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The Family History of John Brandon Parks

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**The Family History of
John Brandon Parks
12 November 2016**

John Brandon Parks authored this family history as part of the course requirements for HIST 813 Seminar in American History: Family History offered online in Fall 2016 and was submitted to the Pittsburg State University [Digital Commons](#). Please contact the author directly with any questions or comments: parksj@usd231.com

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List of Direct Line Family Members

Generation One

- A1. John Brandon Parks (1981-)**
- A2. Stacey Ann Sperfslage Parks (1983-)**

Generation Two

- A1a. John David Parks (1956-)**
- A1b. Barbara Lynn Noonon Parks (1959-)**

Generation Three

- A1a1. John Jasper Parks (1919-1983)**
- A1a2. Jean Marie Bergner Parks (1926-1994)**
- A1b1. Hurley Alden Noonon (1924-2003)**
- A1b2. Barbara Jean Clinton Noonon(1931-)**

Generation Four

- A1a1a. Charles Franklin Parks (1885-1960)**
- A1a1b. Minnie Lea Butler Parks(1885-1965)**
- A1a2a. Elmer Bergner (1900-1979)**
- A1a2b. Mary Palmer Hilands Bergner (1898-1981)**
- A1b1a. Thomas Noonon Jr. (1886-???)**
- A1b1b. Katherine G. Noonon (1885-1975)**
- A1b2a. John William Clinton (1891-1953)**
- A1b2b. Mabel Jeanette Mohr Clinton (1895-1986)**

Generation Five

A1a1a1. Jasper Dolynn Parks (1850-1922)
A1a1a2. Mary Jane Guthrie Parks (1855-1927)

A1a1b1. John Elkanah Butler (1854-1928)
A1a1b2. Sarah Barbara Wise Butler (1862-1927)

A1a2a1. Christian Bergner (1858-1936)
A1a2a2. Geeske Meyer Bergner (1876-1945)

A1a2b1. William A. Hilands (1866-1948)
A1a2b2. Ellen Sarah Palmer Hilands (1866-1948)

A1b1a1. unk
A1b1a2. unk

A1b1b1. unk
A1b1b2. unk

A1b2a1. unk
A1b2a2. unk

A1b2b1. Peter Mohr (1863-1935)
A1b2b2. Elizabeth Mohr (1866-1908)

Generation Six

A1a1a1a. Robert Parks (1805-1869)
A1a1a1b. Elen Myra Fonvill Parks (1809-1881)

A1a1a2a. Hugh Kirk Guthrie (1833-1890)
A1a1a2b. Martha Norman Guthrie (1829-1899)

A1a1b1a. W.M. Butler (???)
A1a1b1b. Johanna Terry Butler (???)

A1a1b2a. Steppe M. Wise (1842-1904)
A1a1b2b. Sarah Jane Smith Wise (1840-???)

A1a2a1a. Carl Wilhelm Etzart Bergner (1827-1908)
A1a2a1b. Hilka Lena Bonic Bergner (1831-1923)

A1a2a2a. Else Meyer (1847-1928)
A1a2a2b. Rolfka Maize Meyer (1852-1897)

A1a2b1a. Abraham Tallman Hilands (1826-1887)
A1a2b1b. Mary Ann Elwell Hilands (1831-1912)

A1a2b2a. Orman Carlos Palmer (1838-1915)
A1a2b2b. Mary Rockwell Carpenter Palmer (1838-1874)

A1b1a1a. unk
A1b1a1b. unk

A1b1a2a. unk
A1b1a2b. unk

A1b1b1a. unk
A1b1b1b. unk

A1b1b2a. unk
A1b1b2b. unk

A1b2a1a. unk
A1b2a1b. unk

A1b2a2a. unk
A1b2a2b. unk

A1b2b1a. unk
A1b2b1b. unk

A1b2b2a. unk
A1b2b2b. unk

GENERATION ONE

Thoughts on Politics

I am a liberal. It's odd that this almost feels like a confession. In today's political world admitting to following one side over the other almost feels dangerous; not that I fear any physical harm, but that immediately anything I say or do will be interpreted as politically motivated and biased. And, as a Social Studies teacher I don't feel right pushing my political beliefs on students. Because of this, I tend to keep my politics to myself. I share them with my wife (who, God bless her, listens to more than her fair share of my rants), but aside from that, I tend to keep my thoughts on the issue to myself.

I never used to really pay too much attention to politics; it all seemed like a pointless dog and pony show that got nothing accomplished except upsetting basically everyone involved. Politicians made promises to get elected and then did whatever they wanted because they had the power, or because the system was too broken for one person to fix it. I guess I was just incredibly jaded, cynical, and sickened by how it all seemed to work. Now, I am incredibly interested in the process. I am still jaded, cynical, and sickened by most of what happens, but now I see the value in the political process and my involvement in it.

I've always voted - that always seemed paramount if I were going to complain - but never did much else. I always tended to side with more liberal candidates, so I never really had any delusions of my political leanings, but I find that the older I get the more liberal I get. I know that doesn't follow the normal pattern; generally young people seem to be much more liberal and as they get older and more established they become more conservative (I understand this is a gross over-generalization), but I can't help but feel more strongly about liberal policies and beliefs. For example, I am all for a single-payer health care system. I am becoming more and more in favor of a universal basic income. I also think college is the new high school, meaning it is a public good and a basic necessity in today's world and should, therefore, be free. I don't claim to be an expert on these issues, and I know they're problematic in a lot of ways, but I just

can't help feeling like they are good ideas that will help society more than they will cost it in the long run. Heck, Social Security and Medicare were both labeled socialist and seen as impossible, and now it's hard to imagine the country without them.

So how did I get here? I've recently started to reflect on this and, honestly, not that long ago I would have been against most of these ideas. I would have told you that if people wanted these things they should get a good job and find a way to pay for what they needed. I always felt welfare was a good safety net for those who ran into hard times, but there was no reason to believe that someone couldn't find a job and cover their own needs if they just put in the effort. But, I've changed. As I get older I look back at past experiences and even current ones and see that life is more complicated than that.

I was lucky enough to be born in an affluent area to parents who put my brother and my needs ahead of everything else. They made sacrifices so that we would have opportunities. I grew up in Johnson County, Kansas - an area that has a lot of money and values education. I'm also white and male. I basically hit the luck jackpot. While my parents were not wealthy, they did everything they could to make sure that we had everything we needed. I never wondered where my next meal would come from or where I might be sleeping tomorrow night. In my world no one had to grapple with these hardships. By high school I started to see this wasn't the case for everyone.

At first I was fairly naive about it. There were so many kids I went to school with who had it better than I did. I remember some 16 year-olds who got a brand new BMX Z3 for their birthday, while I drove a 1979 Oldsmobile Cutlass Supreme. It was a nasty brown color, so we dubbed it the "Turd." Maybe it's understandable that I was so unaware of the struggle some people endured, according to the American Community Survey and Census records only 3.4%

of individuals in Johnson County, Kansas lived below the poverty line.¹ However, as I got older, my parents started to expose me to more of the world just outside of the traditional Johnson County.

We helped feed the homeless at a soup kitchen one Thanksgiving and I saw how good I had it. For the first time I really started to understand the real struggle people faced and it made me appreciate the situation my parents had put me in and the sacrifices they made to make sure I didn't have to live with any real needs going unsatisfied. As I became more involved in scouts I had the opportunity to meet people from all over the country and really get to know them on a nearly month long backpacking trip. I met guys who were more privileged than I was and had all the latest, best equipment. I also met guys who had it worse; who were cheerful for the opportunity while using old, borrowed equipment. Then, I went to college at Washburn University and saw the gambit from poor to rich in my classes and out in the Topeka community. After I graduated I got into education and my eyes opened even more than I would have believed.

I taught in Pomona, Kansas at West Franklin Middle School and High School for 7 years. During that time I truly began to see that there is more to success and survival than a willingness to work. I had students who talked about sleeping in their coveralls because they didn't have enough blankets to keep warm. I had a student tell me he had trouble sleeping because there was a raccoon that kept looking through the hole in the wall of his room, scaring him awake. I had a student who didn't show up to school for a couple days only to find out that the Principal went to his home - which was a run-down trailer - and found it pad-locked shut from the outside with a note on the door which read "Stay away [student] has Whooping Cough." His mother and sister were nowhere to be found; who knows how long he had been left alone in that trailer as a 6th grader.

¹ "Households and Families: 2015 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates," accessed 13 November 2016, <http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=CF>

After 7 years there I got a job in Gardner, Kansas, teaching at the high school. I honestly thought that I wouldn't deal with those kinds of situations. I'd lived here for almost 8 years and knew that there were a lot of trailer homes in town, but this was still Johnson County and the Gardner District was incredibly highly regarded. And yet, I still see similar situations all the time. Students who don't have more than a couple changes of clothes; students who bounce from foster home to foster home; students who are abused and neglected.

My eyes have truly been opened to the point where I pay a lot closer attention to the problems facing people in all walks of life and around the world. It's forced me to rethink success. Now I understand that in order to succeed someone needs support. It takes a village to raise a child, as the saying goes, and there's more truth to that than most people realize. I have been blessed, and I have been lucky. That's not to say that I haven't worked hard or haven't had to make difficult choices to get where I am. I have. And everyone who has found even a modicum of success has had to as well. However, I've started to see that I've had the opportunity to make these choices and be in these situations because of outside forces that are beyond my control. I've had the benefit of my surroundings, my upbringing, and the people in my life who have made sacrifices for my benefit. Looking back I can't thank all of those people enough - teachers, scout leaders, coworkers, friends, extended family, my brother, my parents, my wife, even my kids - I have relied on all of them for love and support that has put me where I am.

Would I have been able to get scholarships to pay for college if I had to work to help my parents pay the bills? I wouldn't have been able to stay involved in Scouts and earn my Eagle Scout like I did. I wouldn't have been able to spend time on my singing, which wound up paying for part of my schooling. I couldn't have spent any time volunteering, which definitely gave me perspective, helped get me into college, and enriched my life in ways I would never have guessed. Would school have been as important to me if I had grown up in an area with

worse schools and less emphasis on education as a gateway to success? I wasn't the hardest working student, to be honest. I was bright enough to coast by and still get all As and Bs. I doubt that I would have had the same GPA if I had grown up under different circumstances.

Of all those benefits I was afforded, achieving my Eagle Scout is the greatest testament to my parents' sacrifices. So few Boy Scouts earn the rank of Eagle because it is an intensive undertaking, especially for someone so young. It takes true dedication, perseverance, planning, organization, and grit to accomplish - all of which are skills that translate into any career in any field. I really take a lot of pride in earning the rank and my project. My final project was installing planter boxes and half barrels of flowers and herbs at the Evergreen Community of Johnson County. It's a senior living facility where I had done a lot of volunteer work throughout the previous year or so. I had to organize fund raising to pay for all the equipment, work with the staff to make sure we were following their regulations and protocols while providing something meaningful and lasting for the tenants, present a thorough plan for approval by the Boy Scouts, recruit other scouts to complete the project, and then oversee and carry out the project. In the end, it was so rewarding to look back on what I had accomplished. I could see the value of my efforts and I could see exactly how that translated into skills that would help me throughout the rest of my life. Truly, it was a humbling and amazing experience. And yet, for all the work I did, I owed almost all of it to my parents for their guidance, their encouragement, and their efforts to provide for me.

Ultimately, through all of these experiences, I came to realize that I have been afforded more opportunities simply because of the circumstances of my birth than most people. I had parents who put my needs first and truly pushed me while being there to help me when I fell. I was surrounded with people who valued education and were willing to pay higher taxes to

ensure that the children of the community got the best education possible. What did I have to do with that? I just lucked into it.

