Louis

City/County Biographies project was one of many activities that garnered "Endorsed Project" status. You can check out all the activities and resources from the celebration at <https://Missouri2021.org>.

In addition to the events and programs that SHSMO planned, Gary R. Kremer, a fifth-generation Missourian and an esteemed Missouri historian, was tasked with writing a history of Missouri. I was eager to read it. *This Place of Promise* did not disappoint. Kremer begins with a rather lengthy prologue entitled "My Missouri" in which he chronicles his experience of living and growing up in mid-Missouri. Although this was an unexpected beginning for a monograph about history, it was actually a perfect entrance into the rest of the book, and it allowed Kremer to insert his own recollections into the

narrative as appropriate, giving this reader a better understanding of how these historical events affected those living through them.

I have read quite a lot about Missouri and St. Louis, and I would say that this, for me, is the definitive work on the history of the Show-Me State. Following the prologue, Kremer's discourse begins in the early 1800s with a discussion of what drew settlers to the Missouri Territory and what they encountered when they first arrived. He concludes the book with a roundup of current (2021) events, including the effects of COVID and the Black Lives Matter protests on Missourians. Kremer does a wonderful job of chronicling history in a way that is engaging, unbiased, and well-detailed.

This is not a book that focuses solely on St. Louis or Kansas City and events in the big urban population centers, although the author does cover them in depth. Being from Osage County, Kremer includes quite a lot about our rural cousins, farming families, and smaller communities, which are equally important to the history of the state. He explores the conditions early settlers to this area found when they arrived and the economic struggles and prosperous times they experienced over the centuries. A previously unknown (to me) story of the founding and growth of Jefferson City illustrated how the city became what it is today, hills and all!

The issues of race relations, economic disparity, and social injustice can be difficult to discuss, but Kremer does an excellent job of addressing these topics in a balanced and straightforward manner that helps the reader under-

Book Reviews

stand how we arrived where we are today. In reading the last chapters, I gained a better understanding of events that happened while I was growing up.

If you are a citizen of the Show-Me State or even just a history buff, I cannot think of a better place to learn about the birth and growth of Missouri than Kremer's 200th birthday present to the state and its people. Despite its many problems, Missouri still remains *This Place of Promise*.

Reviewed by Jane Theissen
StLGS Quarterly co-editor

R*oots for Kids: A Genealogy Guide for Young People*. Third Edition. By Susan Provost Beller. Baltimore, MD: Genealogical Publishing Co. Inc., 2020. 104 pages including index. Softcover. \$24.50.

This is a solid book, as were the two previous editions, aimed at youngsters from fourth grade up. The serious tone is balanced with good examples of family stories that caught my interest. Samples of basic forms are included, as well as a couple of websites that offer free forms. However, there are no charts of relationships or sample census forms.

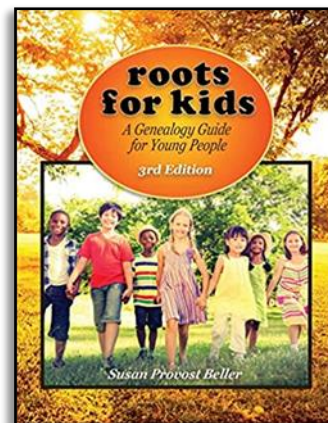
The author starts "at the very beginning" in genealogy and urges the young genealogist to do the same. Start with yourself, then proceed with your parents and their parents. Go through family resources; then move further afield to local, country, and beyond. Sources are noted for such research. She encourages good, solid work habits for a beginning genealogist of any age.

This is the third edition of the guide, but there is not a lot of new material. The number of pages is the same as the previous (2007) edition, which dropped twenty pages from the first edition (a section discussing onsite visits). That section is also not included in this third edition. Because every record is not online, there is still valuable and elusive information to be found in record repositories, and perhaps a future edition will again give the subject of onsite research its due.

So what has been updated? The genealogy basics and the author's idea of how to teach them has not changed. Updates of this guide generally focus on online resources and websites, where a lot does change. The author also briefly mentions DNA without referencing use by law enforcement or other applications which would be of interest to adults. Since adults might be buying this book for young relatives, it might have been worth the space to do that.

The third edition is about five dollars more expensive than the second. It is available from Amazon and Barnes & Noble. Several used book sites have inexpensive copies of the second edition for sale if you do not want or need the latest website information or the DNA section.

Reviewed by Cheryl Wheaton,
StLGS Research Room Volunteer



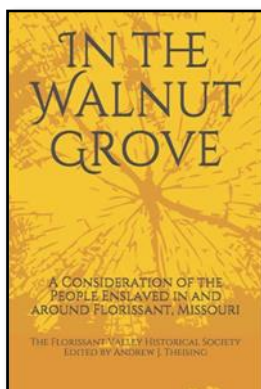
I*n the Walnut Grove: A Consideration of the People Enslaved in and Around Florissant, Missouri*. Edited by Andrew J. Theising. Florissant Valley Historical Society, 2020. 178 pages. Paperback. \$16.95. Available at FVHS website <https://florissantvalleyhs.com/pubs/publications/>.

This book primarily studies slavery at Taille de Noyer [translation "Walnut Grove"], where the Florissant Valley Historical Society (FVHS) is located on the campus of McClure High School. However, *In the Walnut Grove* goes further and contains information about those enslaved at some of the plantations/estates around Florissant Valley during the 1800s. Today, this general area basically encompasses St. Ferdinand Township in North St. Louis County, which includes the area

Book Reviews

north of what is now Interstate 70, extending all the way north to the Missouri River.

The 1870 census was especially important because it was the first federal census to name all the people in the household, along with their



ages, relationship to the head of the household, race, and occupation. For those formerly held in slavery, this may be the first collection of information about them, along with their family groupings. In contrast, the 1860 census information about enslaved individuals can be found

only in the Slave Schedules under the name of the slave master. There, the entry for each person held in slavery lists only their sex, age, and color, but not a name.

This publication consists of a wide range of articles published in the FVHS *Quarterly*, including copies of newspaper accounts, laws pertaining to slaves, an assortment of graphics, and narratives of those enslaved that were published over the years with the material covering a variety of topics and authors. This publication also offers excerpts from articles about slave owners and their wills, with the wills often providing information about the enslaved and their families.

If your ancestors lived in the Florissant region during the 1800s, this publication may enhance your research of the area and times.

*Reviewed by Ann Fleming
StLGS Volunteer*

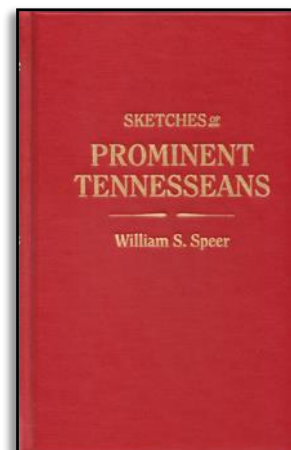
Most of the books donated to StLGS are available in the History and Genealogy Department at St. Louis County Library.

S*ketches of Prominent Tennesseans.* By William S. Speer. Baltimore, MD: Genealogical Publishing Co., 2003. Reprint. 579 pages. Hardback. \$53.50. (Originally published in Nashville, Tennessee, 1888.)

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, many communities celebrated the accomplished lives of their outstanding citizens with what were essentially “vanity press” books. Publishers compiled biographies of prominent citizens, often accompanied by photos and quite often embellishing the outstanding qualities of these rich and famous personalities. Although this volume does not have any illustrations, it does contain 259 “biographies and records of many of the families who have attained prominence in Tennessee.” It is not indexed, but all the biographies are listed in alphabetical order at the front of the book, which helps in searching for an ancestor but not in finding family members associated with that person.

The subjects of these biographies cover the entire state of Tennessee, and each of their stories begins with the name of the city in which the person lived. You will find many doctors, lawyers, judges, military men, and religious leaders. You will not, however, find any women, except as wives and mothers, nor will you find simple, ordinary citizens.

If you are lucky enough to have an ancestor in this collection, you will be rewarded with extensive details but with only some of them sourced, as was typical of genealogy research a century ago. You will need to treat the biographies as



Continued on page 38.

Feature Articles from Other Publications

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

Article 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. 1, Spring 2023

- The Untold Story of Dorothy Good, Salem's Youngest Accused Witch
- A Trip to the Suburbs of Hell: The Salem and Boston Jails During the 1692 Witchcraft Trials
- Witchcraft in Early Boston
- Researching Salem's Witchcraft Victims
- When the Devil Lurked in Springfield, Massachusetts: An Excerpt from *The Ruin of All Witches*
- Witch-Hunt Fervor in Colonial Virginia: The Case of Grace Sherwood

Kirkwood Historical Review (Kirkwood Historical Society)

Vol. 62, no. 1, Spring 2023

- Marianne Moore: Kirkwood's Own Shining Light in the Literary Arts
- Witnesses to the Historic Aftermath [Europe after WWI]
- David Sanborn, Saxophonist Extraordinaire
- In Memoriam: Betty Allen Phillips, July 8, 1926–December 24, 2022

Missouri Historical Review (State Historical Society of Missouri)

Vol. 117, no. 3, April 2023

- In Search of General Pershing's Birthplace
- Compulsory Voting in Kansas City: A Unique American Experiment in Electoral Reform

- Soul Picture Sisters: The Photography of Emme and Mamie Gerhard
- From the Stacks: Research Kansas City: Lillian Kranitz's Oral Histories of Holocaust Survivors in Kansas City

St. Charles County [Missouri] Heritage

(St. Charles County Historical Society)

Vol. 41, no. 2, April 2023

- Ambassadors of Harmony: New name, new fame in barbershop
- When Tom and Huckleberry visited St. Charles
- St. Charles County woman worked to assure the past rests in peace
- Flood uncovered a different civilization at Matson site

St. Clair County [Illinois] Genealogical Society Quarterly

Vol. 46, no. 1, 2023

- Fortune and Misfortune: The Lives of the John B. Bowman Family
- 1841 School Land Sale Petition Near Fayetteville (T2S, R6W)
- Archives Come Home: The Perrin Collection
- Marriage Index 1951 (Bride Surnames A–Harris, B.)
- Death Records Zion Evangelical Church, Millstadt, Illinois, 1836–1915, part nine
- Grand Juror Lists, 1886–1890
- Chancery Case Files Index, 1870–1920, part six

St. Louis City/County Biographies Project

Do 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, ranging from 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 others 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



Book Reviews (Continued)

anecdotes, hints, and clues, and use the information provided to move your research forward as you prove these “facts.” We don’t know who actually wrote these biographies, as Judge Speer is listed as a compiler and not an author, and because there are few citations, we have no way of knowing where much of the information provided in the biographies comes from.

The language is flowery and rambling, and the font used is smaller than average, but if

you find an ancestor in this book, you will be rewarded with an abundance of information about him and his family. More good news is that the original publication is out of copyright and can be found online in several locations. But if you have an ancestor from Tennessee who appears in this book, you may want to add the hard copy to your personal collection.

