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Society

Minnesota Genealogist



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Minnesota Genealogist

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From the Editors' Desks

It's a special time of year. The final issue of the year is traditionally our opportunity to honor the winners of the Michael Clark Family History Writing Awards. The competition is co-sponsored by *Minnesota Genealogist* and the Yankee Genealogical Society. This year's competition invited entries in two categories: Family Stories and Genealogical Problem-solving. The first category emphasizes capturing and sharing family history stories and lore. The second category encourages research, analysis and documentation of evidence to answer a challenging genealogy problem.

This year's winners are Shannon S. Blue and Lesley J. Cafarelli. Blue has both Mdewakanton Sioux and European ancestry. The U.S.-Dakota War that gripped western Minnesota in 1862 looms large in her family history. Her European third-great-grandfather made his way west from Ohio to western Minnesota, where he was killed while fleeing to Fort Ridgely. Her article details the connections between her European and native families.

Who was Jonadab? Careful attention to language, occupation, and geography helped Lesley Cafarelli match the Italian Rosso family of Morrison County, Minnesota, with the Russo family of Marsicovetere, Italy. Correlation of census and birth registration produced a surprising conclusion: The Jonadab Armenia born in 1878 in Morrison County was, in fact, Amelia Russo.

The editors congratulate Lesley and Shannon, and thank Sue Kratsch of YGS, for her many years as coordinator of the Michael Clark Writing Award competition.

Because they leave fewer records and tend to receive less mention in local histories, women can be a research challenge. Zoe Lappin shares the story of young Irish immigrant Esther

Reilly. She identifies possibly Dublin-born siblings, and recounts Esther's life on the Minnesota prairie after the Civil War.

As Larry Hlavas reminds us, to solve a family history puzzle, we sometimes need to set aside old theories and develop new ones. Moravian-born Johann Lundenberg landed in Baltimore in 1903, destined for Cleveland. He promptly disappeared, causing his family to speculate about where he went. Hlavas' concludes that a John Lunderberg who died in Cleveland in 1903 was actually the long-lost John Lundenburg.

Mary Jo Eggers entered a photo of her Swedish great-grandfather in the *Minnesota Genealogist* cover photo contest held at the 2018 North Star Genealogy Conference. While the photo didn't make it to the winner's circle, it was accompanied by a short article describing the research it inspired.

This is the last issue of Volume 49. That's right, our next issue will be the first of our 50th Anniversary volume. The new year – 2019 – also marks the 50th anniversary of the Minnesota Genealogical Society. It is both a time to celebrate the past and look forward to the future. We invite you to help MGS remember 50 years of accomplishments and prepare for a new 50 years of challenges.

Minnesota Genealogist
Editing Team

J.H. Fonkert, CG

Elizabeth Williams Gomoll

Robert Johnson, CG

Esther, We Hardly Knew You: Scant Records Leave Many Mysteries in the Life of a Minnesota Pioneer

Zoe von Ende Lappin

Esther Reilly Savage, a Dublin-born wife of a homesteader, is an important ancestor in my family. She had at least twelve children, lost her firstborn as an infant and made a home in a shanty on the Minnesota frontier in the 1860s and 1870s. She was at best only partially literate, no surprise back then.¹ By 2018, she may have around 1,000 descendants.

We know a great deal about her husband, Joseph Francis Savage, but little about Esther.

Esther's early life is a mystery. We don't know exactly where or when she was born and know very little about her siblings. Even for the event most easily recorded – her death in 1885 – the date is wrong on her grave marker. Her obituary tells all about her death, but little about her life. By contrast, her husband's family history is richly documented in both Irish Catholic and American records. We know about him, his parents, grandparents, his ten brothers and sisters. About Esther, not so much.

Esther was not my ancestor, but her descendants are my cousins. Her husband was the brother of my ancestor, John Patrick Savage. The brothers were close, so researching one led to the other, hence my interest in Esther. Eventually, I became friends with many of her descendants.

Esther deserves the best we can give her, and I will try to set that record straight. Still, facts elude me.

A Starting Point—An Undocumented Biography

An 1889 biography of her husband, apparently written by one of their children, provided a starting point for research. It states that Esther was Roman Catholic, born in Dublin on Palm Sunday in April 1831. Her parents were Bernard Reilly and Mary Doyle. She married Joseph F. Savage 5 August 1850 in Putnam, Connecticut. The biography states that she and Joseph had twelve “named” children, suggesting she may have lost one or two. According to the biography, Esther died 6 November 1885.²

Research confirmed some of these facts, but left others uncertain. Esther died 6 November 1885 in Cottonwood County. A township death registration confirms the death date and states that she was 57.³ A church burial record gives a 7 November death date.⁴ A newspaper memorial article cites the same 7 November death date, but another newspaper article says she died 8 November.⁵

I needed to confirm or disprove that information and add to it. Where and when was Esther born? Were Bernard Reilly and Mary Doyle in fact her parents and did she have siblings? When did she immigrate? When did she and Joseph meet? Were they married in Putnam? What kind of life did she have on the frontier? What happened to her parents and siblings?

I knew I would be hampered by lack of nineteenth-century Ireland records, many of them destroyed. Eventually, I answered some of those questions. Many remain.

1 The 1870 U.S. census says she could not write but apparently could read. 1870 U.S. Census, Brown County, Minnesota, p. 988 (penciled), dwelling 14, family 14, Joseph Savage; NARA roll: T132; Family History Library film 830,421. *Ancestry*, 5 September 2018. The 1880 U.S. census says the opposite – Esther could write (her name?) but could not read. U.S. census, Delton, Cottonwood, Minnesota; NARA roll: 617; p.: 74; Enumeration District: 032. *Ancestry*, 5 September 2018. However, she signed her name with an X in various deeds.

2 *Illustrated Album of Biography of Southwestern Minnesota* (Chicago: Occidental Publishing Company, 1889), p. 677. It spells the surname Riley, but Reilly predominates in other records.

3 Cottonwood County, Minnesota, *Birth and Death Record Book A.*, p. 37, line 17, 6 November 1885, Esther Savage; Family History Library film 7579720, image 1,081.

4 St. James Catholic Church, St. James, Minnesota.

5 “In Memory of Mrs. Esther Savage,” *St. James Journal*: St. James, Minnesota, 21 November 1885, page 1. It states her death date as 7 November 1885. That date is repeated in the records of Calvary Cemetery, St. James, Minnesota, p. 108; photocopy supplied to author, 2018.

Esther, We Hardly Knew You

When was Esther Born?

The Palm Sunday birthday was wrong – Palm Sunday 1831 was not in April, but rather 27 March.⁶ Other sources suggest Esther was born before 1830. Esther's obituary states that she was 58 years, seven months, and 10 days old, producing a calculated birth date of 28 March 1827.⁷ If she was only 57,

Record	Record Date	Age	Birth Date
1860 Census 1 June	1 Jun	32	Estimate: 2 June 1827- 1 June 1828
1870 Census 1 June	1 Jun	41	Estimate: 2 June 1828- 1 June 1829
1880 Census 1 June	1 Jun	52	Estimate: 2 June 1827- 1 June 1828
1885 Census	8 May	57	9 May 1827 - 8 May 1828
1885 death registration 10 November	7 Nov	57	8 November 1827-7 November 1828
Newspaper Memorial	7 Nov	57	Calculated: 28 March 1827
Gravestone	—	—	2 April 1828 (Palm Sunday was 30 March 1828)

Sources:

1860 U.S. census, Warwick, Kent County, Rhode Island, p. 12, dwelling 91, family 107, Joseph Savage; NARA microfilm publication M653, roll 1203; digital image, Ancestry.

1870 U.S. Census, Brown County, Minnesota, Leavenworth Township, p. 2, dwelling 14, family 14, Joseph Savage; NARA microform publication T132, roll 1, FHL film 830,421.

1880 U.S. Census, Cottonwood County, Minnesota, Enumeration District 32, p. 4, Delton Township, dwelling 30, family 31, Joseph Savage; digital image, Ancestry.

1885 Minnesota State Census, Cottonwood County, Delton Township, p.5, family 30, Jos. Savage; Minnesota Historical Society, microfilm MN5C, roll 23; digital image, Ancestry.

Cottonwood County, Minnesota, Birth and Death Record Book A., p. 37, line 17, 6 November 1885, Esther Savage; Family History Library film 7579720, image 1,081.

"In Memory of Mrs. Esther Savage," *St. James Journal*: St. James, Minnesota, 21 November 1885, page 1.

as recorded in her Cottonwood County death registration, her calculated birth date would be 28 March 1828 – three days before Palm Sunday. Her gravestone gives her birth date as 2 April 1828, a Wednesday. An 1827 or 1828 birth date is consistent with her ages reported in censuses (see table).

Uncertainty about an older woman's birth date is not surprising. It is likely neither Esther nor her anyone in her husband's family knew it. Moreover, Irish Catholics often imbued their life events with signs of their faith, and the alleged Palm Sunday birth date may be an example. Baptismal dates are another matter; churches kept those records, and I hoped to find Esther's in a register in Dublin.

Where was Esther Born and Who Were Her Parents?

Records of Irish church records are searchable at www.IrishGenealogy.ie. The National Library of Ireland website (www.registers.nli.ie) offers digital images of Catholic parish registers. Seventeen Catholic parishes in Dublin registered baptisms around the time of Esther's birth. Indexing by name narrowed the field to six baptisms for an Esther Reilly from 1825 to 1833, but none were a good match for Esther. No marriage of a Bernard, Bryan or Brian Reilly and a Mary Doyle was recorded in Dublin around 1820.⁸ (Brian and Bryan are variations of Bernard.) The 1889 biography remains the only source that names Esther's parents, and they have never been confirmed. In addition, the register of a Dublin maternity hospital lists a girl born to Bernard and Mary Reilly on 12 February 1830.⁹ She could have been our Esther, but the birth date is later than expected for her.

Did Esther have Siblings?

Yes – if Bernard Reilly and Mary Doyle of St. Catherine's Catholic Church were Esther's parents. They baptized a son and daughter at St. Catherine's: John, June 1822,¹⁰ and Mary,

6 Date of Easter 1831, <http://tlarsen2.tripod.com/thomaslarsen/easterdates.htm>, 17 October 2017.

7 "In Memory of Mrs. Esther Savage," *St. James Journal*.

8 Dublin Roman Catholic parish registers, baptisms and marriages, <https://churchrecords.irishgenealogy.ie>, searched 27 October 2017.

9 *Rotunda Hospital, Dublin, 1822-1831* birth registers on FHL film 900,656.

10 St. Catherine's Roman Catholic Church Archdiocese of Dublin, parish register, baptisms, 2 June 1822, John Reilly; National Library of Ireland (NLI) film 7138/06, image p. 176.

July 1824.¹¹ Possibly the same Bernard Reilly and Mary Doyle baptized two daughters at nearby churches: Ellen, December 1827,¹² and Margaret, February 1838.¹³

Three more baptisms hint at possible brothers. These were a second John, 1832, parents Bernard and Maria Reilly;¹⁴ Patrick, 1833, parents Bernard Reilly and Margaret (not Mary, a common mistake) Doyle;¹⁵ and James, 1837, parents Bernard and Maria Reilly.¹⁶ No records definitively identify any of those children as siblings of Esther, though clues have emerged.

When did Esther Immigrate?

Mary, 22, Ellen, 18, and Esther Rielly [sic], 13 — good candidates for the daughters of Bernard and Mary Reilly — arrived in New York from Dublin on 5 July 1849 on the *Lady Milton* at the time of the Great Famine.¹⁷ Ellen and Mary should have been three to four years older, and Esther should have been at least 18. Still, the names are evidence strong enough for me to accept them as our three Irish sisters. They probably would have hoped to work in a cotton mill or as domestic servants. The arrival date puts Esther in America in time for an August 1850 marriage.

When and How did Esther and Joseph Meet?

They met in America, likely in Connecticut or Massachusetts.¹⁸ Joseph had come to America in roughly 1842, seven years ahead of Esther.¹⁹ Assuming she worked in the textile industry, as he did, they may have met on the job. A Thompson town marriage record calls each a mechanic,²⁰ evidence both worked in a mill. Both were residents of Thompson, Windham County, Connecticut, which had three mills at this time.²¹ However, neither Esther nor Joseph has been found in the 1850 census, married or single.

When and Where were They Married?

The 1889 biography states that Esther and Joseph were married 5 August 1850 in Putnam, Connecticut. However, Putnam (originally known as Aspinock) was not created until 1855; it was formed from parts of Thompson, Pomfret, and Killingly.²² The Thompson town marriage record confirms that Joseph and Esther were married August 1850, but does not indicate a day of the month.²³ The Savage family Bible confirms the date and expands on the place, Rhodesville, a village in the town of Thompson.²⁴ Joseph's parents and eight of his nine immigrant siblings were enumerated in Thompson in the 1850 census.²⁵

11 St. Catherine's Roman Catholic Church, parish register, baptisms, 21 July 1824, Mary Reilly; NLI film 7139, image p. 96.

12 St. Paul's Arran Quay Roman Catholic Church, Archdiocese of Dublin, parish register, baptisms, 30 December 1828, Ellen Reilly; NLI film 08834/03, image p. 156.

13 St. James Roman Catholic Church, Archdiocese of Dublin, parish register, baptisms, 1 February 1838, Margaret Reilly; NLI film 07228/04, image p. 76.

14 St. Michael and John's Roman Catholic Church, Archdiocese of Dublin, parish register, baptisms, 24 June 1832, John Reilly; NLI film 7358/04, image p. 206.

15 St. James' Roman Catholic Church, Archdiocese of Dublin, parish register, baptism, 28 July 1833, Patrick Reilly; NLI film 7228/04, image p. 22.

16 St. Michael and John's Roman Catholic Church, parish register, baptisms, 5 March 1837, James Reilly; NLI film 7358/05, image p. 17.

17 *Lady Milton* passenger manifest, *New York Passenger Lists, 1820-1957*, online database, *Ancestry*.

18 Letter from Joseph and Esther's daughter Sister Benetia, OSF, in 1958 to Alice Savage states: "My mother's name was Esther Reily [sic], they did not know each other in Ireland, but met and were married here in America, in an eastern state."

19 *Illustrated Album of Biography of Southwestern Minnesota*. Article erroneously gives Joseph's birth date as 1828; it was 1825. It states he immigrated at age 17, making 1842 the approximate year, which has not been confirmed. For Joseph's baptismal record, see Roman Catholic parish register of Haggardstown/Killerley,

County Louth, Archdiocese of Armagh, baptisms, 20 October 1825, Joseph Savage; film Mic/1D/45, at the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, Belfast; and NLI film 05594/06.

20 Thompson, Connecticut, Town Clerk, Marriages, photocopy of original received by author about 1983.

21 Richard M. Bayles, *History of Windham County, Connecticut* (New York: W.W. Preston, 1889), p. 50.

22 "Putnam, Connecticut," *Wikipedia*, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Putnam%2C_Connecticut, 16 November 2018.