I look at society and the struggles that the U.S. and the world face and I see that it's about more than individuals. How can we scorn the poor for not getting a job when there are no jobs available, or those that are available don't pay the bills? I see that brilliant children lose out on so much because they can't afford to harness their talents and find their limits. I see that, as a society, as a species, we have to do what we can to take care of each other and give every person an equal footing for when they are faced with the choices that matter. All people should have freedom from fear and freedom from want so that they can take a chance, fail, and try again. It's only when we have these chances that we can become the best possible version of ourselves, and isn't the human race better off when as many people as possible are the best version of themselves? But, in order to do that, we need systems in place that guarantee everyone has freedom from fear and freedom from want. Right now, I feel like we fall short.

That's why I am a liberal. Liberals fight for the rights of every man, woman, and child, regardless of race, faith, or socioeconomic status. They understand that when left to their own devices people can be selfish and infringe on the rights of others.

Throughout American history there have been numerous examples of this trend and liberals have utilized government to provide safeguards and safety nets for the less fortunate. Without liberal efforts there wouldn't be Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, or voter protection legislation among other things. All of these are hallmarks of modern America and provide a standard of living to all Americans that would have been unimaginable even 100 years ago. I just can't see how any of this is a negative.

My Views on Religion

I'm not a religious person, I'm a faithful one. To paraphrase a line from the movie Fever Pitch, it's good for the soul to believe in something bigger than yourself; to be invested in

something that you have no control over. And, while the character was referring to his love of the Red Sox (and I can empathize since I feel the same way about the Royals) I feel like this is a great summation of my faith.

In chapter 6 of *Made in America: A Social History of American Culture and Character*, Claude Fischer examines the mentality of Americans and how it has changed throughout American history. The central thesis and assumption is that American culture is based on voluntarism, or a belief in individuals as unique and self reliant while at the same time remaining social beings. With that in mind Fischer examined how Americans have examined ourselves and others throughout his exploration of mentality. Americans shifted from seeing individuals as naturally corrupt, to believing they were a blank slate waiting for experience to shape them, to learners who simply responded to punishments and rewards. One key shift that Fischer noted was that of religion. The U.S. went against the grain when compared to much of the western world over the last century. While most European nations became less religious, the U.S. remained strong in its faith in God. While Americans' faith remained strong, it did become less rigid. By 2000 few Americans saw their own faith as the only way to salvation and believed that people of nearly any faith (or non-faith, like atheism) could reach Heaven.²

I was raised Catholic by my mother. My dad supported the idea, but was not at all religious. Mom, my brother, and I went to church every week while dad stayed home to read the paper and get chores done around the house. It never bothered me that Dad stayed home, but it did make me a little more skeptical about organized religion as I got older. And, he was very supportive of our faith. He came to every big event and never gave us an out to stay home on Sundays. It was with this backing that I went through First Communion, religious education, and even got Confirmed in the Church. I really felt connected to Catholicism for a long time. It was a constant in my life and it provided me some moral grounding.

² Claude Fischer, *Made in America: A Social History of American Culture and Character* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2010), 10, 196-197, 208.

As I got older I was exposed to other faiths and was fascinated. I enjoyed going to various church services when I could, although, admittedly, they were almost all Christian denominations. I really noticed the similarities more than anything, with the obvious minor differences, but it never really brought my loyalty to the Catholic Church into question. That's not to say that I always agreed with or understood everything. I remember asking mom all kinds of questions about things that didn't make sense, and through her answers, I saw that it was ok to question and not take everything the Church said as the true word of God.

One idea that got me, and may have begun my real inquisition into my own faith, was that my Mom and Dad were somehow living in sin. They had been married for years, had my brother and I in wedlock, and had been true to one another. Apparently, however, they were committing a sin because Dad hadn't been baptized. That bothered me. It did my mom, too because she basically told me that she didn't believe that God would view their marriage as a sin.

From there I started looking more and more at inconsistencies in the Church. It got to the point where a part of me didn't know if Catholicism was really right for me. I was bad about going to church throughout college, and told myself that it was because of my questions and disagreements about church doctrine, but I think it was more just being an independent, lazy college kid. I had to go to church my whole life, now I get to call the shots.

Eventually I met my wife and got better about going to church again - she happened to be Catholic as well. It was odd. I felt strangely satisfied that I was dating a Catholic girl, even though I had fallen away from the church. Through her I came to the conclusion that while I have my disagreements and problems with Catholicism, it still mostly fits my faith. I still feel like I get some moral grounding from church and some important life lessons.

However, I don't really consider myself religious, because I do have a lot of disagreements with the church. I have a lot of questions that I don't feel any church can truly answer. As I've studied history, and looked into other religions, I've found that they all have a

fundamental flaw that can't be overlooked: they're man-made. Not a single person on Earth has met God, so how can anyone claim that they know what he wants of us? Most people I come in contact with say the Bible lays it out, but that only speaks for 1/3 of the people on the planet. The other 2/3 will tell you some other book tells you what God wants. And, even if that weren't the case, even if all 7 billion of us followed the Bible, it wouldn't matter, because the Bible was written by a bunch of guys who had a vested interest in promoting the messages of the Bible. Not to mention, the stories that made it into the Bible weren't decided on officially until about 300 years after Jesus was crucified.

For some people this might create a sense of emptiness or disbelief in God. It doesn't for me. I can't say for certain if there is a God, but I believe there is. I believe because I see too much magic in the world around me, too much order to think that everything literally happened at random. Through the beauty of nature, the miracle of my children, and the true love I experience every day, I can't help but believe there is some higher power that has at the very least set this all in motion.

Since I don't really buy any religion's version of God, I feel strongly that it's up to each person to live the best life they can and help those around them. We don't know what lies in store for us after this life, but we do get to live this life. There's another way to sum up my view on faith and religion, and that's a quote attributed to Abraham Lincoln. "When I do good I feel good, when I do bad I feel bad, and that's my religion."

My Jobs

I once imagined up an entire musical about my first real job. It was called AMS - American Movie "Sin"ema. There was the Devil as our manager, terrible customers, horrifying work conditions, and it was basically impossible to get out of a shift no matter the circumstances. Obviously it was a bit overdramatic, but it did sum up my first experience in the work force. Working for AMC Theatres was not as glamorous as it sounds - to a High School kid at least, I don't think any adult has delusions about theatre work. It was a lot of sweeping up

trash. I swept trash out of the theatres when people failed to throw it out themselves - which was constant. I swept up trash in the concession stands when workers failed to clean up after themselves - which was constant during a movie rush, there was simply no time to make it to the trash can.

In hindsight, as unglamorous as the work was, I had a job with an important and influential company in Kansas, and even worldwide. AMC Theatres is currently owned by the Dalian Wanda Group based in China, but has its local offices in Leawood, Kansas. It holds the second largest share of the American movie market and has nearly 350 locations throughout the United States with more than 80 located in China and dozens throughout other nations in North America and Europe. The sheer size of the company grants it some leverage in shaping the film industry. If AMC chooses not to screen a movie, there are millions of viewers who likely won't ever know of the film's existence, let alone get a chance to see it. It also has been important in the Kansas City area because its headquarters have been located in Kansas City, Missouri or Leawood, Kansas since 1920. This, inevitably, has led to job creation and investments that have benefited the region as the company has continued to grow.³

When I wasn't sweeping up trash I was busy preparing food for the upcoming rush of people. I only got a 15 minute break for every 7 hours and 45 minutes I worked. If I happened to work 8 hours I got two 15 minute breaks. I still don't think that's legal, but I never checked because I was a lazy High School kid and it was easier to just complain about it. Sure, I got free movies, but I was always working so I never had time to see them.

Later, I dabbled in retail. I spent about 5 years working for Old Navy, a clothing store geared towards affordable fashion, and a summer was spent at Dick's Sporting Goods,

³ Wikipedia. "AMC Theatres," accessed 14 November 2016, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/AMC_Theatres

which sells clothing and a variety of sports, hunting, and fishing equipment. Both jobs were the typical retail experience. It was difficult to get anywhere close to 40 hours a week and most shifts were either in the evening or on the weekends. It was pretty monotonous work, folding clothes, putting back merchandise, cleaning up after customers, and helping customers locate items they were looking for. I was a master at folding denim. I don't know why, but I loved folding an entire wall of jeans and really making them look pristine. I did serve as a cashier supervisor as well, which involved later nights and a lot of counting registers, but also carried extra pay. Neither job was great, but they helped pay the bills and cover my vices, so I didn't mind too much. That said, I don't miss either job, although I did meet my wife at Old Navy, so I probably owe the company a debt of gratitude. Looking back, the only other person I know who met their spouse at work is my wife's best friend. Everyone else I know met their spouse in college or high school. Maybe I'll write Old Navy a nice letter.

I was incredibly fortunate, however, in getting one job in particular. I spent two summers as a Ranger at Philmont Scout Ranch in New Mexico. Basically, I had the great fortune to backpack through the mountains with a crew of scouts for two days teaching them everything they needed to know to be successful on the trails, and then I left them to finish their trek while I went back to Base Camp to pick up my next crew. It was incredible. I'd spend days off climbing to the top of the Tooth of Time to just take in the view and think about life; or racing over to Taos to get away or shop. It was a dream job. I was outside, hiking every day, and teaching important life skills. There's days I really miss that. Sometimes I think I should have pursued a career as a professional Scout and tried to get a job out there permanently. It wasn't without its hardships. I had a boy fall off Lover's Leap (about a 100 foot fall) and it took me a long time to get over that. He survived with relatively minor injuries considering the circumstances, but I always felt a little at fault since I was their guide.

After college I really pursued my passions, which are teaching and history. I had to sub for a year, which was less than ideal. But, I was able to find a full time job as a middle school teacher at West Franklin Middle School in Pomona, KS. It was strange teaching 6,7, and 8th graders, but I enjoyed it for the most part. Eventually I moved up to the high school there in Pomona part time. I split between teaching 6th graders, 8th graders, and Juniors. After that I was a full time high school teacher only to then go back to spending half my day at the Middle School and half at the High School. My last year at West Franklin I was back to full time at the High School. Overall, I loved my time there. I worked with some incredible people and really got to know the student body. There were students I had for 4 years in class, which could be harrowing and so incredibly rewarding all at the same time.

Through my experiences teaching such a wide array of ages and subjects, I've discovered there is a huge difference between the various ages of middle school and high school. Sixth graders are still elementary school children in many ways; they are squirrely, tattle on each other, and demand so much attention - it's exhausting. By the time they are in eighth grade students tend to have grown out of the squirminess and tattling, but are still pretty needy. They are still developing abstract thinking, so some historic concepts were difficult to really grasp. By high school there is a large gap between the successful students and those who struggle. It's funny, having taught middle and high school, I see how hard it is to catch the kids that struggle and help them develop skills that will help them succeed while they're in middle school, and I see how far those kids fall behind when they are missed. And, honestly, as terrible as this might sound, for many kids it's too late to get them caught back up by the time they hit high school. I have students who read at a first grade level in my classes. These aren't remedial courses. How can we expect these students to succeed in understanding the

development and contributions of the Renaissance when they struggle to read and comprehend books written for primary school children?

I still love what I do, though. I definitely prefer high school over middle school. I'm just not cut out for the neediness and childishness of middle school. I love that I can go deeper into the material with high school kids than I could with the younger ages. I've also had the great fortune to teach a wide range of subjects, and honestly, I've enjoyed them all. I've taught ancient world history, geography, early American history, modern American history, modern world history, economics, and a semester course over the American Civil War , and another over both World Wars. For the longest time U.S. history was my favorite subject to teach because it's easy to relate to and has so many great stories. The more I teach world history, however, the more I enjoy it. I'm fascinated by the big picture of history and how we all fit into it. I see more patterns in world history than I ever did before and it has made me reexamine the way I look at the past, present, and future. I never would have thought that economics would be enjoyable to teach, but I have really started to love teaching the class. I've become enamored with understanding the nuts and bolts of economic activity on the micro and macro level. I've also really enjoyed the simulations I can run in class that really let kids experience how the economy works. Those kinds of activities are harder to pull off in the other classes I've taught. Of all the classes, though, I'd have to say my semester courses over the Civil War and the World Wars have been my favorite. They were just such a unique experience. I could get so detailed in the information and really spark kids' interests like never before. These were also the first two topics that truly piqued my

interest in history and set me on a path to where I am today as a teacher, and as a student.