*Reviewed by Ilene Murray,
StLGS Publications Director*

George Washington Nichols, 1842–1913

By Dr. Steven Nichols
for the St. Louis City/County Biographies Project

My great-grandfather, George Washington Nichols, was born on 9 February 1842 in St. Louis County, Missouri, second oldest of seven children of Thomas and Ann Nichols. In 1826, Thomas had moved to St. Louis County with his father, William, after spending three years in Marion County, Illinois. William was born in Halifax County, Virginia, in 1785. About 1800, William's father, Jesse Nichols, had brought the family to Smith County, Tennessee, where Thomas was born. Jesse, my fourth great-grandfather and my entrée into the Sons of the American Revolution (SAR), was a lieutenant in the Halifax County militia and sold beef to the Continental Army.

In the 1850 U.S. census, George was listed with three other siblings: William, twelve years old; Josephine, six; and Thomas, six months old.

The 1864 *Edwards St. Louis Directory* listed George W. Nichols as "medical student, boarding at 22 S. 6th Street." He graduated from the St. Louis Medical College in 1864 at age twenty-two, one of eighty-one graduates. He also obtained a medical degree, *ad eundem*, from the Missouri Medical College. *Ad eundem* designates "graduates of alien institutions who desired . . . the sanction of the Missouri Medical College." Washington University subsumed both schools.

On 28 November 1869, the young doctor married Mary Louisa Monnier, who descended from French Huguenots, at the residence of the bride's mother. The groom was twenty-seven, and his bride was twenty-five. Minister B. T. Lacy was the officiant. At this point in our family history, we became Presbyterians. (George's father and grandfather are buried in the Manchester [Missouri] United Methodist Church cemetery.) The couple had one child, a son, my grandfather, Eugene Jaccard Nichols, who was born on 24 September 1879 in St. Louis County.

The following are snippets gleaned from newspaper files at the Missouri History Museum Library and Research Center:



Old Des Peres church and cemetery; photo in the collection of Dr. Steven Nichols; used with permission

22 January 1882—PRICE POST OFFICE Dr. Nichols vaccinated the children of Claytonville and Wright's school last Tuesday. An ounce of prevention is worth 4,003 pounds of cures—so think the directors of those schools.

5 July 1883—During the heavy storm yesterday, Chas. Kobi, who was working the John McKnight farm near Clayton, was thrown from a reaper, by reason of his team frightening at a heavy clap of thunder. Dr. Nichols was called. The injured man will be laid up for several weeks.

12 June 1884—The county clerk, this week, prepared a list of physicians and midwives who have registered; . . . In the first class, as above indicated, are . . . Nichols and Dionysius, Price . . .

Mary Monnier Nichols suffered an untimely death at age thirty-eight from tuberculosis. She died at home and was buried in the Des Peres Church cemetery where George was eventually laid to rest. George never remarried.

George died on 20 July 1913 at age seventy-one years. At this time, he was living with his son Eugene at 3960A Wyoming Street, about one-half block west of Grand Avenue in south St. Louis. George was buried on 23 July 1913.

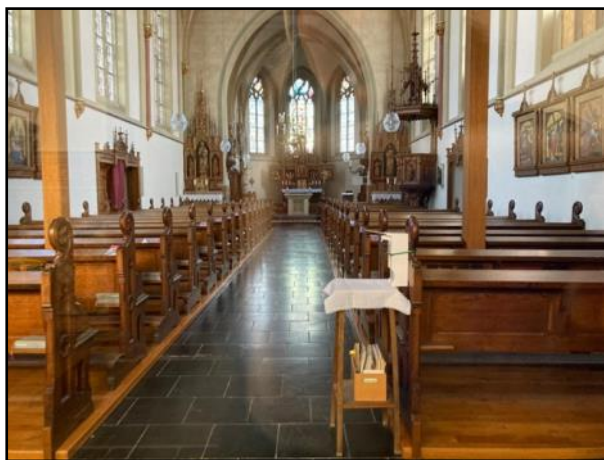
Written by Dr. Steven Nichols
June 2017

Two Lives Diverge in America: Jacob and Johann Verheyen (Part II)

By Joe Armour

(In the previous issue of the Quarterly, vol. 56, no. 1, we shared the story of two brothers—Jacob and Johann Verheyen—who emigrated in the late 1840s from Germany with a small party of family, friends, and neighbors. Here we learn more about these two siblings and their experiences in America.)

Jacob Verheyen was born on 27 December 1812 in Hasselt, Rhenish Prussia (adjacent to Westphalia), and baptized the same day at St. Martin's Catholic Church in Qualburg, which is near Kleve (Cleve), Germany.¹ These towns are on the lower Rhine River in northwest Germany and approximately fifteen miles from Nijmegen, Holland. Probably named for his maternal grandfather, Jacob was the son of fifty-four-year-old laborer Herman Verheyen and his forty-four-year-old wife, Johanna Josten. She was a widow at the time of her marriage to Herman, then a forty-six-year-old bachelor and farmhand from Huisberden, on 22 February 1805.² Considering the ages of Jacob's parents when they married and the age of his mother when she had Jacob, it is amazing that there are descendants at all. That we know as much as we do about this family is a result of the civil registration system brought to the area by the French.



Inside of St. Martin's Church in Qualburg, Germany, taken by the author's granddaughter, Sarah Gardner, 2022. Used with permission.

The French Revolutionary Calendar

After the French Revolution in 1789, French armies spread over neighboring countries and areas, and the French system of civil registrations for birth, marriages, and deaths was implemented.³

Dates were recorded using the French Revolutionary calendar in existence from 1793 to 1805. Prior to this time, there were only church records of births, marriages and burials. The revolution meant to base society on rational thought and "Liberty, Fraternity and Equality." Overturning the "old order," they tossed out not only the royalty but also the church customs, including the Gregorian Christian calendar introduced by Pope Gregory XIII in 1582. They inaugurated a new calendar based on units of ten: a ten-day week and a month of three ten-day periods. Months were renamed for natural events: Snowy, Windy, Misty, Harvest, Summer Heat, and the like. However, this was confusing, cumbersome, and unpopular, so this calendar was officially ended on 1 January 1806.

The marriage record for Herman and Johanna stated that the couple was married on the third day of the month of Ventose in the thirteenth year of the French Republic. The month of Ventose (Windy) started on 19 February and was the twelfth month in the French Revolutionary calendar. The thirteenth year of this calendar began on 23 September 1804. The date of their marriage would be 22 February 1805. This is in accord with church records

Some of the areas affected by this system included the Low Countries, ruled at the time by Austria, and parts of the Rhineland and Westphalia in what is now northwest Germany, where Jacob and Johanna were born and lived. The civil registration system continued even after the French revolutionary armies left and the Napoleonic Wars ended in 1814–1815, although they did revert to the Gregorian calendar. Church records continued to be

Two Lives Diverge in America . . .

kept and were used by the civil administrators who added more information in the civil registers than was contained in most church records. The civil marriage records included the ages of the bride and groom, where they were born and were then living, their occupations, their parents' names, and whether the parents were still living. The prospective couple had to supply their church birth records which listed their parents and death certificates of their deceased fathers. Their civil marriage record was much like marriage licenses today except that it provided much more detail.

The civil marriage record stated that Jacob was a thirty-one-year-old field worker living in Till at the time of his marriage to Johanna Verhaalen on 30 April 1844. According to their marriage record, there was some technical issue with the spelling of the last name of Jacob's mother, Johanna Josten. In the church record of her first marriage on 17 July 1796 to Johannes Verhoeven, the pastor spelled her last name with two o's.⁴ This situation had to be resolved before her son's civil marriage was performed. Johanna (Josten) Verheyen appeared before the mayor and attested that Jacob was her son. His mother would have been seventy-six, a hardy woman for that time.

Jacob's bride, Johanna Verhaalen, was a twenty-one-year-old working as a maid in Calcar (Kalkar), close to Qualburg. She was born on 11 August 1815 in Till, near Qualburg, to Gerhart Verhaalen and Mechtilda Keisers. At the time of Johanna's marriage, her father was deceased but her mother was still living. Jacob and Johanna appeared before the mayor of Till, who performed the civil marriage ceremony in the town of Till, the county of Cleve in the state of Dusseldorf, on 30 April 1844. Jacob's brother, Johann, was one of the witnesses.⁵ (The author has obtained a copy of their civil marriage record and translation.)⁶

Nine months later, on 10 February 1845, their first child arrived. They named the child Herman after his paternal grandfather, following the German naming custom. Unfortunately, the baby died nine days later.⁷ The following year, on 6 June 1846, they had a girl whom they named Helena. She was baptized two days later at St. Martin's in Qualburg. Written later in Latin on the bottom of her baptismal entry were the words "transmig in Americam" (migrated to America). This is the only church record I have ever seen with this notation.⁸ (See page 43 for this document.)

Emigration

Who were these families? Why did they leave Prussia, and from which European port did they sail? In 1847 and 1848, there were revolutions and uprisings throughout the various duchies, states, and kingdoms of Germany as well as in France and the rest of Europe. Fearing revolution, Jacob and his brother, Johann, as well as others in their village, decided to immigrate to the "North America," and they applied for emigration papers, which were granted in November 1848.

As many others had done before them, they planned to set out for the port at Le Havre, France. From there, they would sail to New Orleans, Louisiana, then travel by steamboat up the Mississippi River. Before railroads were built to the Mississippi, this was cheaper and faster overall than sailing to the east coast and then traveling overland. Many others had preceded them along this same route.⁹ Besides Jacob, Johanna, and their three-year-old daughter, the traveling party included Jacob's brother, Johann, his wife Bartholomea, and their four children; Jacob's brother-in-law, Johann Verhaalen, his wife, Johanna, and their young daughter; the Johann Bolls family; and the William Wells family.

It was probably in the early part of 1849 by the time they had disposed of their possessions, packed, and prepared food for their

Two Lives Diverge in America . . .

journey to the port of Le Havre. The Rhine was a few minutes' walk from their homes, and the port of Rotterdam on the Rhine, known as the Waal in Holland, was approximately 150 miles away. From this port, boats steamed to Le Havre, France, where ocean-going ships sailed to the United States. Many travelers from the Rhineland left from Le Havre starting in the 1830s. This water route seems more plausible than a land route, a driving distance today of 380 miles. A letter written in 1851 to a would-be immigrant specified this water route, i.e., the Rhine to Rotterdam, then to Le Havre then boarding a sailing vessel to the United States.¹⁰ After delivering their cargo of cotton in Le Havre, ship captains, whose vessels were now empty, were eager to make some money from passenger fares for their return trip to New Orleans.

At the time, the sailing cost to New Orleans was around twenty dollars for adults but less for children. At the French port, they boarded the *Oregon*, and after a fifty-three day voyage, they arrived in New Orleans on 27 April 1849. From there, they paid the steamboat fare (around three dollars) for the normal six-day, 1,200-mile trip to St. Louis, Missouri. According to Jacob's nephew, Fredrick, after stopping briefly in St. Louis, the party then journeyed to Wisconsin. There, the Verhaalen and Boll families settled and took up farming, as recorded in the 1850¹¹ and 1860¹² federal censuses of Milwaukee County, Wisconsin.