23 Thompson, Connecticut Town Clerk, Marriages (see note 21). A transcription of Thomas town records states the marriage date as August 1851, but the author believes that the year in the original record should be read as "1850." See *Ancestry*, Connecticut, Town Marriage Records, pre-1870, online database (Provo, Utah: *Ancestry* Operations, 2006) from Lorraine Cook White, ed., *The Barbour Collection of Connecticut Town Vital Records* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1994-2002).

24 Family data. John Patrick Savage Family Bible, *The Holy Bible, translated from the Latin Vulgate* (New York, Boston and Montreal: D. & J. Sadlier & Co., 1852); Original held by author, 2018.

25 1850 U.S. Census, Thompson, Windham, Connecticut, p. 119A, dwelling 109, family 118, Patrick Savage; NARA Microfilm publication M432, roll 51; *Ancestry*, digital image.

Esther, We Hardly Knew You

How was Esther's Life as a Wife, Mother and Homesteader?

From her marriage, Esther's life is entwined with her husband's, and records abound. Early events must have tested her physical as well as emotional strength, for she had six children in less than ten years – from July 1851 to March 1861.²⁶ Esther and Joseph lost their first child, a son, in 1854 at age 3.²⁷ Four daughters had been born by 1860 when the census shows them in Warwick, Kent County, Rhode Island, with Joseph working as a weaver.²⁸ Their sixth child, a son, John, was born in March 1861.²⁹ Joseph was a skilled textile-industry mechanic, but in early 1861, Joseph, Esther, their children and several other Irish families went west. They were about to become farmers and homesteaders on the frontier in Wisconsin and Minnesota. (These families included Joseph's brother John Savage and his wife Zoe Arbour, and their sister Margaret Savage Kelly and her husband Tom.)³⁰

There is no record of what Esther, or any of the other wives, thought of this, but gamely (or not?) they all headed west. This band of Irish knew nothing about farming, but they were young and self-reliant, and the land was cheap – the Homestead Act of 1862 was in the works. They went as families, hurling themselves into the unknown just as they had taken the leap across the Atlantic, confident that America would give them a chance to escape the poverty of Ireland and to prosper.

They first settled on a farm – not a homestead – in Markesan, Green Lake County, Wisconsin, in the spring of 1861.³¹ There, Esther gave birth to their seventh child in 1863.³² They soon moved on to Mankato, Blue Earth County, Minnesota,³³ where baby number eight was born in 1864.³⁴ Still in 1864, they took their first homestead, 160 acres, in Leavenworth township in neighboring Brown County.³⁵ That's where their last four children were born from January 1867 to April 1873.³⁶

Esther had given birth to at least twelve children between 1851 and 1873, a span of 22 years. That's an average of a baby every 22 months, with the shortest interval 11 months.

The family's migration to southcentral Minnesota occurred during difficult times on both the prairie and in the nation. Contrary to views of homesteading perpetuated by novels, movies and television – including Laura Ingalls Wilder's books – more often than not it was a terrible existence. Extreme temperatures, natural disasters combined with human errors, inexperience, ignorance and fraudulent speculators skewed the chances of success. Between 1863 and 1880, nearly 137,000 farms were homesteaded in Minnesota, Dakota Territory, Nebraska, and Kansas, with settlers gaining ownership after five years. Overall, fewer than half of the homesteaders succeeded, and in the first 30 years of the

26 Besides the son who died as an infant, the birth dates of four daughters are recorded in the Savage Family Bible (see note 25): Mary Ann, 1853; Rose, 1855, Catherine, 1857, Esther, 1859. Based on handwriting, all appear to be recorded by one person contemporaneously. Birth date of son John Patrick was not recorded, but circumstantial evidence points to 1861.

27 Birth recorded in Thompson, Connecticut, town records. See *Ancestry*, Connecticut Town Birth Records, pre-1870 (Barbour Collection), online database (Provo, Utah: *Ancestry* Operations, 2006). Death date given in *Illustrated Album of Biography of Southwestern Minnesota*.

28 1860 U.S. census, Warwick, Kent County, Rhode Island, p. 12, dwelling 91, family 107, Joseph Savage; NARA microfilm publication M653, roll 1203; digital image, *Ancestry*.

29 1900 U.S. Census, Cottonwood County, Minnesota, Enumeration District 74, Sheet 8A, dwelling 149, family 153, George N. Lee household, line 37, John B. Savage; Family History Library microfilm 1240760; *Ancestry*, digital image. The middle initial "B." is incorrect; it should be "P."

30 Zoe von Ende Lappin, "The Savages and Kellys: Three Irish Immigrant families in Brown County, Minnesota," *Minnesota Genealogist*, 46:1 (Spring 2015).

31 *Illustrated Album of Biography of Southwestern Minnesota*.

32 Daughter Margaret Savage's birth date and place are given on a ship's manifest of 18 August 1922, when she and her husband Owen Callahan returned to Ellis Island from a trip to Europe, ellisland.org, 31 January 2009. S. S. *Rotterdam* passenger manifest, arrival New York 18 August 1922, lines 5-6, Owen and Margaret Callaghan; *Ancestry*, New York, Passenger and Crew Lists, 1820-1957, online database (Provo, Utah: *Ancestry* Operations, 2010); digital image from NARA microform publication T715, roll 3,160.

33 1865 Minnesota State Census, Blue Earth County, Mankato, Family 183, Joseph Savage [indexed: "Laverge"]; FHL film 565,714.

34 St. Peter and Paul's Catholic Church, Mankato, Minn., Baptism Register, 7 December 1864, Ellen Savage.

35 *United States Bureau of Land Management*, Minnesota tract books, volume 117, page 223; FHL film 1,445,671, digital film 7,116,842, image 725.

36 St. Peter and Paul's Catholic Church, Baptisms, 8 June 1868, Joseph Bernard Savage. Obituary for Nicholas Michael Savage, *Comfrey Times*, 6 March 1947 gives birth date as 6 April 1970. Wisconsin State Board of Health, death certificate, Alice Savage, gives birth date as 6 May 1871. St. Mary's Catholic Church, Sleepy Eye, Minnesota, parish register, 3 July 1873 Teresa Regina Savage; extraction given to family in 1922.

Homestead Act, more than a million failed to prove up on their claims.³⁷ However, Joseph and Esther did succeed.

Disasters piled upon themselves. A multiyear blackbird infestation had started in 1857. Two hundred forty settlers and countless Indians were killed in the Sioux uprising of 1862, also known as the U.S. Dakota War. The famous infestation of locusts started in 1864.³⁸ Deadly blizzards occurred in 1866 and 1873.³⁹

The Civil War drew Joseph away from home. His 1889 biography states that he served as a civilian attached to the Union army in the South. He claimed he served in an Indiana battery,⁴⁰ but there's no proof of that.⁴¹ Whatever the facts, Joseph couldn't have been away for very long at a stretch, for Esther became pregnant in 1862 and 1863 or 1864. After they took the homestead, she gave birth in 1867, 1870, 1871, and 1873.⁴²

Esther certainly wasn't the only one of our intrepid pioneer women having babies on the frontier. Between their leaving New England in 1861 and 1878 in Minnesota, five immigrant Irish families I have tracked had 29 children.⁴³ Mutual assistance among the settlers was their way of life, so it was natural that the women helped each other with birthing. Having a baby in a shanty was less to be feared than locusts, blackbirds, prairie fires, blizzards, or Indians.

The Savages' shanty was 16 by 18 by 7 feet with log walls, two doors and two windows. By 1869, they had built a granary, a corn crib, a chicken house and had dug a well.⁴⁴ In 1870, they owned a milch cow, two oxen and a sheep; they raised wheat, corn, peas, beans and Irish potatoes, and produced molasses and hay. The farm was worth about \$1,600.⁴⁵ Children and babies were all over the place. During that 1866 storm, for instance, their brood numbered seven, the youngest a little over one year.

Joseph and Esther proved up on their Brown County homestead in 1870,⁴⁶ but sold it by 1875 for \$1,100. They had bought and sold other parcels of land in Brown County in the 1870s, and Esther usually is named in those transactions as Joseph's wife. In 1872, she alone was the buyer, paying \$1,000 for two parcels.⁴⁷ It's unknown where she got the money; it could have been joint funds with only her name on the deed. Esther in her own name was listed in 1876-1877 tax records as owning personal property worth \$148, including a wagon worth \$5, two horses worth \$65, and \$10 worth of furniture. Assessor's records for 1872 show Esther as one of six women owning land in their own names in Brown County.⁴⁸

By 1875, other associated families had given up on homesteading in Brown County and moved on, but not Joseph and Esther.⁴⁹ In 1883, they spent \$14 for a Timber Culture homestead in Delton Township in adjacent Cottonwood

37 Caroline Fraser, *Prairie Fires, The American Dreams of Laura Ingalls Wilder* (New York: Metropolitan Books, Henry Holt, 2017), p. 163, quoting Gilbert C. Fate, *The Farmers Frontier 1865-1900* (New York: Holt Rinehart and Winston, 1966), and U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, *The Homestead Act 1862-2012*.

38 Elroy Ubl, *Locusts Plagued the State in 1870s*, www.newulmtel.net/history/stories/locust.html, accessed 17 February 2006.

39 Ubl, *Blizzards Blanket New Ulm's History*, www.newulmtel.net/history/stories/blizzard.html, accessed 17 February 2006.

40 *Ancestry, 1890 Veterans Schedules*, online database (Provo, Utah: Ancestry Operations, 2005); from NARA, Special Schedules of the Eleventh Census (1890) Enumerating Union Veterans and Widows of Union Veterans and Widows of Union Veterans of the Civil War, Series M123, Record Group 15. The enumeration states he served in the Stone River Regiment, 15th Indiana Battery, in 1864-1865. There was a 15th Indiana Infantry regiment, but Joseph is not listed on its roster or on any other Union military unit.

41 Zoe von Ende Lappin, *The Savages of County Louth and America, Four Generations of an Irish Catholic Family* (Denver: self-published, 2013). See pages 41-43 for speculation on Joseph's activities during the Civil War.

42 See note 36.

43 The other three couples were John and Zoe Savage, Thomas and Margaret Kelly, John and Mary Ann Kelly, and Frank and Alice McMahon.

44 Joseph Savage Land Entry File, Bureau of Land Management, receipt/application 1306, patent 807; record held by the National Archives and Records Administration.

45 1870 U.S. Federal Agricultural Census, Cottonwood County, Minnesota, Township 107 (Delton); *Ancestry*, Selected Federal Census Non-Population Schedules, 1850-1880, online database (Provo, Utah: Ancestry Operations, 2010); from NARA microform publication T132, roll 1, p. 223.

46 Joseph Savage, Bureau of Land Management, Patent 807; <https://gloreCORDS.blm.gov>.

47 Brown County, Minnesota, Register or Deeds, Volumes 9 and 13; FHL film 1,871,061.

48 Brown County, Minnesota, Auditor, tax records 1858-1886; FHL film 1,704,991.

49 Lappin, *The Savages of County Louth and America*, pp. 61-97, sporadically, for details of Joseph and Esther Savage's homesteads.

Esther, We Hardly Knew You

County.⁵⁰ Joseph was 58 and Esther about 56. Delton was their home for the rest of their lives.

Timber Culture homesteads, authorized by Congress in 1873, 1874 and 1878, also were called tree plantations. They were supposed to encourage growth of timber to preserve the soil by increasing tree cover and to supply wood for construction. The law was abused by speculators and repealed in 1891. In the 18 years it was in effect, more than 65,000 individuals patented 10 million acres.⁵¹ Many settlers were successful, but larger numbers failed.⁵² Joseph and Esther planted cottonwoods, maples, poplars, box elders and willows.⁵³ The property became known as the Home Place.

What were the Circumstances of Her Death?

After taking the Timber Culture homestead, Esther did not have long to live. She became ill in the fall of 1885, and she lived for a time with her daughter and son-in-law, Rose and Lincoln Edward Hilton, in St. James in adjacent Watonwan County, 30 miles from Delton. A newspaper memorial states that she died back home in Delton at an early age of 57 from “congestion of the brain”, 7 November 1885, a day later than the date stated in her husband’s 1889 biography. The memorial dwells on the circumstances of her dying, not her life. It says she was aged 58 years, seven months and ten days (makes birth date of 28 March 1827, another guess, apparently); born in Dublin; came to America at age 19 (that’s possible).⁵⁴ Her youngest child was 12.

While visiting with the Hiltons, the memorial says, she appeared “convalescent.”

With this impression, and desirous of once more being with her husband [and] dear children, she departed for her home on November 2. But she was not destined to much longer

enjoy the pleasures of the home circle, for three days later she was taken suddenly ill and on the evening of the fifth day passed away, surrounded by her family and friends. Feeling she would not live, and wishing to receive the last consolations of her religion, she expressed a desire to see a priest. (One) was summoned and administered to her the sacrament of the dying. Thus strengthened and consoled, she no longer dreaded her approaching dissolution.

How beloved and esteemed by all was the deceased was shown by the large numbers visiting the stricken home to take a last look at the now pallid face, and by the numbers following her mortal remains to their last resting place.

The memorial ends with mention of her survivors: the husband, six daughters and two sons; all but one daughter were with her when she died. None of them were named, and the numbers are wrong. She actually was survived by eight daughters and three sons.

Esther’s body was buried at Calvary Cemetery, the Catholic burying ground at St. James. Twenty-five years later, in 1910, her family had her remains reinterred 23 miles distant at St. Paul’s Cemetery at Comfrey, Brown County, where Joseph, who had died in 1903, was buried.⁵⁵ Esther’s grave is marked with a standing stone emblazoned with “Savage,” and markers identifying them as Mother and Father with birth and death dates, but no names. Esther’s birth date is given as 2 April 1828. Her death date — 6 October 1885 — is off by a month.⁵⁶ Whoever arranged for the gravestones guessed at her dates and got wrong even the one that could have been verified.

After her death, Joseph remained at the home place — the Timber Culture homestead — in Delton. He proved up on it in 1894.⁵⁷ At age 71 in 1896, after 13 years as a prospering farmer,

50 Timber Culture land entry file, application no. 1,715 and final certificate 994; NARA record group 49.

51 Ray Allen Billington and Martin Ridge, *Westward Expansion, a History of the American Frontier*, sixth edition, abridged (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2001), p. 350.

52 C. Barron McIntosh, “Use and Abuse of the Timber Culture Act,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 76:3 (September 1975), pp. 347-362.

53 Timber Culture land entry file, application 1,715 and final certificate 994.

54 “In Memory of Mrs. Esther Savage,” *St. James Journal*, St. James, Minnesota, 21 November 1885, p. 1. The article gives Esther’s death date as 7 November 1885. The same date is given in the burial record of Calvary Cemetery, St. James, Minnesota, page 108; photocopy supplied to author, 2018.

55 “Delton Township News,” *Comfrey Times*, Comfrey, Minnesota, 10 February 1910.

56 Graves visited by author in 1983, photographed by Richard Callanan in 2017.

57 Cottonwood County, Minnesota, BLM Tract Book 117, p. 223; FHL film 7,116842, image 725. Also, timber culture land entry file, NARA, final certificate 994.



