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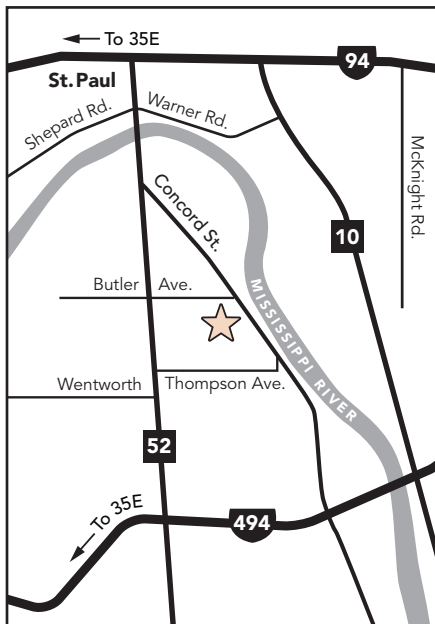
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Minnesota Genealogist



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Minnesota Genealogist

Quarterly Journal of the Minnesota Genealogical Society

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The Managing Editors invites readers to submit articles, including genealogy research articles, genealogical source guides, family history research experience stories, family history heritage travel stories, book reviews, and genealogy software and technology reviews. Research articles and family history stories with Minnesota or Upper Midwest connections are encouraged, but articles with any regional or ethnic focus are welcome. Preference is given to MGS members, but non-member authors are welcome. Submit articles digitally in file formats readable in Microsoft Word. Complete guidelines for writers are available under the "Publications" tab at www.mngs.org.

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Cover photo: Photo courtesy of Bonnie Rae, winner of the ancestral home category in the 2016 Minnesota Genealogist cover photo contest held at the North Star Genealogy Conference. Photo from about 1897 of her maternal great-grandmother's home on Jones Island in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The smaller building on the right is a summer kitchen. The area is now part of the Port of Milwaukee.

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From the Editors' Desks

Certain identity – nothing is more important in family history research. On one level, certain identity is making sure the person we are researching really is our ancestor. If not, we are working on someone else's family tree. This is why proving parent-child relationships in *every generation* is so important.

But, there is another – perhaps more important – dimension to the identity problem. Identity problems can take many forms. Liz discovered an unexpected name change when a Swede named Oscar Peterson became O.P. Williams. Jay needed to verify that the John Fawkner in Indiana in 1839 was the same man as John Fawkner who lived in Kentucky in the 1790s. Were there one or two A. P. Overlands in Fergus Falls, Minnesota? Could Carrie Petersen and Clara Moore possibly have been the same woman?

You see, our ancestors had lives. They moved through time and space, and we sometimes have trouble following their trails. We have to determine whether a grandfather in the 1930 census is the man of the same name in another place in 1900. Other times, two individuals with the same or similar names, ages, and even occupations may appear in the same time and place. We have to find evidence to tell them apart.

Two articles in this issue of *Minnesota Genealogist* are all about merging and separating identities. Sharon Hoyt's article about August Lawrence, aka August Lorieus, aka August Auer, of Sibley and Hennepin counties in Minnesota is an outstanding example of both separating the identities of two easily confused men and merging into a single identity two seemingly different men. In the process Hoyt shed light on a family legend about August abandoning his family. Sharon is the winner of the 2016 Michael Clark Writing Award co-sponsored by the Yankee Genealogical Society and the Minnesota Genealogical Society.

Elizabeth Overstad's article about the secret life of Deesting Shepard is guaranteed to entertain. Overstad fell into Deesting Shepard's rabbit hole quite by accident when she stumbled across an article in a 1904 Wisconsin newspaper about him while researching her own family. He claimed to have spent the previous 40 years mining gold in Mexico. Overstad's research found some truth to his story, but uncovered details he probably didn't want known. The key was merging the identities of Deesting Shepard and Charles Shepard.

The Hoyt and Overstad articles illustrate why genealogical research is more than documenting births, marriages, and deaths. They vividly demonstrate why family history research is so addicting. Overstad remarks that Deesting Shepard's story would make a good movie. A lot of our ancestors' lives would probably make good movies. That's why we just can't walk away from the research even when we aren't directly related to the character. Family history research is just plain fun! Because of the length of these two outstanding articles, the usual "Fit to Print" feature does not appear in this issue. We expect to resume "Fit to Print" in our next issue.

The Michael Clark Writing Competition has been an overwhelming success. We are very grateful to the Yankee Genealogical Society for establishing the competition in memory of a man who encouraged genealogists to write. You will find an announcement of the 2017 competition in this issue. We, the editors, along with our readers, encourage you to accept the challenge.

J. H. Fonkert, CG
Elizabeth Gomoll
Co-Managing Editors



The Mysterious Disappearance of August Henry Lawrence of Winthrop, Minnesota

Sharon L. Hoyt, CG

Sometime between 1906 and 1909, August Henry Lawrence left his home at Winthrop in Sibley County, Minnesota, for a two-week dredging job, and never returned. His wife and children searched for him for several months, but never learned his fate.¹

A single piece of evidence from a document created years after August's disappearance suggested a possible link to two similarly named men in nearby counties. Analysis of their records made it possible to merge their seemingly separate lives into a single identity that revealed not only August's fate, but also his origins.

August Henry Lawrence of Sibley County, Minnesota

August Lawrence lived in Sibley County from 1883 through at least 1905 (see Table 1). During those years, his surname evolved from Lorieus to Lawrence, the name later used by his children.

Despite differing surnames and an 1885 census placing his birth in Prussia rather than Minnesota, evidence from the records summarized in Table 1 suggests that they refer to the same man. August/Gust's occupation as a harness maker in the 1895, 1900, and 1905 censuses matches family information. The 1885 census did not give his occupation, but the presence of his new wife, Augusta, in his home identifies August "Lornice" as the correct man. Finally, an 1888 Sibley County birth record for a [female] Lorieus, the daughter of August and Augusta, was updated by a belated 1942 birth registration which named her as Alice Jonnah Lawrence, the daughter of August Henry Lawrence and Augusta Olson.² Alice was identified as

Lorieus/Lawrence birth registration entries (highlighted): Sibley County Record of Births, Book B, p.1, 1888, Town of Winthrop.

No. Line	DATE OF BIRTH Month Day Year	COUNTY, TOWNSHIP, AND RANGE AND SECTION OF RANGE	Sex and Color, or Twin, Siamese, etc.	Color
27	Jan 5 1888	Village of Winthrop	Male	White
28	Jan 10 1888	Oliver	Female	White
29	Feb 2 1888	Edith	Female	White
30				
31		Lornice	Female	White
32				
33				
34	March 26 1888	Alice Jonnah Lawrence	Female	White

¹ Jeanne Thompson, Santa Cruz [ADDRESS FOR PRIVATE USE,] to Sharon Hoyt, research notes, 12 April 2014, summary of previous census findings on August Henry Lawrence; Correspondence file, August H. Lawrence research files; privately held

by Sharon Hoyt, Saratoga, Calif. The document summarizes family lore related to August's disappearance, and refers to but does not provide copies of U.S. federal census records from 1880, 1900, 1910 (Sibley County, Minn.), and 1920 (Baltimore,

Maryland). Also, Jeanne Thompson, Santa Cruz, California [(E-Address for Private Use),] to Sharon Hoyt, e-mail, 5 April 2014, "Fw: Genealogy Society of Santa Cruz County"; Correspondence file, August H. Lawrence research files; privately held by

Year	Name	Age	Event	Birth Place
1883	August H. Lorieus	-	Married Hermine Bubolz at Winthrop ^a	-
1883	A. H. Lorieus	-	Married Augusta Olson ^b	-
1885	August Lornice	23	Lived at Transit Township ^c	Prussia
1888	August Lorieus	25	Daughter born at Winthrop ^d	Minn.
1895	August Lourens	33	Harness maker at Winthrop ^e	Minn.
1900	August Lawrence	36	Harness maker at Winthrop ^f	Minn.
1905	Gust Lawrence	43	Harness maker at Winthrop ^g	Minn.

a Sibley County, Minnesota, Marriage Records Volume B:413, August H. Lorieus and Hermine/Hermina Bubolz, 11 May 1883; Family History Library (FHL) microfilm 2,295,484, item 4.

b Nicollet County, Minnesota, Marriage Records, Vol. F:246, A. H. Lorieus and Augusta Olson, 21 March 1885; FHL microfilm 1,319,411. August was a resident of Sibley County.

c 1885 Minnesota State census, Sibley County, population schedule, Transit [Township], Mountville Post Office [location noted on p. 552, and presumably applies to succeeding pages], p. 8 (penned, upper left), p. 559 (penned, upper right), family 49, August Lornice [or perhaps Lorince; indexed as Leorince]; digital image, "Minnesota, Territorial and State Censuses, 1849-1905," database and images, *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com>, accessed 21 April 2014); citing *Minnesota State Population Census Schedules, 1865-1905*, Minnesota Historical Society (MHS) microfilm MNSC_42.

d Sibley County, Minnesota, Birth Records, Vol. B, 1888, p.1, Village of Winthrop, lines 31, [female] Lorieus, and 34, Alice Jonnah Lawrence, 26 March 1888; "Minnesota, County Birth Records, 1863-1983," browsable images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/search/collection/1920099>, accessed 18 June 2014), path: Browse > Sibley County > Births 1888-1895, Vol B > page images 2-3 of 201.

e 1895 Minnesota State Census, Sibley County, population schedule, Winthrop Village, p. 2 (penned, upper left), family 13, August Lourens [or Lourence]; digital images, "Minnesota, Territorial and State Censuses, 1849-1905," *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com>, accessed 21 April 2014); citing *Minnesota State Population Census Schedules, 1865-1905*, MHS microfilm roll V290_98.

f 1900 U.S. census, Sibley County, Minnesota, population schedule, Alfsborg Township, Winthrop Village, enumeration district 180, sheet 15 (lined through) B, p. 98 (stamped, front side), dwelling 253 (115 lined through), family 281 (137 and 138 lined through), August Lawrence; digital images, *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com>, accessed 21 April 2014); citing National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) microfilm T623, roll 791; imaged from FHL microfilm 1,240,791.

g 1905 Minnesota State Census, Sibley County, population schedule, Village of Winthrop, enumeration district 14, p. 307 (penned, upper right), dwelling and family not given, line 13 (counted from top), Gust Lawrence; digital images, "Minnesota, Territorial and State Censuses, 1849-1905," *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com>, accessed 21 April 2014); citing *Minnesota State Population Census Schedules, 1865-1905*, MHS microfilm MNSC_153.

Table 1. August Henry Lorieus/Lawrence, 1883-1905

August's daughter in the 1900 census, and was one of eight children in "Gust" Lawrence's home in 1905.

According to family lore, an economic downturn in the early 1900s forced August to change careers to support his large family. After twenty years of working as a skilled and respected harness maker, a skill perhaps in decreasing demand, he began to work on dredging projects sometime after

Sharon Hoyt, Saratoga, Calif. In addition to family names, birth dates, and relationships, the e-mail cites the research of Lawrence "Larry" Thompson (deceased), a grandson of August Henry Lawrence, who searched tirelessly to learn his grandfather's fate. This article is dedicated in Larry's memory.

2 Sibley County, Minnesota, Birth Records, Vol. B, 1888, p.1, Village of Winthrop, lines 31, [female] Lorieus, and 34, Alice Jonnah Lawrence, 26 March 1888; "Minnesota, County Birth Records, 1863-1983," browsable images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/search/collection/1920099>,

accessed 18 June 2014), path: Browse > Sibley County > Births 1888-1895, Vol B > page images 2-3 of 201.

The Mysterious Disappearance of August Henry Lawrence

1905. The census taken in April 1910 enumerated him with his family at Winthrop, where his occupation was reported as “ditch [marking?].³ His appearance in the 1910 census conflicts with the family story that he left Winthrop between 1906 and 1909.⁴ A lack of Winthrop city directories and tax records from 1905 to 1910 make it difficult to confirm the year of August’s disappearance.⁵

Why might August have been enumerated with his family in 1910 if he had disappeared by 1909? A double census enumeration ten years earlier offers a likely explanation. August was apparently enumerated twice in 1900: at his home in Winthrop, and in neighboring Renville County as August Lorence, a harness maker in John Nelson’s home at Hector (*see Table 2*).

John Nelson, also a harness maker, was a Swedish immigrant. August Lawrence spoke both German and Swedish.⁶ If Lawrence was working temporarily in their home and speaking their native language, the Nelsons may have assumed that he was of Swedish parentage and given that information to the census taker.

August might not have permanently left his Winthrop home before 1909, but his two 1900 census enumerations suggest that he may have worked away from home at times before then. August’s family might have given his name to the 1910 census taker because they were accustomed to him traveling for work, or because they were still searching for him.

A Possible Death Record: August Lorius of Hennepin County, Minnesota

August was in his late 40s when he disappeared. The family did not know how long he lived or where he died,

	1900 U. S. census: Winthrop, Sibley Co. ^a	1900 census: Hector, Renville Co. ^b
Name	August Lawrence	August Lorence
Occupation	Harness maker	Harness maker
Relationship	Head of household	Lodger, John Nelson home
Marital Status	Married	Married
Birth Place	Minnesota	Minnesota
Birth Year	June 1863	June 1862
Parents born	Germany	Sweden
<p>a 1900 U.S. census, Sibley Co., Minn., population schedule, Alfsborg Twp., Winthrop Village, enumeration district 180, sheet 15B, p. 98 (stamped, front side), dwelling 253 (115 lined through), family 281 (137 and 138 lined through), August Lawrence; citing Family History Library (FHL) microfilm 1,240,791.</p> <p>b 1900 U.S. census, Renville Co., Minn., population schedule, Hector Township, Village of Hector, enumeration district 133, sheet 4A, p. 144 (stamped, upper right), dwelling 59, family 64, August Lorence, boarder in the home of John Nelson; digital images, <i>Ancestry.com</i> (http://www.ancestry.com, accessed 21 April 2014); citing National Archives and Records Administration microfilm T623, roll 787. No other likely census entries were found for Lorence in prior or later years.</p>		

Table 2. 1900 Census Extractions: August Lawrence/Lorence

but thought he might have died in a dredging accident somewhere near Sibley County. A search of a Minnesota death certificate index identified four similarly-named candidates in Sibley and nearby counties. Two records were poor matches,⁷ but a death record for August

3 1910 U.S. census, Sibley County, Minnesota, population schedule, City of Winthrop, enumeration district 164, sheet 7B, p. 169 (stamped, front side of page), dwelling 143, family 153, August Lawrence [sic] household; digital images, *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com>, accessed 15 April 2014); citing National Archives and Records Administration microfilm T624, roll 726; on line 73 (Augusta Lawrence), the dwelling field contains the numbers “14”, suggesting that the enumerator may have begun to write a new dwelling number for Augusta, possibly as the head of household.