Whether Jacob and Johanna also went to Wisconsin is unknown. If they did, they must have determined that a job in a city was more promising than farming. Perhaps Jacob and Johanna were induced by friends to stay in a city along the way there or on their way back down the river. Whatever the reason, they decided to settle in Quincy, Illinois. There are indications that the Wilhelm Wells family also settled in Quincy, and it may be that the two families wanted to stick together, as immigrants often did.¹³ However, Jacob's brother, Johann, and his

family returned to St. Louis where, according to his son, Fredrick, they settled shortly after the great fire of mid-May 1849. Did the two brothers get separated and miss connecting with each other, or did they each decide the opportunities in different cities were best for them? We can only speculate. There were many other Westphalians who had settled in Quincy.¹⁴ Perhaps Jacob and Johanna decided to settle in Quincy because Johanna was pregnant and due to give birth shortly.

Settling In

The 1850 U.S. census of Quincy, Illinois, lists Jacob, his wife, Anna, and children Lana (Helena) and one-year-old son Herman. (Names were often used again if an older sibling with that name had died.) Their young son was listed as born in Illinois. Jacob's occupation was shown as a laborer. In the census record, their last name was spelled with an "F," which sounds similar to a "V." An American census taker must have written it as it sounded to him.

Their arrival in Quincy is supported by church records. In the baptismal register of St. Peter Church in Quincy, it lists the baptism of "Jacob William, son of Jacob Frein and Johanna Frein," on 13 July 1849.¹⁵ Again, this Irish priest may have written the names as they sounded. Why did an Irish priest baptize the child at an English-speaking church when there was a German Church, St. Boniface, in Quincy? This was an unusual choice for immigrant parents of the time. According to a later pastor who wrote a history of the Catholic Church in Quincy, there was no German pastor at St. Boniface Church from mid-April to early September 1849. So to have their baby baptized, they needed to take him to the English church.¹⁶

In the next few years, Jacob and Johanna would have four additional children: John, born on 12 May 1851; Henry, born on 25 September 1853; Anna Catherine, born on 14 December 1855; and Frank, born on 9 March 1858.¹⁷ However, diseases during this

Two Lives Diverge in America . . .

		Baptised on:				
No	Dies	Mensis	Geniti	ab	et levati a	
		Baptized on:				
Number	Day	Month	Person born	from (i.e., the parents)	and raised (from the baptismal font) by (i.e., the sponsors)	
17	8	Jun.	H'lena h. m. (huius mensis)	Jacobi Verheyen	Joanne Verhaalen et	
			sexta nata	et Johanna	Joanna Verhoeven	
				Verhaalen		
			transmig. in Americam			
17	8	June	Helena was born on the	Jacob Verheyen	Joanne Verhaalen and Joanna Verhoeven	
			6th of this month	and Johanna		
				Verhaalen		
			migrated to America			

Helena Verheyen's baptismal record, St. Martin's Catholic Church, Qualburg, Germany, 1846 (transcribed by the author; English in gray boxes). LDS Batch # C990201; Dates 1789-1875. Source: Family History Library microfilm 907,588, "Extracted Birth and/or Christening Records. Roemisch-Katholisch, Qualburg, Rheinland County, Prussia," page 109, 1846.

period, including yellow fever, typhoid, and cholera, along with substandard living conditions, were not conducive to good health or longevity. John died on 11 September 1852 at the age of one year and four months, while Henry only lived ten months and twenty-four days. Frank survived to adulthood. He married and was sixty-three years old at the time he died in Quincy in 1921.¹⁸ It is not known when Herman or Anna Catherine died, but they are not listed in the 1860 U.S. census for Illinois or in the death records of St. Boniface Church in the town.¹⁹

Life in the United States

The sudden arrival of numerous immigrants created alarm among the existing population. In addition to Germans, there were

many Irish who arrived in America during this time due to the potato famine in their native land. Both groups were mainly Catholic. Most of the "established" citizens of the United States were Protestants who feared the rapid influx of poor immigrants on health and religious grounds. This nativist sentiment gave rise to the Know Nothing party, which was anti-immigrant and anti-Catholic. Perhaps this is why Jacob and William Wells became naturalized citizens as soon as they could. On 30 October 1854, both men renounced their allegiance to Prussia and swore loyalty to the United States, which granted them "all the rights, privileges and immunities of a citizen of the United States." Their consecutive naturalization records, numbers 138 and 139, lend support to the belief that this was the same

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William Wells who emigrated with the Verheyens.²⁰ Now, with the other German immigrants, they could vote and thereby help influence political decisions.

It is not known where Jacob worked, but he and Joanna attended St. Boniface Church, where they had their other children baptized and where services for deceased family members were held. Not surprisingly, they stayed in their German neighborhood as evidenced by baptismal records of the parish. “Anna Verhaien” was the baptismal sponsor for Mary Carolina Lufen, the daughter of Gerhard Lufen and Wilhelmina Hegerman, on 27 March 1853 at St. Boniface.²¹ Gerhard Lufen was the baptismal sponsor for Jacob and Johanna’s son, John, in 1851.²² In addition, Catherine Wells was the baptismal sponsor for Jacob and Johanna’s daughter, Anna Catherine, on 14 December 1855,²³ a further indication of the continuing family connection with their immigration companions. The 1855–1856 Quincy city directory lists a J. “Ferheir” working as a laborer and living on the west side of Ninth Street between Maine and Hampshire. In the same directory, a W. Wells is listed as a shoemaker (his stated occupation on his emigration record), living on the north side of Kentucky between Eighth and Ninth Streets.²⁴ At the time of the 1850 U.S. census, Jacob and Anna were living in Ward 2, but by 1860 they had moved to Ward 5.²⁵ Eleven years after they had immigrated, Jacob was a naturalized citizen and had bought a home valued at \$1,000. They had saved, had become homeowners, and were on their way to integrating into their new country and creating a better life for themselves in America.

Ten years later, in 1870, Jacob reported that he was still living in Ward 5, that their real estate was worth \$5,000, and that their personal property was worth \$1,200. He was working in an unspecified lumberyard but could not read or write English. Their fifteen-and-a-half-year-old daughter, Helena, had

married Matthias Jansen on 20 January 1862.²⁶ Their twelve-year-old son, Frank, was living with his parents in 1870. It is interesting to note that when their daughter Helena “Verhalle” had her first child in November 1862, her brother Frank was only four-and-a-half years old. “Anna Verhalle” was the sponsor for her first grandchild and namesake, Anna, who was baptized on 14 December 1862 at St. Boniface.²⁷ Jacob “Ferheier” was the sponsor for their second granddaughter, Mary, who was born on 30 April 1864 and baptized on 5 June 1864, also at St. Boniface.²⁸

In the 1873–1874 Quincy city directory, Jacob and Johanna were listed as living at 12 N. Ninth, but his occupation and place of employment were not listed.²⁹ In the 1880 census, he and Johanna were living at 16 N. Ninth.³⁰ Their son, Frank had lived for a couple of years in St. Louis where he married Mary Schniedermeier on 29 January 1884,



Jacob and Johanna Verheyen and son Frank; photo in author’s collection; used with permission.

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with his cousin Herman's eldest son, William Verheyen, as a witness.³¹ In the St. Louis city directory of 1883, Frank "Verheigen" was listed as "brick" [bricklayer] living at 1413 Franklin Avenue, while in the 1884 *Gould's Directory* for St. Louis, "Frederick Verhegen's" occupation was again listed as "brick" and he was residing at 1300 Franklin Avenue in St. Louis.³²

By 1887, Jacob and his son, Frank, were living next to each other in Quincy. Jacob and Johanna resided at 115 N. Ninth, while Frank and his family resided at 117 N. Ninth. From deed records, it appears that Jacob and Anna owned both houses and sold the one at 117 N. Ninth to Frank and his wife, Mary.³³ These houses were small. The lot where Jacob and Johanna lived had a frontage of twenty-nine feet and a depth of ninety-nine feet, with a footprint of 2,871 square feet.³⁴

They were still living next to one another in 1894 at the time of Jacob's death on 30 September. He was buried from St. Boniface on 3 October 1894 and interred in block 5, lot 86 in the church cemetery.

Jacob Verheyen's Death

Jacob's obituary states that he died in his home at 115 North Ninth from an abscess of the bowels. It also reported that he was born in Germany in 1812, had come to Quincy in 1849, and had resided in Quincy ever since. He "leaves a widow and two children, Frank Verheyen of this city and Mrs. Matthew Jansen, of Wichita, Kansas."³⁵ The burial record at St. Boniface affirms that "Jacobus Verheyer" was the husband of Anna "Verhagen" and that his father's name was Joannes. There was no name given for his mother.³⁶

Johanna died on 20 January 1897 at St. Vincent's Home in Quincy, Illinois. Her obituary states that she had lived in the city for forty-seven years but mistakenly lists her age as eighty-four instead of eighty-one.³⁷ In her will, she left "\$100 to Rev. M. Weiss for masses

for her own soul and that of her deceased husband." She also gave to her daughter, "Lena Jansen, wife of Matthew Jansen residing in Kansas," all her family pictures and ten percent of her estate. The rest she willed to her son, Frank, who lived next to them in Quincy.³⁸ At the time of her death, her estate was valued at \$750. She owned a small house worth \$900. However, it had a mortgage of \$200 which she had taken out a year earlier at six percent interest.³⁹ As a result, after funeral expenses of sixty-eight dollars and court costs, there was not much left, but at least in their old age both she and Jacob were able to live off their savings and investments—something they probably would not have been able to do if they had remained in Germany. She was buried on 23 January 1897 in St. Boniface Cemetery beside her husband.

Jacob and Joanna had experienced much sorrow in their life together, and they were separated from his relatives in St. Louis and hers in Wisconsin. But Jacob's obituary was also sent to the St. Louis newspapers, which would seem to indicate that the families kept in touch. This connection is further evidenced by his son Frank's residence in St. Louis from 1882 to 1884.⁴⁰

Although Jacob and Anna lost four children born in America (after losing their first child in Qualburg), they probably felt that their life in America had been better than if they had stayed in their original village in Germany where the opportunities for work, investment in homeownership, and advancement for their children were limited at best. They could also take satisfaction in the knowledge that their two surviving children were better off than they were. Rising above the common labor class of his father and grandfather in the Rhineland, their son, Frank, had a profession, that of a bricklayer. Their daughter, Helena, had married successfully, and after a failed farming venture in Quincy, she and her husband moved to Kansas where

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Matthew and Helena (Verheyen) Jansen family. Albert, the author's grandfather, is the young boy on his father's lap. Photo in the author's collection; used with permission.

they were thriving as farmers. None of their grandchildren would die in infancy.⁴¹ In summary, the next generation would enjoy better circumstances than their own, which is the dream and hope of all parents.

Johann (John) Verheyen

Jacob's older brother, Johann Verheyen, was born on 11 February 1810 in house 108 in Hasselt, Rhenish Prussia,⁴² the son of Herman and Johanna Josten. On the same day, he was baptized in St. Martin's Catholic Church in Qualburg, only a few miles from Hasselt.⁴³ Herman was the son of Lambert and Gertrude (Verhoeven) Verheyen. Like his father and grandfather, Johann was a day laborer, and like them, he lived in and stayed around Hasselt until his emigration.