Esther Reilly Savage, about 1828-1885. From the collection of Richard and Todd Callanan.

he married a 46-year-old widow, Margaret Kennedy Larson.⁵⁸ It was a contentious marriage, and they separated, but apparently never divorced. Joseph died on 19 November 1903, at his home.⁵⁹ All 160 acres of the Home Place were still in the family in 2018.⁶⁰

Of their eleven children who grew to adulthood, eight married and had families. They became farmers and farm wives, a firefighter, the wife of a mining engineer. One, with her husband, visited Ireland. Two daughters became Catholic nuns and one son did not marry.

What Happened to Esther's Parents, Brothers and Sisters?

Some of Esther's brothers and sisters may have come to America, but beyond the sighting of the three immigrating sisters (Mary, Ellen and Esther) in 1849, only scattered clues have been found. All involve Ireland-born immigrants.

The 1850 U.S. census for Lowell, Massachusetts, a textile center, listed three Irish female mill workers – Mary, Catherine, and Ellen Riley – who could have been Esther's sisters. They were 30, 25 and 20 respectively.⁶¹ Esther had sisters Mary and Ellen of those approximate ages, and Catherine fits Esther and Joseph's naming pattern – their second daughter was Catherine. (They also had a daughter Margaret.) Later in 1850, the census shows Irish-born Ellen Riley, age 19, unmarried, in Thompson, Connecticut, where Esther was married. Ellen was living with the family of William and Sarah Dray, possibly as a hired girl.⁶² Thompson is about 65 miles southwest of Lowell.

The circumstantial evidence is tempting, but not convincing that any of these are Esther's sisters and brothers.

Searches in marriage and death record indexes have produced several Reillys with parents named Bernard and Mary Reilly:

- Patrick Reilly married Margaret Smith in Newark, Essex County, New Jersey, 1854.⁶³

58 Watonwan County, Minnesota, Clerk of Court, Marriage Records, Volume D (1893-1898), p. 274, Joseph Savage-Margaret Larson; FHL film 1,638,097, image 153.

59 Cottonwood County, Minnesota, Death Book C, p. 116, line 23, 19 November 1903, Joseph F. Savage; FHL film 4,539,691, image 389. Also, "Death of Joseph F. Savage," *Comfrey Times*, 27 November 1903.

60 Property owned by Joseph and Esther's great-grandson and wife, David and Lesa Savage; author's personal knowledge.

61 1850 U.S. census, Lowell, Middlesex, Massachusetts, p. 220A, dwelling 290, family 353, Charles Callaghan; NARA microfilm publication M432, roll 327; digital image, *Ancestry*.

62 1850 U.S. Census, Thompson, Windham County, Connecticut, p. 118A, dwelling 99, family 108, William Dray; NARA micropublication M432, roll 51; *Ancestry*, digital image.

63 *FamilySearch*, "New Jersey Marriages, 1678-1985," Patrick Reilly and Margaret Smith.

Esther, We Hardly Knew You

- Mary Reilly Phillips, widow of Matthew Phillips, died at age 89 in 1889 in Providence, Rhode Island.⁶⁴
- Another Patrick Reilly died in 1900 New York City.⁶⁵ His wife was Catherine Beglan or Beglin. He served in the Union Army from New York in the Civil War.⁶⁶
- Bernard Reilly died in 1893 in Providence.⁶⁷ His wife was Elizabeth Neely.
- Margaret Glode, widow of Michael Glode, died in 1905 in North Smithfield, Providence.⁶⁸

Esther, We Hardly Knew You

We hardly knew her, but we do know what she looked like. She left us a tintype photo, likely taken in the 1860s (see page 11). She was seated, holding a Catholic missal, wearing a

calico dress, and she was pregnant. Esther and Joseph Savage succeeded on their homestead where more than a million failed. More than 130 years after her death, we applaud her courage, tenacity and religious faith.

Zoe von Ende Lappin is a native of Wisconsin and a retired journalist, having worked at the *Billings Gazette*, *Denver Post* and *Rocky Mountain News*. She lives in Denver and has been researching her and her husband's families for more than 35 years. Her interest in Esther Reilly Savage arose out of her research into her Irish immigrant ancestors who homesteaded in Minnesota, as well as acquaintance with many of Esther's descendants and the realization that on the frontier, as elsewhere, women's stories often were buried with them.

64 Providence, Rhode Island, City Clerk, *Returns of Deaths, 1856-1921*, *City of Providence*, 29 September 1889. Mary Phillips, *Rhode Island Deaths and Burials, 1802-1950*, *FamilySearch.org*; FHL film 2,023,152, digital film 4,249,265, image 2,354.

65 New York, NY, Department of Health, *Manhattan Death Certificates, 1866-1919*, certificate 38,145, Patrick Reilly; FHL film 1,322,984; digital film 4,006,180.

66 Patrick Riely [sic], private, Company A, 88th New York Infantry, National Park Service, U.S. Civil War Soldiers, 1861-1865, *Ancestry*, 18 March 2018. Invalid

pension for Patrick Reilly, certificate number 870,768, filed 23 January 1875, held by National Archives, identifies his wife as Catherine Beglan and Beglin.

67 Providence, Rhode Island, *Returns of Deaths, 1856-1921*, 8 January 1893, Bernard Reilly; FHL film 2,023,187; digital film 4,250,004, image 1,676.

68 Burrillville, Rhode Island, Town Clerk, *Deaths*, 22 July 1905, Margaret Glode; FHL film 2,319,317, digital film 4,250,998, image 677.



U.S.-Dakota War of 1862: My Mdewakanton and European Ancestors

Shannon S. Blue

On 18 August 1862, my European third great-grandfather, John Zimmerman Sr., gathered his wife and five children and fled their farm in Renville County for the safety of Fort Ridgely. It was the beginning of the U.S.-Dakota War. They were halfway there when John was shot and killed.¹

The U.S.-Dakota War, sometimes referred to as the Dakota Uprising, was the result of widespread hunger and desperation by the Mdewakanton Dakota. They were forced onto a small reservation in southwestern Minnesota with no game to hunt. Crops were poor that year. Treaty payments had been delayed and corrupt federal agents refused to distribute food to the Dakota families. Dakota frustration and anger erupted into war between them and white settlers.

That war resulted in the largest mass execution in United States history. On 26 December 1862, thirty-eight Dakota warriors were hanged in Mankato, Minnesota. Since all Dakota were exiled from the state, it is reasonable to assume my Mdewakanton tribal ancestors returned to the area after being exiled. It is possible some were among the hundreds imprisoned and the thirty-eight ultimately executed in Mankato.

Seventy-six years later, less than one mile from the site of John's terrible death, his great-granddaughter, Marion Zimmerman, married my Mdewakanton grandfather, Alfred Leith. We are Mdewakanton Dakota descendants of the survivors of the The U.S.-Dakota War.

Alfred Eli Leith and Marion Lillian Zimmerman

My maternal grandfather, Alfred Eli Leith, was born 16 June 1921 on the Lower Sioux Indian Reservation.² He was the fifth child of nine born to James Henry Leith (1888-1963) and Agnes Wells (1890-1956); both were Mdewakanton.³

Alfred's lineage can be traced back to the early nineteenth century. His paternal grandparents were Arthur Thomas Leith (1867-) and Sarah Dow (1863-1912).⁴ His maternal grandparents were John (1825-) and Jane Bluestone (1840-).⁵ All except Arthur Thomas Leith were born and resided on Mdewakanton Dakota land at Lower Sioux Agency in Renville County, Eagle Creek in Scott County, and various Dakota camps throughout Minnesota.

Alfred Leith grew up on a farm on the Lower Sioux reservation with his parents, siblings and extended family. At the age of seventeen, he married sixteen-year-old Marion Lillian Zimmerman.⁶

Marion Lillian Zimmerman was born 17 January 1922 in Grand Marais, Minnesota.⁷ She was the fifth child of eleven born to John Zimmerman and Mary Josephine Longbody. She had six sisters and four brothers, in addition to two half-sisters from her father's previous marriage. Her father was Chippewa and European and her mother was Chippewa.⁸

Chippewa and Ojibwe are traditionally known as Anishinaabe. Today, the Minnesota Consolidated Chippewa Tribe is

1 "Escapees, Refugees, Captives and Victims List," *Family and Friends of Dakota Uprising Victims, 1862 U.S.-Dakota War in Minnesota*, (www.dakotavictims1862.com : accessed 28 June 2018).

2 Bishop Whipple Mission/St. Cornelia's Church, Morton, Minnesota, Alfred Eli Leith certificate of baptism (1921), Register B, p. 54.

3 Bureau of Indian Affairs, "Indian Census Rolls, 1885-1940," digital image, *Ancestry*, accessed 31 May 2018, entry for James H Leith, Pipestone Agency, Minnesota, January 1940; citing National Archives microfilm publication M595, Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, record group 75; Washington, D.C.

4 *Ibid.*, entry for Sarah Leith, Birch Cooley Agency, Minnesota, 13 November 1891.

5 1875 Minnesota census, Eagle Creek, Scott County, population schedule, John Bluestone; "Minnesota, Territorial and State Censuses, 1849-1905," digital image, *Ancestry*, accessed 2 June 2018; citing Minnesota Historical Society reels 1-47 and 107-164, St. Paul.

6 Redwood County, Minnesota, marriage certificate Q-248 (1938), Leith-Zimmerman; Redwood County Recorder, Redwood Falls.

7 Bureau of Indian Affairs, "U.S. Indian Census Rolls, 1885-1940," digital image, *Ancestry*, accessed 2 June 2018, entry for Mary Zimmerman, Grand Portage Chippewa Tribe, Grand Portage Agency, 30 June 1922.

8 1880 U.S. census, Cook County, Minnesota, populations schedule, Grand Marais,

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comprised of the Bois Forte, Fond du Lac, Grand Portage, Leech Lake, Mille Lacs, and White Earth reservations.

Marion grew up in Grand Marais, a small village in Minnesota's far northern arrowhead region. Her father worked as a commercial fisherman and a laborer in the lumber camps. She appears on Grand Portage Consolidated Chippewa tribal rolls with her family throughout her youth.⁹

At the age of sixteen, Marion left northern Minnesota to marry Alfred Eli "Tiny" Leith. They married in the Episcopal Church located on the Lower Sioux Indian Reservation on 14 November 1938. The church is located less than a mile from where her great-grandfather, John Zimmerman, was shot three-quarters of a century earlier.

Marion and Alfred resided primarily in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area and on the Lower Sioux Indian Reservation with Alfred's parents and extended family.¹⁰ They had three daughters and one son. Due to alcoholism and mental health issues, my grandparents were not equipped to care for their children. At some point prior to 1945, these children were placed in the custody of Alfred's parents. James and Agnes (Wells) Leith raised my mother, her siblings, and several other grandchildren on the Lower Sioux Indian Reservation.¹¹

Fourteen months after the birth of Alfred and Marion's fourth child in November 1943, Marion gave birth to a child fathered by Alfred's maternal uncle, Gilbert Wells.¹² It is not known when Marion's marriage to Alfred ended.

Marion and Gilbert had four children together. Their first, Gilbert Charles (1945-1949), was followed by two daughters and another son. Again, my grandmother was not capable of caring for her children. Three of the children were placed in the custody of Gilbert's sister and her husband in St. Paul and the fourth was adopted outside of the family.

In 1949, Marion and Gilbert were living in Turtle River Township, just north of Grand Forks, North Dakota. They were probably working as farm workers. On Tuesday evening, 1 November 1949, they were involved in a terrible car accident. Marion was killed.¹³

According to the *Grand Forks Herald*, Gilbert was driving. He sustained a broken arm and minor injuries while Marion died at the scene. Their vehicle was discovered by passersby at 7:45 p.m. It "ran off the road, traveled 200 feet in the ditch, hit a crossroad and careened into a field, tipping over... The vehicle was demolished."¹⁴ In the photo accompanying the article the vehicle is almost unrecognizable. "Only a mass of twisted metal and broken glass remained of the car..."¹⁵ It's amazing Gilbert survived with such minor injuries. The accident was investigated, but a coroner's inquest was not performed.¹⁶

Marion Lillian Zimmerman Leith Wells was only twenty-seven years old when she died. She had eight children ranging in age from one to ten years old. Her remains were not returned to her tribe and family. Instead, she was buried in an unmarked grave in a potter's field in Grand Forks, North Dakota, 350 miles from home.¹⁷

Enumeration District 96, sheet 1B, p. 1 (stamped), dwelling 4, family 4, John Zimmerman; digital image, *Ancestry*, accessed 6 November 2018, citing NARA microfilm T9, roll 617. Bureau of Indian Affairs, "U.S. Indian Census Rolls, 1885-1940," entry for Marion Zimmerman, Grand Portage Chippewa Tribe, Consolidated Chippewa Indians Minnesota, 30 June 1927.

9 Bureau of Indian Affairs, "U.S. Indian Census Rolls, 1885-1940," entry for Marion Zimmerman, Grand Portage Chippewa Tribe, Consolidated Chippewa Indians Minnesota 30, June 1927.

10 1940 U.S. census, Redwood County, Minnesota, population schedule, Paxton Township, sheet 8B, household 129, Alfred and Marion Leith, digital image, *Ancestry*, accessed 5 February 2018; citing NARA 1940 T627.

11 Riby Minkel, Lower Sioux member, Morton, Minnesota, interview by Deborah Locke, 21 February 2011; recording and transcript; (Usdakotawar.org/stories/contributors/ruby-minkel : accessed 21 June 2018), Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul.

12 My aunt Roberta Leith was born November 1943. See *Find A Grave*, database and images (www.findagrave.com : accessed 6 November 2018), memorial 88586204, Roberta Gene Leith, St. Cornelius Episcopal Church, Morton, Minnesota. Gilbert Charles Wells was born February 1945. See Minnesota Department of Health, death certificate 027573 (1949), Gilbert Charles Wells.

13 North Dakota. Department of Health, death certificate 2115, registrar no. 2778 (1949), Marion Leith aka Marion Wells; Division of Vital Records, Bismarck.

14 "Duluth Resident Car Crash Victim," *Grand Forks Herald*, 2 November 1949, p.1, cols. 5-6.

15 "Death Car Lands in Field," *Grand Forks Herald*, 3 November 1949, p. 8, cols. 3-5.

16 "Accident Death Probe Continued," *Grand Forks Herald*, 3 November 1949, p.8, col. 3.

17 *Find A Grave*, database and images (www.findagrave.com : accessed 7 February 2018), memorial 158799670, Marion Zimmerman, Potter's Field, Grand Forks, North Dakota.

As a young man, my grandfather Alfred was a boxer, an accomplished artist, made beautiful beadwork, and was fluent in the Dakota language. He was small in stature, just five feet five inches, thus his nickname “Tiny.” Unfortunately, he never remarried and went on to live a transient lifestyle. He traveled from the Twin Cities, the Lower Sioux reservation, and beyond Minnesota. He was often homeless and hopped freight trains with his brothers. He was an alcoholic and suffered the medical and social consequences of that lifestyle. My grandfather ventured in and out of our family’s lives over the years. I have some awesome and some very sad memories of him. He struggled.