4 Thompson to Hoyt, e-mail (5 April 2014) and research notes (12 April 2014).

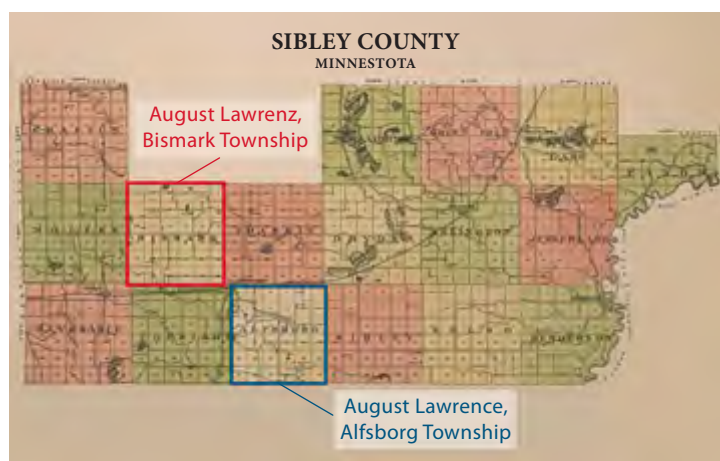
5 According to the Treasurer of Sibley County, Minnesota, state law requires that only tax records for years ending in 0 or 1 be retained. Tax records for the years 1902-1910 are not held by the Sibley County, Minnesota Treasurer or at the Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, Minn.: “Sibley County Assessor,” collection finding aid, *Minnesota Historical Society* (<http://www2.mnhs.org/library/findaids/gr00457.xml>, accessed 22 June 2016).

Winthrop City Directories for the years 1901 through 1910 are not held at the Sibley County Historical Museum.

6 Thompson to Hoyt, e-mail, 5 April 2014.

7 “Minnesota, Death Index, 1908-2002,” database, *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 5 June 2014), entries for August H. Lorenz, d. 11 January 1937, Carver County (record no. 001983, certificate no.746042), and August H. Lorentz, d. 23 April 1934, Blue Earth County (record 669367,

“Lawrenz” who died 2 April 1937 in Sibley County couldn’t be easily excluded.⁸ Lawrenz’ name was virtually identical to Lawrence, and he was buried in August Henry Lawrence’s home town of Winthrop, in the same cemetery where Augusta (Olson) Lawrence was buried.⁹ In response to a research request about the Lawrence family, the local genealogy society noted that “August & Augusta [Lawrence] are resting in the Winthrop Cemetery,” implying that they might be buried together.¹⁰ Could August Lawrenz and August Henry Lawrence be the same man? If so, the entire story of August’s disappearance was in doubt.



Lawrenz and Lawrence residences, Sibley County

Genealogists often need to distinguish between similar evidence in records to identify specific individuals. In this case, research in cemetery and census records showed that despite their consistent names and close proximity, August Lawrenz and August Henry Lawrence were different men. Lawrenz was born 30 June 1860 in Prussia, and immigrated in 1878 to Sibley County, where he lived with his wife Emelie (also called Amelia).¹¹ In 1885, August Lawrenz and August Henry Lawrence both lived in Transit Township with their wives, whose names established their husbands’ identities.¹² August Lawrenz and his wife are buried at Winthrop Cemetery, but do not share a plot with Augusta Lawrence.¹³

With the Lawrenz record excluded, the only remaining record was for an August Lorius who died by suicide on 30 August 1913 near St. Bonifacius in Minnetrista Township, Hennepin County.¹⁴ His surname of Lorius was similar to Lorieus, the surname that August Lawrence had used in the 1880s. Lorius’ employer Frank Wehle provided the information on the death certificate, which stated that his unmarried hired man was about 52 years old and was born in Minnesota. Newspaper accounts were more detailed, describing Lorius as about 55 years old, single, and “well known about St. Bonifacius and Waconia.” Reportedly recently depressed, he had been absent from the Wehle home for several days before his body was found.¹⁵

certificate number 001234); citing Department of Health, Minneapolis. Based on census and cemetery research, their family members and places of birth and residences clearly differentiate them from the subject of this study.

8 *Ibid.*, entry for August Lawrenz, 2 April 1937, Sibley County, record no. 752961, certificate no. 015030.

9 Ancestry, *Find A Grave*, database and images, (<http://www.findagrave.com>, accessed 22 July 2016), Winthrop Cemetery, Winthrop, Sibley Co., Minn., entries for August Lawrenz (d.1937, memorial record 24,480,646) and Emelie/Amelia Lawrence (d. 1931, memorial record 24,480,645), both buried in Block 58; also, Augusta Lawrence (d. 1952, memorial record 24,480,643, buried in Block 37); memorial entries added 8 Feb. 2008 by Colin Colehour, and digital images added in 2012 by Jim & Dawn Sanders.

10 Diane Fredin (Winthrop Community Historical Society) Winthrop, Minnesota, e-mail, to Sharon Hoyt, 8 July 2016, “Re: Lawrence Family Genealogy question for Diane Fredin”; correspondence, Lorius research file; privately held by author.

11 For birth date, see Note 9, *Find a Grave* entry for August Lawrenz. For residence, see 1900 U.S. census, Sibley County, Minn., population schedule, Bismark Township, enumeration district 183, sheet 1B, dwelling/family 14, August Lawrenz; Family History Library (FHL) 1,240,791. Also, 1905 Minnesota State Census, Sibley Co., population schedule, Bismark Township, enumeration district 16, p. 344 (penned, upper left), no. 67, August Lawrenz; Minnesota State Population Census Schedules, 1865-1905, MHS microfilm MNSC _153 Also, 1910 U.S. census, Sibley Co., Minn., population schedule, Bismarck Township, enumeration district 149, sheet 2A, p. 27 (stamped, upper center), dwelling/family 17, August Laurenc; FHL microfilm 1,374,739.

12 1885 Minnesota State census, Sibley Co., population schedule, Transit [Township], Mountville Post Office [location noted on p. 552, and presumably applies to succeeding pages], p. 14 (penned, upper left), p. 565 (penned, upper right), family 93, line 6, August Lawrenz.

13 See *Find a Grave* references, Note 9.

14 Minnesota, Certificate of Death, No. 1913-MN-004859, August Lorius (1913); Minnesota State Historical Society, Saint Paul; citing the records of Hennepin County.

15 “Shot Gun Blows Top of Head Off; August Lorius Commits Suicide at St. Bonifacius,” *The Waconia Patriot* (Carver County, Minnesota), 5 September 1913, p.1, col. 4; Carver County Historical Society, Waconia, Minn.

The Mysterious Disappearance of August Henry Lawrence

The mention of Waconia suggested that Lorius might have lived in that nearby town, but no entries were found for him in Hennepin County or neighboring counties in the 1910 census.¹⁶ However, Frank Wehle's 1910 household included a 49-year old hired man named August Auer, whose first name, age, and birth in Minnesota were a good match for the August Lorius who died at the Wehle farm in 1913.¹⁷ This August Auer is not found in other Minnesota census beginning in 1870, increasing the possibility that he was the man from Winthrop (see Table 3).

The consistent information from the census, obituary, and death records suggests they all refer to one man: August Auer, also known as August Lorius. His surname is similar to the "Lorieus" spelling used by August Lawrence of Winthrop, but Lawrence was not known to have used the Auer surname. Could August Auer/Lorius who died in Hennepin County in 1913 be the same August Henry Lawrence who had disappeared from Sibley County several years earlier? Research on Lawrence's origins suggests a possible answer.

August Henry Lawrence – Origins and Early Years

Like his disappearance, August Henry Lawrence's origins were mysterious. Some of his descendants believed he was born in Prussia,¹⁸ which matched the birthplace on his 1885 census enumeration.¹⁹ A daughter thought he was born in Pennsylvania and was adopted by a Pennsylvania Dutch family after being orphaned at an early age.²⁰ None of these recollections match information from August's

known records, which generally place his birth between 1862 and 1864 in Minnesota.²¹

	1910 U.S. census ^a	1913 Obituary ^b	1913 Death Record ^c
Name	August Auer	August Lorius	August Lorius
Age	47 (b. 1863)	55 (b. 1858)	52 (b. 1861)
Birth Place	Minnesota	[not stated]	Minnesota
Occupation	Hired Man	Farm hand	Laborer
Residence	St. Bonifacius	[not stated]	St. Bonifacius
Marital Status	Single	Unmarried	Single

a 1910 U.S. census, Hennepin Co., Minn., population schedule, Minnetrista-Township, enumeration district 214, sheet 14A, p. 227 (stamped), dwelling 249, family 253, August Auer, hired man in the Frank Wehle household; digital images, *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com>, accessed 20 July 2014); citing National Archives and Records Administration microfilm T624, roll 699.

b "Shot Gun Blows Top of Head Off; August Lorius Commits Suicide at St. Bonifacius," *The Waconia Patriot* (Carver County, Minnesota), 5 September 1913, p.1, col. 4; also, "Shoots Top of Head Off," *The Norwood Times* (Carver County, Minnesota), 12 September 1913, p.1, col. 5; citing the *Waconia Patriot*; Carver County Historical Society, Waconia.

c Minnesota, Certificate of Death, No. 1913-MN-004859, August Lorius (1913); Minnesota State Historical Society, Saint Paul.

Table 3. Comparison of August Auer to August Lorius, 1910-1913

16 "1910 United States Federal Census" database, *Ancestry.com* (<http://search.ancestry.com>, accessed 15 September 2014). Searches in Minnesota for names similar to August (Augie, Gust, initials A. H.) with surname variants of Lawrence (e.g. Lorius, Lauries, Lorieus) or Auer (e.g. Hour, Awer, Ower).

17 1910 U.S. census, Hennepin Co., Minn., population schedule, Minnetrista Township, enumeration District 214, sheet 14A, p. 227 (stamped), dwelling 249, family 253, August Auer, hired man in the Frank Wehle household; digital image, *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com>, accessed 20 July

2014); citing NARA microfilm T624, roll 699.

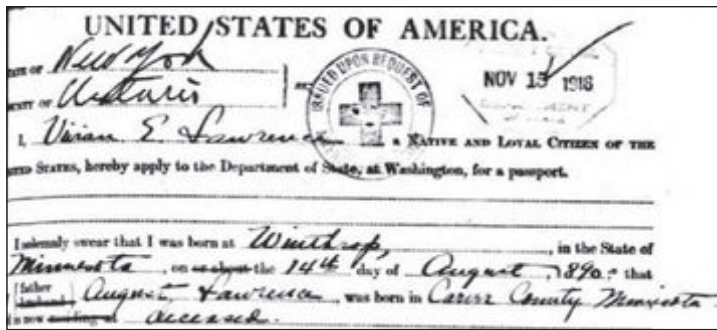
18 Thompson to Hoyt, e-mail, 5 April 2014.

19 1885 Minnesota State census, Sibley County, population schedule, Transit [Township], Mountville Post Office [location noted on p. 552, and presumably applies to succeeding pages], p. 8 (penned, upper left), p. 559 (penned, upper right), family 49, August Lornice [or perhaps Lorince; indexed as Leornice]; digital image, "Minnesota, Territorial and State Censuses, 1849-1905," database and images.

20 Thompson to Hoyt, e-mail, 5 April 2014.

21 See 1885 – 1905 census records in Table 1.

22 "U.S. Passport Applications, 1795-1925," database and images, *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com>, accessed 19 May 2014), application of Vivian E. Lawrence (indexed as "Vaian E. Lawrence"), 15 November 1918 (stamped), U. S. passport application number 45875; citing NARA microfilm 1490, roll 630; General Records of the Department of State; National Archives, Washington, D.C.



Vivian Lawrence passport application, 1918

A document created years after his disappearance provided specific evidence of August’s likely birthplace. In a 1918 passport application, August’s daughter, Vivian Lawrence, stated that her deceased father was born in Carver County, Minnesota.²² Although Vivian would not have had first-hand knowledge of her father’s birthplace, and was probably repeating information she had heard from another family member, the Carver County tip was worth following.

August Lorinz of Watertown, Carver County, Minnesota

The 1870 census taken at Watertown in Carver County shows only one candidate likely to be August Henry Lawrence: August Lorinz, age 8, born in Minnesota.²³ His name, age, and birth place were consistent with what was known of August Lawrence, making him worth a closer look.

Lorinz was living in the home of Henry and Carolina Auer. Henry’s surname was the same as Frank Wehle’s hired man August Auer, who died near St. Bonifacius in 1913 under the name “August Lorius.” The occurrence of the Auer and Lorinz surnames in the same 1870 household suggests that young August Lorinz of Watertown might have been the same August Auer/Lorius who died in neighboring Hennepin County in 1913.

The August Lorinz name appears only in the 1870 census, but the same child was probably living with the Auers in 1865 and 1875. In 1865, he was listed as August Auer (no age reported),²⁴ and in 1875 he was enumerated as Aug[ust]

Census Year	Name	Age	Birth Place
1865 ^a	Henry Auer Caroline Auer August Auer	- - -	Parents of foreign birth “ “
1870 ^b	Henry Auer Carolina Auer August Lorinz	55 45 8	Württemberg Switzerland Minnesota
1875 ^c	Henry Auer Carolina Auer Aug. Forins	60 50 13	Wurtemberg (parents born in Wurtemberg) Switzerland (parents born in Switzerland) Minnesota (parents born in Switzerland)

a 1865 Minnesota State Census, Carver County, population schedule, Watertown Township [not noted on page; appears on image 99, and presumably applies to succeeding images], unpaginated [page image 102 of 108], family 155, line 37, August Auer in the household of Henry Auer [indexed as “Stuer”]; digital images, “Minnesota, Territorial and State Censuses, 1849-1905,” Minnesota Historical Society (MHS) microfilm MNSC_1; *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com>, accessed 25 July 2014).

b 1870 U.S. census, Carver County, Minnesota, population schedule, Watertown, p. 28 (penned, upper left), dwelling 197 (from previous page), family 200 (from previous page), August Lorinz (indexed as “Leunz”) in the household of Henry (indexed as “Reny”) Auer; digital images, *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com>, accessed 25 July 2014); citing National Archives and Records Administration microfilm 132, roll 2.

c 1875 Minnesota State Census, Carver County, population schedule, Watertown Township [appears on front side of page], p. 433 (penned, upper left), family 5, line 30, Aug. Forins in the Henry Auer household; digital images, “Minnesota, Territorial and State Censuses, 1849-1905,” *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com>, accessed 26 July 2014); citing Minnesota State Population Census Schedules, 1865-1905, MHS microfilm MNSC_5.