On 3 May 1841, Johann married Bartholomea Zadelaer in Materborn, Rheinland, Prussia.⁴⁴ She was born in nearby Kekerdom, Holland, in 1815, the daughter of Frederick and Margaretha Thunison. Together, Johann and Bartholomea had four children whose names and christening dates are Herman, 20 March 1842; Friedrich, 22 May 1844; Margaretha,

23 October 1846; and Johanna, 23 November 1848.⁴⁵

Sometime in early 1849, Johann, with his wife and children, immigrated to America with four other families, including that of his brother Jacob. After arriving in New Orleans, Louisiana, the group traveled up the Mississippi River and stopped briefly in St. Louis, Missouri, before proceeding on to Milwaukee, Wisconsin. There, two families, the Verhaalens and the Bolls, settled and took up farming. Whether Johann Verheyen was considering his farming options is unknown. But according to his son's later account, the family returned to St. Louis shortly after the Great Fire in mid-May 1849.

St. Louis after the Great Fire

What was St. Louis like in the mid-1800s? After landing on the levee in St. Louis, the Verheyens would have wound their way through stacks of lumber, barrels of goods, and other merchandise piled high on the levee. To find lodging, they undoubtedly dodged wagons pulled by horses, oxen, or mules. Perhaps they had to navigate through some of the remains of the warehouses and buildings charred by the recent conflagration. Most of the streets were unpaved and either dusty or muddy, depending on the weather. Waste from the animals pulling drayage wagons through the city added to the unsanitary conditions. Pigs ran loose, eating garbage and spillage from grain sacks.⁴⁶

On the bright side, they did find that jobs were plentiful. St. Louis was one of the fastest-growing cities in the country, experiencing a population increase of 373% from 1840 to 1850, with 70,000 residents making it larger than Pittsburgh or Chicago. Nearly forty-three percent of the residents in St. Louis were German and Irish natives, most of whom were destitute and encountered anti-immigrant and anti-Catholic sentiment upon their arrival.⁴⁷

Due to the sudden and large influx of people, St. Louis, like other cities, did not have the

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necessary infrastructure to support this population. There was no sanitation system, and the many sinkholes and caverns dotting the city were used as garbage dumps. When it rained, these filled with water, generating a repugnant odor in the hot and humid summer and overflowing into basements of buildings in low-lying areas where many of the poorer immigrants lived. Unsanitary conditions and contaminated drinking water from these sources caused the rapid spread of disease such as cholera, which developed into an epidemic in St. Louis in the spring and summer of 1849.⁴⁸ Cholera was brought by immigrants from Europe to American ports such as New Orleans where it increased and spread to towns along the rivers.

New Orleans at the time was an “open port,” which meant that there were no restrictions or quarantines imposed on sick passengers, thus allowing disease to spread easily.⁴⁹

In the second week of May 1849, the citizens of St. Louis witnessed 181 cholera deaths. In one week in July, the disease claimed 722 people. Panic set in. Those who could afford it, including many of the city’s elected officials, left the city for the countryside. However, the poor immigrants were not so fortunate. In the midst of the crisis, a Committee of Public Health was hastily formed. It implemented decisive and stringent measures to clean up the city and quarantine incoming steamboats until the passengers were medically cleared. These measures were successful in curbing the spread of cholera.

By August 1849, the number of deaths from cholera was drastically decreasing, but the disease continued to linger into the following year. Officially, the disease claimed 4,547 people in 1849, although some consider this number to be understated.⁵⁰

What must Johann and his family have thought of their new situation? They had come to a land of promise but were confronted with the imminent threat of disease and death. Nevertheless, they survived the eventful year

of 1849 during which they left their homeland, traveled overland to a French port, sailed nearly two months over a seemingly endless ocean, and navigated up a wide, twisting, and dangerous river before they could finally settle into their new home in St. Louis. Brighter prospects must surely await them in the coming year.

In the summer of 1850, however, tragedy struck. On 14 August, Johann died of unknown causes. He was buried the following day, according to the burial records of St. Joseph Catholic Church, the “German Church” at Eleventh and Biddle Streets in St. Louis. In the church death records, he was listed as “Joannes Verhayer,” the thirty-six-year-old husband of Bartholomea “Sadela,” although his actual age was forty.⁵¹

Bartholomea found herself in a still-strange city, without a breadwinner husband and with three small children to feed, clothe, and shelter. Like others in her homeland and now here in America, she solved this problem by re-marrying shortly after Johann’s death. On 1 October 1850, she wed Joachim Gamers, a recent widower himself. Joachim was born on 27 March 1797, the son of Joannes and Maria (Wanders) Gamers, in Rees, Germany. Rees is on the bank of the Rhine River, about fifteen miles from Haslett.⁵² On 26 June 1832, he had



St. Joseph Catholic Church, c. 1875 from Pictorial St. Louis, a Topographical Survey, by Camille N. Dry, public domain.

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married Ludovica “Aloysia” Bretheuer in St. Mary’s Catholic Church in Rees.⁵³ Together, they had five known children, all born in Germany: Joannes, born on 3 July 1833; Maria, born in September 1835; Anna, born on 14 May 1837; Johanna Ludovica, born on 16 October 1839; and a second Maria, born on 1 May 1842. (Presumably, the first Maria had died).⁵⁴ The emigration record shows that Joachim, a day laborer, and his family emigrated in 1845.⁵⁵

By 1850, the family was living in St. Louis. On 15 July 1850, Joachim Gamers lost his wife, Aloysia. Less than a week later, on 21 July, he lost his surviving two daughters, ten-year-old Aloysia and thirteen-year-old Anna.⁵⁶ Young Aloysia was buried on 21 July, and Anna was buried the following day. Due to the proximity of the mother’s and daughters’ deaths, it is possible that they all died from cholera, which spreads rapidly. All three were buried from St. Joseph Catholic Church, which Bartholomea also attended.

If Bartholomea and Joachim did not know each other prior to this, acquaintances and fellow parishioners probably informed them of each other’s plight. She needed a husband and breadwinner, and he needed a homemaker, companion, and family. Less than three months after their spouses passed away, Bartholomea and Joachim married at St. Joseph Catholic Church on 1 October 1850.⁵⁷

Unfortunately, the tragedy in Joachim’s life was not over. Six months later, on 5 March 1851, his seventeen-year-old son, Joannes, died.⁵⁸ But the future did hold happier times, and on 2 June 1852, the couple celebrated the birth of a daughter. They named her Aloysia, undoubtedly after Joachim’s first wife and his deceased daughter.⁵⁹

Eight years later, according to the 1860 U.S. census, Joachim was living in the eighth ward of St. Louis with his wife, Bartholomea (also referred to as “Elizabeth”); her children, Herman

and Frederick; and their eight-year-old daughter, Aloysia. The census taker listed the family surname as “Games” and included Herman and Frederick under that name even though they were Verheyens. No occupation is listed for Joachim, but his eighteen-year-old stepson, Herman Verheyen, is listed as a laborer.⁶⁰ Perhaps at age sixty-three, Joachim was too old or disabled to work, and Herman may have been the breadwinner of the family. On 7 March 1865, Joachim Gamers died and was buried the following day from St. Joseph Catholic Church.⁶¹ Later that spring, Aloysia, along with her 125 classmates, made her First Communion and was confirmed at the same parish.⁶²

What happened to Bartholomea, Herman, Frederick, Margaret, and Aloysia after the death of Joachim? The family evidently stayed close and some perhaps lived together, with Herman, Frederick, Margaret, and Aloysia all contributing to the family support. Although Margaret was not listed in the family census of 1860, she appears in later records. She may have been working for another family in St. Louis during that census, which was not uncommon for girls her age.

The brothers, Jacob and Johann Verheyen, made the decision to leave their ancestral home and make new lives for themselves and their families in the United States. Although they settled in different cities and had different experiences of their new homeland, they both left their offspring with more opportunity and better lives than they might have had in Germany.

End Notes

Unless otherwise noted, referenced websites were last checked on 21 May 2023.

1. “Deutschland Geburten und Taufen, 1558–1898,” database, *FamilySearch* (www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:NFJD-XT1), christening of Jacobus Verheyen, 1812.

2. “Deutschland Heiraten, 1558–1929,” database, *FamilySearch*, (www.familysearch.org)

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/ark:/61903/1:1:JHZV-QJT), marriage of Herman Verheyen and Eva Josten, 22 February 1805.

3. "French Republican Calendar," *Wikipedia* (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/French_Republican_calendar).

4. "Deutschland Heiraten, 1558–1929," database, *FamilySearch* (www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:JHZM-B5S), marriage of Joannes Verhoeven and Joanna Joosten, 17 July 1796.

5. "Deutschland Geburten und Taufen, 1558–1898," database, *FamilySearch* (www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:NZPG-XMG), baptism of Johanna Verhaalen, 11 August 1815.

6. "Deutschland Heiraten, 1558–1929," database, *FamilySearch* (www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:JHZV-MLV), marriage of Jacob Verheyen and Johanna Verhaalen, 1844.

7. "Deutschland Geburten und Taufen, 1558–1898," *FamilySearch* (www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:NZPG-5MB), baptism of Hermann Verheyen, 10 February 1845.

8. "Deutschland Geburten und Taufen, 1558–1898," *FamilySearch* (www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:NZPG-RWY), baptism of Helena Verheyen, 6 June 1846.

9. See "Jacob and Johann Verheyen: The Journey of Two Mid-Nineteenth Century Immigrant Families from Germany to Quincy, Illinois and to St. Louis, Missouri," *St. Louis Genealogical Society Quarterly*, vol. 56, no. 1, for a detailed explanation of the families' migration to America.

10. *News from the Land of Freedom: German Immigrants Write Home*, Walter D. Kamphoefner, Wolfgang Helbich, Ulrike Sommer, eds. (Munich, 1988; translation, Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1991), 541. Letter of Franz Schano, dated 19 March 1851.

11. 1850 U.S. census, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin, population schedule, Lake, p. 124B (printed), 846 (penned), dwelling 200, family 212, Gerard Boll, *FamilySearch*, citing NARA microfilm publication M432.

12. 1860 U.S. census, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin, pop. sch., Lake, p. 52 (penned), dw. 200, fam. 212, John Boll in the household of Gerard Boll, *FamilySearch*. Also 1860 U.S. census, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin, pop. sch., Lake, p. 52 (penned), dw. 199, fam. 211, William Boll, *FamilySearch*. Also 1860 U.S. census, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin,

pop. sch., Franklin, p. 136 (penned), dw. 996, fam. 996, John Verhaalen, *FamilySearch*.

13. *Quincy City Directory for 1855–6*, compiled by J. F. Everhart, M.D. (Quincy, Illinois: Gibson & Morrison, Republican Office, 1855), "W. Wells, shoemaker, north side of Kentucky between 8th & 9th street," 53.

14. Rev. Thomas Bruener, *History of the Catholic Church in Quincy*, translated by Lester Holtschlag (Quincy, Illinois: Druck von Volk, Jones & McMein, 1887(?); republished by the Great Rivers Genealogical Society, Quincy, Illinois, 2006), p. iv.