Alfred Eli Leith, my *unkana* (grandfather), passed away in a nursing home in Minneapolis on 18 November 1990 at the age of sixty-nine of unknown natural causes.¹⁸ I used to visit him there, and would “sneak” him Hershey’s chocolate bars with almonds. Toward the end he was unable to speak because he lost his voice box to cancer. He is buried at St. Cornelia’s Episcopal Church Cemetery on the Lower Sioux Indian Reservation.¹⁹ Most of his records, including his death certificate and headstone, have his birth year as 1919. He was actually born in 1921; he lied about his age his entire adult life.

Alfred Eli “Tiny” Leith, 1921 – 1990
Marion Lillian Zimmerman, 1922 – 1949

Marion was the daughter of John Zimmerman and Mary Josephine Longbody.

John Zimmerman and Mary Josephine Longbody

My great-grandfather, John Zimmerman, was born 1 May 1879 in Grand Marais, Minnesota. He was the eldest child of Samuel Zimmerman and Jane Collins-Cariboo. He had five brothers and six sisters. His father was of European descent and his mother was Chippewa.

John was raised in Grand Marais with his parents and many siblings until about the age of ten, when he went to live with his maternal grandparents, Peter and Susan Cariboo-Collins. He was enumerated on tribal allotments and census with them until he reached age eighteen.²⁰

In about 1900 John married Catherine Paro.²¹ Indian censuses show they had two daughters, Clara, born in 1901, and Blanch Lottie, born in 1903.²²

Catherine Paro was born 1878 to Frank and Nancy Paro.²³ The Paro family were also Chippewa and Catherine and her family appear on the Minnesota Consolidated Chippewa censuses.²⁴ The Paro and Zimmerman families resided in the same Grand Marais neighborhood.²⁵

John and Catherine appear as husband and wife with their daughters on annual Indian censuses with Chief May-maush-kow-aush’s band from 1901 through 1908.²⁶ I have not discovered what happened to Catherine Paro after 1908.

In 1910 John was enumerated in the federal census with his daughters Clara and Blanch and someone named Lizzie, who appears to be a new wife.²⁷ As I have been unable to find Catherine’s middle name or any evidence she used the name

18 Minnesota. Department of Health, death certificate 2290029449 (1990), Alfred Eli Leith.

19 *Find A Grave*, database and images (www.findagrave.com : accessed 15 March 2018), memorial 88607533, Alfred Leith, Saint Cornelia’s Episcopal Church Cemetery, Redwood Falls, Minnesota.

20 Bureau of Indian Affairs. “U.S. Indian Census Rolls, 1885-1940,” digital image, *Ancestry*, accessed 25 June 2018, entry for John Zimmerman, Grand Portage Chippewa Tribe, La Pointe Wisconsin Agency.

21 *Ibid.*, entry for John Zimmerman, Grand Portage Chippewa Tribe, La Pointe Wisconsin Agency, 30 June 1901.

22 *Ibid.*, entry for Catherine Paro, Grand Portage Chippewa Tribe, La Pointe Wisconsin Agency, 30 June 1906.

23 Bureau of Indian Affairs. “Minnesota, Indian Allotment Records, 1888-1919,” digital image, *Ancestry*, accessed 18 Mar 2018, entry for Frank Paro, Grand

Portage Reservation, Duluth Land District, 14 January 1889; citing Registers of Indian Allotment Entries under the Dawes Act, 1888-1908, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul.

24 Bureau of Indian Affairs. “U.S. Indian Census Rolls, 1885-1940,” digital image, *Ancestry*, accessed 25 June 2018, entry for Frank Paro, Ojibwe Tribe, La Pointe Wisconsin Agency.

25 1900 U.S. census, Cook County, Minnesota, population schedule, Grand Marais Township, sheet 5, digital image, *Ancestry*, accessed 25 June 2018; citing NARA 1900 T623.

26 Bureau of Indian Affairs. “U.S. Indian Census Rolls, 1885-1940,” digital image, *Ancestry*, accessed 24 June 2018, entry for Catherine Paro, Grand Portage Chippewa Tribe, La Pointe Wisconsin Agency, 30 June 1903.

27 1910 U.S. census, Cook County, Minnesota, population schedule, Grand Marais Township, sheet 11, digital image, *Ancestry*, accessed 25 June 2018, entry for John and Lizzie Zimmerman; citing NARA T624.

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Lizzie, I do not believe this to be Catherine. Instead, I believe Lizzie was John's second wife, especially as this census states they were married for two years. Lizzie was eleven years younger than John, while Catherine was about the same age as him. I have not been able to locate her maiden name or any other information. Regardless, Lizzie wasn't around for long, for by 1911 John was with my great-grandmother, Mary Josephine Longbody.

Mary Josephine Longbody was born 15 August 1894 to Joseph Longbody (O-tah-tah-gay) and Ke-way-de-nah-beake on the Nett Lake Chippewa Reservation in Minnesota.²⁸ She grew up in the Grand Marais area and attended the Lake Vermilion Indian Boarding School.²⁹ On 30 April 1910, she was enumerated in federal census as a sixteen-year-old pupil at the school.

Mary Josephine was fifteen years younger than John. She became pregnant with their first child when she was just sixteen years old and he was thirty-one. They were not married until 27 July 1911, three months after Grace Amelia was born.³⁰ On 30 June 1912 they were enumerated as a family on the Grand Portage Indian census: John, thirty-three, Mary Josephine (no age given), Clara, eleven; Blanch Lottie, nine; and Grace Amelia, four months.³¹

John and Mary Josephine resided in Grand Marais where they owned their own home near his father and much of his extended family. He worked as a laborer and a commercial fisherman while she kept house and had babies.

Mary Josephine gave birth to eleven children—seven daughters and four sons—her first at age seventeen and her last at age thirty-nine. Seven daughters and four sons. Sadly, she lost two at very young ages; Bertha died at age three

in 1926,³² and in 1934 her last child, Ione, succumbed to pneumonia at age eight months.³³

Mary Josephine died 15 June 1941 when she was struck by a car. According to the *Cook County News Herald*, "Mrs. John Zimmerman was accidently killed early Sunday morning when she was struck by a car...on Highway 61 about 13 miles east of Grand Marais." She was brought immediately to the hospital, but "...cerebral hemorrhage... resulted in her death at 4:25 a.m." A coroner's inquest was held and returned a verdict stating, "...Mary Zimmerman came to her death by being struck by a car driven by Axel Taudberg without any criminal negligence on his part."³⁴

Mary Josephine died at the age of forty-seven, preceded in death by two of her children and leaving nine children ranging in age from ten to thirty.³⁵

Her tragic death is cause for ongoing research. What was she doing out there in the middle of the night? Was she alone? Who is Axel Taudberg? I have not been able to locate the coroner's inquest, but I intend to continue researching her mysterious and untimely demise.

John lived in Grand Marais for some time after his wife's death, but eventually moved one hundred miles south to Duluth. On 13 May 1963, John Zimmerman died at the age of eighty-five years. According to his death certificate, the immediate cause was bronchopneumonia, due to acute alcoholism, bronchogenic carcinoma of the lungs, and abscessed teeth.

John Zimmerman, 1878 – 1963

Mary Josephine Longbody, 1893 – 1941

John Zimmerman was the son of Samuel Zimmerman and Ann Jane Collins-Cariboo.

28 Bureau of Indian Affairs. "U.S. Indian Census Rolls, 1885-1940," digital image, *Ancestry*, accessed 28 June 2018, entry for Joseph Longbody, Ojibwe Tribe, La Pointe Wisconsin Agency, 1894.

29 1910 U.S. census, St. Louis County, Minnesota, population schedule, Township 62, sheet 5A, Mary Longbody, digital image, *Ancestry*, accessed 18 March 2018; citing NARA T624.

30 Cook County, Minnesota, marriage certificate A0711911 (1911), Zimmerman-Longbody; Cook County Recorder, Grand Marais.

31 Bureau of Indian Affairs. "U.S. Indian Census Rolls, 1885-1940," database, *Ancestry*, accessed 28 June 2018, entry for John Zimmerman, Grand Portage Chippewa Tribe, Consolidated Chippewa Indians, 30 June 1912.

32 Bureau of Indian Affairs. "U.S. Indian Census Rolls, 1885-1940," database, *Ancestry*, accessed 24 June 2018, Grand Portage Chippewa Tribe, Consolidated Chippewa Indians, 30 June 1928.

33 Bureau of Indian Affairs. "U.S. Indian Census Rolls, 1885-1940," digital image, *Ancestry*; accessed 28 June 2018, entry for Ione Zimmerman, Grand Portage, Ojibwe Tribe, Consolidated Chippewa Indians, 1933 to 1934.

34 "Mrs. John Zimmerman Accident Victim," *Cook County [Minnesota] News Herald*, 19 June 1941.

35 Cook County Minnesota, death certificate 2979 (1941), Mary Josephine Longbody; Cook County Recorder, Grand Marais.

Samuel Zimmerman and Jane Collins-Cariboo

My second great-grandfather, Samuel Zimmerman, was born 14 February 1851 in Toledo, Ohio. He was the youngest child of John, Sr. and Mary Zimmerman. He had two brothers and two sisters. Both his parents had been born in Europe—probably Switzerland.³⁶

According to Sam's obituary and his sister Elizabeth's account, the family settled on a farm in Renville County in 1859. The farm was located just north of the Lower Sioux Agency in Southwestern Minnesota.

On the morning of 18 August 1862, a man came to the Zimmerman farm to warn them that the "Indians were shooting down the town of Agency."³⁷ Sam's father was away assisting a neighbor. As soon as he returned to the farm, he gathered his family, loaded their wagon and oxen and set out with some neighbors for the safety of Fort Ridgely, a distance of about ten miles. They had reached LaCroix Creek [likely Birch Coulee Creek]—about halfway to the fort, when they encountered several Indians. John Sr. and his two eldest sons were shot and killed.

An eyewitness account by Mrs. Mary Hayden relates the following: "We drove on till we came to the house of David Faribault, at the foot of the hill, about one and a half miles from the Agency ferry. When we got here two Indians came out of Faribault's house, and stopping the teams, shot Mr. Zimmerman, who was driving, and his two boys...Mrs. Zimmerman, who was blind, and her remaining children... were captured and taken to the house of David Faribault, where they were kept till night...but for some inexplicable reason [they] let them go, and they, ... reached the fort in safety."³⁸

The survivors, including my great-grandfather, Sam, eventually made it to Fort Ridgely where they were listed as refugees.³⁹ After the war, my third great-grandmother, Mary Zimmerman, collected a claim in the amount of \$1,250 against the United States for "depredations committed by the Sioux Indians."⁴⁰ This would be about \$20,000 in today's currency.⁴¹

After the war, the remaining family members moved to New Ulm, Minnesota. Unfortunately, Sam's mother passed away in about 1864 when he was just twelve years old. Sam and his sister Elizabeth moved north to the arrowhead region to live with an uncle in Beaver Bay.⁴²

In 1871 Sam moved about sixty miles north to the small village of Grand Marais and was employed "skidding out logs from the woods in winter and worked as a cook on a lake vessel in the summer." In 1874 he was hired by Thomas Mayhew "filling the cribs for the piers in the Duluth harbor." He lost his right leg during a trek into the North Woods when he froze both his legs. His right leg, which had been severely burned in a campfire accident when he was a child, was too damaged to save. According to his obituary, "Without means of anesthesia the amputation was performed by a Duluth doctor."⁴³

Although Sam witnessed the murder of his father and brothers by Indians as a boy of ten, when he moved north, he fished, hunted, and traded with the natives in northern Minnesota. He eventually married a Chippewa woman, Jane Collins-Cariboo, about 1877.

Jane Collins-Cariboo, my second great-grandmother, was born in 1861 to Peter Cariboo and Susan Collins; both were Chippewa.⁴⁴

36 1905 Minnesota state census, Cook County, Grand Marais, sheet 3, person 120, Samuel Zimmerman; digital image, *Ancestry*, citing *Minnesota State Population Census Schedules, 1865-1905*, Minnesota Historical Society.

37 Elizabeth (Zimmerman) Hangartner, letter, Beaver Bay, Minnesota, to New Ulm's Diamond Jubilee & Homecoming, 27 June 1929; digital image, *Family and Friends of Dakota Uprising Victims, 1862 U.S.-Dakota War in Minnesota*, (www.dakotavictims1862.com : accessed 28 June 2018), "John and Mary Zimmerman," pps. 62-62.

38 Franklyn Curtiss-Wedge, compiler, *History of Renville County, Minnesota, Volume 2*, (Chicago, M.C. Cooper Jr. & Co., 1916); digital image, (<https://books.google.com> : accessed 6 November 2018) 926-927.

39 Don Heinrich Tolzmann, editor, *Outbreak and Massacre by the Dakota Indians in Minnesota in 1862*, (Westminster, Maryland: Heritage Books, Inc., 2001), 104.

40 Nicollet County, Minnesota, John Zimmerman, probate case file 47, 15 November 1862-2 August 1883; digital images, *Ancestry*, accessed 1 November 2018; citing "Minnesota, Wills and Probate Records, 1801-1925." *Index to Claimants for Depredations following the Dakota War of 1862*, (Park Genealogical Books, 2001), 48.

41 *The Inflation Calculator*, Morgan Friedman, <https://westegg.com/inflation/>, accessed 1 November 2018.

42 1870 U.S. census, Lake County, Minnesota, population schedule, Beaver Bay, page r1, digital image, *Ancestry*, accessed 28 June 2018; citing NARA 1870 T132.

43 "Zimmerman, 91, Dies; Buried on Birthday," *Cook County [Minnesota] News Herald*, February 1943.

44 "Family tree for Ruby Minkel," Grand Portage Tribe, undated; privately held by Shannon Blue, Morton, Minnesota.

Sam and Jane lived out their lives in Grand Marais, where he was the janitor for the Cook County courthouse for twenty-nine years. They had twelve children; three died in infancy. Their firstborn, my great-grandfather John, was born in 1879 and their last was Rosy, born in 1904.

Jane suffered from hypertension, among other ailments, and died from a stroke 9 January 1941 at the age of eighty.⁴⁵ Two years later Sam passed of various ailments, including “senility.” He was ninety-one years old.⁴⁶

Samuel Zimmerman, 1851 – 1943

Jane Collins-Cariboo, 1861 – 1941

Samuel Zimmerman was the son of John Zimmerman Sr. and his wife, Mary.

John Zimmerman Sr. and Mary Tischer

My third great-grandfather, John Zimmerman Sr., was born about 1822 in Europe. He and his European-born wife Mary



Sam and Jane Zimmerman. Cook County Historical Society.

Tischer had three sons and two daughters. After immigration, it appears they lived in Ohio for a time before settling in Minnesota in 1859. It was this John Zimmerman Sr. and his two eldest sons who were killed by Indians on 18 August 1862 near the Lower Sioux Agency at the start of the U.S.-Dakota War.