Table 4. Reported Birthplaces of August Auer/Lorinz/Forins, 1865-1875

23 1870 U.S. census, Carver County, Minnesota, population schedule, Watertown, p. 28 (penned, upper left), dwelling 197 (from previous page), family 200 (from previous page), August Lorinz (indexed as “Leunz”) in the household of Henry (indexed as “Reny”) Auer; digital images, *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com>, accessed 25 July 2014); citing NARA microfilm T132, roll 2.

24 1865 Minnesota State Census, Carver County, population schedule, Watertown Township [not noted on page; appears on image 99, and presumably applies to succeeding images], unpaginated

[page image 102 of 108], family 155, line 37, August Auer in the household of Henry Auer [indexed as “Stuer”]; digital images, “Minnesota, Territorial and State Censuses, 1849-1905,” *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com>, accessed 25 July 2014); citing Minnesota State Population Census Schedules, 1865-1905, MHS microfilm MNSC_1.

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Forins, age 13.²⁵ Apart from the different first consonant, “Lorinz” and “Forins” sound similar, suggesting that the enumerator may have misinterpreted the name (*see Table 4*).

Aug[ust] Forins’ parents were reported as born in Switzerland, where Carolina Auer was born. Although Carolina’s age suggested she could have been August’s mother, her likely husband Henry’s birth in Württemberg does not match the reported Swiss birthplace of August’s father. Henry and Carolina Auer were apparently married by 1860, two years before August’s birth.²⁶ If August had been their son, his surname would be expected to have consistently appeared as Auer, not Lorinz or Forins. Their differing surname and birthplaces suggest that the Auers might have been August’s adoptive parents.

August Lorinz’ Possible Parents

If August was not a son of Henry and Caroline Auer, who were his parents? When young August lived in Watertown, only one family in the area had a surname similar to Lorius

or Lorinz. In 1860, forty-four-year-old Swiss immigrant “Lewis” [Louis] L. Lorius lived at Watertown with his wife, Anna Maria, (35), and their children Lina (12), Alfred (10), Louisa (4), and Albert (2).²⁷ Louis’ Swiss ancestry and residence in the same town where August Auer/Lorinz lived suggests that the two might have been related. The Lorius surname is also virtually identical to Lorieus, the surname used by August Henry Lawrence from 1883 to 1888.

Louis Lucien Lorius was born 17 May 1816 at Péry-La Heutte in the Canton of Bern, Switzerland.²⁸ He married Anna Maria Iseli on 7 November 1840 at Bienne, Switzerland.²⁹ The couple settled at nearby Péry, where they had six children before immigrating to the United States in October 1850.³⁰ They lived in Ohio, where Anna Maria had three more children, before the family moved to the Watertown area in 1859.³¹

Anna Maria (Iseli) Lorius died at St. Bonifacius in Hennepin County in 1863,³² leaving Louis with several young children to support. The following year, Louis

25 1875 Minnesota State Census, Carver County, population schedule, Watertown Township [appears on front side of page], p. 433 (penned, upper left), family 5, line 30, Aug. Forins in the Henry Auer household; digital images, “Minnesota, Territorial and State Censuses, 1849-1905,” *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com>, accessed 26 July 2014); citing Minnesota State Population Census Schedules, 1865-1905, MHS microfilm MNSC_5.

26 1860 U.S. census, Carver County, Minnesota, population schedule, Town of Watertown, Watertown Post Office, p. 116 (penned), dwelling 1132, family 987, Henry Auer household; digital images, *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com>, accessed 27 July 2014); citing NARA microfilm 653, roll 567; although the census does not give relationships, Henry and Carolina appear in the same household from 1860 through 1875. Henry died in June 1880, the same month that Carolina appeared in the census at Watertown as “Widowed,” suggesting that she and Henry had been married.

27 1860 U.S. census, Carver Co., Minn., population schedule, Town of Watertown, Watertown Post Office, p. 108 (penned), dwelling 1055, family 909, Lewis Luzia Lorius household; digital images, *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com>); citing NARA microfilm M653, roll 567.

28 “Switzerland, Church Records, 1277-1992,” browsable images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org>).

org/search/collection/1640373), path: Bern > Péry > Réformée > Baptêmes 1816-1860 > image 5 of 138, for no. 7, Louis L. Lorius, son of Lieutenant Abram Lorius and Rose Simon, born 7 May 1816, baptized 3 June 1816; records are in French. The collection is viewable only in a Family History Center as of April 2016. The Lorius family’s likely residence location in Switzerland was identified via: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints [LDS], “Pedigree Resource File,” database, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/2:2:SR17-MQW>), entry for Louis Lucien /Lorius/ (Submission id: MMQQ-78G); submitted 12 May 2011, no submitter information.

29 “Switzerland, Church Records, 1277-1992,” browsable images, *FamilySearch*, path: Bern > Péry > Réformée > Marriages 1816-1849 > image 20 of 26, entry 74, Louis L. Lorius – Ann Marie Iseli [or possibly Tseli]. Her birth surname appears as “Jjeli” in: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints [LDS], “Pedigree Resource File,” database, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/2:2:SR17-MMT>), entry for Anne Marie Jjeli, submission id: MMQQ-78G). In an earlier article, the author gave Anna Maria’s maiden name as “Tseli;” however, subsequent review of handwritten church records suggests that her surname was more likely Iseli. See: Sharon Hoyt, CG, “Louis Lucien Lorius of Minnetrista Township, Minnesota,” *St. Bonifacius Area Historical Society* (St. Bonifacius, Minnesota), newsletter, May 2016, 3-8.

30 “New York Passenger List, 1820-1957,” digital images, *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com>), manifest, *Ship William Tell*, Le Havre to New York, arriving 30 Oct. 1850, pp. 2-3 (unnumbered), Lorius entries; citing NARA microfilm M237, Roll 94.

31 For Louis’ move to Minnesota, see: Affidavit of John [N?] Maerz, 18 Nov. 1889; Louis L. Lorins (Pvt., Co. G., 11th Minnesota Vol. Inf., Civil War, pension application no. 698,321, certificate no. S. C. 864,278, Case Files of Approved Pension Applications..., 1861-1934; Civil War and Later Pension Files; Department of Veteran’s Affairs, Record Group 15; National Archives, Washington, D.C.; Maerz stated that that the Lorius family “had lived in his neighborhood [near St. Bonifacius] ever since 1859.” For children’s births in Ohio, see 1860 U.S. census, Carver Co., Minn., population schedule, Town of Watertown, Watertown Post Office, p. 108 (penned), dwelling 1055, family 909, Lewis Luzia Lorius household. For Louis’ spouses and children, see Sharon Hoyt, CG, “Louis Lucien Lorius of Minnetrista Township, Minnesota,” *St. Bonifacius Area Historical Society* (St. Bonifacius, Minnesota), newsletter, May 2016, 3-8.

32 Untitled circular, 4 July 1898; Louis L. Lorins Civil War pension no. S. C. 864,278, RG 15; NA-Washington; the circular containing Louis’ family information identifies his first wife as “Mary Eisele” [similar to “Iseli”].

enlisted in Company G of the 11th Minnesota Volunteer Infantry.³³ After being discharged in June 1865, he returned home and took up his previous career as a furniture maker.³⁴ However, he found it difficult to earn a living because of eye damage that he attributed to sunstroke suffered during his Civil War service. Louis described his injuries and treatment in an 1891 pension affidavit filed from his home near St. Bonifacius in Minnetrista Township.

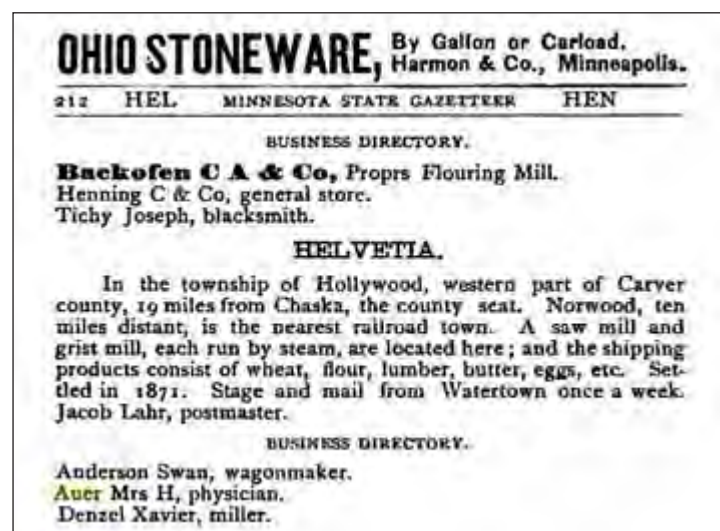
“At first I did not consider the case of sunstroke to be very bad and having some medicines with me I took them several times I bought medicine in a drug store in Galatine [*probably Gallatin, Tennessee*] but never fully recovered, but knowing that the end of the war was near, I thought that as soon as I could get home, I could attend to myself better, wick [*sic*] I have done, but the more medicine I used the worse my eyes got, and after giving up the use of medicine altogether they kept on getting worse from year to year untill [*sic*] now I am almost blind — My first doctor employed was Dr. Auer, [*underlined in blue pencil*] who some 10 or 12 years ago moved east but has since died.”³⁵

Louis Lorius and Carolina Auer

Based on Louis’ affidavit, Dr. Auer probably began treating him about 1865 and served as his physician until leaving the area between about 1879 and 1881. Dr. Auer would probably have lived near Louis’ home near Watertown or St. Bonifacius. An 1878-79 Minnesota state directory listed only one physician named Auer in the area: “Mrs. H. Auer, physician,” who lived in the Carver County town of Helvetia.³⁶ The community, which bordered on Watertown,

was a Swiss settlement named by immigrant John Buhler in honor of his homeland.³⁷

The only “H. Auer” found near Watertown or Helvetia between 1860 and 1880 was Henry Auer, the likely adoptive father of August Lorinz.³⁸ Could his wife Carolina be the same Dr. Auer who treated Louis Lorius’ eye problems? Female physicians were not uncommon in late 19th-century Minnesota, and Louis’ affidavit did not mention Dr. Auer’s gender.³⁹ As a Swiss immigrant, Louis might have preferred to receive medical care from someone from his native country who spoke his language. If he knew and trusted Carolina Auer as a healer, Louis might also have entrusted her with the care of an infant son when he left to serve in the Civil War.



Minnesota, North and South Dakota, and Montana Gazetteer and Business Directory, 1878-9

33 Declaration for Invalid Pension, 22 July 1890; Louis L. Lorins Civil War pension no. S. C. 864,278.

34 Sworn statement of Jakob Düll, Jacob A. Heneseler, and John N. Maerz, 30 May 1891; Louis L. Lorins Civil War pension no. S. C. 864,278.

35 Affidavit of Claimant, 16 November 1891, Louis L. Lorius Civil War pension no. S.C. 864,278.

36 R. L. Polk & Co’s Minnesota, North and South Dakota and Montana Gazetteer and Business Directory, 1878-9, Volume 1 (Detroit: R. L. Polk & Co., and A. C. Danser: 187[8?]), 212, Town of Helvetia, entry for “Auer Mrs. H, physician”; digital

image, Google Books (<https://books.google.com/books?id=kbFLAQAIAAA>), accessed 23 June 2015). Helvetia (now defunct) was located in Hollywood Township, which is adjacent to Watertown.

37 Edward D. Neill, *History of the Minnesota Valley, including the Explorers and Pioneers of Minnesota* (Minneapolis: North Star Publishing Company, 1882), 386 (John Buhler) and 402 (Hollywood [Township]); digital images, Ancestry.com (<http://www.ancestry.com>), accessed 23 June 2015).

38 Federal and Minnesota State census records from 1860 to 1880 were searched for Auer and likely variants.

39 R. L. Polk & Co’s Minnesota, North and South Dakota and Montana Gazetteer and Business Directory, 1878-9, Volume 1, entries for physicians “Mrs. Wellmer” (Eden Lake, p. 152), Mrs. Catherina Stork (New Market, p. 403), and Mrs. Eliza Paulsen (Red Wing, p. 458). Many medical practitioners in nineteenth-century Minnesota were allopathic or homeopathic physicians, per: Peter J. Kernahan, “Was There Ever a ‘Golden Age’ of Medicine?,” *Minnesota Medicine* (September 2012), esp. the section entitled “1830 to 1900: A Tenuous Profession”; online article (<http://pubs.royle.com/allarticle/16967/124206/124206/allarticle.html>), accessed 1 July 2016).

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After her husband died in June 1880,⁴⁰ newly widowed Carolina Auer lived at Watertown with her nephew John Straub and niece Mary Straub.⁴¹ Mary was the daughter of Carolina's sister Ursula (Massueger) Doll, who lived at Sauk County, Wisconsin.⁴² The Straubs may have helped Carolina Auer move east to Sauk County, where she married Johann Georg Haller on 29 January 1881. Ursula and George Doll were witnesses at their wedding.⁴³

Carolina died in 1903,⁴⁴ long after Louis asserted that Dr. Auer had died; however, Louis' 1891 affidavit also contained other errors, including an incorrect year for his third marriage.⁴⁵ An 1891 surgeon's certificate stating that Louis' "mental processes are very sluggish" and a later diagnosis of senile debility suggest that his memory might have been questionable when he made his affidavit.⁴⁶ Carolina's move to Wisconsin before January 1881 is consistent with Louis' statement that the Dr. Auer who treated him moved east about 1880-81. Her census and marriage records and likely city directory entry provide credible indirect evidence that Carolina was Louis' physician, and that young August Lorinz in her home was the son of the only similarly-named man in the same town: Louis Lorius.