15. "Illinois, U.S., Roman Catholic Diocese of Springfield Sacramental Records, 1853–1975; Quincy, St. Peter, Baptism 1839–1920; Index to Baptism 1939–1900; Marriage 1839–1900; Death 1859–1885"; database with images, *Ancestry* (<https://ancestry.com>), Jacob Frein [sic], 13 July 1849, baptisms, image 95 of 1128, p. 89, eighth item on page.

16. Bruener, p. 92.

17. "Illinois, Roman Catholic Diocese of Springfield Sacramental Records, 1853–1975," Quincy, St. Boniface, 1838–1870 (baptisms); database with images, *Ancestry*, John Verheide, [sic] 12 May 1851, 125, no. 58 (image 133 of 840); and Henry Verheide, [sic] 25 September 1853, 48, no. 95 (image 218 of 840); and Anna Catherine Verheide, [sic] 14 December 1855, 118, no. 147 (image 292 of 840); and Gerhard [Frank] Verheide, [sic] 9 March 1858, 7, no. 51 (image 377 of 840).

18. "Illinois, Roman Catholic Diocese of Springfield Sacramental Records, 1853–1975," Quincy, St. Boniface, 1837–1975 (deaths); database with images, *Ancestry*, Johann Verheyde [sic], 46–47, no. 38 (images 48 and 49 of 605); and Henricum Verheide [sic], 83, no. 74 (image 85 of 605); and Franciscus, no. 33, under the year 1921 (image 442 of 605).

19. 1860 U.S. census, Adams County, Illinois, pop. sch., Quincy, p. 266 (penned), dw. 1939, fam. 2166, Jacob Verhine [sic]; *FamilySearch*, FHL film 803,154.

20. "Illinois, County Naturalization Records, 1800–1998"; database with images, *FamilySearch*, Jacob Verhier [sic], 1854, 139, image no. 1442 of 1447.

21. "Illinois, Roman Catholic Diocese of Springfield Sacramental Records, 1853–1975," Quincy,

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St. Boniface, 1837–1975 (baptisms); database with images, *Ancestry*, Mary Caroline Lufen, 36, no. 33 (image 206 of 840).

22. "Illinois, Roman Catholic Diocese of Springfield Sacramental Records, 1853–1975," Quincy, St. Boniface, 1837–1870 (baptisms); database with images; *Ancestry*, Johann Verheide [sic], 125, no. 58 (image 133 of 840).

23. "Illinois, Roman Catholic Diocese of Springfield Sacramental Records, 1853–1975," Quincy, St. Boniface, 1837–1870 (baptisms); database with images, *Ancestry*, Anna Catherine Verheide [sic], 118, no. 147 (image 292 of 840).

24. *Quincy City Directory for 1855–6*, "Ferheir, J. [sic], laborer," 29; and "Wells, W. shoemaker," 53.

25. 1850 U.S. census, Adams County, Illinois, pop. sch., Quincy, p. 34 (penned), dw. 240, fam. 289, Jacob Feshier [sic], *FamilySearch*, NARA microfilm M432.

26. "Illinois, Roman Catholic Diocese of Springfield Sacramental Records, 1853–1975," Quincy, St. Boniface, 1837–1975 (marriages), database with images, *Ancestry*, Matthaes Jansen and Helena Verheien, [sic] 20 January 1862, 19, no. 4 (image 131 of 361).

27. "Illinois, Roman Catholic Diocese of Springfield Sacramental Records, 1853–1975," Quincy, St. Boniface, 1837–1975 (baptism), database with images, *Ancestry*, Anna Jansen, 123, no. 182 (images 584 and 585 of 840).

28. "Illinois, Roman Catholic Diocese of Springfield Sacramental Records, 1853–1975," Quincy, St. Boniface, 1837–1975 (marriages), database with images, *Ancestry*, Maria Christina Jansen, 5 June 1864, 150, no. 89 (image 638-639 of 840).

29. "U.S., City Directories, 1822–1995," *Langdon and Arntzen's Quincy City Directory and Reference Book, 1873–74*, 179, Jacobus Verheien [sic]; digital image, *Ancestry*.

30. 1880 U.S. census, Adams County, Illinois, pop. sch., Quincy, p. 19 (penned), dw. 178, fam. 215, Jacob Verheyen; digital image, *Ancestry*, citing NARA microfilm T9.

31. "Catholic Church, Shrine of St. Joseph (St. Louis, Missouri), Church records, 1843–1979," database with images, *FamilySearch*, (www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-CS79-27NP-K?i=338&cat=657286), marriage of Franciscus Verheyen and Maria Schneidermeyer,

29 January 1884, 168, no. 3 (image 339 of 1041); FHL film 1,870,935.

32. *Gould's St. Louis Directory for 1883*, St. Louis Mercantile Library (<https://dl.mospace.umsystem.edu/islandora/search>), Frank Verheigen [sic], 1114. Also *Gould's St. Louis Directory for 1884*, St. Louis Mercantile Library, Fredrick Vernegen [sic], 1123.

33. Adams County, Illinois, "Abstract of Land Deeds, book 3 of Samuel P. Church's Addition," lot no. 23, block no. 1, warrant no. 1229 in book 140, p. 557, 3 February 1891, "The Grantors, Jacob Verheyen and Anna Verheyen, his wife . . . convey and warrant to Frank Verheyen"; County Recorder's Office, Adams County Courthouse, Quincy, Illinois. Also "Abstract of Land Deeds, book 3 of Samuel P. Church's Addition," lot no. 23, block no. 1, mortgage 1230 in book 56, p. 627, 3 February 1891, "That the Mortgagors, Frank Verheyen and Mary K. Verheyen, his wife . . . Mortgage and Warrant to Jacob Verheyen and Anna Verheyen, his wife. . . ." Also, "Abstract of Land Deeds, book 3 of Samuel P. Church's Addition," lot no. 23, block no. 1, quit claim no. 5971 in book 143, p. 323, 25 April 1892, "The Grantors, Jacob Verheyen and Anna Verheyen, his wife . . . in consideration of \$400.00 Dollars . . . convey and quit claim to Frank Verheyen . . . Lot Number twenty-three. . . ."

34. Adams County, Illinois, "Abstract of Land Deeds, book 3 of Samuel P. Church's Addition," mortgage record book 69, 523, no. 12153.

35. "Lived Here Forty-five Years," *The Quincy Daily Herald*, Quincy, Illinois, 1 October 1894, *NewspaperArchive* (<https://access.newspaperarchive.com>), p. 1, col. 2.

36. "Illinois, Roman Catholic Diocese of Springfield Sacramental Records, 1853–1975," Quincy, St. Boniface, 1837–1975 (deaths), 3 October 1894, 225, item no. 35, Jacobus Verheyer [sic], database with images, *Ancestry*, image 391 of 605.

37. "Deaths," *The Quincy Daily Journal*, Quincy, Illinois, 20 January 1897, p. 7, col. 2, Johanna Verheyen.

38. "Anna Verheien," *The Quincy Daily Journal*, Quincy, Illinois, 20 January 1897, p. 7, col. 2.

39. Adams County, Illinois, Petition for Letters Testamentary, Estate of Anna Verheyen, record 72, page 270, order no. 270, filed 9 February 1897, Adams County Court, Quincy, Illinois.

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40. *Gould's St. Louis Directory 1883*. Also, *Gould's St. Louis Directory 1884*.

41. According to family lore, ten-month-old Albert Jansen fell out of the wagon as the family was moving from Quincy to Wichita, Kansas. The infant was not missed immediately. When his parents finally noticed his absence, they turned around and found him playing in the powder-fine dirt of the wagon trail. He lived to be seventy-eight years old and died on 17 February 1955. As his grandchildren, we were all reminded by our parents, aunts, and uncles that we were fortunate to be born in light of our grandfather's near-demise.

42. Hasselt was a small village near Qualburg and the larger city of Kleve (Cleve).

43. "Deutschland Geburten und Taufen, 1558–1898," Till-Moyland, Rheinland, Prussia, *FamilySearch* (www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:NFJD-FY5), baptism of Joannes Verheyen, 11 February 1810.

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Two Lives Diverge in America . . .

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About the Author

Joe A. Armour holds an M.A. degree in history from the University of Missouri-Kansas City and an M.B.A. from Lindenwood University. After a six-year teaching career (primarily social studies but also Latin and French), he began working for UniGroup, Inc., the parent company of United Van Lines and Mayflower Transit, where he held various management positions in his thirty-three-year career. During these years, he continued researching his family history and expanding his genealogical knowledge by attending the St. Louis Genealogical Society's meetings and workshops. When he retired in 2009, he devoted more time to his passion and was able to begin writing the results of his findings. His interest in genealogy began as a youth listening to family stories from his parents and grandparents and seeing the places they described.

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Susie Florence Dobbins

By Karen Meng

My grandmother, Susie Florence Dobbins, was greatly loved by her large family of nine children and their many descendants. She was a soft-spoken, calm, loving person who put her family above all else. She was always smiling and had kind words for everyone she knew. Her twenty-five grandchildren received hugs, kisses, praise, and encouragement, and it was obvious she dearly loved her husband and would have done anything for him. We all knew that he was no saint, but she always adored him. To all of us, she lived a peaceful, happy life.

When researching family history, I have learned to never assume something without checking the facts. In doing so, I have discovered that Grandma's life was far different from anything I could have imagined.

The daughter of James Dobbins and Florence Fritz, Susie Florence Dobbins was born on 5 December 1881 in St. Louis, Missouri.¹ Little was known about Susie's dad because he left the family when Susie was only a child, although many family members possess his same wavy, sandy hair and small build. Conversely, family members knew quite a bit about Susie's other relatives because she shared many loving stories about them.



Florence (Fritz) Dobbins; used with permission of Florence (Davis) Portell.

James and Florence had many differences. While Florence was the granddaughter of recent German immigrants, the Dobbins family had been in the United States for several generations. She and her family spoke High German; James likely did not speak German. She was Catholic, and he was Protestant. She grew up in St. Louis, while he grew up in Benton, Scott County, Missouri, where his family owned a hotel.² When the hotel was destroyed by fire, the Dobbins children went their separate ways to find work.

James and his brother Thomas moved to St. Louis where they worked as "molders." Another brother, William, also worked as a molder in St. Louis, but he did not live with his siblings.³

Molding was a dangerous profession. First, a wooden frame was made for the mold. Next, the box was filled with sand which was formed into the appropriate shape. Finally, molten iron was poured into the mold.⁴ There was always the chance that the molten iron would spill or splash onto the molder. Molds were used to make everything from frying pans to large stoves.



James Albert Dobbins; used with permission of Clifford Graham.

Susie Florence Dobbins

Florence lived on North Ninth Street while James lived on North Tenth Street in St. Louis when they met. She was working as a waitress. Her brother George was apprenticed to a molder, which may be how Florence and James became acquainted.⁵ Their first child, Susie, was born on 5 December 1881,⁶ just over nine months after her parents' marriage.⁷ She was the firstborn of three girls. As a child, Susie lived at 2403 North Ninth Street.⁸

Susie was one year old when Mark Twain wrote *Tom Sawyer*. Living so close to the Mississippi, she undoubtedly spent lots of time watching steamboats ply the river. Her grandfather, Ignatius Fritz, had worked on riverboats, so she must have heard fascinating stories about life on the Mississippi from her family.