John Zimmerman Sr., 1822 – 18 August 1862

John Zimmerman Jr., 1843 – 18 August 1862

Gotfried Zimmerman, 1844 – 18 August 1862

Conclusion

It is not known what my Mdewakanton ancestors might have done on 18 August 1862, the day my European grandfather and his sons were slain. Some could have been helping white settlers, while others may have been killing those who took their land and left them to starve.

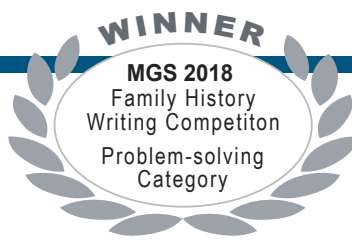
Throughout my life I viewed the war through the eyes of my Mdewakanton ancestors. I never really thought about the war from a white perspective. I have discovered I descend from both the oppressor and the oppressed, and am still reconciling my new-found perspective on the war.

I am indigenus. I am Mdewakanton Dakota, descendant of the warriors and survivors of the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862.

Shannon S. Blue was born and raised in Minneapolis. She earned an associate degree in Native American Studies and a bachelor's degree in business from the University of South Dakota. Shannon was a legal secretary for several years before she began working in the casino and hospitality industry. Her heritage is Mdewakanton, Chippewa, and Sisseton with some European ancestry. An enrolled member of the Lower Sioux Indian Community, Shannon currently resides on the reservation in her paternal grandmother's house where her father was raised. The reservation is small and a very short distance from the battle sites of the U.S.-Dakota War. Her interest in genealogy began in the 1990's when she and her mother met with a tribal elder in Shakopee to begin tracing their family history.

45 Minnesota Division of Birth and Death Records and Vital Statistics, death certificate 2975 (1941), Jane Zimmerman; Department of Health, St. Paul.

46 Minnesota Division of Birth and Death Records and Vital Statistics, death certificate 2905 (1943), Sam Zimmerman Sr.



What's in a Name? Solving the Mystery of Amelia Rosso's Birth

Leslie Cafarelli

For many of us, the lives of ancestors as recent as our grandparents are a mystery, especially those who came to America as immigrants, speaking another language, and those who died before our births. Such is the case of Amelia Rosso, wife of Nicholas H. Priley of Duluth, Minnesota. Her grandchildren wanted answers to these questions:¹

- When and where was Amelia born, in the United States or Italy?
- Who were Amelia's parents and siblings?
- When and where were members of Amelia's birth family born?

In the course of this research, key puzzles to be solved – some common, others more challenging – concerned names.

Analysis of information from three family documents furnished by one of Amelia's granddaughters with explanatory notations provided a starting point for this project and its research plan. The first was a copy of an undated account of her family history by Geraldine Rosso, a cousin and the daughter of Amelia's brother, Pascal.² Second was a copy of a letter dated 21 February 1976 addressed to Geraldine from "Your cousin, Charley" with the annotation, "Letter from my father, Charles Priley, to his cousin Geraldine."³ And the third was a copy of a marriage certificate for N. H. Priley and Milley Rosso.⁴ Milley/Milly, a variant of Millie, is a common nickname for Amelia.⁵

Geraldine wrote:

- Amelia's parents were Giuseppe (Joseph) Russo, a musician/harpist and truck farmer, and Christina Girardi, a seamstress.
- The family was from "Mariscovecchio in the province of Basilicata," Italy.
- Their first child, Pasquale (Pascal), was born 13 November 1872. The Russos left Italy when Pascal was two years old and "went directly to Minnesota, in the heart of the truck farming region."
- Joseph and Christina had seven more children "including Lillie, Louis, Mildred, Charles, Rose, Mary, and a second Rose after the death of the first."⁶

Charles wrote:

- Amelia's birthdate was 23 November 1878 based on her age at death.
- The Rosso children were possibly born in this order: Pasqual, Rose, Louis, Mary, Amelia, Lilly, Charles, Rose.

The certificate indicates that N. H. Priley and Milley Rosso were married in Morrison County, Minnesota, in 1895. Witnesses were Philippe Coti and Lily Rosso. Another person named on the certificate was Arthur Lamothe.

From this, it is reasonable to assume Giuseppe was born in Italy and emigrated to the U.S. around 1874. We don't

1 This research was commissioned by Jeanne P. (Priley) McLean of St. Paul, Minnesota, who provided the family documents. Contact information is available from the author on request.

2 Geraldine Rosso (residence unknown) to "Paul, Tom, Mary and Bill," account of Russo and DiMarco family history, no date; privately held by Jeanne P. McLean, St. Paul, Minnesota, 2018.

3 Charles Priley (Duluth, Minnesota) to "Dear Geraldine [Rosso]," letter, 21 February 1976; privately held by Jeanne P. McLean, St. Paul, Minnesota, 2018.

4 Certificate of Marriage for N. H. Priley and Milley Rosso, Morrison County, Minnesota, citing marriage on 3 October 1895; privately held by Kathleen (Priley) Arola, Duluth, Minnesota. This document was likely passed from Nicholas and Amelia to their son Charles Priley and then to his daughter Kathleen.

5 See Christine Rose, *Nicknames Past and Present*, 5th ed. expanded (San Jose, California: CR Publications, 2007), 2 and 13.

6 The name Amelia is not listed, but Mildred might have been assumed since they share the nickname Milley/Millie.

What's in a Name?

know where he arrived or whether his wife and children accompanied him. If he had married in Italy in the early 1870s, he would have been born before 1850. The eldest children may have been born in Italy and younger ones in the U.S., in Morrison County or elsewhere in Minnesota, beginning in the mid-1870s. If the names and birth order of the four eldest Rosso children can be verified, Italian naming customs point to Pasquale and Rosa as Giuseppe's parents' names and Luigi and Maria, or a compound of Maria, as Christina's parents.⁷

The Marriage of N. H. Priley and Milley Rosso

Nicholas Priley and Milley Rosso's marriage certificate derives from the original record, including direct evidence that the bride, resident of Morrison County, and the groom, resident of St. Louis County, were married by a Catholic priest in Morrison County on 3 October 1895. Since the original certificate resides with one of one of Amelia's grandchildren, we can speculate that Milley and Amelia were the same person.

A copy of the original "Application for and Marriage License Record" obtained from Morrison County provides information consistent with the marriage certificate but with a different spelling of the bride's name Millie Rosseau.⁸ The name Arthur Lamothe appears where one expects the officiant's name. The certificate was written in a different hand than the license, so was likely prepared later by someone other than the clerk who entered the original into the county record.

This license provides valuable direct evidence for Amelia's marriage and birth. It states that the bride and groom applied for their license in the city of Little Falls on 14 August 1895. Accompanying the application is a "Minor's Permission to Marry" in which Amelia's parents had attested that Millie was "of the age 17 years and 2 months," and they had given their consent.⁹ From this, Millie's birth can be estimated as about June 1878.

A news item from the *Little Falls Weekly Transcript* of 4 October 1895, indicates the marriage took place at the French Catholic church in Little Falls, Rev. Arthur Lamothe officiated, and Lillie Russo, the bridesmaid, was Millie's sister.¹⁰ Millie, daughter of Joseph Russo, "was born and raised in Morrison [C]ounty." This church, originally called San Salvador, was organized in 1867; many congregants belonged previously to St. Andrew's in Belle Prairie.¹¹ In 1892, a new building dedicated to St. Francis Xavier was "erected under the pastorate of Rev. Arthur Lamothe."¹²

Death and Burial Records

Amelia Priley's death certificate is based on secondary information from her son Joe. He attested that Amelia, who died at the age of sixty years and eight months, had been born in Little Falls, Minnesota, on 23 November 1878 to Italian immigrants Joseph Rosso and Christina Gerard.¹³ She died in Duluth on 23 July 1939 and was buried at the city's Calvary Cemetery. Her grave marker, shared with her husband, cites only the years, 1878 – 1939, and cemetery records offer no

7 Melanie D. Holtz, *The Family Tree Italian Genealogy Guide* (Cincinnati, Ohio: Family Tree Books, 2007), 84–86.

8 Morrison County, Minnesota, Marriage Records, book E, 281, "Application for and Marriage License Record," N. H. Priley and Millie Rosseau; Morrison County Recorder, Little Falls.

9 Morrison County, Minnesota, Marriage Records, book E, 281, "Minor's Permission to Marry," Millie Rosseau/ Rousseau; Morrison County Recorder, Little Falls.

10 "Priley-Russo Wedding," *Little Falls Weekly Transcript*. (Little Falls, Morrison Co., Minn.), 4 October 1895, p. 6, col. 6; *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Library of Congress (<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov> : accessed 15 February 2017). A notice also appeared in the 16 August 1895 edition of the same paper (p. 7, col. 2) stating that "A marriage license was issued Wednesday [14

August] to N. H. Priley, a Duluth merchant, and Miss Millie Russo, of Little Falls. The wedding will take place Oct. 3."

11 "History of St. Mary's Church," *Little Falls Catholic Community* (<http://littlefallscatholic.org/st-marys/about/history/> : accessed 15 February 2017). St. Francis Xavier was since incorporated into St. Mary's Church, part of the Little Falls Catholic Community.

12 Clara K. Fuller, *History of Morrison and Todd counties, Minnesota, their people, industries and institutions*, vol. I (Indianapolis: B.F. Bowen & Co., 1915), 110–112. Reverend Lamothe was "for fifty two years the widely beloved pastor of St. Xavier Church." From Volunteer contributor 47713690, *Find A Grave* memorial 116435921 for Rev. Arthur A. Lamothe, posted 2 September 2013; (<http://www.findagrave.com> : accessed 25 January 2017).

13 Minnesota Division of Vital Statistics, death certificate no. 27508 (1939), Amelia Priley; Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul.

additional birth information.¹⁴ A search of the Social Security Death Index on *Ancestry* and *FamilySearch* returned no result, so she probably had not applied for a number in the few years Social Security had existed. According to *Ancestry*, “About 98% percent of the people in the SSDI died after 1962, but a few death dates go back as far as 1937,” so her failure to appear in this index is not surprising. Amelia’s obituary appeared in the *Duluth News Tribune* two days after her death. The obituary states she had died the previous Sunday at the age of 60 and had been born in Little Falls and was a resident of Duluth for 44 years, since 1895, the year of her marriage.¹⁵

Census Records

With consistent evidence that Amelia was born in Morrison County, census records from the town and nearby Belle Prairie Township provided earlier evidence for Amelia’s birth family including their birth dates and places. These records show nicknames and name variations — common for non-English-speaking immigrant families and enumerators unfamiliar with their language.

Still, the main characteristics of the Russo household are consistent across five censuses from 1880 through 1905 (Figure 1).¹⁶ In the first of these, the family lived in Belle Prairie, about five miles north-northeast of Little Falls, and the

surname is spelled Russeau, a variation that is understandable given the number of French Canadians in the area.¹⁷ The household included Italian-born Joseph and Christina; two children, Josena, age ten, and Pascal, age seven — born in Italy; and three — Tressina, Louis, and Emelie, a nickname for Amelia — all born in Minnesota between 1874 and 1879. None could read or write English.

By 1885, the family had settled in Little Falls and had two more children, Nellie and Charles.¹⁸ With the 1890 federal census destroyed by fire, the next available is the 1895 Minnesota state census. By this time, another daughter, Racinea, a misspelling of Rosina based on the French female given name Racine (root), had been born, and the census indicated Joseph had lived in Minnesota for twenty-two years and in the same enumeration district for twelve.¹⁹ This places his arrival in the state at about 1873 and in Little Falls about ten years later.

In 1900, just the two youngest children, both female, were living with their parents.²⁰ By 1905, Rose, sixteen, was the only child still at home. This is the one Russo household documented in Morrison County censuses during this period; people of Italian birth were a tiny ethnic minority there at the time.²²

The U.S. and Minnesota censuses provide clues for locating Joseph and Christina’s births and marriage in Italian records.

14 Nicholas and Amelia Priley grave marker, Calvary Cemetery, Duluth, Minn.; digital image by Jeanne (Priley) McLean taken 30 August 2018. Also, Contributor 47734262, *Find A Grave*, database and images (<https://www.findagrave.com> : accessed 30 August 2018), memorial no. 180928615 for Amelia Priley (1878–1939), Calvary Cemetery, Duluth, St. Louis County, Minn.

15 “Mrs. Nicholas Priley,” *Duluth News Tribune* (Duluth, MN), 25 July 1939, vol. 71, no. 69, p. 12, col. 3; digital image from microfilm provided 19 November 2018 by the Kathryn A. Martin Library, University of Minn., Duluth.

16 See footnotes for source citations for Figure 1.

17 1880 U.S. Census, Morrison County, Minnesota, population schedule, Belle Prairie, p. 14 (penned) B (stamped), dwelling 100, family 107, Joseph Russeau household; digital image, *Ancestry* (accessed 5 June 2016); citing FHL microfilm 1254626 and NARA microfilm publication T9. Devoted to the early settlement of Morrison County, chapter IV of Fuller’s *History of Morrison and Todd counties*, includes a section by Arthur Lamonthe [sic], himself a French Canadian from Québec, describing the arrival of French pioneers to the county, including many who settled in Belle Prairie and Little Falls (pp. 68–72).

18 1885 Minnesota state census, Morrison County, population schedule, Little Falls, p. 16 (penned), 201 (penned upper right), family 142, Joseph Russo household; digital image, *Ancestry* (accessed 5 June 2016); citing Minnesota Historical Society microfilm, Minnesota State Population Census Schedules, 1865–1905; St. Paul, MN.

19 1895 Minnesota State Census, Morrison County, population schedule, Little Falls, p. 7 (penned), family 41, Joseph Russo household; digital image, *Ancestry* (accessed 5 June 2016); citing Minnesota Historical Society microfilm, *Minnesota State Population Census Schedules, 1865–1905*; St. Paul, MN.

20 1900 U.S. census, Morrison County, Minnesota, population schedule, Little Falls, p. 134 A (stamped), 64-01 (penned upper right), dwelling 209, family 243, Joseph Russo household; digital image, *Ancestry* (accessed 5 June 2016); citing FHL microfilm 1240776 and NARA microfilm publication T623.

21 1905 Minnesota state census, Morrison County, population schedule, Little Falls, sheet 30 (penned), 258 (penned upper left), lines 1196–98, Joseph Russo household; digital image, *Ancestry* (accessed 5 June 2016); citing Minnesota Historical Society microfilm, Minnesota State Population Census Schedules, 1865–1905; St. Paul, MN.

22 Population statistics from Morrison County show that the population grew from 816 in 1860, two years after Minnesota statehood, to 5,875 in 1880 and 22,891 in 1900. The population of Little Falls, the county seat, grew from 508 in 1880 to 5,774 in 1900. “Morrison County Statistical Data,” Morrison County Historical Society (<http://morrisoncountyhistory.org/mcstatistics.pdf> : accessed 23 February 2017). A search of U.S. censuses for these years on *Ancestry* and *FamilySearch* shows that few people born in Italy were documented there in 1880 and 1900.

What's in a Name?