The Auer – Lorinz/Lorius /Lawrence Connection

Their consistent names, ages, and places of birth offer compelling evidence that the August Auer/Lorinz who lived in the Auer home at Watertown from 1865 to 1875 was the same man as August Auer/Lorius who lived with the Wehle family near St. Bonifacius thirty-five years later. When their records are merged and compared to those of August Henry Lawrence of Winthrop, a clear pattern emerges: with the exception of 1910 when both men are enumerated in nearby counties, their records never overlap (see Table 5).

Double census enumerations are not uncommon. In 1900, August Lawrence appeared at his home in Winthrop, and also in John Nelson's home in neighboring Renville County. In 1910, August Henry Lawrence was enumerated with his wife and children at Winthrop, but was likely living as August Auer with the Wehle family in Minnetrista Township. Whether or not his Winthrop family knew his whereabouts, they may have told the census-taker that August usually lived there.

The 1880 McLeod County census record provides convincing evidence that August Auer/Lorinz and August Henry Lawrence are the same person. At first glance, the

40 Carver County, Minnesota, Register of Deaths, Vol. A, 1880, p.40 (penned), Town of Watertown, entry 36, no. 1, Henry Auer, June 1880 (no day given); "Minnesota, County Deaths, 1850-2001," browsable images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/search/collection/2185953>, accessed 18 June 2014), path: Browse > Carver > Deaths, 1870-1897, vol. A > page image 42 of 140.

41 1880 U.S. census, Carver County, Minnesota, population schedule, Watertown, enumeration district 85, p. 28D (stamped, upper left), dwelling 244, family 248, Carolina Auer; digital images, *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com>, accessed 27 July 2014); citing NARA microfilm T9, roll 616. For marriage of John Straub and Mary Doll, see: Wisconsin Historical Society, "Vital Records, Pre-1907 Wisconsin," database, *Wisconsin Historical Society* (<http://www.wisconsinhistory.org>, accessed 15 February 2016), marriage of John Straub and Maria Magdalena Doll, 6 November 1877; citing Sheboygan County, Marriage Records, Vol. 22, p. 333.

42 For Ursula's maiden name, see *Ancestry, Find A Grave*, database and images, (<http://www>

<http://www> findagrave.com, accessed 22 July 2016), Salem Honey Creek Cemetery, Prairie du Sac, Sauk County, Wisconsin, memorial record (18 Aug. 2008) and photo (11 Oct. 2008) created by Lynne S. (contributor no. 46,971,898), entry for Ursula Massueger Doll (1828 – 1889), *Find a Grave* memorial 29,116,063. For Mary Straub's relationship, see: 1870 U.S. census, Sauk Co., Wisconsin, population schedule, Honey Creek, p. 14 (penned, upper left), dwelling 92, family 97, Maria, likely daughter in the household of George and Ursula Doll; digital images, *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com>, accessed 25 July 2016); citing NARA microfilm T132, no roll number.

43 Wisconsin, Sauk County, Registration of Marriages, 1869-1882, Vol. 2:426, no. 164, Johann Georg Haller and Karolina (né Massueger) Auer, 29 Jan 1881; FHL microfilm 1,275,559; citing Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison.

44 "Deaths and Funerals [Mrs. Caroline Haller]," *The Lockport Journal* (Lockport, New York), 6 August 1903, p. 3, col. 5; digital image, *Old Fulton NY Post Cards* (<http://www.fultonhistory.com>, accessed 21 August 2015). The 1900 census provides evidence

that she was the wife of Johann George Haller. Also, 1900 U.S. census, Niagara County, New York, population schedule, Lockport City, Ward 5, District 2, enumeration district 61, sheet 14B, p. 222 (stamped, front side), dwelling 338, family 354, John G. and Caroline Haller, in-laws in the home of Gottlieb Otto; digital images, *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com>, accessed 25 April 2016); citing NARA microfilm T623, roll 1129; imaged from FHL microfilm 1,241,129.

45 Untitled circular, 4 July 1898; Louis L. Lorins Civil War pension no. S. C. 864,278. His signed family circular incorrectly gives the date of Louis' third marriage as "about 1878" rather than the actual year of 1871 (per Carver County, Minnesota, Marriage Records, D:4, Louis L. Lorius - Mrs. Mary Sassen, 24 June 1871; FHL microfilm 1,434,895).

46 Surgeon's Certificate (24 June 1891) and Form 3-428 (26 April 1893); Louis L. Lorins Civil War pension no. S. C. 864,278.

Census Year	August Lorinz/Lorius (a.k.a. Auer) of Watertown & Minnetrista Twp. (b. abt. 1862 – d. 1913)	August Henry Lorieus/Lawrence of Winthrop, Sibley County (b. June 1863 – d. after 1910)
1865 ^a	August Auer (Henry Auer's home)	<i>Not found</i>
1870 ^b	August Lorinz (Henry Auer's home)	<i>Not found</i>
1875 ^c	Aug. Forins (Henry Auer's home)	<i>Not found</i>
1880 ^d	<i>Not found</i>	August Lorieus: Sumter Twp., McLeod Co.
1885 ^e	<i>Not found</i>	August Lornice (possibly Lorince)
1895 ^f	<i>Not found</i>	August Lourens, harness maker
1900 ^g	<i>Not found</i>	August Lawrence, harness maker; Sibley Co. August Lorence, harness maker, Renville Co.
1905 ^h	<i>Not found</i>	"Gust" Lawrence, harness maker
1906 -1909		Reportedly disappeared from Winthrop ⁱ
1910 ^j	August Auer, hired man in Frank Wehle's home at Minnetrista Twp.	August Lawrence [<i>sic</i>], ditch marker[?], at Winthrop [<i>residence there is uncertain.</i>]
1913 ^k	August Lorius, a hired man in Frank Wehle's home, commits suicide	—
1920	<i>Deceased</i>	<i>Not found</i>

a 1865 Minnesota State Census, Carver County, population schedule, Watertown Township [not noted on page; appears on image 99, and presumably applies to succeeding images], unpaginated [page image 102 of 108], family 155, line 37, August Auer in the household of Henry Auer [indexed as "Stuer"]. images, "Minnesota, Territorial and State Censuses, 1849-1905," Minnesota Historical Society (MHS) microfilm MNSC _1; *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com>, accessed 25 July 2014).

b 1870 U.S. census, Carver County, Minn., population schedule, Watertown, p. 28 (penned, upper left), dwelling 197 (from previous page), family 200 (from previous page), August Lorinz (indexed as "Leunz") in the household of Henry Auer (indexed as "Reny") Auer; digital images, *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com>, accessed 25 July 2014); citing National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) microfilm publication T132, roll 2.

c 1875 Minnesota State Census, Carver County, population schedule, Watertown Township [appears on front side of page], p. 433 (penned, upper left), family 5, line 30, Aug. Forins in the Henry Auer household; digital images, "Minnesota, Territorial and State Censuses, 1849-1905," *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com>, accessed 26 July 2014); citing Minnesota State Population Census Schedules, 1865-1905, MHS microfilm MNSC_5.

d 1880 U.S. census, McLeod Co., Minn. population schedule, Sumter, enumeration district 83, p. 45 (penned, upper left), p. 138A (stamped, upper right), dwelling 337, family 345, August Lorieus, boarder in the home of John Schilling; digital image, *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com>, accessed 21 April 2014), citing NARA microfilm T9, roll 625.

e 1885 Minnesota State census, Sibley County, population schedule, Transit [Township], Mountville Post Office [location noted on p. 552, and presumably applies to succeeding pages], p. 8 (penned, upper left), p. 559 (penned, upper right), family 49, August Lornice [or perhaps Lorince; indexed as Leornice]: digital image, *Ancestry.com*, accessed 14 December 2016, citing MHS microfilm MNSC_42.

f 1895 Minnesota State Census, Sibley County, population schedule, Winthrop Village, p. 2 (penned, upper left), family 1? [difficult to read, but should be 13 based on sequence], line 13 (counted from top), August Lourens [or Lourence] digital image, "Minnesota Territorial and State Censuses, 1849-1905," *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com>, accessed 21 April 2014): citing Minnesota State Population Census Schedules, 1865-1905; MHS microfilm V290, roll 98.

g 1900 U.S. census, Sibley Co., Minn., population schedule, Alfsborg Twp., Winthrop Village, enumeration district 180, sheet 15B, p. 98 (stamped, front side), dwelling 253 (115 lined through), family 281 (137 and 138 lined through), August Lawrence.; citing Library FHL microfilm 1,240,791. Also, 1900 U.S. census, Renville Co., Minn., population schedule, Hector Township, Village of Hector, enumeration district 133, sheet 4A, p. 144 (stamped, upper right), dwelling 59, family 64, August Lorence, boarder in the home of John Nelson; digital images, *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com>, accessed 21 April 2014); citing NARA microfilm publication T623, roll 787; imaged from FHL microfilm 1,240,787.

h 1905 Minnesota State Census, Sibley County, population schedule, Village of Winthrop, enumeration district 14, p. 307 (penned, upper right), dwelling and family not given, line 13 (counted from top), Gust Lawrence; digital images, "Minnesota, Territorial and State Censuses, 1849-1905," *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com>, accessed 21 April 2014); citing Minnesota State Population Census Schedules, 1865-1905, MHS microfilm _153.

i Jeanne Thompson, Santa Cruz, California [(E-Address for Private Use),] to Sharon Hoyt, e-mail, 5 April 2014, "Fw: Genealogy Society of Santa Cruz County"; Correspondence file, August H. Lawrence research files; privately held by Sharon Hoyt, Saratoga, Calif.

j 1910 U.S. census, Hennepin Co., Minn., population schedule, Minnetrista Township, enumeration district 214, sheet 14A, p. 227 (stamped), dwelling 249, family 253, August Auer, hired man in the Frank Wehle household; digital images, *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com>, accessed 20 July 2014); citing NARA microfilm publication T624, roll 699.

k Minnesota, Certificate of Death, No. 1913-MN-004859, August Lorius (1913); Minnesota State Historical Society, Saint Paul; citing the records of Hennepin County.

Table 5. August Henry Lawrence Candidate Records Comparison

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record for seventeen-year-old August Lorieus, a boarder in John Schilling's home at Sumter Township, appears to be a record for August Henry Lawrence. Lorieus' work as an apprentice in a harness shop matches August Henry Lawrence's occupation as a harness maker, and the Lorieus surname exactly matches the name on August Henry Lawrence's marriage records. However, "Lorieus" is also nearly identical to "Lorius", the surname of August Auer/Lorinz' likely father Louis Lorius. The 1880 census states that August Lorieus' mother was born in Switzerland, and his father's birth location field appears to contain the words "Prussia" and "Switzerland" written over each other. The Swiss births of Lorieus' parents are consistent with Louis and Anna Maria (Iseli) Lorius, the likely parents of the August Lorinz who lived with the Auer family at Watertown between 1865 and 1875. The 1880 census record suggests that August Lorieus in McLeod County was, in fact, August Lorinz/Auer, and that he had left the Auer's home in Carver County to learn the harness making skills that he later plied at Winthrop as August Henry Lawrence.

Perhaps struggling with depression, the loss of his former career, and the difficulty of supporting his large family, August Lawrence may have voluntarily left his home at Winthrop sometime before 1910. If so, he might have returned to a familiar area where he had once lived under another name (Auer), and been reluctant to tell others

about the family he had left behind. But why would the former harness maker be drawn to work as a hired man for the Wehles? Even more curious, if the Wehles knew him as August Auer, why would his death certificate have been filed under the name Lorius?

Neither August's death certificate nor his obituaries revealed his connection to the Wehle family: he shared a surname with Frank Wehle's wife Paulina. Born Paulina Lorius, she was the daughter of Louis L. Lorius and his third wife Mary (Kreher/Krayer) Sassen.⁴⁷ As Louis' likely son, August Lorius was Paulina Wehle's half-brother.

August H. Lorinz/Lorius/Lawrence (alias Auer)

Separating and merging identities are common problems for genealogists. August Auer/Lorinz of Watertown, August Henry Lawrence of Winthrop, and August Auer/Lorius of Minnetrista Township appeared to be similarly named men who lived separate lives in neighboring Minnesota counties. However, compelling indirect evidence suggests that all were the same man, even though no records directly connect them. When their identities are merged, their records reveal the story of August Henry Lawrence's life.

Although no birth record has been found for him,⁴⁸ August Henry Lorius was born between June 1862 and June 1863,⁴⁹ probably near St. Bonifacius.⁵⁰ He was likely the tenth child of Swiss immigrants Louis Lucien Lorius

47 For Paulina (Lorius) Wehle, see: Minnesota State Department of Health, certificate of death 1948-MN-005578 (1948), Paulina Wehle; Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul; the photocopy of the handwritten certificate names her husband Frank Wehle, and identifies her parents as Louis Lorues [or Loieres] and Mary Kreher. For Lorius - Sassen marriage, see: Carver County, Minnesota, Marriage Records, D:4, Louis L. Lorius - Mrs. Mary Sassen, 24 June 1871; FHL microfilm 1,434,895.

48 Births were not recorded in Carver and Hennepin Counties until 1870. Louis and Anna Maria (Iseli) Lorius' children were baptized at the Reformed Church in Péry, Bern, Switzerland. Louis' children by his third wife Mary (Krayer) Sassen Lorius

were baptized at St. Bonifacius Catholic Church in Minnetrista, where their family record identifies Louis as a Protestant (see record image: Kenneth Heitz, *St. Bonifacius Area Historical Society*, newsletter, May 2016, p.1). Taken together, these records suggest that Louis and Annie Maria might have attended a Protestant church near Minnetrista Township in the early 1860s. No local records exist for the Minnetrista German Baptist Church from 1862-63, per: John McNabb (Pastor, Minnetrista Baptist Church) St. Bonifacius, Minnesota, e-mail, to Sharon Hoyt, 11 July 2016, "Re: Question about church records, 1862-63,"; correspondence, Lorius research file; privately held by author.