The marriage of James and Florence began to deteriorate in the early 1880s, with a series of four births between 1883 and 1886 raising questions about James's marital fidelity and providing a confusing timeline. Susie's sister, Laura, was born in St. Louis on 30 December 1883.⁹ Then the following November, 600 miles away, a Charles Dobbins was born in Texas where James had been working.

Although it is not known if James was Charles's father, the question remains as to why Charles's last name was Dobbins.¹⁰ His mother was Lottie Norton McCown—whom James Dobbins would marry four years later, on 28 October 1888.¹¹ Like James, Lottie had also been married before. Her marriage license to James lists her as Mrs. Lottie McGown, but in most other legal documents she is shown as Lottie Norton, which must have been her maiden name.

Back in St. Louis, Susie's youngest sister, Cora, was born on 12 March 1886¹² while the family still lived on North Ninth Street. But two months later down in the Lone Star State, on 4 May 1886, Blanchard May Dobbins was born in Sherman, Texas; years later, Blanchard's death certificate would show her parents as James A. Dobbins and Lottie P. Norton.¹³ The St. Louis Dobbins children were



2403 North Ninth Street, front and rear, 2015, from St. Louis Missouri City Assessor's office (<https://www.stlouis-mo.gov/government/departments/assessor/Who-Owns-a-Property.cfm>). Public domain.



Susie, Laura, and Cora, while Charles and Blanchard carried the Dobbins name in Texas. Perhaps it was no surprise that it was around this time when James left the St. Louis family.

According to Tom Kilwin, whose wife is a descendant of Susie's sister, Cora Dobbins Fitzgerald, James left the family because Florence had the children baptized in the Catholic faith against his wishes. It is true that the three St. Louis sisters were baptized on 15 July 1888,¹⁴ but just three months later, James married Lottie Norton (on 28 October),¹⁵ so it is unlikely the baptisms had anything to do with the choices James made. Susie must have known that her parents were having serious problems and that her mother was heartbroken. The obvious

Susie Florence Dobbins

question arises: By the end of 1888, did James have two wives? Whatever the situation, it was the first of many major losses Susie would experience in her life.

Pearl Graham Bright, Susie's daughter, shared many of the stories Susie had told her.¹⁶ For example, once, when Susie was visiting her Dobbins relatives, she was told, "Here comes your dad." To avoid seeing him, she went down the back stairs and to her aunt Georgie's. Before James left the family, Susie had been very close to a woman called "Aunt Georgie"; however, Susie had no relatives by this name, and I have not been able to identify her. She may have been a friend or neighbor. Pearl also mentioned that the last time Susie saw her father, he was walking down the opposite side of the street with a beautiful, red-headed woman. Susie, who was with her aunt Lena, felt betrayed and refused to say hello. According to oral family history, the woman was quite wealthy, and her family was in the shoe industry. (This does not fit the description of Lottie. Was this yet another woman?) Previously, Susie would spend time with James's sisters, but after James deserted the family, Susie wanted nothing to do with her father or anyone else in the Dobbins family. To her, her father was dead.

In 1890, Susie lost her beloved grandmother, Florentina,¹⁷ who had been born in Baden¹⁸ and emigrated to the U.S. after her mother's death. Her father in Germany had remarried, and her stepmother had been cruel to her. Additionally, she had been promised in marriage to an older German man whom she detested. For these reasons, Florentina came to this country by herself when she was still a teenager. Susie must have adored Florentina because she frequently shared stories about the older woman with her children.¹⁹

The year 1894 was probably the worst time Susie experienced in her young life. The 1894 St. Louis city directory lists Florence Dobbins as a widow,²⁰ even though James was alive and living in Texas. Florence was ill and

BIRTH RECORD			
Name.....	Laura	Sex.....	
Address.....	Brown Street	Date.....	1883
Father's Name.....		Age.....	
Mother's Name.....		Age.....	
Presentation.....		Weight.....	
Name.....	Laura	Sex.....	
Address.....	12 Main	Date.....	1886
Father's Name.....		Age.....	
Mother's Name.....		Age.....	
Presentation.....		Weight.....	
Name.....	Laura	Sex.....	
Address.....	Brown Street	Date.....	1881
Father's Name.....		Age.....	
Mother's Name.....		Age.....	
Presentation.....		Weight.....	
Name.....	Laura	Sex.....	
Address.....	Laura	Date.....	
Father's Name.....	Susie U	Age.....	
Mother's Name.....	When Mama	Age.....	
Presentation.....	Dead	Weight.....	

Page from Dobbins Family Bible, from author's collection. Used with permission.

died on 21 June 1894 at the age of thirty-three. In the family Bible, Susie wrote, "Cora 7 years, Laura 9 years, Susie 11 years when Mama died." (See image above.)

Susie always believed that her mother died of a broken heart, but the City of St. Louis death register lists the cause of death as "phthisis pulmon" (pneumonia).²¹ After her mother's death, Susie refused to acknowledge James as her father. In her mind, he had killed her mother. Susie must have struggled greatly with what she saw as betrayal by her father, as well as the loss of her grandmother and mother, all within seven years. Essentially, the three girls had become orphans.

An article from the *Fort Worth Gazette* in Texas provides details about the situation:

To Produce His License—A Request to Investigate the Marriage Records

City Secretary Montgomery received a letter yesterday morning from one F. P. White of St. Louis asking him to please investigate the date a license was issued to James A.

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Dobbins. The request says that Dobbins was married in Fort Worth something like twelve years ago; that he brought his wife to St. Louis and there abandoned her and her three little girls seven years ago. Mrs. Dobbins never had a divorce from her erring husband and never knew that he had ever married again. Mrs. Dobbins died about a month ago, and now Dobbins has appeared on the scene in St. Louis, saying that he has been married twice since he deserted his first wife, and that he intends taking the children and bringing them to Fort Worth. The children are said to detest the idea of coming with their father, and friends of the children wish to prevent his bringing them if they can. For this purpose they have asked Secretary Montgomery to furnish them with the date of the license so that Dobbins may be prosecuted for bigamy. Inquiry has been made here and no one remembers Dobbins. County Clerk Jno. P. King has not made a thorough investigation yet, but will, and the exact date of Dobbins' marriage and to whom (for the letter does not state Mrs. Dobbins' maiden name) can be learned. The letter has excited considerable interest among those to whom it has been shown, and all join Secretary Montgomery in his desire to do anything that can benefit the three little motherless children.²²

Although this article indicates that James had a third wife in addition to Florence and Lotie sometime between 1880 and 1894, no record of this marriage has been found. Could the red-headed woman have been the second marriage? Could he have been married to three women at the same time? Sadly, all this reveals so much about what Susie faced during the first eleven years of her life. As the oldest daughter, she must have felt so much responsibility for helping her mother and sisters.

After Florence's death, Susie's maternal aunt Lena (Maria Magdalena Fritz Hamburg) took over raising the three girls. Lena must have struggled financially and emotionally trying to provide for them. She worked as a housekeeper for several wealthy families in



Laura, Susie, and Cora Dobbins, from author's collection. Used with permission.

St. Louis. Susie recalled playing at the Orthwein home while Lena did laundry and sewing for the family. It is likely that Susie cared for her sisters while Lena worked.

Lena taught the girls to sew and make their own clothing. Susie's niece stated that her mother, Cora, and her aunt Laura made their own wedding gowns.²³ Lena made sure the girls received a proper education by sending them to St. Liborius Catholic School where all three graduated from eighth grade.²⁴

On 27 May 1896, when Susie was fourteen, a tornado hit St. Louis, damaging the eastern approach to the Eads Bridge and many structures in the city. At the time, Aunt Lena and the girls were living in the area that received the most damage. It was estimated this tornado killed more than 255 people.²⁵ Although no one in her family was hurt, for Susie this was just one more tragedy in her life.

When Susie was nineteen, the apartment on North Ninth Street where she lived with her aunt Lena and two sisters was burglarized.²⁶ This robbery was described in an article in the *St. Louis Republic* and mentions that items stolen belonged to Susie Dobbins. The burglar was caught and found to have been responsible for several other burglaries in the area.

Susie Florence Dobbins

Sometime around the turn of the century, Susie met John George Graham and fell in love. She fondly called him Johnny. Susie had been raised in a strict Catholic environment, but he was Baptist. Nevertheless, they were married on 2 July 1901 at the Fourth Christian Church (also known as the Union Avenue Christian Church on Fourth Street) in St. Louis.²⁷ This decision must have been difficult for Susie, because her sisters disowned her for marrying outside their faith and had little to do with Susie after that. The only named witnesses to the wedding were from John's family. Even a happy event like her marriage brought some heartbreak to Susie.

Over the years, Susie and John had nine children. Even though they had little money, John still pursued a social life apart from his family. He was always ready to play poker and buy drinks for his friends. According to Maud Graham, Susie's daughter-in-law, John's sister frequently slipped money to Susie without her brother's knowledge. She knew that Susie would use the money wisely.

Susie and John lost the only home they ever owned during the Great Depression. For most of their lives, they rented small homes, occupied government housing, or resided with their children. But their home was always full of children and grandchildren. Family picnics were regular events and were never small. Susie made sure that cousins, and even distant cousins, knew each other. This included members of the Shapiro, Schultz, Bennet, Egner, Fritz, Fitzgerald, Dolan, Fleming, and Gilmore families.

In the end, Susie was content and happy. She had a big family and lots of love. Cousins agree that the reason we are all still so close is because of our grandmother, Susie Dobbins Graham.



A typical Graham family picnic; picture from Clifford Graham's album, used with permission. Susie is on the right (no. 8), and John is in front of her (no. 43).

End Notes

Unless otherwise noted, referenced websites were last checked on 21 May 2023.

1. Susie Dobbins Graham, *Susie Dobbins Handwritten Family History* (Granite City, Illinois: no publisher, 1934,) unpaginated; privately held by Karen Meng, [ADDRESS FOR PRIVATE USE], Edwardsville, Illinois, 2022.

2. 1860 U.S. census, Scott County, Missouri, population schedule, Benton, sheet 2 (handwritten), dwelling 9, family 9, James A. Dobbins; digital image, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org>), citing NARA microfilm publication M653.

3. *Gould's St. Louis Directory, for 1885, [varying subtitles]* (St. Louis, Missouri: Gould Directory Co., 1885), James A. Dobbins, 326; digital image, "United States City and Business Directories, ca. 1749–ca. 1990," *FamilySearch*.

4. "Moulder," *The Commonwealth* (<https://commonwealth.gostudy.net/occupation/moulder>).

5. 1880 U.S. census, St. Louis, Missouri, pop. sch., St. Louis, sheet 9A (penned), dw. 65, fam. 80, Florence Fritz in household of Florindene Fritz; digital image, *FamilySearch*, citing NARA microfilm publication T9.

6. Graham, *Susie Dobbins Handwritten Family History*, n.p.

Susie Florence Dobbins

7. "Missouri Marriages, 1750–1920"; database, *FamilySearch*, James A. Dobbins and Florence Fritz, 24 February 1881, vol. 20, 12, citing City of St. Louis Marriage Records, 1881–1920.