As of 2016, I'm teaching Freshmen Economics and Geography, as well as Sophomore World History at Gardner Edgerton High School. It was an incredibly difficult transition going from a school of 150 kids to one with 1600 kids, but it has turned into a rewarding decision. I get to spend more time with my wife and kids since I work so close to home. I also have met some incredible teachers and students. And, I feel like I am becoming a better teacher and advancing my career by making the move. Even after just a year, I can tell this has been one of the better decisions I've made when it comes to my career.

Hopes and Dreams

It's incredible how life changes our hopes and our dreams. If you would have asked me about my hopes and dreams when I was a child, I'd have talked about being a doctor, or playing for the Kansas City Royals, or being President. When I was a teenager, it would have been the Royals still, but doctor and President would have changed to teacher and park ranger. Ultimately I've been able to live one of those dreams. I've been blessed with the opportunity to teach for the last 9 years. It hasn't always been easy, I've even contemplated a career change - seriously contemplated a career change. But, it has been rewarding.

Looking back, I laugh at my naivety. I wasn't a great athlete, I don't do well with blood or needles, and I sure don't handle hard-headed jerks very well. But I also realize that I knew what I wanted early on. There were two other dreams I had as a kid: I wanted to get married, and I wanted to have kids. Maybe that's not the norm for boys, but I always felt that way. And, I've managed to trick a wonderful woman into spending her life with me and even have children with me.

Now, almost all my hopes and dreams center around my family. I look forward to evenings at home with my wife. I don't care what we do, I just enjoy being around her. Some of

my favorite moments are just sitting next to her watching television and chatting. Those moments bring me peace and happiness. The same goes for spending time with my kids, except that it's never peaceful because they're both under the age of 5. So, my time with them is a bit more chaotic, but no less joyful.

I hope to travel the world with my wife and see all there is to see in the world, but I really want my kids there to experience it and gain an appreciation for the world around them. I want my kids to grow up and live long, happy, fulfilling lives. I want them to find their passion and make the world a better place. I want them to experience life to its fullest; all the ups and downs. And, I hope that I can be there to witness it. I want to celebrate their successes. I want to help them when they fail. I want to share in their happiness. I want to console them in hard times. I want them to live the life they want, and I want to be a part of that life.

GENERATION TWO

A1a. John David Parks (1956-)

A1b. Barbara Lynn Noonan Parks (1959-)

Dave

"Jean, come quick, Dave brought a girl home!" This is probably paraphrased a bit, but this was the line his father used when **John David Parks (1956-)** brought **Barbara Lynn Noonan Parks (1959-)** home to meet his parents. It's a great snapshot of Dave, as he's called by those who know him. He is a very shy person and although he's come out of his shell more recently, he is still a very introspective and quiet guy.

Dave was born on 30 October 1956 and raised in Shawnee, Kansas. He was the youngest of three children and the only boy. As a child he did the typical boy things, playing with G.I. Joe action figures and getting outside as much as possible. He spent a lot of time playing with his best friend down the street, Mike Erickson, whose own son would become a childhood friend of mine years later.

As Dave grew older he got involved in Boy Scouts for a time, but never really committed to it, leaving the program after a few years. He also enjoyed playing sports of all kinds, especially baseball. By the time he reached high school he was a solid first baseman. And, as he grew older he developed a love of cars.

Dave has always been a car guy, but not necessarily in the traditional car-guy mold. He did own an orange Porsche when he was dating Barbara (they called it the Pumpkin) and he did some work on his cars when he was younger. Now his love of cars has shifted a bit. He meticulously washes his cars every week and makes sure to park near the back of the lot next to a curb so no one dings up the door. Honestly, my brother and I didn't know you could park close to a store until we were older. I remember mom parking close to a store once and having a miniature panic attack thinking she was doing something wrong. Dave also cycles through cars pretty quickly. Only a few years ago we did the math as a family and determined that Mom

and Dad averaged one new (new to us, several were used vehicles) car for every year they had been married.

In many ways, this passion for cars followed the arc of materialism in the U.S., according to Claude Fischer in *Made in America*. Fischer argues that U.S. materialism has not actually grown in any measurable sense over the last couple centuries, it's just that Americans have gained more affluence and, more importantly, more access to goods than they ever had previously. Cars are a perfect example of this trend. In 1900 there were effectively no cars on the road. By 1918 fewer than 1/3 of middle class families owned a car, and by 1930 over half of American middle class families owned a car. Cars also made up about 67% of consumer spending by that year. While on the surface it appears that materialism grew, the reality is that over that time Henry Ford developed the modern assembly line and car production costs, and thus prices, dropped substantially.⁴

Dave's greatest passion growing up, however, was spending summers in Pratt, Kansas with his Aunt Norma and Uncle Pete helping on the farm. Part of the land belonged to his mother as it was originally his grandparents farmland. Once he was old enough he would spend the entire summer on the farm helping care for the cattle and the fields. Pete grew wheat, milo, and alfalfa. Dad still talks about his time in Pratt with a reverence that is touching. He was able to help drive a lot of the big equipment to harvest crops and put up hay. When we'd visit as a family years later he'd take my brother and I around the farm and tell us all about what he did and the equipment he had used. Uncle Pete was an incredible handy-man and created some machinery of his own to get work done around the farm, so there was always incredibly unique equipment lying around the property waiting to be restored or scrapped to create some other monstrosity.

⁴ Fischer, *Made in America*, 60-67.

Boo

"Peek-a-boo!" Every day, when he returned from work Hurley covered his face and then quickly pulled his hands apart with the exclamation to the delight of his "Boo Baby." With that Barbara Lynn Parks gained her nickname, Boo. To this day it's how she introduces herself to everyone. Usually people give her a look as if she's making a joke before she reassures them that literally everyone calls her Boo.

Boo was born on 20 May 1959 and grew up in Overland Park, Kansas. She was the youngest girl in the family and the sixth of seven children. Her parents were devout Catholics and instilled the same faith and discipline that came with the faith in their children. That's not to say they didn't have their fun, however. Summer days were spent outside playing. As soon as breakfast was over, her mother would send the kids outside with the instructions to stay outside until lunchtime. Then, after lunch, they did the same until dinner. Nowadays this sounds unfathomable, but that was life in Overland Park in the 1960s.

Looking back, I'm sure she wonders how her siblings and her all made it out in one piece. Her oldest brother, who is about ten years her senior, generally tried to avoid most of the siblings, but would teach them dangerous games from time to time. Mumblety peg was a favorite. Two of the siblings would stand across from one another with their feet shoulder width apart and throw a pocket knife into the ground and see who could get it to stick closest to their feet. As far as I know there were never any accidents.

Boo experienced all of the typical big family conundrums. She had to share a room with both of her sisters, which inevitably led to numerous fights and hurt feelings. At one point there was even a literal line drawn, dividing the room up into sections. The cliché sit-com joke actually played out in real life! Meal time was a true "whoever eats the fastest, eats the mostest" free for all. Food was placed on the center of the table and after the prayer was said everyone dug in. More than a few times there were disputes over second and third helpings.

School was another adventure for Boo. She attended Catholic school, and once again, her experiences seemed like something straight out of a cheesy sit-com. She had several strict nuns for teachers who would box kids ears or hit their knuckles with the metal edge of a ruler. Boo found herself on the wrong end of many of these encounters. As she tells it, she wasn't a bad kid, but just seemed to be in the wrong place at the wrong time - and sometimes say the wrong thing. While she did have a few good teachers that she really cared about, one moment really soured Boo on the Catholic school system. On the first day of class in primary school, she walked into the classroom and the nun looked right at her, pointed and said "I can tell you and I aren't going to get along." This was before Boo had a chance to sit down or even say a word. These experiences led her to swear she'd never put her own kids through Catholic school.

As she grew older she spent a lot of time with friends and looked toward the future. She wasn't sure what she wanted to do after high school beyond being a mother, and her dad had strict rules about moving out. The Noonan kids had to either attend college or get married, otherwise they had to remain living at home. She took a few college courses, but nothing really stood out. And then she met Dave.

Dave and Boo

Their romance couldn't be described as love at first sight in any stretch of the imagination. In fact, their first interaction actually involved Boo chewing Dave out over the actions of one of his friends. However, this rocky start eventually turned into something special. They had mutual friends and so they met at parties on several occasions until they eventually started dating. At that point things sped up quickly as they were married a mere ten months later on April 11, 1980.

They rented a house in Shawnee, Kansas near Dave's parents for a couple years and had their first child, John Brandon Parks (me). Just a couple years later they bought a house in Olathe, Kansas and had their second child, Daniel Parks. After that, the family was complete, unless you count our dog, Festus who joined the family a few years later.

In those early years it was difficult to get by. Boo worked an office job downtown for awhile but then stayed home with my brother and I while we were young. Dave took a job painting houses on a crew. He detested the work, but it was the only way the bills could get paid. Both Boo and Dave had taken some college classes, but never really pursued a degree as children put any of those ideas on hold. Money was so tight that Boo would actually patch Dave's one pair of painting pants when wore a hole in them because they couldn't afford to buy another pair.

These experiences actually fall right into line with some of the findings of Claude S. Fischer and Michael Hout in their book, *Century of Difference: How America Changed in the Last Hundred Years*. In chapter 2 they examined the expansion of education throughout the century and the impact this change had on society. One of their findings was that the expansion of education shifted the divide between haves and have-nots to a one based on educational attainment. By the 1970s the number of college graduates stalled across the country. The authors seem to ask the question as to why more people didn't finish up and get their degree when there was no real economic benefit to taking a few classes and completing a degree would increase yearly earnings by an average of 30%. They also found that marriages tended to follow education as people began to meet in the school setting they had more opportunities to find like minded and similarly educated people.⁵

In chapter 5 of the book Fischer and Hout also examined how work evolved over the century. One interesting change they examined related to women, specifically mothers, in the workforce. They discovered that regardless of education women with pre-kindergarten age children were more likely to leave the workforce. In fact, even those with a college degree and 2 young children only remained in the workforce 60% of the time. By the 1970s and 1980s women

⁵ Claude S. Fischer and Michael Hout, *Century of Difference: How America Changed in the Last One Hundred Years*, (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2006), 9-19.

were more likely to continue working while pregnant and come back to work after their child was born.⁶

Boo did make an attempt to go back to work while my brother and I were young. For just a couple years we were in in-home daycare while mom went back to work. One day when she came to pick us up, however, she found my brother passed out in a pile of his own vomit. She honestly thought he was dying. To this day she gets choke up talking about it. After that, it was decided that she'd stay home with my brother and I. She began babysitting a few children to help cover some of the bills. And, as Daniel and I started going to school she began working as a paraprofessional for a few years, and then as a self-employed medical transcriptioner who did most of her transcribing for a physical therapy and occupational medicine group. All the while, Dave continued to paint houses.

By the mid-1990s my parents decided it was time to upgrade and they built a new house in another part of Olathe. Shortly after that Dave was able to get the career change he had been looking for. He took a job as a supervisor for J.S. Robinson homes. Immediately my whole family noticed a change in Dad. He was happier and more outgoing than he had been in a long time. The job kept him busy, but it was a welcome change to the painting he had endured for so many years. Boo took a job as an administrator for Concentra, an occupational health clinic, and then worked as an office manager for Klein Orthodontics. Eventually she made the decision to get a degree in nursing.