49 1900 U.S. census, Sibley Co., Minn., population schedule, Alfsborg Twp., Winthrop Village, enumeration district 180, sheet 15B, p. 98 (stamped, front side), dwelling 253 (115 lined through), family 281 (137 and 138 lined through), August Lawrence; born June 1863. Also, 1900 U.S. census, Renville Co., Minn., population schedule, Hector Twp., Village of Hector, enumeration district 133, sheet 4A, p. 144 (stamped, upper right), dwelling 59, family 64, August Lorence; born June 1862.

50 Louis Lorius lived from about 1859 near St. Bonifacius, per: Affidavit of John [N?] Maerz, 18 Nov. 1889; Louis L. Lorins Civil War pension no. S. C. 864,278.

and Anna Maria Iseli.⁵¹ When Anna Maria died in 1863, August's likely father Louis left him in the care of Henry and Carolina Auer while Louis served in 11th Minnesota infantry.⁵² Carolina was probably the physician who later treated Louis for trachoma after he returned from the war.

August "Lorinz" lived with the Auers until at least 1875.⁵³ By June 1880, when his likely adoptive father Henry Auer died in Carver County, August Lorieus was working near Sibley County as an apprentice in a McLeod County harness making shop.⁵⁴ He was married in Sibley County in May 1883 to Hermine Bubolz, who died a few months later.⁵⁵ In May 1885, August married Augusta Olson.⁵⁶ They raised their family at Winthrop, where about 1890, they modified their family name from Lorieus to Lawrence.

Although he was enumerated at Winthrop in 1910, August probably left his home there between 1905 and 1910. He may have left to work on a drainage ditch project, but might also have intentionally abandoned his family. He settled at Minnetrista Township in Hennepin County, where he lived and worked in the home of his half-sister Paulina (Lorius)

Wehle, using his former name of August Auer.⁵⁷ When he died in 1913, his death certificate did not name his parents, but gave the birth name that Paulina would have known: August Lorius.⁵⁸

The author thanks Jeanne Thompson, who requested and approved publication of this research, and appreciates the local research assistance of Marilyn Braun (Carver County Historical Society), Kenneth Heitz (St. Bonifacius Area Genealogical Society), and Diane Fredin (Winthrop Community Historical Society).

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51 Untitled circular, 4 July 1898; Louis L. Lorins Civil War pension no. S. C. 864,278. The document gives Anna Maria (Eisele) Lorius' year and place of death, but does not name August or her children. Louis' circular named only his children from his third marriage, and did not mention the adult children from his first marriage who were living in 1898. Accordingly, his failure to name August Lorius does not exclude August as Louis' child.

52 Louis L. Lorins Civil War pension no. S. C. 864,278.

53 1870 U.S. census, Carver Co., Minn., population schedule, Watertown, p. 28 (penned, upper left), dwelling 197, family 200, August Lorinz (indexed as "Leunz") in the Henry Auer household. Also, 1875 Minnesota State Census, Carver Co., Watertown Twp., p. 433 (penned, upper left), family 5, line 30, Aug. Forins in the Henry Auer household.

54 1880 U.S. census, McLeod Co., Minn., population schedule., Sumter, enumeration district 83, p. 45 (penned, upper left), p. 138A (stamped, upper right), dwelling 337, family 345, August Lorieus, boarder in the home of John Schilling.

55 For marriage, see Sibley County, Minnesota, Marriage Records Volume B:413, August H. Lorieus and Hermine Bubolz, 11 May 1883. For Hermine's death, see Sibley County, Minnesota, Death Returns, Town of Alfsborg, 1883, line 3, Hermine Lorieus, 12 October 1883; "Minnesota, County Deaths, 1850-2001," browsable images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/search/collection/2185953>, accessed 4 July 2016), path: Browse > Sibley County > Deaths, 1870-1889> page image 430 of 973, entry for Hermine Lorieus.

56 Nicollet County, Minnesota, Marriage Records, Vol. F:246, A. H. Lorieus and Augusta Olson, 21 March 1885.

57 1910 U.S. census, Hennepin Co., Minn., population schedule, Minnetrista Township, enumeration district 214, sheet 14A, p. 227 (stamped), dwelling 249, family 253, August Auer, hired man in the Frank Wehle household.

58 Minnesota, Certificate of Death, No. 1913-MN-004859, August Lorius (1913); Minnesota State Historical Society microfilm, Saint Paul.

The Many Lives of Deesting Shepard – A Treasure Trove of Questions

Elizabeth Overstad

My ancestors were mostly teachers, preachers and farmers. Solid citizens. Over time I have compulsively read more than 60 years' worth of small town newspapers on microfilm in an effort to flesh out their stories, beyond the basics of births, marriages, and deaths. With their mostly straightforward lives, I have learned to be content with finding few newsy items. Someone was "rusticating" during her summer vacation from college studies. Someone else found a robin with a broken leg and mended it. Interesting yes, but not very exciting.

Then, while reading the front page of a July 1904 edition of *The Press*, New London, Wisconsin, looking for tidbits about my recently-wed great-grandparents, I encountered a remarkable and touching story about someone entirely unrelated to me. I said to myself, "This man's life should be made into a movie!"

On a whim, I decided to print a copy of the article and dig a little deeper to see if the story could possibly be true. Which parts of the article could be confirmed through historical records? Surprisingly, quite a bit of evidence was found to support the story.

This is the headline that caught my attention:¹

GONE FORTY-FIVE YEARS

LEFT HERE BEFORE THE CIVIL WAR BEGAN

Count De Ester-Shepherd, Formerly of Northport,
Serves His Country in the Army –

Works in Mexico Mines Over Forty Years –
Now Returns to Seek His Children.

HE FINDS ONE IN NEW YORK, THE OTHER
NEAR THIS CITY

If it had been a common name like "John Smith," I might have stopped right there, but the highly unusual name, Count De Ester-Shepherd, would certainly make research easy – or so I thought.

The Story

According to the newspaper article, in 1859 Shepard, his wife, and two year-old son traveled from New York to Northport, Waupaca County, Wisconsin, where they intended to make their home. Shortly after arriving, a second son was born, but the wife died a day later. The Harkness family that lived nearby adopted the infant son.² The younger son was raised to manhood as Wilson Harkness. He married Minnie Rath about 1880. Shepard returned to New York and left his older son, William Shepard, in the care of his parents. Being raised in distant states, the brothers corresponded, but never met.

Shepard enlisted and served in the Civil War for a short time.³ According to the newspaper story, he afterward traveled to Mexico to seek his fortune, with the aim of eventually reuniting with his sons. He got an address for his younger son, and after visiting other relatives in New York, he set out for Wisconsin to find him. Shepard told the newspaper that he was badly injured in a train wreck near Chicago. He was unconscious for a number of days, and hospitalized for weeks. By this time, he had forgotten the address of his Wisconsin son, so he returned to New York to recuperate. While there he received word from Mexico about the sale of his mining interest so he went there to attend to it.

On his journey back from Mexico, Shepard claimed he was overtaken by a cloudburst and swept down a river. He clung to a log for miles and finally made his way to an

1 *The Press*, New London, Outagamie & Waupaca Counties, Wisconsin, 8 July 1904, p. 1.

2 1860 U. S. census, Waupaca County, Wisconsin, population schedule, Royalton, dwelling 1542,

family 1348, Harkness (Geo., Alvira, Orlando, Howard, Martha) & Shepherd, Wilson W., *Ancestry.com*, citing NARA microfilm M653_1433, page 815, image 125, Family History Library Film 805433, www.ancestry.com, accessed 17 March 2016.

3 New York 1st Independent Battery, New York Light Artillery, "U. S. Civil War Soldier Records & Profiles, 1861-1865," private D'Esting Shepard, film number M551 roll 128, *Ancestry.com*, www.ancestry.com, accessed 18 March 2016.

island where he was rescued two days later. Unfortunately, during this time he lost his wallet, which contained a new copy of the address for his Wisconsin son and several bank checks. He continued on to Chicago where he purchased a farm near the outskirts of the city for his New York son. He telegraphed his New York son to get the address for his Wisconsin son and then found his way to a farm in Bear Creek, Outagamie County, Wisconsin.⁴ The reunion was joyful. Shepard said he intended to purchase a farm for his younger son near the one he had recently purchased for the older one in Illinois, and said he planned to live out his remaining years with them.

The newspaper editor noted that Shepard's face and limbs showed the scars of his claimed encounters with Indian arrows, a grizzly bear, and other wild animals in the mountains of Mexico. The article described Shepard as being 69 years old (born about 1841), but as well preserved as a man of 50. Shepard said he was of Scotch-German heritage and that his forefathers were nobility, as reflected in his title.

The Facts – Larger than Life

This was the story told to the New London newspaper by a man who called himself Count De Ester-Shepard, but no one named Count De Ester-Shepard was found in online sources. However, there were four individuals found with a

similar name. The surname was variously spelled Shepherd, Shepard, Shapard, and Sheppard. His curious given name had more than fifteen spelling variations.

DeEsting Shepard, age 13, born about 1837, was the apparent son of Amos Y. and Permilia Shepard of Lewis County, New York.⁵ For the purpose of this narrative the "DeEsting" spelling was selected based on the spelling on the headstone of his namesake nephew, DeEsting C. Shepard, born circa 1872.⁶ The other individuals with similar names were his grandson, Deesting Count Shepard, born in 1916, and a man identified in online family trees as Charles Deesting Sheppard, a contemporary, born in New York, circa May 1845, but seemingly no relation. More about him later.

Other sources confirm many of the details in the newspaper article. According to the newspaper article, in 1859 Shepard, his wife, and two year-old son traveled from New York to Northport, Waupaca County, Wisconsin, where they intended to make their home. No record is found of the wife's death,⁷ but the 1860 Census did enumerate 9-month old Wilson, born in Wisconsin, living with the Harkness family.⁸ The younger son was raised as Wilson Harkness.⁹ He did marry Minnie Rath in 1882.¹⁰ Shepard apparently did return to New York and leave his older son, William Shepard, in the care of his parents.¹¹

4 1900 U. S. census, Outagamie County, Wisconsin, population schedule, Deer Creek, Willis Harkness, *Ancestry.com*, www.ancestry.com, accessed 19 March 2016.

5 1850 U. S. census, Lewis County, New York, population schedule, Martinsburg, dwelling 484, family 490, Shepard (Amos, Pamela, Almira, Desting, Adaline, Darius, Pamela) *Ancestry.com*, citing NARA microfilm M432_523, page 132B, image 264, www.ancestry.com, accessed 15 March 2016.

6 Martinsburg Cemetery, Martinsburg, Lewis County, New York, U. S. *Find A Grave*, DeEsting C. Shepard, son of Darius A. & Mary Shepard, www.findagrave.com, accessed 15 March 2016.

7 A search of Wisconsin vital records yielded no birth or death records for the surname Shepard in Waupaca County, Wisconsin circa 1860. Wisconsin Pre-1907 Vital Records Collection, Wisconsin

Historical Society, www.wisconsinhistory.org, accessed 15 March 2016. State of Wyoming, Certificate of Death, File No. 1932, Registered No. 1644, Powell, Park County, Wyoming, Wilson Willis Shepard, born 10 Oct 1859, died 15 Sept 1932, father Deesting Shepard born New York, Public Member Stories for Wilson Willis Shepard, www.ancestry.com, accessed 17 August 2016.

8 1860 U. S. census, Waupaca County, Wisconsin, population schedule, Royalton, dwelling 1542, family 1348, Harkness (Geo., Alvira, Orlando, Howard, Martha) & Shepherd, Wilson W., *Ancestry.com*, citing NARA microfilm M653_1433, page 815, image 125, Family History Library Film 805433, www.ancestry.com, accessed 17 March 2016.

9 1900 U. S. census, Outagamie County, Wisconsin, population schedule, Deer Creek, dwelling 52, family 52, Harkness (Willis, Minnie, Stella, Ernest,

Frank, Libbie, Grace), *Ancestry.com*, citing Family History Library microfilm 1241809, www.ancestry.com, accessed 17 March 2016.

10 Outagamie County, Wisconsin, Volume 4, page 168, Marriage Index Record 2 April 1882 W. Harkness & Minnie Roth, Wisconsin Pre-1907 Vital Records Collection, Wisconsin Historical Society, www.wisconsinhistory.org, accessed 17 March 2016.

11 1860 U. S. census, Lewis County, New York, population schedule, Martinsburg, dwelling 914, family 912, Shepherd (Amos, Permilia, Drias, Pamela, Demaris, Wllier), *Ancestry.com*, citing NARA M653_777, page 114, Family History Library Film 803777, www.ancestry.com, accessed 18 March 2016.

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Shepard did enlist and serve in the Civil War for a short time.¹² A New York newspaper reported that he returned to New York in the spring of 1904 and was reunited with his older son.¹³

I was not able to find Shepard in the 1870, 1880, or 1900 United States censuses, under any spelling variation, which seemed to corroborate his story of being in Mexico during that time period. This should have been the end of my research. I had my own family's history to investigate. But in my mind's eye, I could visualize the dramatic action and emotional roller coaster that would be the screenplay of Shepard's life story. The story lacked an ending. What happened after Shepard left Wisconsin in 1904? Did he and his sons live happily ever after on their farms in Illinois?

Trouble Ahead

The article in the New London newspaper ended with, "He expects to visit his grand-daughter, Mrs. Aug. Freymuth of this city, before leaving for his new home." This implied that Shepard left Wisconsin. I decided it couldn't hurt to do a bit more research to find out what happened to him after that.

No online records were found indicating that either son lived in Illinois.¹⁴ However, at some time the brothers must have gotten together because – amazingly – two of Shepard's grandchildren married each other. Grace Eleanor Harkness, daughter of the Wisconsin son, Wilson Harkness, married DeEsting Count Shepard, the son of Shepard's New York son, William.¹⁵

Because Shepard is not part of my family tree, I decided early on to limit my research to only free internet resources. After a comprehensive search of the resources available in genealogy databases, I turned to *Google*. There I quickly found a surprising and disturbing article in a July 1906 Arizona newspaper which caused me to completely rethink Shepard's life story.