8. *Gould's St. Louis City Directory, 1900* (St. Louis, Missouri: Gould Directory Co., 1900), Florence Dobbins, 486; digital image "United States City and Business Directories, ca. 1749–ca. 1990," *FamilySearch*.

9. *Find a Grave*, database with images (<https://www.findagrave.com>), memorial page for Laura E. Dobbins Fitzgerald (1883–1961), no. 48943955, citing Calvary Cemetery and Mausoleum, St. Louis, Missouri; created by: "T.V.F.T.H."

10. 1900 U.S. census, Dallas County, Texas, pop. sch., Dallas, precinct no. 1, ED 126, sheet 8B (penned), dw. 155, fam. 173, Lottie J. Dobbins; digital image, *FamilySearch*, citing FHL film 1,241,625.

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12. Social Security Administration, "United States Social Security Death Index," database, *FamilySearch*, entry for Cora Dolan, 1973, no SSN listed.

13. "Texas Deaths, 1890–1976," *FamilySearch*. Lottie J. Norton on death certificate for Blanchard May McLendon, 19 December 1939, citing certificate no. 57382, State Registrar Office, Austin; FHL microfilm 2,118,413.

14. Rev. G. Flavin, St. Michael the Archangel Catholic Church, St. Louis, Missouri, letter, baptisms of Susie, Laura, and Cora Dobbins, 5 March 1947; Dobbins Family Files, Meng Research Files, privately held by Karen Meng, [ADDRESS FOR PRIVATE USE], Edwardsville, Illinois.

15. Texas, "Texas, County Marriage Index, 1837–1977," database with images, *FamilySearch*, entry for James Dobbins and Lottie McCown, 1888.

16. Pearl Graham Bright (Edwardsville, Illinois), interview by Karen Meng, 2 May 1988; transcript privately held by interviewer, Edwardsville, Illinois.

17. *Find a Grave*, memorial page for Florence Fritz (unknown–1890), no. 49551527, created by: "T.V.F.T.H."; citing Calvary Cemetery and Mausoleum, St. Louis, Missouri; no gravestone photograph.

18. 1860 U.S. census, St. Louis County, Missouri, pop. sch., St. Louis City, 4th ward, sheet 224 (penned), dw. 1482, fam. 2173, Florentina Fritz; digi-

tal image, *FamilySearch*, citing NARA microfilm publication M653, roll 649.

19. Pearl Graham Bright (Edwardsville, Illinois), interview by Karen Meng, 2 May 1988; transcript privately held by interviewer, Edwardsville, Illinois.

20. *Gould's St. Louis Directory for 1893* (St. Louis, Gould Directory Co., 1894), Florence Dobbins, 403; digital image, "United States City and Business Directories, ca. 1749–ca. 1990," *FamilySearch*.

21. City of St. Louis, Missouri, Register of Deaths in the City of St. Louis, no. 4127, Florence Dobbins, 21 June 1894; "Missouri, Death Records, 1850–1931," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com); citing "Missouri Death Records," microfilm no. 540, Missouri State Archives, Jefferson City.

22. "To Produce his License," *Fort Worth [Texas] Gazette*, 5 August 1894, p. 6, col. 6; digital image, *Chronicling America* (<https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov>).

23. Marcella Dolan Ruhmann, daughter of Cora Dobbins Dolan (Collinsville, Illinois), interview by Karen Meng, 26 August 2004, privately held by interviewer, [ADDRESS FOR PRIVATE USE], Edwardsville, Illinois.

24. Marcella Dolan Ruhmann, interview, 26 August 2004.

25. NOAA, National Centers for Environmental Information, "On This Day: The Great St. Louis Tornado of 1896" (<https://www.ncei.noaa.gov/news/great-st-louis-tornado-1896>).

26. "Woman Accused of Daylight Burglary," *St. Louis [Missouri] Republic*, 20 November 1900, p. 4, col. 7; *Newspapers* (<https://newspapers.com>).

27. "Missouri, County Marriage, Naturalization, and Court Records, 1800–1991," database with images, *FamilySearch*, Susie F. Dobbins and John G. Graham, 2 July 1901, license no. 92603; citing St. Louis, Missouri, "Marriage records of St. Louis and St. Louis Co., 1806–1965," vol. 55, 1900–1901, marriage licenses 86123–94039, p. 421; FHL microfilm 7,513,841; Missouri State Archives, Jefferson City.

About the Author

Karen Meng is a retired school administrator with a doctorate degree in education. She has authored articles that have been published in the *St. Clair County Genealogical Society Quarterly*, in a Macoupin County historical book, and for the *Journal of Educational Research*.

Susie Florence Dobbins

The Great Cyclone of St. Louis, 1896

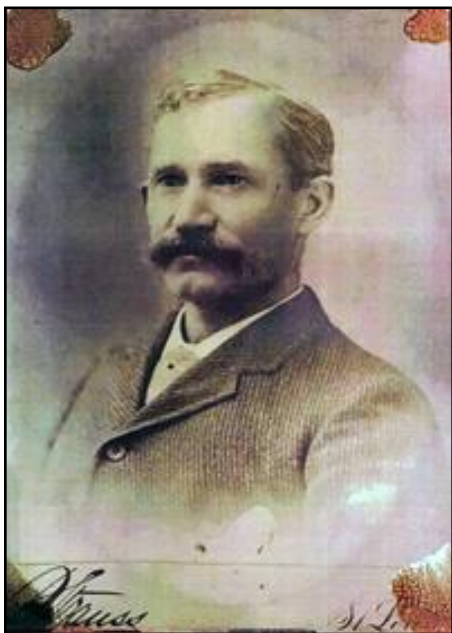


"From the City Hospital to the corner of Seventh and Rutger streets the storm gathered itself together for a final onslaught before reaching the river . . . The terrible tail was drawn up into the main cloud as though for additional strength, and at Eighth street, the entire mass dropped to the earth and women and children died here like flies in the cold." Photographic Views of the Great Cyclone of St. Louis, May 27, 1896 (St. Louis, Missouri: Haas Publishing and Engraving Company, 1896), p. 42. Image: NOAA Photo Library, "Tornadoes" (<https://www.photolib.noaa.gov/Collections/National-Weather-Service/Meteorological-Monsters/Tornadoes/emodule/643/eitem/2826> : accessed 1 March 2022); National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Washington, D.C.

Thomas “Tom” Lawson Davidson: Union Civil War Soldier and Riverboat Captain

By Shirley Wadell

The St. Louis Genealogical Society (StLGS) received an email a few years ago which included a portrait of Tom Davidson.¹ The email writer explained that she had discovered this portrait behind a painting she purchased at an auction. The portrait measures ten by fourteen inches and is monochromatic, with “Strauss Studios-St. Louis” printed at the bottom. It is undated.



In the photograph, Tom Davidson appears to be between thirty and forty years old. He is wearing a dark corduroy jacket over a button-up white shirt. He sports a thick, bushy mustache above thin lips and has light hair, medium-light eyes, and a dimpled chin.

Information provided with the portrait included that he was a half-brother to Mrs. Theo Ferguson and that he owned a boat that plied the Mississippi River. My research began on Ancestry.com. Starting with the assumption that he would have likely lived in the Midwest or the Ohio River valley since he owned a Mississippi riverboat, I searched for a Tom Davidson living in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, Illinois, Ohio, Michigan, and Mis-

souri in the mid- to late-1800s. This turned up records for a steamboat captain named Tom Davidson who, according to census records, was born in June 1840 in Ohio.²

Thomas “Tom” Lawson Davidson (1840–1913)³ was a Union soldier during the American Civil War and filed for his pension on 13 November 1865.⁴ His military record indicated he was twenty-two years old when he enlisted on 25 August 1862, entering the Union Army as a private. He mustered out as a corporal from Company H, 27th Ohio Infantry, on 26 June 1865 at Camp Dennison, Ohio, with a disability.⁵

A biography of his father, Rev. William W. Davidson, included details about Rev. Davidson’s three marriages. Tom was born to William’s second wife, Nancy Lawson. She died in 1853. William’s third wife, Lavina Yingling, was the mother of Tom’s half-sister, Mary, who married Theodore Ferguson.⁶ This biography also refers to Tom’s military career, noting that he was wounded at the Battle of Atlanta.

Tom’s occupation as steamboat captain appeared on two 1880 U.S. census records in St. Louis. The first was dated 5 June and listed Tomes [*sic*] Davidson, age thirty-eight, a captain on the river, living with his wife, Ella E., age twenty-five. Boarders living with them were Frank Sweet, Ella’s brother, age nineteen and a store clerk, and a servant named Kate Comer, age eighteen. They resided at 919 Easton Avenue.⁸

The second census was gathered that same year in St. Louis, Missouri, at the direction of the town fathers. This enumeration, dated 10 November 1880, listed L. Thomas Davidson, age thirty-nine, a river captain. He was living with his wife, Ella, age twenty-four; his widowed mother-in-law, Adela Sweet, age fifty-four; and his brother-in-law, Frank Sweet, age nineteen. Also in the household were Kate Bolman, a servant, age twenty-three; Bridget Ferrell, a servant, age thirty; and William West, a cousin, age fifteen, who was attending school.⁹

Thomas “Tom” Lawson Davidson: Union Civil War Soldier and Riverboat Captain

By 1900, Tom and his family were living in Burlington, Ohio, on the banks of the Ohio River. On the census, he is listed as a steamboat captain.¹⁰ Three other men with the surname Davidson, along with their families, were also living in the neighborhood: Benjamin, born in 1843; Josephus, born in 1839; and Humphrey, born in 1845. These may have been Tom’s relatives.

In 1910, Tom was sixty-nine years old, residing with his wife, Mary and his daughter, Nita, in Fayette, Ohio, near the Michigan border. No longer listed as a river captain in the census, he was now retired.¹¹ Again, Benjamin and Humphrey Davidson were living in the neighborhood, along with a few of their children’s families.

Thomas L. Davidson died on 21 November 1913, aged seventy-three, the cause of death listed as mitral insufficiency (a form of heart disease). His death certificate lists his occupation as steamboat captain and his parents as [Rev.] William W. Davidson, born in Pennsylvania, and Nancy Lawson, born in Ohio. The informant was his wife, Mary, who listed Woodland Cemetery as his burial site.¹²

If you are interested in claiming this photograph, please call the society office at 314-647-8547, or email Ilene Murray, StLGS publications director, at publications@stlgs.org.

End Notes

Unless otherwise noted, referenced websites were last checked on 21 May 2023.

1. Julie D. Bruno to St. Louis Genealogical Society, electronic communication, 21 September 2021, regarding a portrait of Tom Davidson, personal correspondence, privately held by St. Louis Genealogical Society, St. Louis, Missouri.

2. 1900 U.S. census, Lawrence County, Ohio, population schedule, Burlington Precinct, Enumeration District (ED) 67, p. 10B (hand-written), 65B (printed), dwelling 223, family 735, Thomas L. Davidson; digital image, *Ancestry* (<https://ancestry.com>), citing National Archives publication T623, roll 1292.