Before making that change, however, my parents had sold their home and built yet another home in Olathe. Since they knew my brother and I were both staying in the Kansas City area they decided to downsize a little from the previous home. Then, the financial crisis of 2008 hit and threatened everything. Dave was laid off from his job at J.S. Robinson and suddenly mom's schooling and the house were becoming a struggle. Luckily, within a few months Dad

⁶ Fischer and Hout, *Century of Difference*, 99-103.

was offered a supervisor position for James Engel Homes. He was doing essentially the same work as before.

Ever since, things have been smooth for the most part. Mom has recently taken a job at a hospital and dad continues to stay busy overseeing the construction of homes throughout Johnson County. Their choice of careers have followed trends in the U.S., but are contrary to local ones. According to the American Community Survey in 2014 the percentage of people in Johnson County working in healthcare is 7% and the percentage for those in construction is 3%.⁷ However, according to Claude Fischer and Michael Hout in *Century of Difference*, Americans are making less "stuff." Instead, they take care of each other, they educate each other, and they boss each other.⁸

⁷ "Households and Families: 2015 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates," accessed 13 November 2016, <http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=CF>

⁸ Fischer and Hout, *Century of Difference*, 107.

GENERATION THREE

A1a1. John Jasper Parks (1919-1983)
A1a2. Jean Marie Bergner Parks (1926-1994)

A1b1. Hurley Alden Noonan (1924-2003)
A1b2. Barbara Jean Clinton Noonan (1931-)

John and Jean

John Jasper Parks (1919-1983) was born on 21 December 1919 in Goodman, McDonald County, Missouri. He was the middle child and only boy of Charles and Minnie Parks. Leota was two years his senior and Mary Lou, who would be lovingly referred to as Aunt Toots by future generations, was eight years his junior.

John's family remained in Missouri throughout his childhood, moving a couple separate times. By 1930 they were living in Hurley, Missouri in Stone County only to move to Crane, Missouri by 1935, and finally to Marionville, Missouri by 1940. I imagine that at least a few of the moves were related to hunting for work as John's father was a farmer⁹ and many farmers of the era struggled to make ends meet, moving from place to place in search of work even if the work was only temporary.

By 1940 the family seems to have settled down a bit. Three members of the household held what appear to be steady jobs. John's father was working as a carpenter; his older sister Leota as a practical nurse in a private home; John as a painter.¹⁰

It was not long after this time of relative stability for the Parks family that things began to change, however. A day of infamy shook the nation on December 7, 1941 and brought the United States into World War II. John was enlisted in the navy and served throughout the war.

⁹ "United States Census, 1930", database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.1.1/XHVZ-M2D> : 8 December 2015), John Parks in entry for Chas J Parks, 1930 (Accessed 8 October 2016).

¹⁰ "United States Census, 1940," database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.1.1/K779-5Y4> : accessed 8 November 2016), John Parks in household of Frank Parks, Marionville, Buck Prairie Township, Lawrence, Missouri, United States; citing enumeration district (ED) 55-5, sheet 5A, family 114, Sixteenth Census of the United States, 1940, NARA digital publication T627. Records of the Bureau of the Census, 1790 - 2007, RG 29. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 2012, roll 2123 (Accessed 8 October 2016).

He also later served in the Korean conflict. Not much is known about his service to the country as he was a very private man and never really shared his experiences with family. One thing that is known is that he served on amphibious landing craft as a spotter. While it's not clear how much combat he saw in either conflict, it is clear that any he did experience would have been harrowing and not easily forgotten, or reflected on.

Jean Marie Bergner Parks (1926-1994) was born in Pratt County, Kansas to Elmer Bergner and Mary Palmer Hilands. She was the oldest of two children, her younger brother Pete would join the family about 4 years later. Jean's childhood was stable, especially compared with her future husband John, but was hard work. Her father was a farmer who by 1930 owned the land he was working and maintained it until he passed it on to his children.¹¹

Jean grew up on the farm and likely helped with all kinds of chores around the property. Like many families in central and western Kansas during the 1930s the family likely had to battle drought and poor harvests. Incredibly, they were able to maintain ownership of their property, which would indicate that they were at least mildly successful in growing crops throughout the decade. By 1940 she was attending school regularly and was in the 8th grade.¹²

The fact that the family was able to maintain their own farm for so long is a bit of an anomaly for the era. Not only were many family farms going under in the 1930s, but many small farms had been disappearing for several decades at that point. The process began with the Industrial Revolution and continued, even accelerated, in the late 1800s with a second wave of industrialization. As Claude Fischer notes in *Made in America*, the ratio of farmers to

¹¹ "United States Census, 1930", database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/pal:MM9.1.1/X779-H9D> : 8 December 2015), Jean M Bergner in entry for Elmer Bergner, 1930 (Accessed 8 October 2016).

¹² "United States Census, 1940," database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/pal:MM9.1.1/VR2M-NYW> : accessed 8 November 2016), Jean Marie Bergner in household of Elmer Bergner, Logan Township, Pratt, Kansas, United States; citing enumeration district (ED) 76-16, sheet 2B, family 38, Sixteenth Census of the United States, 1940, NARA digital publication T627. Records of the Bureau of the Census, 1790 - 2007, RG 29. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 2012, roll 1252 (Accessed 8 October 2016).

manufacturers in 1860 was four to one, but by 1900 it was only two to one.¹³ Farmers did still make up about 1/3 of the workforce in 1900, however, according to Fischer and Hout in *Century of Difference*.¹⁴ Admittedly, most of the shift towards manufacturing and away from farms was happening along the coasts, especially throughout the Northeast, and in major cities rather than in rural Kansas. The fact remains that this experience was becoming more the exception than the rule for most Americans.

Eventually John and Jean met, were married, and settled down in Shawnee, Kansas. They purchased a home in the suburbs and started a family which eventually consisted of three children: Barb, Peggy, and John David. They lived the stereotypical American life in some ways, with John acting as the breadwinner and Jean as the homemaker. Their kids grew up, rebelled in their own unique ways as they figured out their own lives, and eventually all married and started their own families.

In 1983, not terribly long after his retirement, John had to have heart surgery. He was a pretty heavy smoker for most of his life and his heart was struggling to keep up. Tragically, he never woke up from the anesthesia and passed away on 31 January 1983. I was only about a year old at the time, so I have no memory of my grandfather. It is still one of my great regrets that I never had a chance to truly meet him. John's death was hard on the family, I know my father took it especially hard.

Jean continued to live in the same home in Shawnee. I do remember spending all kinds of time at Grandma's house. There were Thanksgivings where Uncle Lou would call us boys little girls and offer us a quarter if we finished our plate at dinner time. We had Christmas with the traditional ham and an old ridiculous Christmas record that played some silly Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer song that all of us grandkids thought was the funniest thing ever. It really

¹³ Fischer, *Made in America*, 46.

¹⁴ Fischer and Hout, *Century of Difference*, 107.

wasn't anything amazing, a few words were replaced with sound effects, but we would play it over and over and laugh hysterically as only children can.

My fondest memories of Grandma are of sick days, though. Maybe that sounds weird, but on days my brother or I got sick and had to stay home from school, we generally went to Grandma's house. She would take us to the grocery store to pick out food and rent a couple movies, and then we'd go back to her house and relax for the rest of the day. I almost always picked out Toaster Strudels, but she always made soup, too. Grandma was always good for comfort food and movies.

Sometime around 1993 Grandma Jean started to get a little sick and couldn't quite get better. Eventually she went to the doctor and after some tests they determined that she had developed Diabetes. I remember my Mom helping her get her new dietary restrictions figured out, but I also remember Mom saying that she just didn't think it was Diabetes for some reason. Eventually, as her health didn't improve, Grandma went in for more tests. This time they found that she had renal cell carcinoma, or cancer of the kidney. They also realized that it was in a very advanced stage.

I remember that from that point Grandma's health deteriorated pretty quickly. She had Hospice come to help care for her at home and most of the family came to visit nearly every day. I remember a lot of tears. I even remember the day that all three of her kids told her goodbye before she passed away on 4 April 1994. I was only 12 at the time and didn't fully comprehend what was going on, but it has all stuck with me. Grandma was the first close family member to pass away at a time when I really started to grasp the situation. I remember my Great-Aunt Leota's funeral, but I was too young to really understand what was going on. By the time of Grandma's funeral I was a wreck. I cried pretty uncontrollably and missed her terribly already.

Chief and Gaga

Hurley Alden Noonen (1924-2003) was born in Kansas City, Jackson County, Missouri on 5 April 1924 and given the name Arnold Lee Richter. He was the illegitimate child of a woman who came to Kansas City simply to give birth to him and keep the pregnancy private from her home town. Hurley liked to believe that she was a young girl who simply couldn't take care of him.

He was adopted by the Boland family, who changed his name to Robert Boland Jr. For a time they believed that they couldn't have children of their own, but after adopting Robert they found out this wasn't the case. As they started to have children they realized they couldn't afford to care for Robert as well. Kate Noonen, a widow for several years, was a cousin of the Bolands and took Robert in, changing his name to Hurley Alden Noonen. She raised him on her own throughout the 1930s and into the 1940s on a seamstress salary.¹⁵

Living through the Great Depression in this situation had a deep impact on Hurley. He learned to appreciate what he had and learned that it took hard work to make a living. It also simply hardened him a little, he was a tough guy with a chip on his shoulder. There is a story of him sitting in the front row of a movie theatre when someone from behind him threw a jawbreaker that hit him square in the head. Apparently sitting in the front was odd, but Hurley couldn't see well enough to sit further back and his mother couldn't afford glasses for him. Tears rolled down his face, but he didn't move a muscle or make a sound because he didn't want whoever threw it to know it hurt him or to give them the satisfaction of seeing him cry.

That chip stayed with Hurley throughout his life. He was never one to mince words and was always brutally honest. Much later, when meeting my sister-in-law's younger brother Bret (who was only about 10 at the time), Hurley looked at him and asked point blank, "you're not an

¹⁵ "United States Census, 1930", database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.1.1/XHF4-7YF> : 8 December 2015), Hurley A Noonen in entry for Katherine G Noonen, 1930.

asshole like that other Brett are you?" and then he just laughed. Those of us that knew him knew to expect statements like this regularly. It was this same penchant for saying whatever came to mind that put him on the bad side of his future father-in-law.

Barbara Jean Clinton Noonan (1931-) was born in Fort Smith, Sebastian County, Arkansas on 23 October 1931 to John and Mabel Clinton. She was one of seven children and was raised a devout Catholic. She remained in the same town throughout her childhood until she married Hurley.

As a child of the Depression, Barbara also learned the value of hard work and sacrifice. While her family maintained a stable life throughout the national tragedy, she still experienced the hardships of cutting back. Throughout her early years she found a deep peace and calling in her faith. She was an incredibly devout Catholic. When she met Hurley she was actually planning on becoming a nun. Something about him changed her mind, however, because they quickly fell in love.

Hurley converted to Catholicism and became devout in a way that only a convert can, although he never lost his crude sense of humor. Even making that concession wasn't enough for Barbara's father, however, because he simply didn't get along with Hurley. The two were madly in love, so Barbara rushed to marry Hurley without the full consent of her father. Problem was, however, that she was 17 at the time. She was able to get her mother's consent and signature on the marriage license on 18 October 1949 and the two were married on the 22nd.¹⁶ I've always marveled a little at the whole ordeal, because my grandmother's birthday was only a day later, which would have meant they didn't need the signature. I guess love just can't wait.