The Story, Take Two

Headline: "A Gay Lothario Who Had Untold Riches in Arizona." According to this article a man named Deesting Shepard arrived in Quincy, Adams County, Illinois, representing himself as a wealthy mining man from Tucson. For a while he stayed at a boarding house kept by Mrs. Medora Chamberlain, but his health soon declined, and he was taken to the hospital. On his deathbed, he wanted her to have all of his riches, so he proposed marriage to his landlady. He confided to her the location of his rich mining claims in Arizona and told her about a trunk in Tucson that contained a detailed map to his property and the millions of gold he had left there. On 28 December 1905 they were married and the following day he died.¹⁶

Despite an extensive search, his widow was unable to locate his fortune. Six months later the mayor of Quincy received a letter from a Mrs. Amanda H. Elliot of Gravity, Iowa. She claimed she had married Shepard in 1904 at Siloam Springs, Arkansas, where she had a boarding house.¹⁷ At that time he was using the name C. C. Brown, and he told

12 New York 1st Independent Battery, New York Light Artillery, "U. S. Civil War Soldier Records & Profiles, 1861-1865," private D'Esting Shepard, film number M551 roll 128, *Ancestry.com*, www.ancestry.com, accessed 18 March 2016.

13 *The Journal and Republican*, Lowville, Lewis County, New York, 28 April, 1904, p. 8, "D'Estang Shepard of Mexico and sister, of Theresa, are visiting William Shepard and family," NYS Historic Newspapers, www.nyshistoricnewspapers.org, accessed 19 March 2016.

14 Articles in the *Journal and Republican*, Lowville, Lewis County, New York place the oldest son, William Shepard, in Lewis County, New York

in 1904, 1905, 1906, and 1908, NYS Historic Newspapers, www.nyshistoricnewspapers.org, accessed 22 March 2016.

15 The marriage of Dest Count Shepard (son of William Shepard of New York) and Grace Eleanor Harkness (daughter of Wilson Shepard, aka Wilson Harkness of Wisconsin) is documented by the marriage of their son, DeEsting Count Shepard in 1840. Montana County Marriages 1865-1950, Yellowstone County, Montana, 3 October 1940, marriage of Emma Terpstra to D Ersting Count Shepard, father Debt Count Shepart, mother Grace Eleanor Harkness, *Ancestry.com*, www.ancestry.com, accessed 29 March 2016.

16 *Weekly Tombstone Epitaph*, Cochise County, Arizona, 1 July 1906, p. 1, <http://newspapers.com>, accessed 21 March 2016. The Tombstone Epitaph article was reprinted from the Quincy (IL) *Dispatch*. No Illinois marriage or death records were available online, however an article in the Quincy Daily Herald, Adams County, Illinois, dated 26 June 1906, p. 5 stated, "The records of the county clerk's office show that December 28, 1905, a license was issued for the marriage of Mrs. Madora A. Chamberlin, aged 44 years, of Quincy, Ill., and DeEsting Shepard, aged 54, of Tucson, Arizona. The records of the city health department show that De Esting Shepard, aged 53 years, of New York, a gold miner, died at St. Mary's hospital December 29, 1905," Quincy Public Library, www.quincylibrary.org, accessed 21 March 2016.

fantastic stories of his gold mines in Arizona. He proposed marriage to Mrs. Elliot and she accepted. He convinced her to sell all of her property and turn the profits over to him. After their marriage, they set out from Arkansas to visit her relatives in Iowa. In Kansas City, she claimed he changed the shipping labels on her boxes of household goods, addressing them to Deesting Shepard in Wagner [Wagoner], Indian Territory. She managed to recover her household goods, but had not heard anything from him until learning of his death in Quincy. She thought the placement of the death story in the newspaper was a ruse to stop her from pursuing him to recover her money.

This second newspaper article raised serious questions, the most interesting of which was, how many of the unverified parts of Shepard's narrative in the New London newspaper were true?

- Was the gold mine story true?
- If it was, why didn't he leave his wealth to his sons instead of his former landlady?
- Was Shepard a con man? Did he marry Medora Chamberlain so he could have a decent burial instead of a pauper's? Had he tried to con his sons?
- Was Shepard's absence from the 1870, 1880 and 1900 federal censuses because he was in Mexico, or because he was living as C. C. Brown?
- Why was Shepard in Arkansas marrying Amanda Elliot in December 1904, instead of living on the Illinois farms he claimed to have purchased for his sons?
- Was Amanda Elliot an opportunistic con woman trying to get Shepard's fortune, or was she one of his victims?

The Arizona newspaper article dated 1 July 1906 placed Shepard in Quincy, Illinois, so I searched the *Quincy Daily Herald* and found an article printed 26 June 1906. The headline of the article was, "SHEPARD HAD TWO WIVES. THE FIRST WRITES LETTER TO THE MAYOR. Another Chapter in the Life Story of Pseudo Millionaire Mine Owner of Arizona Who Was Wedded Here."¹⁸

In January 1906, the *Quincy Daily Herald* printed seven separate articles that covered Shepard's marriage to Madora Chamberlain, his death, and tales of a gold mine.¹⁹ Shepard related he had been married once before and that his wife had died the following year. For thirty years afterward he lived as a recluse, amassing a fortune and hiding millions in gold dust in fruit jars in a cavern, fifty-five miles south of Tucson. If the distance was accurate, the cavern would have still been in Arizona, not Mexico. He also claimed to have a trunk at a boarding house in Tucson, which contained a map to the exact location of his treasure.

Now Shepard had me completely captivated. The more I dug into his life, the more I wanted to know. Each new twist and turn made me repeat, "This man's story should be made into a movie." I really wanted to find out how the story ended – so much so that I abandoned my own family research – for months.

It Gets Worse

One part of Shepard's story I could readily verify was his service in the Civil War. But predictably, an examination of available online military index records only generated more questions about his life.

He enlisted April 1861 in the New York 1st Light Artillery Battery and left service six months later in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.²⁰ In 1875, Mr. Chickering of Lewis County,

17 Arkansas, County Marriages Index, 1837-1957, Siloam Springs, Benton County, Arkansas, marriage 31 December 1904, Amanda H. Elliot & C. C. Brown, citing Family History Library Film 1034662, *Ancestry.com*, www.ancestry.com, accessed 22 March 2016.

18 *Quincy Daily Herald*, Adams County, Illinois, 26 June 1906, p. 5, Quincy Public Library, www.quincylibrary.org, accessed 22 March 2016.

19 *Quincy Daily Herald*, Adams County, Illinois, 1, 2, 4, 8, 13, 14, and 15 January 1906, Quincy Public Library, www.quincylibrary.org, accessed 22 March 2016.

20 New York 1st Independent Battery, New York Light Artillery, "U. S. Civil War Soldier Records & Profiles, 1861-1865," Historical Data Systems, comp. U.S., Civil War Soldier Records and Profiles, 1861-1865 [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: *Ancestry.com*, 2009, accessed 23 March 2016.

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New York, introduced a bill in Congress seeking relief for Shepard. The bill was referred to the Committee on Military Affairs.²¹

From that time the military records become more convoluted. In 1880, Sarah L. Shepard, widow of De Esting C. Shepard of the 1st Independent Battery, New York Light Artillery, filed for a pension in an unknown state.²² According to his tale, Shepard should have been living in Mexico at the time.

However, the 1890 veteran's census, places Shepard in Linn County, Oregon, not Mexico.²³ He had enlisted in April 1861 and served four months as a private in the 1st New York Light Artillery. The record indicates he had a rupture, which may have been the reason for the brevity of his service.

Even worse, in 1917, Louisa H. Sheppard of Oregon filed for a pension as the widow of Deesting Sheppard of the 1st Independent Battery, New York Light Artillery.²⁴ She indicated that he died 25 September 1903 in Walla Walla County, Washington – a year before his 1904 visits to New York and Wisconsin.²⁵

This new information raised additional obvious questions:

- Just how many wives – and how many widows – did Shepard have?
- Who was Sarah L. Shepard, and what might be the basis of her widowhood in 1880?
- Who was Louisa H. Sheppard, and what might be the basis of her widowhood in 1903?

More Unwelcome News

Another *Google* search using a different spelling of his given name yielded even more disconcerting information. From the 18 September 1903 issue of the *Weekly Oregon Statesman* came the headline, “Shepard Escaped Convict Still At Large. Authorities in Hot Pursuit.”²⁶ It mentioned that four guards from the Walla Walla Penitentiary were pursuing an escaped 65 year-old convict, D’Esting Shepard, who had served two years of his four-year sentence for stealing horses. No newspaper account was found that reported his recapture.

Now there were more questions:

- If Shepard had millions in gold, why did he steal horses?
- Did Shepard travel to New York in the spring of 1904 because he had made his fortune and wished to reunite with his son, or because he needed to get far away from the authorities in Walla Walla, Washington?
- Did Shepard fake his death a week after escaping from the penitentiary, which provided the basis of Louisa Sheppard’s pension request?

Doppelganger?

There was one additional nagging issue that I still had not been able to resolve. Who was Charles Deesting Sheppard, DeEsting Shepard’s contemporary? Could he account for some of the disparate bits of information?

21 “1875 Sessional Indexes to the Annals of Congress: Register of Debates,” p. 469, Shapard, De Estang, *Google Books*, <https://books.google.com>, accessed 23 March 2016.

22 “U. S. Civil War Pension Index: General Index to Pension Files, 1861-1934,” Roll Number 32959_033091, Sarah L. Shepard widow of De Esting C. Shepard, NARA, T288, 546 rolls, *Ancestry.com*, www.ancestry.com, accessed 2 April 2016.

23 1890 Veterans Schedules, Syracuse and Waterloo,

Linn County, Oregon, Roll 77, page. 2, Enumeration District 93, Durling Sheppard, citing NARA microfilm M123, records of the Department of Veterans Affairs, Record Group 15, *Ancestry.com*, www.ancestry.com, accessed 2 April 2016.

24 “U. S. Civil War Pension Index: General Index to Pension Files, 1861-1934,” citing NARA T288, 546 rolls, *Ancestry.com*, www.ancestry.com, accessed 2 April 2016.

25 Wallula, Walla Walla County, Washington, death 25 September 1903, Deesting Sheppard, “U. S.

Civil War Pension Index,” NARA T289, Pension Applications for Service in the W. S. Army between 1861 and 1900, Roll_pub57_synthroll999, New York, Light Artillery, Regiment 1, Company D, filed 20 April 1917, New York Light Artillery, Co. D, 1, Roll 373, *Fold3*, <https://footnotelibrary.com>, accessed 4 April 2016.

26 *Weekly Oregon Statesman*, Salem, Oregon 18 September 1903, p. 3, *Newspapers.com*, <https://www.newspapers.com>, accessed 7 April 2016.

He was enumerated in Minnesota in the 1870 U.S. census as Charles Shepard, a 48 year-old carpenter born in Vermont, along with his wife, Louisa.²⁷ The 1880 census placed him in Dakota Territory as Charles C. Shepherd, born in New York, carpenter, with his wife, Louisa, and four children, Mary, Charles, Rosa, Melissa.²⁸ He was included in an 1896 California voter registration list as Deestring Sheppard, with his son Charles James, although his actual residence was indicated as just across the state border in Oregon.²⁹ In the 1900 census he was living in Idaho as D. Shepard, with his wife, Louisa C., and three children, Calvin, Arthur, Ethyl.³⁰ Notably, Charles Deesting Sheppard was enumerated in census records for the years in which DeEsting Shepard was not.

The 1870, 1880, and 1890 census records indicate Charles Deesting Sheppard's birth between 1842 and 1846, making him about seven years younger than DeEsting Shepard. However, Charles was not found in New York in the 1850 or 1860 censuses, the years in which DeEsting Shepard was enumerated in New York census records.

Intriguingly, records for four of Charles Deesting Sheppard's seven children do not call him Charles. Charles James' Social Security application names his father as Destang Sheppard.³¹ Arthur's 1949 Idaho death record identifies his father as Deestine Sheppard.³² Daughter Rose Sheppard Legacy's death record lists him as Deeting Sheppard.³³ And a 5 September 1891 delayed birth record

for daughter Lillian Ethel in Linn County, Oregon, lists her father as Desting Sheppard.³⁴

So now, even more questions:

- Is it possible that Charles Deesting Sheppard and DeEsting Shepard were the same person?
- If so, could one man have traveled back and forth between mining in Arizona or Mexico while fathering children in Minnesota, South Dakota, Idaho, and Oregon?
- If not, why can't both men be found in the same year in any of the 1850 to 1900 federal census records?
- If they are two different men, what are the odds that DeEsting Shepard would be in Linn County, Oregon, at the time of the 1890 census and Charles Deesting Sheppard's wife would be in Linn County, Oregon, a year later for the 1891 birth of daughter, Lillian Ethel?

Farther Down the Rabbit Hole

My intense curiosity finally got the better of me. I wondered if the purchase of one carefully chosen record might at least resolve whether DeEsting Shepard and Charles Deesting Sheppard were the same person. As you might guess, the short answer to that question is, "No." If anything, the situation became more muddled.

27 1870 U. S. census, Blue Earth County, Minnesota, population schedule, Pleasant Mound, dwelling 6, family 7, Shepard (Charles & Louisa), *Ancestry.com*, Roll T132_1, page 647, image 150689, Family History Library Film 830421, www.ancestry.com, accessed 7 April 2016.

28 1880 U. S. census, Lake County, Dakota Territory, population schedule, dwelling 122, family 125, Shepherd (Charles C., Louisa, Mary, Charles, Rosa, Melissa), *Ancestry.com*, roll 113, Family History Film 1254113, page 175C, Enumeration District 041, accessed 7 April 2016.

29 "California Voter Registers, Siskiyou, California, 1896," Desting Sheppard, *Ancestry.com*, California State Library, California History Section, Great Registers, 1866-1898, Collection Number 4-2A,

CSL Roll 130, citing Family History Library roll 9785884, www.ancestry.com, accessed 7 April 2016.

30 1900 U. S. census, Idaho County, Idaho, population schedule, Kamiah, dwelling 8, family 8, Shepard (D., Louisa C., Calvin, Arthur, Ethyl), *Ancestry.com*, Roll 233, page A, Enumeration District 0127, citing Family History Library microfilm 1240233, www.ancestry.com, accessed 9 April 2016.

31 "U. S. Social Security Applications and Claims Index, 1936-2007," Charles James Sheppard, born Fergus Falls, Minnesota 21 April 1872, father Destang Sheppard, mother, Louisa McDonald, *Ancestry.com*, www.ancestry.com, accessed 9 April 2016.