Census Year Enumeration Date Residence	1880 10 June Belle Prairie	1885 13 May Little Falls	1895 [blank] June Little Falls	1900* 7 June Little Falls	1905 14–21 June Little Falls
SURNAME	RUSSEAU	ROSSO	RUSSO	RUSSO	RUSSO
Given Name Age at Last Birthday Birth Date** & Place U.S. Residency/ Naturalized Years Married***	Joseph 37 1842–43/Italy	Joseph 35 1849–50/Italy	Joseph 50 1844–45/Italy 22 yrs., MN (since 1873)	Joseph 50 April 1850/Italy 28 yrs. (since 1872)/ Na 30 yrs. (since 1870)	Joseph 55 1849–50/Italy 24 yrs., MN (since 1881)
Given Name Age at Last Birthday Birth Date** & Place U.S. Residency/ Naturalized Years Married*** No. of Children/ No. Living	Christina 33 1846 – 47/Italy	Christine 30 1854 – 55/Italy	Christina 37 1857 – 58/Italy	Marie C. 50 March 1850/Italy 28 yrs. (since 1872)/ Na 30 yrs. (since 1870) 9 children/ 7 living	Christina 55 1849 – 50/Italy 24 yrs., MN (since 1881)
Given Name Age at Last Birthday Birth Date** & Place	Josena 10 1869 – 70/Italy	Rosina 14 1870 – 71/Italy			
Given Name Age at Last Birthday Birth Date** & Place	Pascal 7 1872 – 73/Italy	Pascal 12 1872 – 73/Italy			
Given Name Age at Last Birthday Birth Date** & Place	Tressina 5 1874 – 75/MN	Theresa 10 1874 – 75/MN			
Given Name Age at Last Birthday Birth Date** & Place	Louis 3 1876 – 77/MN	Louis 6 1878 – 79/MN			
Given Name Age at Last Birthday Birth Date** & Place	Emelie 1 1878 – 79/MN	Emily 7 1877 – 78/MN	Millie 17 1877 – 78/MN		
Given Name Age at Last Birthday Birth Date** & Place		Nellie 5 1879 – 80/MN	Lillie 14 1880 – 81/MN	Lucy 19 April 1881/MN	
Given Name Age at Last Birthday Birth Date** & Place		Charles 1 1883 – 84/MN	Charles 12 1882 – 83/MN		
Given Name Age at Last Birthday Birth Date** & Place			Racinea 6 1888 – 89/MN	Rosa 11 April 1889/MN	Rose 16 1888 – 89/MN
*Joseph and Christina's immigration year reported as 1872. **Birth year projected from enumeration date and age at last birthday for 1880–95 and 1905 censuses. ***Date of marriage projected from number of years married.					

Figure 1. U.S. Federal and Minnesota State Censuses for Joseph Russo Household, 1880–1905

While their ages in the censuses fluctuate widely, Joseph's birth might fall between 1842 and 1850 and Christina's between 1846 and 1858, perhaps earlier.²³ Also, from the number of years they were married as recorded on the 1900 census, their wedding occurred about 1870.²⁴ And if Rosina was their oldest at age ten in 1880, they were likely married in 1870 or earlier.²⁵ Italian marriage records contain evidence of the bride and groom's birthdates, so finding this record would help in locating birth records, corroborating surnames, and confirming their children's identities.²⁶

Projected birthdates and places for the Russo children are more consistent than those for their parents. Just the two

oldest children, Rosina and Pasquale, were reported as born in Italy. The others, including Millie, were listed as native Minnesotans. From these censuses, birthdates can be projected for the younger children and a search conducted for birth records for them and any other children not in the censuses.

Figure 2 summarizes evidence from the Morrison County birth register. Some entries correlate directly with children listed in the censuses.²⁷ Jonadab Armenia and Joseph, whose births appear in the register, are absent from the censuses. No birth records were found for Theresa or Millie.

Child's Name & Gender	Birth Date & Place	Date Filed & Certificate No.	Father's Name & Birthplace	Mother's Name & Birthplace	Corresponds to Census Records
Louis RUSO Male	15 Sep 1877 Belle Prairie Township	10 Dec 1877 A-34-20	Joseph RUSO Itali	Custeno ____ Itali	Louis Projected: 1876-79
Jonadab Armenia RUSO Male	24 Nov 1878 Belle Prairie Township	28 Dec 1878 A-46-19	Joseph RUSO Italy	Christina ____ Italy	NO RECORD FOUND
Petronille RUSSO Female	15 Apr 1881 Belle Prairie Township	24 Dec 1881 A-76-11	Joseph RUSSO Italy	Christina ____ Italy	Nellie/Lillie/Lucy Projected: 1879-81
Charles ROUSSEAU Male	24 Apr 1884 City of Little Falls	1 Jun 1884 A-105-5	Joe ROUSSEAU Italy	Christine ____ Italy	Charles Projected: 1882-84
Joseph RUSSO Male	2 May 1886 City of Little Falls	8 Jan 1887 A-134-37	Joseph Italy	Christina ____ Italy	NO RECORD FOUND
____ Rosso Female	5 Apr 1889 City of Little Falls	5 Apr 1889 A-169-102	Joseph ROSSO Italy	Cristina GILARDI Italy	Rosa Projected: 1888-89

Figure 2: Morrison County Birth Records for Children of Joseph and Christina Russo

23 It was common in this period of mass migration from the poorer regions of southern Italy for many immigrants to be illiterate and have an imprecise knowledge of their age and year of immigration. At times, they may have thought it an advantage to appear younger or older. See Holtz, *Italian Genealogy*, 36. Also, in the chapter on census records in Loretto Dennis Szucs and Sandra Hargreaves Luebking, eds., *The Source: A Guidebook to American Genealogy*, 3rd ed. (Provo, Utah: Ancestry, 2006), 160–161, Szucs and Matthew Wright address the unreliability of some census data more broadly: “There were and still are many people who simply do not trust the government’s motives. Many citizens have worried that their answers to census questions might be used against them, particularly in regards to taxation, military service, and immigration. Some have simply refused to answer enumerators’ questions; others have lied . . . For a number of reasons, ages are always suspect in census records. Many people tend to be secretive about their age; women may have been particularly sensitive about revealing the truth . . . some honestly could not remember how old they were.”

24 1900 U.S. census, Morrison Co., Minn., pop. sch., Little Falls, p. 134 A (stamped),

64-01 (penned upper right), dwell. 209, fam. 243, Joseph Russo household.

25 1880 U.S. census, Morrison Co., Minn., pop. sch., Belle Prairie, p. 14 (penned) B (stamped), dwell. 100, fam. 107, Joseph Russeau household.

26 As early as 1809, when areas of southern Italy controlled by Napoleon began to require the civil registration of births, marriages, and deaths, the records were wonderfully thorough in the information captured. Beginning around 1831, groups of documents known as *processetti* included not only civil documentation of the marriage and church sacrament (*atto di matrimonio*) but extracts of the bride and groom's birth records, ancestor's names and death records, and other supporting evidence. Trafford R. Cole, *Italian Genealogical Records: How to use Italian civil, ecclesiastical, and other records in family history research* (Provo, Utah: Ancestry Publishing, 1995), 75.

27 The first census following Jonadab's birth was in 1880, the first after Joseph's in 1890. Since these records were destroyed, the next available was 1895, so Joseph may have died between the 1890 and 1895 enumerations.

What's in a Name?

Italian Records

To locate vital records in Italy, one must first know where to look.²⁸ Joseph was naturalized at the District Court in Little Falls on 20 September 1893, but the record does not provide his town of birth.²⁹ Searches of ship passenger lists for a Giuseppe or Cristina Russo (or Gerardi) arriving in the U.S. or Canada produced only one candidate: Giuseppe Russi, musician, 36 (birth estimated at 1836), arriving in New York 9 December 1872.³⁰ But as is typical for early passenger lists, no town of origin was included.

Russo is currently one of the two most common Italian surnames, second only to its variant, Rossi, so searching without geographic parameters is impractical.³¹ Here, family lore provided a clue: Geraldine Rosso wrote that the family was from “Mariscovecchio in the province of Basilicata.”³² However, there is no town by this name in Basilicata or anywhere else in Italy. But in Potenza, one of Basilicata’s two provinces, there is a town by a similar name, Marsicovetere. Geraldine must have transposed the S and I, and in Italian, *vetere* and *vecchio* have the same meaning: “old.” A search of records in Marsicovetere found:³³

- Giuseppe Russo and Maria Cristina Gerardi were married in Marsicovetere, Potenza, Italy, on 24 De-

cember 1868.³⁴ Giuseppe was twenty-nine, a musician, and son of Pasquale (deceased) and Cristina Briglia. Maria Cristina Gerardi was twenty-three, a peasant, and daughter of Luigi (deceased) and Teresa Miraglia. From this, we can project their birthdates as 1839 (Giuseppe) and 1845 (Maria Cristina). Occupation as a musician is uncommon, so the 1872 passenger list entry found is almost certainly for our Giuseppe.

- Maria Cristina Gerardi was born in Marsicovetere on 8 October 1845 to Teresa Miraglia and Luigi Gerardi.³⁵
- Giuseppe was born in Marsicovetere on 12 December 1839, the son of Pasquale Russo and Cristina Briglia.³⁶

As anticipated, Pasquale and Louis, Joseph and Christina’s eldest sons, were named after their fathers, and Teresa, their second daughter, was named after Christina’s mother. The source of their first daughter’s name, Rosina, is unknown but may be discovered with more research. Rosa may be one of Cristina Briglia’s middle names, or they may have decided to call the girl after another relative.

Although the marriage record indicates a birth year of 1839 for our Giuseppe, a search was conducted of town records from 1850 backward as projected from the U.S. and Minnesota

28 Civil registration began in individual towns (*comuni*) in southern Italy under Napoleon in 1809 with copies sent to the provincial archives and regional courts. In 1870, there were 69 separate provinces in Italy, each with hundreds of villages and towns. (See Holtz, *Italian Genealogy*, 55–58, 65–69.) In the five regions, excluding Sicily, considered to be part of southern Italy – Abruzzo, Apulia, Basilicata, Calabria, and Campania – there are currently 1,654 *comuni*, from 131 in Basilicata, the most sparsely populated region, to 409 in Calabria, the toe of the Italian boot, and 551 in Campania, home to the city of Naples. See Provinces of Italy, *Wikipedia* (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Provinces_of_Italy : accessed 24 February 2017).

29 Morrison County, Minnesota, Naturalization Records, Final Papers 1875–96, vol. B, p. 519, Joseph Russo, naturalized 20 September 1893; citing microfilm reel 3, code 8, Iron Range Research Center, Chisholm, Minnesota. We can assume this is our Joseph since no one else by that name appears in county documents during this period.

30 Women in Italy retained their original surnames after marriage, so searches were made for Gerardi as well as Russo, with variant spellings and wildcards. Manifest, S.S. *Italy*, December 1872, line 23 (not numbered), Giuseppe Russi, “New York, Passenger Lists, 1820–1957,” digital images, *Ancestry* (accessed 8 February 2017), citing NARA microfilm serial M237, roll 370. Others were ruled out because of their ages, ethnicities, places of origin (e.g., Gerhard from Germany or Russo from Sicily), or occupations (Giuseppe Russo, aged 35, miner, who also arrived in December 1872). None of these listings could be linked to our Giuseppe Russo

through an adjacent entry for a Cristina or Maria, Pasquale, or Rosa, and none provided a previous residence.

31 One of the surnames describing physical characteristics, in this case “red” or “ruddy,” Russo occurs throughout Italy, but more so in the south, with more than 31,000 families currently having the name. Rossi, another version of the name found in higher concentrations in the north, claims close to 46,000 families. See www.cognomix.it/mappe-dei-cognomi-italiani/. Distribution of these surnames in earlier Italian records since 1809 shows a similar prevalence.

32 Geraldine Rosso to “Paul, Tom, Mary and Bill,” no date.

33 Google Maps (<https://www.google.com/maps> : accessed 7 June 2017)

34 Marsicovetere, Potenza, “Indice Annuale Matrimoni, 1868” and “Atti di Matrimonio, 1868”: index entry and record 35, Giuseppe Russo and Maria Cristina Gerardi, from “Potenza, Basilicata, Italy, Civil Registration Records, 1861-1938,” *Ancestry* (accessed 16 April 2016), citing “Tribunali di Lagonegro e Potenza, Italy, Civil Registration Records, 1866-1938.”

35 Marsicovetere, Potenza, “Atti di Nascita, 1845”: index entry and record 63, Maria Cristina Gerardi. *Antenati* (<http://antenati.san.beniculturali.it> : accessed 16 April 2016).

36 Marsicovetere, Potenza, “Atti di Nascita, 1839”: index entry and record 110, Russo Giuseppe; *Antenati* (<http://antenati.san.beniculturali.it> : accessed 16 April 2016).

censuses. It found births in the town for four infants named Giuseppe (or compounds of Giuseppe) Russo between 1839 and 1847. That the infant born in 1839 is the correct one is confirmed not only by the record's consistency with our Giuseppe's age at marriage, but also because this Giuseppe is the only one with a father named Pasquale, after whom his first son was named.

It is common to find many of the older children in the same generation of a family in Italy sharing the same name, since first-born sons were traditionally named after their paternal grandfather and second-born sons after their maternal grandfather, with a comparable pattern for daughters. Further research might find that these other Giuseppe Russos are first cousins or other close relatives. Research into earlier birth records led to discovery of another Giuseppe born to Pasquale Russo and Cristina Briglia who had died in the town on 27 October 1835 at age five. In the spot for profession, the clerk wrote poignantly *fanciullo*, “boy.”³⁷

U.S. and Minnesota censuses show that two of the Russo children were born in Italy: Rosina (1869 – 1871) and Pasquale (1872 – 1873). Civil birth records created in Marsicovetere were found for two children of Giuseppe and Maria Cristina: Rosa, born 5 October 1869,³⁸ and Pasquale, born 14 November 1872.³⁹ Birth records from 1868 through 1878 contained no other children for the couple, so they must have left Marsicovetere soon after Pasquale's birth, confirming that the Giuseppe Russo, musician, who reached New York in December 1872 was most likely Rosa and Pasquale's – and eventually Amelia's – father.

Where Is Amelia? Reconciling Evidence

So, where is Amelia's birth record? Several sources provide direct evidence for her birth date and location, most with

secondary information – family documents, the “Minor's Permission to Marry” testimony from her parents, the newspaper marriage announcement stating that she “was born and raised in Morrison County,” census records uniformly affirming her birth in Minnesota between 1877 and 1879, the death certificate with 23 November 1878 and Little Falls, and her obituary and grave marker. This evidence points consistently to Amelia's birth in Morrison County, and the 1880 Belle Prairie census implies that she was born there, before the Russos moved to Little Falls. As for her birthdate, the evidence points consistently to 1878, but records conflict on the month: June in her parents' statement for her marriage, November in the 1900 census and death certificate.⁴⁰ The latter states an exact date, 23 November, but the information is secondary. Her parents' testimony in 1895 is primary information, but memory for dates was often vague for illiterate Italian immigrants, or they might have had a motive for making her a little older to secure her marriage license.