3. *Find a Grave* (www.findagrave.com), memorial 76022856, “Thomas Lawson ‘Tom’ Davidson,” 5 September 2001 by Deborah Sitar; citing Woodland Cemetery, Ironton, Lawrence County, Ohio.

4. “U.S. Civil War Pension Index: General Index to Pension Files, 1861–1934,” *Ancestry*, Thomas L. Davidson, Corporal, Company H, 27th Ohio Infantry, 13 November 1865, pension file index card; citing National Archives and Records Administration, micropublication. T288, Washington, D.C.

5. “Numerical Index to Pensions, 1860–1934,” *Fold3.com* (<https://fold3.com>), Thomas L Davidson, private, Company H, 27th Ohio Infantry; citing National Archives publication A1158, record group 15, roll 30.

6. “Biographies,” Rev. William W. Davidson, citing *Lawrence County, Ohio GenWeb* (<http://theusgenweb.org/oh/lawrence/bios-d.html>), transcribed by Kristy, from *Atlas of Lawrence County, Ohio* (Chicago and Toledo: H. H. Hardesty & Co., Publishers, 1882).

7. “Ohio, U.S., County Marriage Records, 1774–1993,” database, *Ancestry*, entry for marriage Thomas L. Davidson and Mary. E. B. Talbot, 1 January 1899; citing Lawrence County, Ohio, Marriage Records.

8. 1880 U.S. census, St. Louis, Missouri, pop. sch., ED 139, p. 15 (penned), 176 (printed), dw. 104, fam. 117, Tomes [sic] Davidson; digital image, *Ancestry*, citing National Archives publication T9, roll 724.

9. 1880 U.S. census, St. Louis, Missouri, pop. sch., ED 364, p. 9 (penned), 383A (printed), dw. 60, fam. 72, L. Thomas Davidson; digital image, *Ancestry*, citing National Archives publication T9, roll 734.

10. 1900 U.S. census, Lawrence County, Ohio, pop. sch., Burlington Precinct, ED 67, p. 10B (penned), 65B (printed), dw. 223, fam. 735, Thomas L. Davidson; digital image, *Ancestry*, citing National Archives publication T623, roll 1292.

11. 1910 U.S. census, Lawrence County, Ohio, pop. sch., Fayette Township, ED 81, p. 3A (penned), 192 (printed), dw. 52, fam. 52, Thomas L. Davidson, digital image, *Ancestry*, citing National Archives publication T624, roll 1202.

12. “Certificates of death, 1908–1953; index, 1908–1911,” digital images, *FamilySearch*, (www.familysearch.org), death certificate, Thomas L. Davidson, 21 November 1913; citing Ohio Department of Health, certificates of death, FHL microfilm 1,953,820.

James Musick (1769–1817)

By Robert Parkin

The following article is part of the society's Parkin Collection, materials that were collected and written by Robert E. Parkin between 1950 and 1998 and donated to the St. Louis Genealogical Society (StLGS). This article was retyped by Ann Carter Fleming and is printed as it was originally written. Citations were not included in the original; however, some sources are mentioned within the text itself.

James Musick was born in 1709 during the less-than-a-decade that his parents, Abraham and Sarah (Lewis) Musick, lived in South Carolina. Thus, he was twenty-five years old and unmarried in 1794 when his family came from Rutherford County, North Carolina, to Spanish Upper Louisiana. They settled in the vicinity of the village of St. Ferdinand (de Florissant) in the northwest portion of St. Louis District (county).

Probably because he was a bachelor, young Musick did not get a Spanish land grant as was customary before the purchase, in 1804, of Louisiana by the United States. Members of his family, however, garnered a number of such grants, encompassing large tracts of land in the area.

On 4 April 1805, James Musick was married to Nancy Withington, sixteen-year-old daughter of Thomas and Tabitha (Carrico) Withington. Although the Musicks were thoroughly Baptist, even including preachers among their number, the Withingtons were of the Catholic faith, having emigrated to Upper Louisiana from Charles County, Maryland. The wedding of Nan and James was performed in the old St. Ferdinand Catholic Church, where it was entered upon the marriage register. It never was recorded with civil authorities in St. Louis, the county seat, as required by new American law.

James and Nan Musick resided on a large farm, consisting of 100 (French) arpens, which he acquired from Asa Musick, a relative. It was situated on the road from St. Louis to

St. Charles, sixteen to eighteen miles west of St. Louis, at a place known as Owen's Station. Later named Bridgeton, the station had been formed by Robert Owen as a defense against marauding Indians. James and Nancy became parents of six children: William Milan Musick, who was born 18 February 1808; Volney Carlin, born 11 December 1811; Marie, born 3 May 1812; Omalva, born in 1814; Marisa, born in 1817, and James Musick, who was born in 1818. Baptisms of only four of these children have been found at nearby St. Ferdinand's Catholic Church. There is none for William Musick, and the last child, James, was not baptized until 29 October 1820, more than three years after their father's death and within one week of their mother's demise.

James Musick was active in community governmental and military affairs. On 27 December 1805, he was among area residents who subscribed to a memorial to the U.S. government, supporting General James Wilkinson as governor of the Territory of Louisiana. Nan's father, Thomas Withington, and cousin, John Withington, also were signers of the petition. In 1810, Musick and another relative by marriage, Daniel B. Moore, were residents of Coldwater Creek—the "river" which runs through St. Ferdinand—who petitioned the Federal Land Commission for fair treatment of American claims, based on old Spanish grants.

Meantime, on 8 July 1806, upon formation of territorial militia forces, James Musick's appointment as lieutenant of Captain Kincaid Caldwell's company was certified by secretary of the territory Joseph Browne. Then, in June, 1812, when the second conflict with Great Britain broke out, Musick was elevated to captain of the 1st Company, Second Battalion, First Regiment of the militia, which became known and famous as "Missouri Rangers." Lieutenant Colonel David Musick, James's elder brother, was regimental commander. The War of 1812 in the Missouri and Mississippi River valleys consisted mostly of repelling

James Musick (1769-1817)

raids by Indian tribes who were in the service of British military authorities. Captain James Musick's force was on the frontier for many such engagements. He served with distinction throughout the war for, on 1 March 1816, he was promoted to rank of major and placed in command of the Second Battalion, succeeding Richard Chitwood.

After the war, James Musick farmed his place in northwestern St. Louis County until his death, which occurred during the summer of 1817. He was about forty-eight years old. His burial place remains a mystery; St. Ferdinand's register does not contain his name, although his widow was buried a few years later in the old Catholic cemetery; his grave site could be on his farm as was much the custom in those days, but it was most likely in Fee Fee Baptist Church's old cemetery, where so many members of his family are buried.

Since James Musick died intestate, his widow, Nancy, was named administratrix when his estate was filed for probate, August 16, 1817. She apparently became incapacitated during late winter of 1820, however, and, on February 15th, she was replaced as administrator. Nancy Musick died 22 October 1820, according to her tombstone in St. Ferdinand's old cemetery; she was only thirty-one years old. (Family records give Nan's death date as 8 January 1821. St. Ferdinand burial registers for this early

date disappeared long before archdiocesan microfilming in 1955. However, much information on the cemetery was preserved by tombstone transcribing and indexing, before 1900. One other factor makes the 1820 date most likely: One week later, the youngest son, James—born after his father's death—was taken to St. Ferdinand's for baptism.)

On 10 November 1820, Thomas Withington Sr. was appointed to succeed Nancy Musick as administrator of her husband's estate. It was in probate for nine years. In July 1829, commissioners of St. Louis circuit court ordered that James Musick's land be sold at public auction for the benefit of his "children and

A list of Articles disposed of by me Nancy Musick Administratrix of James Musick deceased on the 7th day of Nov. 1818 at a Public Sale.

1 House & barn	13	50
1 Yard of Stairs & barn	52	00
3 Cows	9	50
2 Horses	7	50
3 Do	7	50
5 Do	10	00
1 Steer	11	00
1 Bull	16	00
1 Cow	9	00
1 Horse	6	50
2 Do	14	00
2 Do	5	00
1 Saddle	1	00
		\$177 37 1/2

Signed by me Nancy Musick

RECEIVED of *Nancy Musick* by *Thomas Withington Jr*
the amount of *two* Territorial and County Tax for the year eighteen hundred and
twenty 1819
St. Louis, Missouri, } Territorial Tax,

Dolls.	Cents.
1	78

County do. _____
this 29th August 1822 *E. H. Brown & Shpp*

RECEIVED of *Nancy Musick* by *Thomas Withington Jr*
the amount of *two* Territorial and County Tax for the year eighteen hundred and
twenty 1820
St. Louis, Missouri, } Territorial Tax,

Dolls.	Cents.
2	16

3 11 94
County do.

Dolls.	Cents.
1	78

this 29th August 1822 *E. H. Brown & Shpp*

Some items from James Musick's probate file show Nancy Musick as his administratrix, paying taxes (image on the left) and itemizing some of his possessions (image above).

James Musick (1769–1817)

heirs, William, Mary, 'O'Malvey, Volney C., and James Musick." The sale was held on 2 November 1829, and Jacques Chauvin paid \$403.75 for the land.

All of James and Nancy Musick's orphans were adults and all but one of them were married in 1838 when their grandfather, Thomas Withington Sr., died. Each of them is mentioned in all settlements and various documents of probating his estate, which continued through most of 1849.

The eldest, William Milan Musick, was married at Bridgeton on 29 April 1827, to Mariah Jane Martin, fifteen-year-old daughter of Adam and Mary (Baker) Martin. They subsequently settled at Hickory Hill in Cole County, Missouri. William was guardian for his sister, Mary, who was designated as insane in the 1850 census. (Interpreters of Thomas Withington's estate file erroneously assumed she "was a minor at this time" [1843], whereas she was thirty-one years old.)

William and Mariah Jane were married at Fee Fee Baptist Church by its founder and longtime pastor, Reverend Thomas R. Musick.

Volney Carlin Musick was married at St. Ferdinand's on 25 October 1832, to Alfred and Pelagie (Yosti) Crutsinger's daughter, Louise. She was born 22 February 1811, and baptized in St. Louis's King of France Catholic Church (Old Cathedral). They lived at Bridgeton and all of their children were baptized in the Catholic faith.

Omalva and Marisa Musick both were married in Cole County. On 13 July 1832, Omalva married twenty-seven year old Green Clay, and, on 22 November 1835, Marisa married Wade Hampton Clay. Assumedly, they were brothers.

James Musick subsequently was married in Moniteau County, on 16 January 1851, to seventeen-year-old Eliza Ann Moore.



Read more about James Musick, his contemporaries, and the Missouri Rangers in *The War of 1812 in Missouri*, compiled by Robert Parkin and edited by Ann Fleming, Ruth Ann Hager, and Ilene Murray. The two volumes are sold singly or in combination and are available to purchase in the StLGS online store or at our office.

Volume One: <https://store.stlgs.org/war-of-1812-in-missouri-volume-1>

Volume Two: <https://store.stlgs.org/war-of-1812-in-missouri-volume-2>

Two-volume Set: <https://store.stlgs.org/catalog/product/30a506f7b9b44b45971fc64d660ed5a>

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