32 "Idaho, Death Index, 1890-1964," Nampa, Canyon County, Idaho, 6 March 1949, death of Arthur

Sheppard, father Deestine Sheppard, Certificate Number 000893, *Ancestry.com*, citing Idaho Department of Health and Welfare, www.ancestry.com, accessed 14 April 2016.

33 "Washington, Select Death Certificates, 1907-1960," Rose Sheppard Legacy, father Deeting Sheppard, mother Louise McDonald, *Ancestry.com*, www.ancestry.com, accessed 14 April 2016.

34 "Oregon, Select Births and Christenings, 1868-1929," Lillian Ethel Mae Sheppard Coy, father Desting Sheppard, mother Louise McDonald Sheppard, *Ancestry.com*, www.ancestry.com, accessed 14 April 2016.

The Many Lives of Deesting Shepard

I considered the options of how to best spend a small amount of money. An Illinois marriage or death record might or might not list the names of parents. Pension records would likely yield a wealth of information, but they were too costly for someone not on my own family tree. Never having seen a penitentiary record, I did not know what information it might yield, but thought it had some potential, and it could be had for a modest fee. Thus, I ordered a copy of the Washington State penitentiary records of D. E. Sheppard.³⁵ The file included the court record of his conviction, a detailed physical description of the convict, and a mug shot.

D. Esting Shepherd was convicted of “larceny live stock” in Walla Walla County, Washington, and was sentenced to four years imprisonment. He was incarcerated 11 October 1902, but escaped almost a year later on 6 September 1903. At the time of his conviction he was living in Fox Valley, Linn County, Oregon.

Keeping with the frustrating ambiguity surrounding everything in this research, some information in the documents fit DeEsting, and some fit Charles Deesting. Naturally, some information fit both men.

Details in the penitentiary record consistent with previously found information about DeEsting Shepard:

- His age was listed as 64, suggesting he was born circa 1838.

- He had been a soldier in the civil war in the New York 1st Light Artillery Co.
- He had multiple scars, including facial ones.
- He died in Adams County, Illinois.

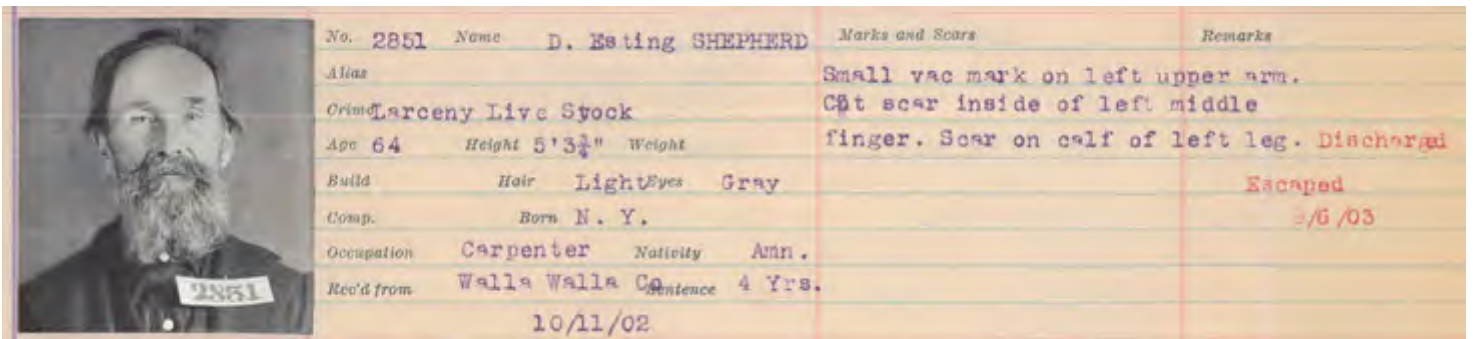
Details in the penitentiary record consistent with previously found information about Charles Deesting Sheppard:

- His occupation was that of a carpenter.
- His father was born in England.
- He was married at the time of his arrest.
- He had eight children.

So unfortunately, the purchased record did not resolve anything. More research would be necessary to write the final pages of Shepard’s story.

What About the Lost Gold Mine?

Shepard’s story resurfaced in 1924, twenty years after his death.³⁶ According to articles in the *Quincy Daily Herald*, Shepard’s widow, Madora, traveled to Tucson immediately after his death, and using a rough drawing he’d given her of its location, spent six months searching the area for his gold cache. She also looked for his trunk, which was supposed to contain a bag of gold and a more detailed map of the exact location of the gold cache and mine. While in Tucson, she learned that Shepard was well known in that part of the



Washington State Corrections Department Penitentiary commitment photograph, courtesy of the Washington State Archives.

35 D. E. Sheppard, Inmate Number 2851, Convicted in Walla Walla County in 1902, Department, Penitentiary Commitment Registers, 1887-1945,

Washington State Archives, Digital Archives, <http://www.digitalarchives.wa.gov>, 21 April 2016, copy in the author’s possession.

36 *Quincy Daily Herald*, Adams County, Illinois, 4 February 1924, p. 2, Quincy Public Library, www.quincylibrary.org, accessed 6 July 2016.

State Penitentiary at Walla Walla, Washington.

65

DESCRIPTION OF CONVICT.

C

Register No. 2851 Name, Leeting Sheppard Alias,
 County, Walla Walla Crime, Armed Rob. Steal.
 When received, October 11th 1902 When committed,
 Sentenced, Four 1/2 years Discharged, Escaped Sept 6 '03
 Age, 64 Where born, New York
 Where Father was born, England Where Mother was born, New York
 Father living, No Mother living, No
 Age of convict when Father or Mother died, 67 63 m
 Where living when arrested, Fox Valley, Ore. Died Sept 30th 1906
 Social State—Married, Yes Single, No Divorced, Illinois for Illinois.
 Any children, Eight Legitimate occupation, Carpenter
 What doing when arrested, Sole Any knowledge of other trade,
 Education—Read, Yes Read and write, No Where educated, New York
 Under what system, Private
 Religion, Protestant Mental culture, New York
 Been a soldier or sailor, Soldier In what service, Civil War, 1st Light Artillery Co.
 Habits of Life—Temperate or intemperate, Temperate Tobacco, Yes Opium,
 Plea on trial, Not guilty Any excuse for committing crime,
 Former imprisonment, When and how discharged,
 Name and address of nearest relative, Mrs. J. E. Sheppard, Fox Valley, Ore.
 Height, 5 feet 3 3/4 inches; Diameter of head, 17 3/4 inches; Distance between temples, 5 3/4 inches;
 Length of nose, 2 1/4 inches; State of teeth, Good; Hair, Light; Eyes, Gray; Chest measurement, 36 inches;
 Length of forearm, 10 1/4 inches; Elbow to point of middle finger, 17 inches; Width of hand at knuckle joints, 3 3/8 inches;
 Length of middle finger, 4 inches; Length of foot, 9 1/2 inches.
 Peculiarity of build or feature, Thin build, regular features; bald headed.
 Beard worn when received, Gray chin whiskers mustache. Round shouldered.
 Indian ink marks,

Scars and deformities, Small deep mark on upper arm.
Upper and lower back teeth all out.
Cut scar inside of L. middle finger 1st joint.
Great toe protruding, having been broken.
Three scars on front and outside of L. knee.
Scar on calf of L. leg, lump on R. thigh.
Scar inside R. knee.
Large contracted scar on L. jaw.
Two cut scars on chin.

General conduct,
 Forfeiture of time earned by good conduct,

State Penitentiary
 at Walla Walla,
 Description of
 Prisoner

The Many Lives of Deesting Shepard

country, that he had prospected in the mountains for years, and when he got supplies in Tucson he always paid with gold dust. Yet, Madora's search for the mine and the trunk was futile.

Madora then married Joseph Kelley of Omaha, Nebraska. In late 1923 the couple learned that a Frank Brubaker had filed suit against the American Smelting and Refining Company of Omaha. Brubaker had purchased an old trunk at a sale of unclaimed railroad freight. In it was a bag of mud and some old papers. He took the mud to a smelter thinking it might contain some sort of mineral. It turned out the mineral was gold worth nearly \$2,000. The smelting company refused to return the gold to Brubaker because the rightful owner might return to claim it. Thinking the trunk in question might have been Shepard's, Kelley petitioned the court on behalf of his wife for possession of the trunk and its contents. Unfortunately, no resolution to the case was found in the *Quincy Daily Herald*.

The legend of DeEsting Shepard's lost gold mine has lived on over the years, appearing in publications in 1941, 1955, and 1973.³⁷ The most recent retelling of the saga that I was able to find appeared in the March 1992 edition of *Arizona Highways*.³⁸ All these stories mention the approximate location of the mine: about fifty-five miles south of Tucson, near the border with Mexico. But, if anyone ever found Shepard's millions in gold, they kept that information to themselves.

A search of the Bureau of Land Management website yielded no Arizona land patents in Shepard's name.³⁹

The End (at Least for Me)

Now I am even more convinced that this man's life story is worthy of being made into a movie. However, after several months of work, it is time for me to leave this most enjoyable diversion and return to researching my

own family story. What began as a simple, fun exercise in research has become overwhelming in its depth and breadth. My decision to not commit funds to do a more thorough search into the Shepard story has left many unanswered research questions.

Shepard lived in a time in the nation's history when it was easy to move to a different location and establish a new identity. My hypothesis at this time is that DeEsting Shepard and Charles Deesting Sheppard were the same person. It has become clear to me that the scope of the research necessary to wrap up this investigation is beyond what I initially thought would be a short, amusing exercise in historical research. Hopefully, another researcher will be mesmerized by the romance of lost gold and high adventure, and decide to spend the time and funds necessary to pursue the records needed to answer this question – and probably more – to compile the definitive story.

Because of self-imposed limitations, I have not completed a reasonably exhaustive search. With the exception of one purchased record, I pursued only free online sources, which have been cited here for future researchers. The information obtained so far has only been partially analyzed and not completely correlated, and conflicting evidence has not been completely resolved. More vital records, property records, pension records, court records, and newspaper accounts need to be consulted. Ultimately, DNA testing of descendants may be necessary to untangle the many lives of DeEsting Shepard. Until then, the final scene of his movie script cannot be written.

Elizabeth Overstad has been researching her family for fifteen years. Recently she retired from a career in education and now has more time to devote to genealogy. She hopes to find someone willing to continue researching the subject of this article.

37 "Gold Ghost of the Southwest," *The Salt Lake Tribune*, 17 August 1941, p. 57. John D. Mitchell, "Shepherd's Lost Bonanza: Prospector De Estine Shepherd and His Lost Tucson Gold," *Arizona Highways*, 31:8 (August 1955). "Tucson's Lost

Bonanza," *Long John Latham's Treasure World Magazine*, 7:5 (April-May 1973).

38 March 1992, *Arizona Highways*, pp. 50-51, "Legends of the Lost Aztec Gold," *Arizona Highway*

Department, *Arizona Highways Online*, azmemory.azlibrary.gov, accessed 29 March 2016.

39 U. S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, General Land Office Records, www.floreCORDS.blm.gov/search, accessed 14 April 2016.

Third Cousins and Sunny Skies: Making Sense of DNA Relationship Predictions

J. H. Fonkert, CG

If you have DNA, you have ancestors. Yes, you do have DNA, and because your DNA came from those ancestors, it might help you find your ancestors by forecasting in which direction to look.

Testing DNA has never been easier. The harder part of genetic genealogy is interpreting the results. Testing companies help by offering predictions of how two individuals might be related based on their shared amount of DNA. But, just as with predicting tomorrow's weather, it is all a matter of probability. Sometimes the weather forecast is correct. Sometimes it is not. Sometimes the weather is better than forecast. Sometimes it is worse. So it goes with DNA. Sometimes people are more closely related than predicted. Sometimes they are less closely related than predicted. Understanding the statistical underpinning of DNA predictions will help you assess the predictions the companies give you.

DNA as a Predictor of Relationships

Genealogists commonly use DNA in one of two ways.

- They scour lists of “matches” to find possible cousins with whom they might collaborate.
- They seek people to test whose DNA might confirm or reject a hypothesized relationship.

In either case, the exercise is based on the fact that two people with a common ancestor may share some DNA. Two males who are straight male-line descendants of the same man should have closely matching Y-DNA. Two females who are straight female-line descendants of a common female ancestor should have closely matching mitochondrial DNA. Two individuals – regardless of sex – who have a common ancestor within a half-dozen or so generations should have significant matching segments of DNA on one or more of the 22 autosomal chromosomes.

If two people have closely matching DNA, they likely have a common ancestor within several generations – fewer generations for autosomal DNA and more for Y-DNA.

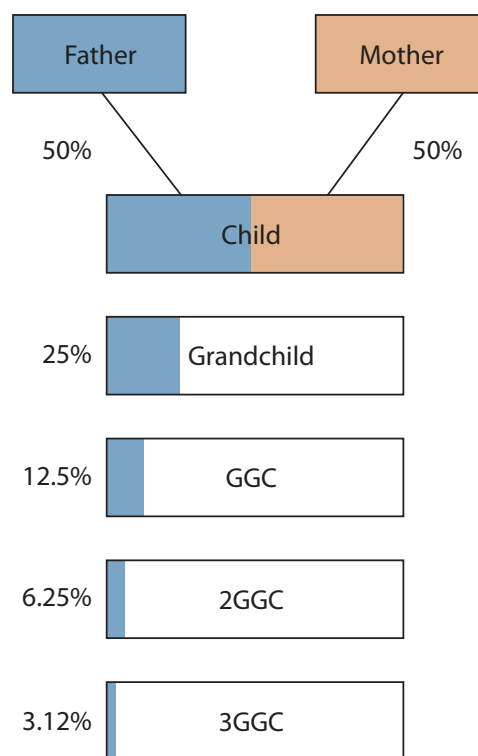


Exhibit 1. Average Percentage of Autosomal DNA Passed to Descendants

But they may not. It is important to understand why two people who are related in genealogical time may have little, if any, shared DNA.

- Autosomal DNA recombines in every generation. A child gets half its autosomal DNA from each parent, but two siblings may not get the same mix on any of the 22 autosomal chromosomes. A grandchild will, on average, get 25 percent of its autosomal DNA from each of four grandparents, but will likely get significantly more than 25 percent from some and significantly less than 25 percent from others. These average percentages drop off with each generation, so that a great-great-grandchild – on average – gets around six percent from each great-grandparent, but that grandchild may get little, if any, autosomal DNA from one great-grandparent and considerably more than six percent from another.