Eventually the two would settle down in Overland Park, Kansas. They had seven children together and lived the typical 1950s suburban life. Hurley worked in home construction

¹⁶ "Arkansas, County Marriages, 1837-1957", database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.1.1/N943-JXC> : 24 June 2016), Hurley A Noonan and Barbara Jeanne Clinton, 1949 (Accessed 8 October 2016).

around the Johnson County, Kansas area and made a good living, providing for his family. At some point he took the nickname Chief, although no one really knows where it came from. Even my grandmother simply says he's always been Chief. While Chief earned a living for the family, Barbara took care of the house and kids.

This suburban life, and that of John and Jean Parks falls in line with the typical American pattern explained by Margo J. Anderson in *The American Census*. In her extensive study of the American Census Anderson found data from the Census in 1940 and 1950 as well as subsequent surveys that showed a trend of de-urbanization following World War II. A combination of G.I. Bill educations, increased spending after families saved throughout the war, the construction of the interstate, and numerous other factors led many people across the U.S. to move to the suburbs. This demand led to a housing boom in suburban areas which opened the door for even more people to abandon urban areas for their own piece of land. This also reflected a growing affluence as people were able to afford homes. Sadly, this trend did not happen equitably as much of the affluence and movement happened along racial lines. Both of my sets of grandparents experienced this as they were able to buy their own home, but they were living in predominantly white Johnson County, Kansas.¹⁷

One of the more difficult decisions they had to make involved their son James. Jim was born with incredibly high iron which caused some complications in his early years. He was severely mentally and physically handicapped. Eventually my grandparents came to the realization that they couldn't provide Jim with the care that he needed. While still a boy they took him to the Kansas Neurological Institute in Topeka, Kansas where he lived for the rest of his life. They visited him when they could, but I know that they both always felt a little guilt over the whole ordeal.

¹⁷ Margo J. Anderson. *The American Census: A Social History, Second Edition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015), 212-220.

Eventually their children grew and had families of their own. Chief and Barbara's first grandson was born when Barbara was a mere 45 years old. She believed she was too young to be grandma, so when her grandson Jay started babbling and spouted out ga-ga the name stuck. From that moment on my grandparents were Chief and Gaga.

As Chief entered retirement and all the kids had moved out of the house, my grandparents decided to move into a smaller home to make their lives a little easier. It was definitely cramped around the holidays as six of their kids with spouses and kids in tow crammed in to celebrate Christmas together, but it was always fun. The kids would all pile downstairs and play games of draw while the adults caught up with each other upstairs. If the family gathering happened when it was warm out all the grandkids would head out back where a huge open drain became the playground of choice. We would explore the drain pipe as far back as we could muster the courage and we'd run down one side of the drain and up the other.

Chief and Gaga were always incredibly supportive of me and all the activities I was involved in. Gaga was my Confirmation sponsor in the Catholic Church. They both came out to numerous theatre productions I was involved in as well as Barbershop Quartet competitions. They were there for my Eagle Scout ceremony as well. They even asked me to sing Franz Schubert's Ave Maria for their 50th Wedding Anniversary. I was incredibly nervous, but it was such an honor. I have always been truly grateful for their love and support.

As time went on, both started to have more health problems. Chief even had heart surgery on a couple occasions. Then one night, Gaga awoke to Chief having a heart attack. He passed away on 31 August 2003. Saying goodbye to Chief was tough. I was lucky to have a chance to view his body at the funeral home and pay my respects prior to the funeral. It was a surreal experience. Throughout the funeral I cried. It was just difficult to accept that he was gone. Afterwards the family gathered at my parents' house and shared their favorite memories of Chief. We had a lot of good laughs that night, in between the tears.

Gaga continues to live in Olathe, Kansas near my parents. She is in fairly good health considering she just turned 85. We get together pretty frequently and she is always grateful to see her children, grandchildren, and now great-grandchildren as well. And they all love to see their Gaga.

One of the indicators for the growing sense of security that Americans have gained over the course of a few hundred years is the cause of death, according to Claude Fischer in *Made in America*. He points out that as technology and medical care improved people simply didn't die as frequently, especially at younger ages. This helped foster a sense of security among most Americans. The tradeoff for this, however, was a shift in what the major causes of death became. No longer were diseases of scarcity (caused by malnutrition, lack of clean water, or limited medicine) the leading cause of death. Diseases of abundance replaced them. Heart failure and cancer cases, like those that took my grandparents, skyrocketed as people simply lived longer lives.¹⁸

¹⁸ Fischer, *Made in America*, 27.

Generation Four

A1a1a. Charles Franklin Parks (1885-1960)

A1a1b. Minnie Lea Butler Parks (1885-1965)

A1a2a. Elmer Bergner (1900-1979)

A1a2b. Mary Palmer Hilands Bergner (1898-1981)

A1b1a. Thomas Noonan Jr. (1886-???)

A1b1b. Katherine G. Noonan (1885-1975)

A1b2a. John William Clinton (1891-1953)

A1b2b. Mabel Jeanette Mohr Clinton (1895-1986)

Charles and Minnie

Charles Franklin Parks (1885-1960) was born on 14 January 1885 in Park Springs Missouri. He grew up on a farm in Missouri which his father owned and helped out as most children on farms do. By 1910 he was still living with his parents but he had a job as a carpenter building homes.¹⁹

Minnie Lea Butler Parks (1885-1965) was born on 16 May 1885 in Marionville, Lawrence County, Missouri. She grew up on a farm which her family rented. As of 1910 Minnie worked as a school teacher while living with her parents.²⁰

At some point throughout the next decade Charles married Minnie and they settled down on a farm in Erie, McDonald County, Missouri and continued the family tradition of farming.²¹

Minnie left her teaching position and stayed home to raise their three children, Leota, John, and

¹⁹ "United States Census, 1910," database with images, *FamilySearch*(<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:MLMW-NZZ> : 29 October 2015), Jasper D Parks, Grant, Stone, Missouri, United States; citing enumeration district (ED) ED 194, sheet 3B, NARA microfilm publication T624 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.); FHL microfilm 1,374,838 (Accessed 9 November 2016).

²⁰ "United States Census, 1910," database with images, *FamilySearch*(<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:M2Y1-PSQ> : 29 October 2015), John E Butler, Marionville Ward 1, Lawrence, Missouri, United States; citing enumeration district (ED) ED 89, sheet 6A, NARA microfilm publication T624 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.); FHL microfilm 1,374,808 (Accessed 1 November 2016).

²¹ "United States Census, 1920," database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/pal:MM9.1.1/M841-7NC> : 14 December 2015), John J Parks in household of Charles F Parks, Erie, McDonald, Missouri, United States; citing sheet 14A, NARA microfilm publication T625 (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.); FHL microfilm 1,820,919 (Accessed 8 October 2016).

Mary Lou. Charles continued to farm, but the family moved at least three separate times between 1920²² and 1940. All of this moving had to have caused some tension, and by some family recollections Minnie and Charles' marriage was not the happiest of unions. However, by 1940 they seem to have found some stability as Charles took a job as a carpenter once more.²³ The two lived out the remainder of their lives in Missouri until their passing in Aurora, Missouri. Charles on 3 February 1960 and Minnie on 3 July 1965.

Elmer and Mary

Elmer Bergner (1900-1979) was born in Germantown Township, Turner County, South Dakota on 17 February 1900. He was listed as Else on the 1900 Census²⁴, but in all later documentation is referred to as Elmer. His parents were both German immigrants who had been living in the U.S. for a decade or more so it's likely that they "Americanized" their names because of some fear of anti-immigrant sentiments as they moved from a predominantly German town in South Dakota to central Kansas.

He was the fifth of ten children, although two may have died in infancy. The 1910 Census states that Geeske (Elmer's mother) was the mother of 9 and all 9 were living, but only 8 children are listed.²⁵ On the Find A Grave Index there are two other children listed with birth

²² "United States Census, 1930", database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/pal:MM9.1.1/XHVZ-M2D> : 8 December 2015), John Parks in entry for Chas J Parks, 1930 (Accessed 8 October 2016).

²³ "United States Census, 1940," database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/pal:MM9.1.1/K779-5Y4> : accessed 8 November 2016), John Parks in household of Frank Parks, Marionville, Buck Prairie Township, Lawrence, Missouri, United States; citing enumeration district (ED) 55-5, sheet 5A, family 114, Sixteenth Census of the United States, 1940, NARA digital publication T627. Records of the Bureau of the Census, 1790 - 2007, RG 29. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 2012, roll 2123 (Accessed 8 October 2016).

²⁴ "United States Census, 1900," database with images, FamilySearch(<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:MMRX-LXS> : 22 January 2015), Christian Bergner, Germantown & Home Townships, Turner, South Dakota, United States; citing sheet 6A, family 102, NARA microfilm publication T623 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.); FHL microfilm 1,241,554 (Accessed 10 November 2016).

²⁵ "United States Census, 1910," database with images, FamilySearch(<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:M2Z7-BZ7> : 29 October 2015), Elmer Bergner in household of Christian Bergner, Logan, Pratt, Kansas, United States; citing enumeration district (ED) ED 128, sheet 2B, NARA microfilm publication T624 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.); FHL microfilm 1,374,466 (Accessed 9 November 2016).

and death dates on the same year.²⁶ To make the numbers even more confusing, the oldest two children are actually Elmer's half-brothers. His father Christian was a widower and remarried not long after the death of his first wife. This needs further research to be sure of exactly how many children were in the Bergner family.

Within a few years of his birth the family moved from South Dakota to Logan Township, Pratt County, Kansas and settled down to farm land that they owned. For a time the family lived in a soddie until they were able to build a more permanent home. From then on, the family stayed in Pratt working the land and all the kids, including Elmer helped.

When the United States entered the Great War to make the world safe for democracy, Elmer was too young to enlist, but upon turning 18 in 1918 he registered for the draft. According to his draft registration card, he was tall in height and of slender build. While I'm sure his parents were incredibly worried about the prospect of sending their son "over there" to fight in the trenches, there was no real danger of him going since his registration was dated September 12, 1918. The war would be over in two short months.²⁷

Mary Palmer Hilands Bergner (1898-1981) was born on 15 October 1898 in Kansas, likely Culver, Ottawa County, Kansas.²⁸ Her parents had moved to Kansas from Pennsylvania before Mary was born in order to farm. Mary was the only child of William and Ellen Hilands and remained living with them until she married Elmer.

²⁶ "Find A Grave Index," database, *FamilySearch*(<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QVGY-6N5Q> : 13 December 2015), Elmer Bergner, 1979; Burial, Pratt, Pratt, Kansas, United States of America, Greenlawn Cemetery; citing record ID 132878174, *Find a Grave*, <http://www.findagrave.com> (Accessed 9 November 2016).

²⁷ "United States World War I Draft Registration Cards, 1917-1918," database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:K66N-YY4> : 12 December 2014), Elmer Bergner, 1917-1918; citing Pratt County, Kansas, United States, NARA microfilm publication M1509 (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.); FHL microfilm 1,643,804 (Accessed 9 November 2016).

²⁸ "United States Census, 1900," database with images, *FamilySearch*(<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:MMY6-S4X> : 20 January 2015), Mary P Hilands in household of William A Hilands, Culver & Center Townships (excl. Minneapolis city), Ottawa, Kansas, United States; citing sheet 5A, family 73, NARA microfilm publication T623 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.); FHL microfilm 1,240,494 (Accessed 9 November 2016).

After their marriage, Elmer and Mary remained on Elmer's family farm in Pratt, Kansas. They had two children, Jean and Pete.²⁹ They continued to work the land, adding barns and equipment as they expanded their operation until they passed away. Elmer died on 12 March 1979 and Mary passed away on 17 May 1981.