There are also issues still to resolve in the composition of the Russo household. Figure 3 correlates evidence from the birth records with that from the censuses. For six of the children, the evidence is consistent, but for others, it is not. What happened to Jonadab and Joseph, who have birth records but aren't in the censuses?

In the 1900 and 1910 censuses, two questions were asked about women: the number of children borne and how many of them were living. In both censuses, Christina allegedly had nine children, seven living.⁴¹ But a tally of Russo children from a combination of these records totals ten. The Morrison County Recorder found no death records for any of these children, so we must look to other evidence.

37 Marsicovetere, Potenza, “Atti di Morte, 1835”: record 139 for Giuseppe Russo. *Antenati* (<http://antenati.san.beniculturali.it> : accessed 8 May 2016).

38 Marsicovetere, Potenza, “Atti di Nascita, 1869”: record 86, Rosa Russo. *Ancestry* (accessed 23 April 2016), citing *Tribunali di Lagonegro e Potenza, Italy, Civil Registration Records, 1866-1938*.

39 Marsicovetere, Potenza, “Atti di nascita, 1872”: record 98, Pasquale Russo. *Ancestry* (accessed 23 April 2016), citing *Tribunali di Lagonegro e Potenza, Italy, Civil Registration Records, 1866-1938*.

40 1900 U.S. census, Morrison Co., Minn., pop. sch., Little Falls, p. 134 A (stamped), 64-01 (penned upper right), dwell. 209, fam. 243, Joseph Russo household.

41 1910 U.S. Census, St. Louis Co., Minn., population schedule, sheet 16A (penned), dwell. (illegible), fam. (illegible), Joseph and Christine Russo.

What's in a Name?

Birth Order	Child's Name & Gender from Combined Evidence	Name in Birth Record	Birth Date & Place from Birth Record	Birth Date & Place from Census Records
		DIRECT EVIDENCE		DIRECT OR NEGATIVE EVIDENCE
1.	Rosa Female	Rosa RUSSO	5 Oct 1869 Marsicovetere, Italy	Projected: 1869 – 71, Italy Died before the birth of the second Rosa (#10).
2.	Pasquale/Pascal Male	Pasquale RUSSO	14 Nov 1872 Marsicovetere, Italy	Projected: 1872–73, Italy
3.	Theresa/Mary ROSSO Female	NO RECORD (Negative finding)		Projected: 1875, Minnesota
4.	Louis Male	Louis RUSO	15 Sep 1877 Belle Prairie Township, MN	Projected: 1876–79, Minnesota
5.	Amelia/Millie ROSSO Female	NO RECORD (Negative finding)		Projected: 1877–79, Minnesota
6.	Jonadab Armenia Male	Jonadab Armenia RUSO	24 Nov 1878 Belle Prairie Township	NOT IN 1880 OR LATER CENSUSES (Negative Evidence)
7.	Petronille/Nellie/Lillie/Lucy Female	Petronille RUSSO	15 Apr 1881 Belle Prairie Township, MN	Projected: 1879–81, Minnesota
8.	Charles Male	Charles ROUSSEAU	24 Apr 1884 City of Little Falls, MN	Projected: 1882–84, Minnesota
9.	Joseph Male	Joseph RUSSO	2 May 1886 City of Little Falls, MN	NOT IN 1895 OR LATER CENSUSES (Negative Evidence)
10.	Rosa Female	___ ROSSO	5 Apr 1889 City of Little Falls, MN	Projected: 1888–89, Minnesota

Figure 3: Correlation of Evidence for Births of Russo Children

The first Rosa died before the second was born in 1889. Who was the other child who died before 1900, and how do we explain the total of ten children in Figure 3? Theresa, who was also called Mary, last appears in the Rosso household

in the 1885 census. She moved to Duluth after her 1890 marriage.⁴² Amelia lived with her parents until her 1895 marriage and died in 1939.⁴³ This leaves Jonadab and Joseph. If one of them was the second child to die by 1900, what happened to the other?

42 See, for example, Mary Rosso listed as a pupil in “Little Falls Public Schools,” *Little Falls Transcript* (Little Falls, Minn.), 9 October 1885, p. 6, col. 2; digital image, *GenealogyBank*, (<https://www.genealogybank.com> : accessed 21 November 2018); her marriage in Minnesota, Marriage Records, book D, 174, “Application for and Marriage License Record,” Carlo Mainelle and Mary Rosso; Morrison County Recorder, Little Falls; and 1910 U.S. Census,

St. Louis County, Minnesota, population schedule, Duluth, sheet 16A (penned), 601 (penned upper right), dwelling (illegible), family (illegible), Carlo Manilla household; digital image, *Ancestry* (accessed 5 June 2016); citing FHL microfilm 1374738 and NARA microfilm publication T624, where Joseph and Christina appear as father- and mother-in-law of Mary’s husband, Carlo.

43 Minnesota death certificate no. 27508 (1939), Amelia Priley.

This is where scrutinizing an unexpected name becomes pivotal to problem solving. Joseph is, of course, a common name, and he was certainly named after his father. But Jonadab Armenia, used exclusively for males, is extremely rare, a highly unlikely choice for Italian immigrant parents.⁴⁴ Armenia appears occasionally in late 19th century censuses, twenty females (one in Belle Prairie) in the 1800 U.S. census, one male born in Canada in 1879.

Amelia was certainly born in 1878, perhaps in June or November. But how can this be, given that county birth records specify September 1877 for Louis' birth and November 1878 for Jonadab's? Not registering Theresa's birth, the first in America, is understandable, but failing to register Amelia's a year after Louis' and before a consecutive string of four others is odd.

The most plausible explanation is that the clerk recording Jonadab's birth misunderstood the informant, most likely Joseph, and an unfamiliar Italian given name. In 1878, Joseph was a recent immigrant, unable to read or write, speaking a local Italian dialect in a community with few Italians. Certainly, he and Christina would have given the child an Italian name, something that sounded like Jonadab Armenia – perhaps Gianetta Amelia or Gianettamelia.⁴⁵ The certificate for Jonadab is most likely for Amelia, even though Amelia was not male. Perhaps the clerk misunderstood the word for the infant's gender if it was given in Italian – *bambina*, not *bambino*. Or maybe he heard "Jonadab" and assumed male. Whatever the reason for the incongruous gender, this explanation is consistent with the number of Christina's nine children still living in 1900 and 1910, leaving two, the first Rosina and Joseph, to have died.

Baptismal and burial records for either Amelia or Jonadab, if they exist, should help resolve this dilemma. A request to St. Mary's Church in Little Falls for these records remains pending.

Conclusion

Variations in the spelling of names occur often in historic records, but most are easily explained. Solving more baffling questions about names, such as Mariscovecchio and Jonadab Armenia in this case, often requires more ingenuity. Following the Genealogical Proof Standard from reasonably exhaustive research to analysis and correlation of evidence is key to resolving such conflicts. With a family that has migrated from a place with another language, knowledge of the original language and sounding out a problematic name may lead to a solution.

Lesley K. Cafarelli came to Minneapolis in 1977 to teach classics at the University of Minnesota and served in leadership positions for the University, Minnesota Private Colleges, and a nonprofit educational consortium. Her genealogical interests began with a search to find the family her grandmother had left behind in Russia and who disappeared during the Holocaust. Sparked during a 1994 trip to the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, her research led to a joyful reunion with survivors and their descendants in Israel in 2000 and collaboration on a family tree with a Russian cousin. Since retiring, Lesley has incorporated DNA in her work and is researching her husband's varied European ancestry, including immigration during the 17th – 19th centuries and migration from the East Coast into the pioneer Midwest. Lesley completed the ProGen Study Program and is working on her portfolio for certification.

44 An *Ancestry* search returned just two people with this name in U.S. census records from 1790 to 1940; it appears a little more often in British and Australian censuses. Jonadab, from Hebrew יִנְדָב, is a contraction of יְהוֹנָדָב, Jehonadab, meaning something along the lines of "inspired by G-d." Two men by this name appear briefly in the Hebrew Bible, one at 2 Samuel 13:3 and the other at 2 Kings 10:15.

45 See <https://script.byu.edu/Documents/Nomi-Femminili.pdf>. Gianetta is a diminutive of Gianna. For the parents' illiteracy, see 1880 U.S. Census, Morrison Co., Minn., pop. sch., p. 14 (penned) B (stamped), dwell. 100, fam. 107, Joseph and Christina Russeau.

Johannes Abrahamson, Swedish Immigrant and Civil War Soldier

Mary Jo Eggers

This has been an interesting journey tracing the ancestry of my great-grandfather, Johannes Abrahamson. I'm finding information slowly but surely about him, but my journey with him is far from over. Our journey together started when I received a picture of him several years ago from my mother, his granddaughter, who found the picture among several family letters. He is dressed in his Civil War uniform sitting erect on a straight-back chair with a drawn, yet serious, expression on his face.

Johannes was born 19 December 1831 in Tegnaby Parish, Kronoberg, Sweden, the third of fourteen children born to Abram Svensson and Martha Pettersdotter.¹ He emigrated 20 March 1854 from Tegnaby Parish to North America.² He may have come directly to Minnesota, but we know he was in New Sweden, Nicollet County, Minnesota, at least by May of 1858 when he signed his name a founding member of the Scandian Grove Lutheran Church, New Sweden, Nicollet County, Minnesota.³

Johannes enlisted as a Private in December 1861 for a three-year term in Company H, of the 4th Minnesota Infantry.⁴ He was 33 years old and single, and possibly was farming at that time. In a letter dated 24 December 1864, he wrote to his future wife, Ingar Trulsdotter, that the war was horrific.⁵ They had just marched from Allatoona to Atlanta, Georgia, a distance of 40 miles, which was their longest march since the war began.

His pay stubs indicate he was to receive pay every two months, but he did not always take his pay. One pay stub indicates he received \$201, a handsome sum of money for the time. Another



Johannes Abrahamson. Photo courtesy of Mary Jo Eggers.

1 Tegnaby Parish, (Kronoberg County, Sweden), Födelse- och Dopbok (Birth and Baptism Book), 1820-1854, vol. CI:2, p. 18, birth no. 14, 19 December 1831, Johannes [Abramsson]; digital images by subscription, *ArkivDigital* (<http://www.arkivdigital.net> : accessed 7 November 2018), AID #v32435.b13.s18.

2 Hemmesjo med Tegnaby Parish, (Kronoberg County, Sweden), In- och utflyttningslandgd (Moving In and Out Records), 1826-1860, vol. BI:1, p. 127, Moving Out Record no. 2, 20 March 1854, Johannes Abrahamsson; digital images by subscription, *ArkivDigital* (<http://www.arkivdigital.net> : accessed 7 November 2018), AID #v30642.b73.s127.

3 Scandian Grove Lutheran Church (Scandian Grove, Nicollet, Minnesota) "U.S., Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Swedish American Church Records, 1800-1946." p. 2, Founding Church Members 30 May 1858, digital images, *Ancestry* (accessed 17 November 2018), image 5.

4 Compiled service record, John Abraham, Pvt., Co. H, 4th Minnesota Inf.; Carded Records, Volunteer Organizations, Civil War; Record Group 94: Records of the Adjutant General's Office, 1780-1917; National Archives, Washington, D.C.

5 Johannes Abrahamson (Savannah, Georgia) to Inger Persson Trulsdotter, letter, 24 December 1864; Privately held by Mary Jo Eggers, [Address for Private Use.] Florida, 2018.

stub shows he was absent from duty when he was hospitalized for 40 days at Grant U.S. General Hospital, Willetts Point, New York Harbor. He returned to duty and was discharged with a disability 28 June 1865, with the rank of a corporal.

After his discharge Johannes returned to the Nicollet County where his future wife Ingar Trulsdotter lived. They were married 4 October 1865 in St. Peter, Nicollet County, Minnesota.⁶ They had two children together, Gustaf Wilhelm, born 15 August 1866, and Johanna Maria, born 21 December 1868.⁷ Johannes lived only a year after Johanna was born, dying 12 July 1869 from chronic rheumatism and having suffered from various ailments since his Civil War experiences.⁸

This summary just scratches the surface of what might be learned about Johannes. Future research might include learning the history of his military regiment, pursuing his ancestry in Sweden, determining if any of his many siblings came to

America, finding if he owned any land, learning how he came to be in New Sweden in the first place, and much more.

My travels with Johannes all started from a simple, yet poignant picture, but it looks like the road ahead will be quite interesting.

Mary Jo Eggers of Ocala, Florida, is the daughter of second generation Swedish Americans in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Her great-grandfather, Johannes, has presented her most challenging research challenge. Her research journey has taken her to Salt Lake City with the Swedish American Genealogist of Augustana College, Rock Island, Illinois. On the Salt Lake City trip, she met another researcher who also had great-grandparents in the Scandian Grove Lutheran Church at the same time as Johannes.

6 Nicollet County, Minnesota, Marriages vol. B (1865-1876) : p. 28, Johan Abraham to Ingar T. Pehrson, 7 October 1865; digital image, "Minnesota, County Marriages, 1860-1949," *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org> : accessed 17 November 2018), DGS # 0051913181> image 133.

7 Scandian Grove Lutheran Church (Scandian Grove, Nicollet, Minnesota) "U.S., Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Swedish American Church Records, 1800-1946." p. 18, Church Register, digital images, *Ancestry* (accessed 17 November 2018), image 289.

8 Ibid.

Finding John Lundenburg

Larry B. Hlavsa

Sometimes solving a family mystery involves setting aside old theories and developing new ones. The disappearance of Moravian-born Johann Lundenburg long baffled our family. Conflicting information made discovering his fate all the more challenging.

Family records indicate Johann wrote just one letter from Cleveland to his family in Moravia in mid-1903, but then he disappeared.¹ What happened to him after he reached Cleveland was the subject of much family speculation. Had he been waylaid and murdered? Did he run away with another woman? Had he vanished into the great North American continent? Since the family regarded the latter two options as uncharacteristic of John, a violent, possibly unrecorded death seemed the most likely explanation. Would the family ever learn John's true fate?

Johann Lundenburg was born on 26 December 1876 in Veseli, Moravia, now part of the Czech Republic. He was the second oldest of thirteen children, and the oldest of the three boys and three girls who survived to adulthood. Johann was the first of his family to emigrate to America.² When he went to the United States he left behind a wife, parents, and siblings. His intent was to earn enough money to send for his wife so they could begin a new life together in a new world.

Johann landed in Baltimore, Maryland, on 6 April 1903 aboard the Norddeutscher Lloyd steamer *Main* which had sailed from Bremen, Germany, some eighteen days earlier.³ The voyage was reported by the captain to be "a most disagreeable passage," characterized by "heavy gales...sweeping seas and high swells... with squalls of rain, hail and snow." Captain van Borell added to his report "a number of large and small icebergs were in view."

Two people died during the voyage, though their causes of death were not noted. Nonetheless, 2,307 passengers arrived; all but twelve were immigrants. Of this number, 2,200 of the passengers were men. It was the second largest number of immigrants to have arrived in America on one ship until that time.