Making Sense of DNA Relationship Predictions

- Mutations occur. Mutations are random copying errors as DNA is passed from one generation to the next. Some parts (markers) of the Y-DNA molecule commonly mutate over several generations. This is why two males with a common straight-line male ancestor might not have as closely matching Y-DNA as would be expected. Mitochondrial DNA mutates very slowly, so this is less a problem – but, as a result, the common ancestor may be thousands of years back in time.

Predicting Relationships from Autosomal DNA

Based on comparisons of two individuals' DNA, testing companies offer predictions of how closely they might be related. Generally, individuals who share larger amounts of autosomal DNA, measured in centimorgans (cMs), are more closely related. For example, based on analysis of their autosomal DNA, *AncestryDNA* (www.dna.ancestry.com) predicts that Barbara and Robin are third- to fourth-cousins. *Ancestry* makes its prediction with “extremely high” confidence based on the fact that Barbara and Robin share 12 segments of autosomal DNA totaling 171 centimorgans (cM). In fact, Barbara and Robin are second-cousins; they are more closely related than *Ancestry* predicts. *Ancestry's* prediction was conservative in the sense that it cautioned that Barbara and Robin might not be more closely related than third- to fourth-cousins.¹ Had the same two women tested at *Family Tree DNA* (www.familytreedna.com), their relationship prediction might have been slightly different.

Family Tree DNA found that Barb and Bruce have 71 cM of matching autosomal DNA spread over 14 segments, and predicts that they are second- to fourth-cousins. They are, in fact, second-cousins, once removed. Again, their actual relationship is slightly closer than predicted. (*FTDNA* also reports that their longest share segment is 40 cM on chromosome number 9. *AncestryDNA* does not report this level of detail.)

The testing companies state their relationship predictions as ranges precisely because the recombination of autosomal DNA in each generation makes it difficult to determine an exact relationship solely from DNA data. The predicted ranges tend to be quite accurate, but sometimes the actual relationship determined through traditional documentary research is slightly outside the predicted range. Exhibit 2 shows data for eight individuals who match Bruce, ranked according to total matching centimorgans. The actual relationships determined by comparing family trees line up nicely with *FTDNA's* predicted relationships. Otto is a bit more distantly related than predicted – probably because he and Bruce descend two ways from a common ancestor.

Match	Total cM Match	Longest Segment	Predicted Relationship	Actual Relationship
David	99	36	2nd - 4th cousin	2nd cousin, once removed
Sharon	94	26	2nd - 4th cousin	2nd cousin, once removed
Barb	71	40	2nd - 4th cousin	2nd cousin, once removed
Otto	66	43	2nd - 4th cousin	5th cousin, once removed
Patsy	47	19	2nd - 4th cousin	4th cousin, once removed
Connie	45	23	4th - remote cousin	4th cousin, once removed
Evelyn	40	11	4th - remote cousin	5th cousin, once removed
Dee	35	11	4th - remote cousin	5th cousin, twice removed

Exhibit 2. Bruce's Autosomal Matches at Family Tree DNA

¹ Data for Barbara and Robin were submitted to www.GEDmatch.com, a third-party site that permits comparison of autosomal data from

different testing companies. *GEDmatch* calculated that Barbara and Robin share 182.5 cM and predicted that their common ancestor was 3.1

generations back. This is consistent with their actual relationship.

Exhibit 3 shows data for five individuals who match Barb at *AncestryDNA*. *Ancestry* qualifies its predictions with a confidence rating. From this small sample, *Ancestry's* predictions appear to be on the conservative side – that is, the actual relationships are mostly on the near end of the predicted relationship ranges. *AncestryDNA* was “highly confident” that Barb and Robin were at least third- or fourth-cousins, when in fact, they are more closely related.

Match	Total cM Match	Predicted Relationship	Confidence	Actual Relationship
Robin	171	3rd - 4th cousin	Extremely high	2nd cousin
Sharon	13	5th - 8th cousin	Moderate	3rd cousin
Fran	11	5th - 8th cousin	Moderate	4th cousin, once removed
Carolyn	10	5th - 8th cousin	Moderate	5th cousin
Clara	7	5th - 8th cousin	Moderate	Half 4th cousin, once removed

Note: *Ancestry.com* does not report segment data.

Exhibit 3. Barb's Autosomal Matches at Ancestry.com

Test results from *AncestryDNA*, *Family Tree DNA*, *23andMe*, and other companies can be uploaded to *GEDmatch* (www.gedmatch.com) where an individual's test results can be compared to individuals who tested at the other companies. *GEDmatch* predicts relationships by estimating the number of generations back to a common ancestor of two individuals. For example, using data from *FTDNA*, *GEDmatch* estimates that Bruce and Barb have a common ancestor within 3.7 generations. Their common ancestor is, in fact, back three generations from Bruce and back four generations from Barb; this estimate is pretty accurate.

Predictions and Estimates

The key words here are *prediction* and *estimate*. Researchers tend to hope for a close relationship. But, just as with weather forecasts, DNA predictions and estimates can be overly optimistic (sunny) or overly pessimistic (cloudy).

In the case of autosomal DNA, the degree of mixing, or recombination, increases with each generation. Without mixing, exactly 6.25 percent of an individual's autosomal DNA would come from each second-great-grandparent. However, the actual percentage of DNA from any one of sixteen second-great-grandparents could be higher or lower – even approaching zero. Over five or six generations, autosomal DNA from a distant ancestor can, in effect, be washed out.

To complicate matters, this process plays out differently in every line of descent. This is why some third cousins have a lot of matching DNA, while others don't. Third or fourth cousins – who indeed have a common ancestor – may not have enough matching DNA to show up in each other's match lists. Consider the curve graphed below.

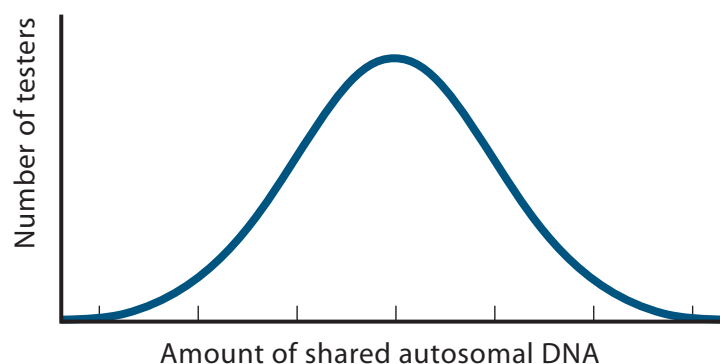


Exhibit 4. Hypothetical Distribution of Shared DNA Between Cousins

This is a hypothetical graph of the distribution of testers of, say, third cousins sharing various amounts (centimorgans) of autosomal DNA. The horizontal axis represents centimorgans of shared DNA. The vertical axis represents the number of third cousins who have tested. Most of the testers fall in the middle of the curve. That is, they have shared amounts of DNA near the mean, or average, value under the peak of the curve. However, some tested third

Making Sense of DNA Relationship Predictions

cousins are outliers who share significantly less or more autosomal DNA than the average.

Another hypothetical graph illustrates the problem. The amount of expected shared DNA declines with distance of relationship. A fourth-cousin is expected to have less shared DNA than a third-cousin. However, any pair of tested individuals can fall above or below the line in the graph. That is, a pair of third cousins may share more or less DNA than expected. If they share less than expected, they might look genetically like fourth-cousins. If they share more than expected, a testing company might predict a too-close relationship.

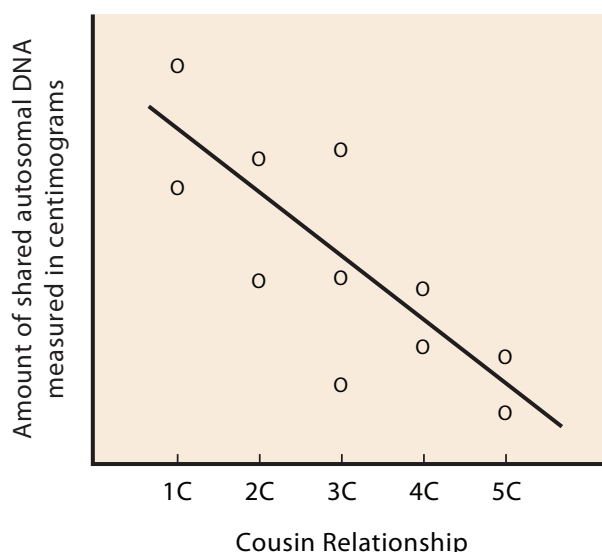


Exhibit 5. Shared DNA and Cousin Relationships

While they should be taken only as science-based estimates, the testing companies' predictions are usually in the ballpark. The predictions are a guide suggesting how far back in your tree you and your match might find a common ancestor. Do not be alarmed if the prediction is off by a generation or two.

Blaine Bettinger's "Shared cM Project" illustrates the kind of variation you can expect.² Bettinger has used a colorful chart

Relationship	Average Shared cM	Low Reported	High Reported
Full sibling	2,600	2,150	3,070
1st cousin	869	533	1,379
2nd cousin	238	43	504
2nd cousin, once removed	129	0	325
3rd cousin	79	0	198
4th cousin	31	0	90

Data extracted from Blaine Bettinger, "Update to the Share cM Project," *The Genetic Genealogist*, 26 June 2016; HYPERLINK "<http://thegeneticgenealogist.com/2016/06/26/update-to-the-shared-cm-project/>" <http://thegeneticgenealogist.com/2016/06/26/update-to-the-shared-cm-project/>, accessed 10 November 2016.

Exhibit 6. Ranges of Shared cM by Relationship

to illustrate the ranges of shared cM he and other researchers have found between testers at different relationships.

On their *AncestryDNA* autosomal tests, second cousins Barb and Robin shared 171 cM – less than average for second cousins. *FTDNA* reported that Barb and Bruce shared 71 cM – also less than average for second cousins, once removed. Bettinger's data shows that the active recombination of autosomal DNA can result in second cousins, once removed, having *no* reported shared autosomal DNA. Thus, the absence of a match does not eliminate the possibility that two people are related – the relationship must be established through traditional research. Even when DNA test results show two people matching, traditional research is essential to prove a relationship.

The Role of Probability in Y-DNA Comparisons

Probability also plays a role in Y-DNA matching, but the reason is different. With Y-DNA, the uncertainty arises from the random nature of mutations. Two males with a common straight-line male ancestor should have closely

² Blaine Bettinger, "Update to the Share cM Project," *The Genetic Genealogist*, 26 June 2016; <http://thegeneticgenealogist.com/2016/06/26/>

[update-to-the-shared-cm-project/](http://thegeneticgenealogist.com/2016/06/26/update-to-the-shared-cm-project/), accessed 10 November 2016.

matching Y-DNA, but if one of their lines has had an unusual number of mutations, they might not match. Y-DNA tests report “repeat” values for identified locations, or markers, on the Y-chromosome. In the absence of mutations, two men with a common straight-line male ancestor – typically two men with the same surname – would have exactly matching Y-DNA.

But, mutations happen. When it compares the DNA of two men, *Family Tree DNA* reports the genetic distance between them. Genetic distance is the number of mutations between two men. The uncertainty for estimating relationships arises because it is difficult to know how recently any mutation occurred. If the mutation occurred more recently than average, two very closely related men may not match as closely as expected. If a marker has been more stable than expected (mutated less), the two men may appear more closely related than they actually are – that is, their common ancestor may be more generations back than expected.

Therefore, estimating relationships from Y-DNA is complicated by the fact that some markers on the Y chromosome mutate slowly and others more rapidly. Thus, estimates of relationship depend on not only on genetic distance from a perfect match, but also on which specific markers for two males don't match. A non-match on a fast-mutating marker is of less concern than a non-match on a slowly mutating marker.

Bill's and Bruce's surnames appear to be variants of the same name, suggesting they might be descended along straight male lines from a common man within genealogical time. *FTDNA* reports that Bruce and Bill have a genetic distance of 5 on 111 markers. How closely might they be related? It depends on whether either has had more or fewer mutations than expected.

FTDNA accounts for the possible range with a Time Predictor tool (TIP). Their TIP report estimates a 24 percent probability that Bruce and Bill have a common ancestor within four generations, a 75 percent probability of a common ancestor within eight generations, and a near certainty – 95 percent probability – of a common ancestor within 12 generations.

The DNA data does not directly identify the common ancestor; it only gives an idea of about how far back the common ancestor is. Although the odds don't appear good at four generations, the possibility of the common straight-line male ancestor being that close is real. This could be the case if one of their lines had somewhat more mutations than expected. Bruce's and Bill's common straight-line male ancestor is more than likely within 12 generations. The common ancestor could be that far or farther back only if their lines had mutated less often than expected. Traditional documentary research can eliminate the uncertainty.

What are the Odds?

DNA alone is rarely sufficient to identify an ancestor. The random nature of autosomal recombination and Y mutations bring probability into the equation. This is why both *FTDNA* and *AncestryDNA* estimate a range for predicted relationships and why *FTDNA* offers its TIP-calculator. Both autosomal and Y-DNA make possible estimates of how closely two people are related.

It really is a bit like interpreting a weather forecast. A 70-percent chance of rain sounds pretty gloomy, but there is a 30-percent chance it won't rain. Sometimes the forecast is dead-on, often it is close, and occasionally it is completely wrong. DNA-predicted relationships behave in much the same way. While a reported DNA match indicates the likelihood of a common ancestor, and the data suggests how far back a common ancestor might be, the common ancestor might be a bit closer or a bit farther back. The predictions are estimates; understanding the nature of these estimates will help you get the most out of your DNA test results.

J. H. “Jay” Fonkert specializes in 19th-century Midwest genealogical research, with forays into English, Dutch and Scandinavian genealogy. His research and teaching articles have appeared in the National Genealogical Society Quarterly, NGS Magazine, Minnesota Genealogist, APG Quarterly, and Family Chronicle. He is a trustee of the BCG Education Fund, a past president of MGS, a former Director of the Association of Professional Genealogists, and a former instructor at the Salt Lake Institute of Genealogy.



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