Thomas and Kate

Thomas Noonan Jr. (1886-???) was born in Nebraska sometime in 1886. According to the 1910 Census he was living in Kansas City, Jackson County, Missouri and working as a cook in a restaurant. By that time he was married to **Katherine G. Noonan (1885-1975)** who was born 4 March 1885 in somewhere in Missouri.³⁰

At the time of the 1930 Census Kate, as she was known to family and friends, was widowed and raising her adopted son, Hurley. She was a self employed seamstress living in Kansas City, Missouri.³¹ Sometime over the next ten years, Kate was forced to close her business and began working as a seamstress in a factory. She also took in a 6 year old lodger by the name of Susie Porter. I'm sure the Great Depression had a lot to do with those changes as she did what she could to provide for her son and to take care of others in desperate times.

Kate lived out the rest of her life in Kansas City, Missouri. She remained in contact with her son, Hurley throughout her life. I know that Chief truly loved his adopted mother and considered her his real mother, flesh and blood. Kate passed away in May of 1975.

²⁹ "United States Census, 1940," database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/pal:MM9.1.1/VR2M-NYW> : accessed 8 November 2016), Jean Marie Bergner in household of Elmer Bergner, Logan Township, Pratt, Kansas, United States; citing enumeration district (ED) 76-16, sheet 2B, family 38, Sixteenth Census of the United States, 1940, NARA digital publication T627. Records of the Bureau of the Census, 1790 - 2007, RG 29. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 2012, roll 1252 (Accessed 8 October 2016).

³⁰ "United States Census, 1910," database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:M2Y6-WF3> : 29 October 2015), Kate Noonan in household of Thomas Noonan Jr., Kansas Ward 8, Jackson, Missouri, United States; citing enumeration district (ED) ED 101, sheet 9A, NARA microfilm publication T624 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.); FHL microfilm 1,374,800 (Accessed 7 November 2016).

³¹ "United States Census, 1930," database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/pal:MM9.1.1/XHF4-7YX> : 8 December 2015), Katherine G Noonan, 1930 (Accessed 8 October 2016).

John and Mabel

John William Clinton (1891-1953) was born on 26 September 1891 in Arkansas.³²

There is not much that could be found about his early years living in Arkansas. More research will be needed, but it is safe to say that he likely lived in Arkansas throughout his early life.

Mabel Jeanette Mohr Clinton (1895-1986) was born to Peter and Elizabeth Mohr on 23 December 1895 somewhere in Missouri. At some point early in her life Mabel's family moved from Missouri to Marion Township, Sebastian County, Arkansas. By the time of the 1910 Census her mother had passed away and she was living with her father, her older sister, and her four younger siblings. The family home was owned at that point and they survived off her father's coal miner salary.³³

I suspect that John and Mabel met through Mabel's father, Peter. Both Peter and John worked as coal miners in the same town, so they were likely coworkers of some sort. On 9 July 1913 in Fort Smith, Sebastian County, Arkansas John and Mabel were married at the ripe old age of 22 and 18, respectively.³⁴ Within a year they welcomed their first child, John Jr., into the world. By 1930 John was still working in the coal mines while Mabel stayed home to care for their five children, including a newborn baby boy named James.³⁵

Both John Clinton and Peter Mohr worked in an industry at its height in the 20th Century. In chapter five of *Century of Difference* authors Fischer and Hout examined the work Americans

³² "Find A Grave Index," database, *FamilySearch*(<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QVKZ-SNS8> : 13 December 2015), John W. Clinton, 1953; Burial, Fort Smith, Sebastian, Arkansas, United States of America, Calvary Cemetery; citing record ID 41474524, *Find a Grave*, <http://www.findagrave.com> (Accessed 17 November 2016).

³³ "United States Census, 1910," database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.1.1/MKKS-XBZ> : 29 October 2015), Mabel Mohr in household of Peter Mohr, Marion, Sebastian, Arkansas, United States; citing enumeration district (ED) ED 141, sheet 12A, NARA microfilm publication T624 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.); FHL microfilm 1,374,078 (Accessed 21 October 2016).

³⁴ "Arkansas, County Marriages, 1837-1957," database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.1.1/N9W4-RYS> : 24 June 2016), Jno W Clinton and Mable Mohr, 1913 (Accessed 21 October 2016).

³⁵ "United States Census, 1930," database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.1.1/XMGN-2R6> : 8 December 2015), John W Clinton, 1930 (Accessed 21 October 2016).

did and how that work changed throughout the century. According to their findings the mining industry went from 670,000 laborers in 1900 to over 1 million by 1920. By the end of the century that number had shrank to a mere 88,000.³⁶

In 1940 John and Mabel found themselves living in the same town in Arkansas, but John had improved his career, or at least his health. According to the Census he was self employed doing clerical work and pulling in a modest, but respectable \$675 salary. Their daughter Joyce Ann was also working as a cashier at a theatre bringing in another \$591, which helped the family no doubt.³⁷ A few years later, as World War II reached its height, John registered for the draft at the age of 50,³⁸ which was in line with the expanded age requirements of the Selective Training and Service Act of 1940.³⁹

John and Mabel continued to live in Fort Smith, Arkansas as their children grew older, married, and moved on to their own lives. Eventually, on 4 January 1953 John William Clinton passed away and was buried in Fort Smith on 8 January 1953.⁴⁰ Mabel would go on to live another 36 years as a widow. I actually remember meeting her briefly as a very young boy. My mother and grandmother took me to see her. I don't remember a lot about the visit, but I do remember it being a very somber mood in the room and I remember holding Great-grandma

³⁶ Fischer and Hout, *Century of Difference*, 107.

³⁷ "United States Census, 1940," database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/pal:MM9.1.1/KQ28-4FV> : accessed 8 November 2016), John W Clinton, Ward 4, Fort Smith, Upper Township, Sebastian, Arkansas, United States; citing enumeration district (ED) 66-49, sheet 6B, family 134, Sixteenth Census of the United States, 1940, NARA digital publication T627. Records of the Bureau of the Census, 1790 - 2007, RG 29. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 2012, roll 175 (Accessed 21 October 2016).

³⁸ "United States World War II Draft Registration Cards, 1942," database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:J4MD-MLN> : 8 April 2016), John William Clinton, 1942; citing NARA microfilm publication M1936, M1937, M1939, M1951, M1962, M1964, M1986, M2090, and M2097 (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.) (Accessed 17 November, 2016).

³⁹ Wikipedia. "Selective Training and Service Act of 1940," accessed 17 November 2016, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Selective_Training_and_Service_Act_of_1940

⁴⁰ "Arkansas, Sebastian County Births and Deaths, 1877-1963," database, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/pal:MM9.1.1/XZCH-M47> : 9 December 2014), John William Clinton, 04 Jan 1953; citing P32, Fort Smith Public Library, Fort Smith; FHL microfilm 1,034,199 (Accessed 21 October 2016).

Mabel's hand and marveling at the softness of her skin. Not long after that trip Mabel passed away on 8 November 1986.

Generation Five

A1a1a1. Jasper Dolynn Parks (1850-1922)

A1a1a2. Mary Jane Guthrie Parks (1855-1927)

A1a1b1. John Elkanah Butler (1854-1928)

A1a1b2. Sarah Barbara Wise Butler (1862-1927)

A1a2a1. Christian Bergner (1858-1936)

A1a2a2. Geeske Meyer Bergner (1876-1945)

A1a2b1. William A. Hilands (1866-1948)

A1a2b2. Ellen Sarah Palmer Hilands (1866-1948)

A1b1a1. unk

A1b1a2. unk

A1b1b1. unk

A1b1b2. unk

A1b2a1. unk

A1b2a2. unk

A1b2b1. Peter Mohr (1863-1935)

A1b2b2. Elizabeth Mohr (1866-1908)

Jasper and Mary Parks

Jasper Dolynn Parks (1850-1922) was born in Greene Township, Polk County, Missouri on 26 July 1850. He was the seventh of nine children, and the youngest boy in the family. His parents owned a farm valued significantly higher than other properties listed on the 1850 Census.⁴¹ The family remained on the same farm at least through 1870, even after the death of Jasper's father the year before. It appears that by this time the boys of the family had gained some schooling as they are listed as being partially able to read and write, but none of the girls are listed as being even partially literate.⁴²

⁴¹ "United States Census, 1850," database with images, *FamilySearch*(<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:MDZH-NK4> : 9 November 2014), Jasper Parks in household of Robert Parks, Polk, Greene, Missouri, United States; citing family 753, NARA microfilm publication M432 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.) (Accessed 9 November 2016).

⁴² "United States Census, 1870," database with images, *FamilySearch*(<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:M4XF-P1S> : 17 October 2014), Jasper

In 1879 Jasper married **Mary Jane Guthrie Parks (1855-1927)**. The two moved to Polk Township, Christian County, Missouri where Jasper farmed as Mary kept house while raising their newborn son, Elmer D. Jasper's mother, aunt, and a niece were also living with the family at the time. It is unclear if the property was owned or rented as the 1880 Census didn't list this information.⁴³

Mary was born on 2 September 1855 in Linden, Perry County, Tennessee. In 1870 her family had moved to Missouri, where her father farmed a modest property valued at \$200. A lot more research is needed to find out about Mary's life.

By 1900 the family had moved to Grant Township, Stone County Missouri. There Jasper continued to farm with the help of two of his sons, James and Robert. His oldest son, Elmer, was working as an engineer.⁴⁴ In 1910 the family remained in the same location with five of the children still living at home ranging from 17 to 27 in age. Robert and William were working as farmers, while Charles had a job as a carpenter and Julia (or Sela - she is listed with a different name on two different Censuses) was working as a teacher. Blanch, the youngest, probably helped her mother with keeping house.⁴⁵

After many years of farming, Jasper retired and took his wife to Buck Prairie, Lawrence County, Missouri where the two rented a home. Their son William continued to live with them

Parks in household of Ellen Parks, Missouri, United States; citing p. 16, family 115, NARA microfilm publication M593 (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.); FHL microfilm 552,268 (Accessed 9 November 2016).

⁴³ "United States Census, 1880," database with images, *FamilySearch*(<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:M66G-L7J> : 13 July 2016), Jasper D Parks, Polk, Christian, Missouri, United States; citing enumeration district ED 8, sheet 8C, NARA microfilm publication T9 (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.), roll 0681; FHL microfilm 1,254,681 (Accessed 9 November 2016).

⁴⁴ "United States Census, 1900," database with images, *FamilySearch*(<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:M3DJ-2H9> : 20 January 2015), Jasper D Parks, Grant & Pierce Townships, Stone, Missouri, United States; citing sheet 11A, family 200, NARA microfilm publication T623 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.); FHL microfilm 1,240,904 (Accessed 9 November 2016).

⁴⁵ "United States Census, 1910," database with images, *FamilySearch*(<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:MLMW-NZZ> : 29 October 2015), Jasper D Parks, Grant, Stone, Missouri, United States; citing enumeration district (ED) ED 194, sheet 3B, NARA microfilm publication T624 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.); FHL microfilm 1,374,838 (Accessed 9 November 2016).

and worked as a produce merchant.⁴⁶ Not long after, Jasper passed away, sometime in 1922, in Marionville, Lawrence County, Missouri. Mary would live for another five years before her death in 1927 in the same town.

John and Sarah Butler

John Elkanah Butler (1854-1928) was born on 30 March 1854. In 1910 he was living in Marionville Ward 1, Lawrence County, Missouri with his wife **Sarah Barbara Wise Butler (1862-1927)**. At the time they were renting land to farm in the area. Sarah was listed without an occupation, so she likely acted as the homemaker while also helping with the various jobs that needed to be accomplished on the farm. Their oldest son, Benjamin, was also listed as a grain farmer like his father.⁴⁷

Sarah was born on 1 August 1862 in Crane, Stone County, Missouri. She grew up on a farm in Missouri, which her family owned, valued at about \$2500.⁴⁸ It appears that both John and Sarah lived their entire lives in Missouri, but this is mostly speculation based on the few records I could track down. Sarah died on 18 August 1927 in Crane, Missouri and John passed a year later on 30 July 1928 in Marionville, Missouri. Significant research is needed to track down more information about John and Sarah Butler.