The *Main's* passenger manifest noted Johann was a locksmith from "Wesely," Moravia. "Wesely," or more accurately, "Wessely," is the German name of the Czech town now known as Veseli nad Moravou. The words "nad Moravou" distinguish it from another town named Veseli. The German spelling is no longer in use.

Sadly, due to the poor penmanship of the immigration official, the name and address of the person John planned to meet in Cleveland is indecipherable.⁵ As soon as he arrived in America, Johann anglicized his given name to John.

Certainly, in the early 1900s, tracking down a beloved son lost on a distant continent was not possible for a poor Moravian family, so John's disappearance remained a painful mystery. Ten years after his emigration, apparently to resolve some inheritance issues, John was declared legally dead by a Moravian district court.⁶ Except to the family that loved him, the memory of John Lundenburg faded quickly. Decades passed, and then generations.

The mystery of John Lundenburg's disappearance led to examining the Cleveland *Plaindealer*, available at *Newsbank.com*. This search proved unfruitful.

Sometimes thinking about a problem from a different angle helps. What if John simply died of an illness? What if he never left Cleveland? An online index for Cleveland cemeteries listed

1 Obituary of Anton Lundenburg, typed manuscript, 10 February 1964; author's collection. Upon the death of his youngest brother, Anton Lundenburg, Jacob Lundenburg relayed this information to his daughter Evelyn, who recorded it in a typewritten page to accompany the obituary.

2 Ibid.

3 "Baltimore, Passenger Lists, 1820-1964," manifest, SS Main, 6 April 1903, p. 147, entry #19 for Johann Lundenburg [indexed "Limdenburg], (The Czech language does not have umlauts.); *Ancestry* (https://www.ancestry.com/interactive/8679/mdt844_35-0299? : accessed 9 August 2018).

4 *The Baltimore [Maryland] Sun*, "The Main Brings 2507, Large Number of Immigrants Arrive - Two Deaths on Trip," 7 April 1903, p 7, col 3;

digital image, *Newspapers.com* (<https://www.newspapers.com> : accessed 5 August 2018).

5 "Baltimore, Passenger Lists, 1820-1964," manifest, SS *Main*, 1903.

6 On a 2009 trip to Veseli, Moravia, the author's first cousin, Anjana Pettigrew, found a notation in the town records indicating Johann Lundenburg was declared legally dead as of 31 December 1913.

7 City of Cleveland, Ohio, Department of Parks and Public Property, Division of Cemeteries, "Register of Internments, 1903, p 190, John Lunderburg; digital image, USGenWeb Project (<http://usgenwebsites.org/OHCuyahoga/Cemeteries> : accessed 11 Feb 2017).

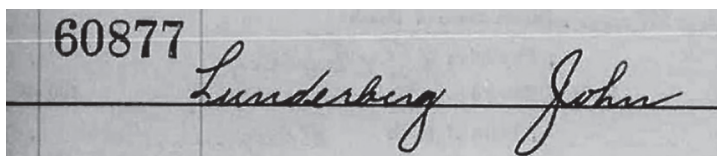
no John Lundenburg, but there was a John Lunderberg who died of pulmonary tuberculosis on 26 August 1903 and was buried in Woodland Cemetery.⁷

This John Lunderberg was reported to be 26 years old – the same age John Lundenburg would have been. He was also Bohemian like John Lundenburg. It is unlikely John Lunderberg and John Lundenburg of the same age and from the same country would be in Cleveland at the same time. It looked as if our long-lost great-uncle died in Cleveland just five months after arriving in America.

Twelve points of evidence support a conclusion that there was no John Lunderberg, and that the man buried in Woodland Cemetery was, in fact, my Bohemian great-uncle.

1) In 1964, Jacob P. Lundenburg wrote in an unpublished autobiography that “his eldest brother John...after sending his folks in [Moravia] one letter from Cleveland [in 1903] ...disappeared from sight. They never heard from him again.”⁸

2) The Cleveland Register of Interments for 1903 says John Lunderberg was “Bohemian.”⁹ However, the surname Lunderberg is not Bohemian, but rather Scandinavian, mostly Swedish.¹⁰ A search of various Czech surname databases found no modern-day usage of the surname Lunderberg anywhere in the Czech Republic.¹¹



Register of Deaths, Cuyahoga County, Ohio, entry 60877, John Lundenburg/Lunderberg.

3) A thorough search of *Ancestry* and other genealogical databases found no census, immigration, city directory, birth or death records for a John Lunderberg in Cleveland in 1903. No Lunderberg within five years of the expected age was found.

4) The 31 July 1903 issue of *The Owosso [Michigan] Times* stated, “John Lundenberg, of Cleveland, a beet weeder for the Owosso Sugar Company, has been sent home on account of illness.”¹² In this case the only incorrect letter in the spelling of John’s name is an “e” in place of the “u” – a common misspelling of the suffix “-burg.” Incidentally, Mr. Lundenberg must have been very ill to have been sent 200 miles home by his employer.

5) There were beet farms in the 1900s in Vlkos, Kelcany, just eleven miles from Veseli, Moravia, where John Lundenburg grew up. In fact, John’s younger brother, Jacob, was known to have worked as a machinist at one of these farms after completing his apprenticeship in Vienna in 1900. It is not difficult to imagine John Lundenburg also worked on one of these farms before his emigration, and he found similar work in America.¹³

6) Based on family stories and John’s work as a laborer, it can be assumed John Lundenburg spoke no English upon his arrival in America, and probably would not have learned much during his first five months here. His ability to communicate with doctors or other English speakers would likely have been quite limited.

7) The Cuyahoga County death register indicates John Lunderberg was treated and died at Cleveland City Hospital

8 Jacob P. Lundenburg, unpublished autobiography, 1962; author’s possession.

9 “Ohio, Cleveland Cemetery Interment Records, 1824-2001,” John Lunderberg; database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org> : accessed 9 August 2018) image 193, citing East Cuyahoga County Genealogical Society, Lyndhurst.

10 A search of *Ancestry* for the surname “Lunderberg” on 14 February 2017 listing the nativity of individuals: Swedish (22), German (2), Norwegian (1), Danish

(1) and Finish (1). There was no “Lunderberg” listed with Bohemian or Czech nativity.

11 A Czech surname database with more than 400,000 unique Czech surnames shows no entries for “Lunderberg;” database, *Kde Jsme* (<http://www.KdeJsme.cz>).

12 *The Owosso [Michigan] Times*, 31 July 1903, p 5, col 4, news item; digital image, *Chronicling America* (<https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov> : accessed 5 August 2018).

13 Jacob P. Lundenburg, unpublished autobiography.

Finding John Lundenburg

and Infirmary.¹⁴ In 1903, Cleveland City Hospital was the “first of municipalities to establish a separate Hospital for the treatment of tubercular cases.”¹⁵ As a recent immigrant working as a beet weeder, John Lundenburg would not have had much money and his treatment at such a hospital when he returned from Owosso, Michigan, makes sense.

8) The death register for the city of Cleveland Department of Health includes Bohemia-born John Lundenberg, who died on 26 August 1903.¹⁶

9) Both death registers reported John Lunderberg/Lundenberg died of pulmonary tuberculosis, a highly communicable disease. He was probably disallowed contact with his Bohemian friends, making communication with doctors more difficult. John might have avoided writing home for fear of needlessly worrying his wife and family. As his illness progressed, he may not have been able to write or had anyone to do so for him. In any case, his family received no notice of his illness or death.

10) Both death registers reported John Lunderberg/Lundenberg lived at 1365 Broadway. The 1904 Cleveland city directory indicates this was the address of two Bohemians, William A. Sklenicka and Vaclav Jirak.¹⁷ Moreover, the property at this address was on the same block as the C.S.P.S. (Česko-Slovanský Podporující Spolek) Hall at 1405 Broadway, home for several Bohemian Organizations.¹⁸

11) Misspelling of surnames is common. The misspelling or misreading of Lundenburg as Lunderberg is not surprising.

12) The handwritten entry in the death register for John Lunderberg can as easily be interpreted as John Lundenburg.¹⁹ In fact, the Cleveland city cemeteries index

at USGenWeb states, “The records from which this index was created were typed by the Cemetery personnel. It appears that they were typed from the original records, likely in the 1930s. For this reason, much of the information was subject to interpretation of handwriting and meaning from various sources.”²⁰

Conclusion

From the evidence cited, it is apparent that Bohemian John Lundenburg was in Cleveland in 1903, where he lived with two other Bohemians. He was twenty-six years old at the time of his death and sick enough in August of 1903 to be sent 200 miles back to Cleveland by the Owosso Sugar Company, his employer in Michigan. We know John wrote one letter from Cleveland in 1903 to his family in Moravia. No documentary evidence of a man of the appropriate age named “John Lunderberg” has been found in census, birth, immigration, or other records. The handwritten death record for “John Lunderberg” could just as easily be interpreted as “John Lundenburg.” We are reasonably certain the surname “Lunderberg” is not Bohemian, yet the death record indicates the deceased was Bohemian. We know John Lundenburg disappeared in Cleveland in 1903 and was never heard from again. In summary, there is no evidence a John Lunderberg existed in Cleveland in 1903, but many pieces of evidence indicate John Lundenburg did.

In late 2017, the author’s first cousin, Anjana Pettigrew, great-niece of Johann Lundenburg, contacted Woodland Cemetery in Cleveland, Ohio. The cemetery agreed to file a paper by this author in their records citing the evidence of the mis-identification of John Lundenburg. The cemetery

14 “Ohio, County Death Records, 1840-2001,” John Lunderburg; database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org> : accessed 9 August 2018), citing Cuyahoga County, Ohio, Death Records 1902-1903, vol. 14, image 332.

15 Wright, Howell, Superintendent, Department of Public Welfare of the City of Cleveland, *Cleveland City Hospital: Its History, Its Functions, Its Possibilities*, Monograph Series No. 2, Division of Research and Publicity, July 1914, p 10.

16 Cleveland Department of Health, “Records of Deaths, 1903,” p. 257, no. 27, John Lundenburg; digital image, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org> : accessed 25 November 2018), FHL film 4,017,656, item 268.

17 “U.S. City Directories, 1822-1995,” Cleveland, Ohio, City Directory, 1903, pps 648, 1211; digital images, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 10 August 2018).

18 *Ibid.*, pps. 1778-1779.

19 “Ohio, County Death Records, 1840-2001.”

20 City of Cleveland, Ohio, Department of Parks and Public Property, Division of Cemeteries, “Register of Interments, 1903.



John Lundenburg grave marker, Woodland Cemetery, Cleveland, Ohio.

also agreed to the placement of a tombstone on the grave, identifying it as that of John Lundenburg.

In July 2018, a tombstone was placed on the grave of John Lundenburg by Anjana Pettigrew and her family. Since John's burial in 1903 was in the indigent's section of Woodland Cemetery, his grave is one of the few in that section bearing a marker.

The fate of Bohemian immigrant John Lundenburg, unknown for nearly 120 years, was finally revealed through the use of online resources.

Postscript

John Lundenburg's brother, Jacob Lundenburg (1885-1966), emigrated to America in 1907. After short stays in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and Lidgerwood, North Dakota, Jacob settled in St. Paul, Minnesota, around 1910. There Jacob married, fathered three children, and worked for forty years on the Great Northern Railway. John's youngest brother, Anton Lundenburg (1891-1964), followed his two brothers to America in 1911 and went immediately to North Dakota. Anton remained a lifelong bachelor, working on farms for more than fifty years. The three Lundenburg sisters all remained in Moravia where they married and raised families.

Larry Hlavsa is a retired library director who now works on family history and other writing projects. He is currently preparing a history of his patrilineal line covering six hundred years of his Bohemian surname. Larry's database currently includes over 230 individuals named Hlavsa, the oldest being a Bohemian Lord and knight named Jan Hlavsa. Jan Hlavsa was killed during the Hussite Wars at the Battle of Malesova, 7 June 1424.

Browsing issues of your ancestral hometown daily or weekly newspaper will give you a flavor of the special excitement in the air as holidays approached 100 years ago. In November and December 1918, the horrors of war were still fresh in mind as Minnesota families anticipated Hanukkah and Christmas.

The Duluth Herald, December 20, 1918

A good example is the Friday evening December 20 edition of *The Duluth Herald*. A full-page display ad for The Glass Block, the city’s largest department store, captured the spirit. The ad expressed relief and budding optimism just a month after Armistice Day.

Noel de la Victoire! With confidence our stalwart men conquered the Hun. With confidence Duluth strove to meet the exigencies the war-weighted days brought forth. With confidence the happy crowds cram our aisles on the homestretch of Christmas shopping. So may we all with confidence face the future — you in your corner and we in ours — The Glass Block.¹

Another department store, Freimuth’s, proclaimed: “Today the world cries out more loudly for the Christmas Spirit than ever before. With the affairs of the universe at peace, Yuletide today comes refreshing and clean, strengthened by intense patriotic feeling.”²

No one had yet imagined Black Friday, but holiday shopping advertising was brisk throughout December. The Glass Block offered clearance sale prices on mahogany floor lamps (\$10.40), candelabra (\$4.80), trimmed hats (\$3.95), and serge, satin, jersey, taffeta, and Georgette gowns (\$18.50).

J. M. Gidding & Co. advertised 25 percent off on furs.³ The Leiser Co. had 500 blouses “never shown before.”⁴ Siegel Hardware advertised Westinghouse electric irons (\$4.68), electric toy trains (\$7.98), and tubular hockey and race skates, complete with shoes (\$8.48).⁵

Yet, many families were still waiting to be reunited with the soldier sons. A front-page headline reported “Transports Coming Fast.” The *Martha Washington* and *Mercury* had landed at Newport News with 3,720 men. Thousands more had just disembarked from the *Mallory* and *Manchuria* at New York. The December 20 newspaper still included new casualty lists, including hundreds of Minnesota and Wisconsin men wounded, killed, or missing in action.⁶ Mrs. Mary Page learned that her son, David, had died of pneumonia in October enroute overseas and had been buried at sea.⁷ The Sundholm family received better news — their son had been previously reported severely wounded, but the family had received a letter from him saying he was “getting along fine.”⁸

Historic newspapers are a window on the past. Whether or not your family is named, they will give you some flavor of the times.

1 *Duluth Herald*, 20 December 1918, p. 5; digital image, Minnesota Digital Newspaper Hub,

2 *Ibid.*, p. 4.

3 *Ibid.*, p. 2.

4 *Ibid.*, p. 3.

5 *Ibid.*, p. 10.

6 *Ibid.*, p. 7.

7 *Ibid.*, p. 12.

8 *Ibid.*

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Open House

March 30, 2019

*Co-hosted by Minnesota Genealogical Society,
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April 13, 2019
Minnesota Genealogy Center

Genealogy Problem-Solving 5-part course

Instructor: J. H. Fonkert, CG

First Meeting: February 23, 2019
Minnesota Genealogy Center

Other Class meetings: March 9 and 23; April 6 and 27

*For more information and registration details for all events and classes, watch
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