Christian and Geeske Bergner

⁴⁶ "United States Census, 1920," database with images, *FamilySearch*(<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:M8H1-3T6> : 14 December 2015), Jasper D Parks, Buck Prairie, Lawrence, Missouri, United States; citing sheet 4A, NARA microfilm publication T625 (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.); FHL microfilm 1,820,932 (Accessed 9 November 2016).

⁴⁷ "United States Census, 1910," database with images, *FamilySearch*(<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:M2Y1-PSQ> : 29 October 2015), John E Butler, Marionville Ward 1, Lawrence, Missouri, United States; citing enumeration district (ED) ED 89, sheet 6A, NARA microfilm publication T624 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.); FHL microfilm 1,374,808 (Accessed 1 November 2016).

⁴⁸ "United States Census, 1870," database with images, *FamilySearch*(<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:M4XQ-DWC> : 17 October 2014), Barbara Wise, Missouri, United States; citing p. 4, family , NARA microfilm publication M593 (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.); FHL microfilm 552,256 (Accessed 10 November 2016).

Christian Bergner (1858-1936) was born in Hannover, Germany in 1858. His family immigrated to the U.S. in 1870 on a ship known as the Mississippi. While many think of the immigrant journey to America and imagine seeing the Statue of Liberty as a beacon of freedom before being taken onto Ellis Island, Christian's experience was much different. His family actually arrived in the U.S.'s second largest immigrant point, Baltimore, Maryland.⁴⁹

In 1888 Christian married Gerhardine Viator Bergner and had their first child, William, three years later. The joy the two felt was not long-lived, however. Only a year later, in 1892, Gerhardine gave birth to a second son who passed away in the same year. The child was never even given a name. This may have been symptomatic of a trend noted by Claude Fischer in *Made in America*. In chapter 2 of his book Fischer notes that for many years in American history it was not uncommon for parents to remain emotionally distant from children because of the likelihood that they would die at a very early age. One of the ways that parents kept emotional separation was by avoiding giving a name to a child until they were almost a year old.⁵⁰

Within two years tragedy struck again as Gerhardine passed away in 1894.⁵¹ Christian married **Geeske Meyer Bergner (1876-1945)** soon after in 1895. Apparently Geeske had served as a house maid for the family and Christian feared that rumors might start about him having a woman living in the home, so he took her to the courthouse to be married. Geeske was born in Ostfriesland, Niedersachsen, Germany on 29 November 1876 and immigrated to the U.S. in 1890. By 1900 the two were living in Germantown Township, Turner County, South

⁴⁹ "Maryland, Baltimore Passenger Lists, 1820-1948," database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.1.1/QK6L-HVXY> : 1 October 2015), Christian Bergner, ; citing Immigration, Baltimore, Baltimore, Maryland, United States, NARA microfilm publications M255, M596, and T844 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.); FHL film 417,399 (Accessed 10 November 2016).

⁵⁰ Fischer, *Made in America*, 20.

⁵¹ "Find A Grave Index," database, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QV2G-MLQG> : 13 December 2015), Christian Bergner, 1936; Burial, Pratt, Pratt, Kansas, United States of America, Greenlawn Cemetery; citing record ID 76139713, *Find a Grave*,

Dakota and owned their own farm. They had four children at the time, William C., Johann C., Ralpka, and Else.⁵²

In later records Johann, Ralpka, and Else became Carl, Rose, and Elmer, which leads me to believe that the family felt at least a little fear about their German ancestry. While I couldn't find any evidence of exactly when, their names were changed before the 1910 Census.⁵³ At that point the family had another four children and had lost another in infancy the previous year.⁵⁴

Since it seems likely that the family had concerns about anti-immigrant sentiment prior to 1910, it is also reasonable to assume that they felt uneasy with the outbreak of war in Europe in 1914. A wave of anti-German sentiment spread across the country as Allied propaganda demonized the Germans and emphasized atrocities they committed against the Belgians. Then again in 1939, for Geeske at least, war must have brought plenty of anxiety as well. As Margo Anderson points out in *The American Census*, with the declaration of war against Germany on December 11, 1941 German immigrants suddenly gained enemy alien status.⁵⁵

Before either of these conflicts had broken out, however, the family had moved to Logan Township, Pratt County, Kansas. They lived out the remainder of their days there, farming the land and raising their family. Christian passed away sometime in 1936 and Geeske joined him on 26 March 1945.

⁵² "United States Census, 1900," database with images, *FamilySearch*(<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:MMRX-LXS> : 22 January 2015), Christian Bergner, Germantown & Home Townships, Turner, South Dakota, United States; citing sheet 6A, family 102, NARA microfilm publication T623 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.); FHL microfilm 1,241,554 (Accessed 10 November 2016).

⁵³ "United States Census, 1910," database with images, *FamilySearch*(<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:M2Z7-BZ7> : 29 October 2015), Elmer Bergner in household of Christian Bergner, Logan, Pratt, Kansas, United States; citing enumeration district (ED) ED 128, sheet 2B, NARA microfilm publication T624 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.); FHL microfilm 1,374,466 (Accessed 9 November 2016).

⁵⁴ "Find A Grave Index," database, *FamilySearch*(<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QV2G-MLQG> : 13 December 2015), Christian Bergner, 1936; Burial, Pratt, Pratt, Kansas, United States of America, Greenlawn Cemetery; citing record ID 76139713, *Find a Grave*, <http://www.findagrave.com> (10 November 2016).

⁵⁵ Anderson, *The American Census*, 194.

William and Ellen Hilands

William A Hilands (1866-1948) was born in Milroy, Mifflin County, Pennsylvania on 29 March 1866. He was the youngest of three children. While he grew up on a farm and likely had plenty of hard work to do, he was born into a fairly comfortable situation. In 1870 the family property was valued at \$1700 with the family controlling another \$2000 in assets. He was also able to spend significant time with his grandmother, who was living with the family at the time.⁵⁶

By 1900 he had moved to Kansas and married **Ellen Sarah Palmer Hilands (1866-1948)** who was born in 1866, likely somewhere in New Hampshire, and grew up in Wyandotte Township, Wyandotte County, Kansas.⁵⁷ Early in her life she had to deal with tragedy as her mother passed away in 1874. Within four years her father had remarried which may have brought some stability for Ellen as she entered young adulthood. She remained in Wyandotte Township until she married William.⁵⁸

The two moved to Culver, Ottawa County, Kansas and farmed. William's mother Mary lived with the couple and they had one child together, Mary.⁵⁹ While living in Culver the two enjoyed cross breeding Irises. As of the 1920 Census, William was no longer farming and was

⁵⁶ "United States Census, 1870," database with images, *FamilySearch*(<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:MZ5Q-F8B> : 17 October 2014), William Hilands in household of Abram T Hilands, Pennsylvania, United States; citing p. 18, family 131, NARA microfilm publication M593 (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.); FHL microfilm 552,874 (Accessed 10 November 2016).

⁵⁷ "United States Census, 1870," database with images, *FamilySearch*(<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:MCJ1-5HR> : 17 October 2014), Mary R Palmer in household of Orman C Palmer, Kansas, United States; citing p. 8, family 62, NARA microfilm publication M593 (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.); FHL microfilm 545,942 (Accessed 12 November 2016).

⁵⁸ "United States Census, 1880," database with images, *FamilySearch*(<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:MF5T-C9F> : 14 July 2016), Nellie S Palmer in household of O C Palmer, Wyandotte, Wyandotte, Kansas, United States; citing enumeration district ED 194, sheet 382C, family 8945851, NARA microfilm publication T9 (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.), roll 0400; FHL microfilm 1,254,400 (Accessed 12 November 2016).

⁵⁹ "United States Census, 1900," database with images, *FamilySearch*(<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:MMY6-S4X> : 20 January 2015), Mary P Hilands in household of William A Hilands, Culver & Center Townships (excl. Minneapolis city), Ottawa, Kansas, United States; citing sheet 5A, family 73, NARA microfilm publication T623 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.); FHL microfilm 1,240,494 (Accessed 9 November 2016).

listed as having no occupation. The family had moved to Salina, Saline County, Kansas.⁶⁰ It was likely around this time that the family took their cruise through the Mediterranean Sea. My family still has pictures taken of William near the Great Pyramid of Giza, sitting atop a camel with a local guide aiding him. I can only imagine the awe of visiting such an incredible location. The pictures show almost no one else around, so it seems as if they were there without any of the masses of tourists that are seen in the area today.

In 1930 William and Ellen were still living in Salina, but William was once again working. He took a job as the County Treasurer at the local Courthouse. Their daughter had moved out, but a local school teacher was boarding with them. This likely helped cover the cost of the home, since it was valued at \$7000 and was at least one-and-a-half times the value of any other house listed on the census record.⁶¹ Ellen passed away sometime in 1948 in Salina, but William apparently died in Pratt, Kansas the same year. According to family lore William was headed on a trip to Mexico and stopped in Pratt to visit family and possibly pick up my Great-uncle Pete to join him. There is actually video footage of him standing near some of the family as they helped dig a cellar. Later that day, he had a heart attack and died.

Peter and Elizabeth Mohr

Peter Mohr (1863-1935) was born in Germany sometime in 1863. Further research is needed to find out details about his early life, but it appears likely that he immigrated to the United States in 1881, according to the 1910 U.S. Census.⁶² His wife, **Elizabeth Mohr (1866-**

⁶⁰ "United States Census, 1920," database with images, *FamilySearch*(<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:MF6Y-SNC> : 14 December 2015), Mary P Hilands in household of William A Hilands, Salina Ward 5, Saline, Kansas, United States; citing sheet 4B, NARA microfilm publication T625 (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.); FHL microfilm 1,820,548 (Accessed 9 November 2016).

⁶¹ "United States Census, 1930", database with images, *FamilySearch*(<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:X774-JD8> : 8 December 2015), William A Hilands, 1930 (Accessed 10 November 2016).

⁶² "United States Census, 1910," database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.1.1/MKKS-XBZ> : 29 October 2015), Mabel Mohr in household of Peter Mohr, Marion, Sebastian, Arkansas, United States; citing enumeration district (ED) ED 141, sheet 12A, NARA microfilm publication T624 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.); FHL microfilm 1,374,078 (Accessed 21 October 2016).

1908) had passed away on 13 August 1908 in Fort Smith, Sebastian County, Arkansas⁶³, but appears to have been born in Illinois based on the Mother's Birth entry for their children on the Census that year.

There is some discrepancy to the year of Peter's immigration, it must be said, as two other records seem a possible match, except the immigration dates don't add up. An 1880 U.S. Census has a Peter Mohr living in Iowa, but I was unable to track enough other information to confirm whether or not it was the same Peter. There was also a passenger list from New York immigration documents that had a Peter Mohr arriving in the U.S. in 1882. Again, I was unable to track enough other information to either confirm or deny this record either.

Regardless of which date is correct, it is clear that Peter immigrated from Germany sometime in the 1880s. This was arguably the height of immigration into the United States with about 5 million people coming to live the American Dream, according to Margo Anderson in *The American Census*.⁶⁴ It was not long after this that the U.S. began placing strong limits to the number of immigrants coming into the country.

Those restrictions came, in part, out of a fear that more and more of the immigrants coming to the U.S. didn't share traditional American values. The number of foreign born people living in the U.S. was clearly on the rise at the time. Census data shows that in 1880 about 13.3% of people in the U.S. were not native and that number grew to 14.7% even with legal quotas in place.⁶⁵ Many of those seeking the freedoms and jobs of America were coming from Southern and Eastern Europe. It may come as a surprise, but many recent immigrants from parts of Northern Europe, like Germany, were unhappy with the arrival of so many "lesser" immigrants. Claude Fischer and Michael Hout present evidence that shows the disdain many

⁶³ "Arkansas, Sebastian County Births and Deaths, 1877-1963," database, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.1.1/XZCM-2H4> : 9 December 2014), Elizabeth M. Mohr, 13 Aug 1908; citing P 186, Fort Smith Public Library, Fort Smith; FHL microfilm 1,034,198 (Accessed 25 October 2016).

⁶⁴ Anderson, *The American Census*, 108.

⁶⁵ "Nativity of the Population and Place of Birth of the Native Population: 1850 to 1990," internet release date: 9 March 1999, <http://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0029/tab01.html>

recent immigrants and native born Americans had for these new arrivals in chapter 3 of their book *Century of Difference*.⁶⁶ It would be reasonable to assume that Peter held some of these same trepidations as more Southern and Eastern Europeans arrived into the U.S. throughout the remainder of the 19th Century.

Peter continued to live in Marion Township, Sebastian County, Arkansas working as a miner until his retirement sometime before 1930. At the time of the 1930 U.S. Census he had moved in with his oldest daughter, Lenora Mohr Pudlaz and her husband Henry Pudlaz, likely until his passing just 5 years later.⁶⁷ He died on 11 May 1935 and was buried in Fort Smith, Sebastian County, Arkansas.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Fischer and Hout, *Century of Difference*, 23.

⁶⁷ "United States Census, 1930", database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.1.1/XMGN-25H> : 8 December 2015), Peter Mohr in entry for Henry Pudlaz, 1930 (Accessed 25 October 2016).

⁶⁸ "Find A Grave Index," database, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.1.1/QVKZ-SJRB> : 13 December 2015), Peter Mohr, 1935; Burial, Fort Smith, Sebastian, Arkansas, United States of America, Calvary Cemetery; citing record ID 42411351, Find a Grave, <http://www.findagrave.com> (Accessed 25 October 2016).

Generation Six

A1a1a1a. Robert Parks (1805-1869)

A1a1a1b. Elen Myra Fonvill Parks (1809-1881)

A1a1a2a. Hugh Kirk Guthrie (1833-1890)

A1a1a2b. Martha Norman Guthrie (1829-1899)

A1a1b1a. W.M. Butler (???)

A1a1b1b. Johanna Terry Butler (???)

A1a1b2a. Steppe M. Wise (1842-1904)

A1a1b2b. Sarah Jane Smith Wise (1840-???)

A1a2a1a. Carl Wilhelm Etzart Bergner (1827-1908)

A1a2a1b. Hilka Lena Bonic Bergner (1831-1923)

A1a2a2a. Else Meyer (1847-1928)

A1a2a2b. Rolfka Maize Meyer (1852-1897)

A1a2b1a. Abraham Tallman Hilands (1826-1887)

A1a2b1b. Mary Ann Elwell Hilands (1831-1912)

A1a2b2a. Orman Carlos Palmer (1838-1915)

A1a2b2b. Mary Rockwell Carpenter Palmer (1838-1874)

A1b1a1a. unk

A1b1a1b. unk

A1b1a2a. unk

A1b1a2b. unk

A1b1b1a. unk

A1b1b1b. unk

A1b1b2a. unk

A1b1b2b. unk

A1b2a1a. unk

A1b2a1b. unk

A1b2a2a. unk

A1b2a2b. unk

A1b2b1a. unk

A1b2b1b. unk

A1b2b2a. unk

A1b2b2b. unk

Robert and Elen Parks

Robert Parks (1805-1869) was born on 20 July 1805 somewhere in South Carolina. His wife **Elen Myra Fonvill Parks (1809-1881)** was born on 17 August 1809 somewhere in Tennessee. The earliest record I could find for either was the 1850 Census. At that point they were living in Greene Township, Polk County, Missouri on a \$600 farm. They were married with seven children at the time and both were literate.⁶⁹ Sometime after Robert's passing on 11 July 1869⁷⁰ Elen went to live with their son Jasper in Polk Township, Missouri. It is unclear how long she had lived there before passing away on 18 March 1881.⁷¹ A lot more research is needed to find out more about both Robert and Elen.

Hugh and Martha Guthrie

Hugh Kirk Guthrie (1833-1890) was born on 26 April 1833 in Sumner, Tennessee. His wife **Martha Norman Guthrie (1829-1899)** was born on 26 October 1829 in Bedford, Tennessee. In 1850 Martha was living with her parents on the family farm valued at \$800 in Marshall, Marshall County, Tennessee.⁷²

The two were married in Perry, Tennessee in 1854 and had moved to Missouri by 1870. They had a modest farm valued at \$200 and five children ranging from five to fourteen. Hugh

⁶⁹ "United States Census, 1850," database with images, *FamilySearch*(<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:MDZH-NV1> : 9 November 2014), Robert Parks, Polk, Greene, Missouri, United States; citing family 753, NARA microfilm publication M432 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.) (Accessed 12 November 2016).

⁷⁰ "Find A Grave Index," database, *FamilySearch*(<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QV2G-124K> : 13 December 2015), Robert Parks, ; Burial, Marionville, Lawrence, Missouri, United States of America, Marionville IOOF Cemetery; citing record ID 77073828, *Find a Grave*, <http://www.findagrave.com> (Accessed 12 November 2016).

⁷¹ "Find A Grave Index," database, *FamilySearch*(<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QV2G-124X> : 11 July 2016), Elen Fonville Parks, ; Burial, Marionville, Lawrence, Missouri, United States of America, Marionville IOOF Cemetery; citing record ID 77073891, *Find a Grave*, <http://www.findagrave.com> (Accessed 12 November 2016).

⁷² "United States Census, 1850," database with images, *FamilySearch*(<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:MCD5-6MM> : 9 November 2014), Martha Norman in household of Robert Norman, Marshall county, Marshall, Tennessee, United States; citing family 130, NARA microfilm publication M432 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.) (Accessed 16 November 2016).

passed away on 21 September 1890 in Republic, Greene County, Missouri⁷³ and Martha died in the same location nine years later on 27 July 1899.⁷⁴

WM and Johanna Butler

I was unable to find any records that verified my relation to **WM Butler (???)** or **Johanna Terry Butler (???)**. I have kept them in this paper because they are listed as relatives in other family members' genealogical records. Research is needed to find more solid evidence of their connection to the family and to find out details of their lives.

Steppe and Sarah Wise

Steppe M. Wise (1842-1904) was born in Bedford, Tennessee on 14 March 1842. His wife **Sarah Jane Smith Wise (1840-???)** was born in 1840 in Indiana. The earliest record I could find for either was the 1870 Census. They were married and living in Missouri at that point. Steppe farmed land that the family owned which was valued at \$2500. Neither he or Sarah were literate.⁷⁵ At the time of the 1880 Census the family was in Crane Creek Township, Barry County, Missouri and still farming. My guess is that they lived on the same property at this point, but I couldn't find the exact address from 1870. Sarah was also suffering from the measles at the time the Census taker arrived at their home.⁷⁶

⁷³ "Find A Grave Index," database, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.1.1/QV24-76BP> : 13 December 2015), Hugh Kirkpatrick Guthrie, 1890; Burial, Republic, Greene, Missouri, United States of America, Lindsey Chapel Cemetery; citing record ID 65416185, Find a Grave, <http://www.findagrave.com> (Accessed 12 November 2016).

⁷⁴ "Find A Grave Index," Martha Ann Norman Guthrie, 1899; Burial, Republic, Greene, Missouri, United States of America, Lindsey Chapel Cemetery; citing record ID 66005262, Find a Grave, <http://www.findagrave.com> (Accessed 12 November 2016).

⁷⁵ "United States Census, 1870," database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.1.1/M4XQ-DW4> : 17 October 2014), Step M Wise, Missouri, United States; citing p. 4, family , NARA microfilm publication M593 (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.); FHL microfilm 552,256 (Accessed 12 November 2016).

⁷⁶ "United States Census, 1880," database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.1.1/M66Z-VND> : 13 July 2016), S M Wise, Crane Creek, Barry, Missouri, United States; citing enumeration district ED 2, sheet 246C, NARA microfilm publication T9 (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.), roll 0672; FHL microfilm 1,254,672 (Accessed 10 November 2016).

By 1900 the family had moved to Crane Creek & Czark (Ozark?) Townships, Barry County, Missouri. They owned a farm there, but couldn't have worked the land for long.⁷⁷ Steppe passed away on 19 December 1904 in Osa, Barry County, Missouri. I could not find any record of when Sarah passed away, save that it was after the 1900 Census.

Carl and Hilka Bergner

Carl Wilhelm Etzart Bergner (1827-1908) was born in Leer, Germany in 1827 and died in 1908. His wife **Hilka Lena Bonic Bergner (1831-1923)** was also born in Leer, Germany, but in 1831 and died in August of 1923. Hilka's maiden name may have also been Bonk, but I could not find solid evidence of this. The only record I could connect to these two was the marriage license for their son Peter, who married Emma H. Velde in Illinois.⁷⁸ A lot more research is needed to hash out their lives.

Else and Rolfka Meyer

Else Meyer (1827-1948) was born on 25 March 1847 in Ostfriesland, Niedersachsen, Germany and died in March 1928. His wife **Rolfka Maize Meyer (1852-1897)** was born on 26 March 1852 and died on 28 April 1897. The only record I could trace to them was the marriage of their son Hilko Meyer to Bena Auen in Iowa. Significant research is needed to find out about their lives.⁷⁹

Abraham and Mary Hilands

Abraham Tallman Hilands (1826-1877) was born on 9 December 1826 in Pennsylvania. His wife **Mary Ann Elwell (1831-1912)** was born in New Jersey sometime in

⁷⁷ "United States Census, 1900," database with images, *FamilySearch*(<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:M3HN-ND8> : accessed 20 November 2016), Step M Wise, Crane Creek & Czark Townships, Barry, Missouri, United States; citing enumeration district (ED) 4, sheet 6A, family 102, NARA microfilm publication T623 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1972.); FHL microfilm 1,240,838 (Accessed 10 November 2016).

⁷⁸ "Illinois, County Marriages, 1810-1934," database, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.1.1/Q292-23J5> : 4 March 2016), Hilke Bonk in entry for Peter A. Bergner and Emma H. Velde, 13 Oct 1886; citing , Tazewell, Illinois, United States, county offices, Illinois; FHL microfilm 1,314,688 (Accessed 12 November 2016).

⁷⁹ "Iowa, County Marriages, 1838-1934", database, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.1.1/XJF6-BSJ> : 8 March 2016), Else Meyer in entry for Hilko Meyer and Bena Auen, 1913 Accessed 12 November 2016).

1831.⁸⁰ I could not track down information about their childhood at the time of writing this paper, so more research is needed.

It is clear from family stories, however, that the two were living in Pennsylvania at the outbreak of the Civil War. After the First Battle of Bull Run Abraham Lincoln called for an expansion of the military to defeat the South and unify the nation. On 14 September 1861 the 49th Pennsylvania Infantry mustered in Lewistown and Harrisburg. A.T. was one of the first to answer the call. The 49th quickly found itself in some of the most well-known and deadly battles of the Civil War. Wikipedia lists 27 separate battles in which the regiment fought. Among those were the Seven Days' Battles, the Battle of Antietam, Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, Gettysburg, the Battle of the Wilderness, Spotsylvania Courthouse, Cold Harbor, the Siege of Petersburg, and the Appomattox Campaign.⁸¹

A.T. wrote his wife extensively throughout the Civil War and, luckily, his letters were preserved and remain in the family. It is clear that early on in the war the 49th played more of a support role as they saw some combat but were generally kept in reserve. At Antietam, for example, they were part of the literally thousands of soldiers who General McClellan kept out of the battle for fear of a counter attack by General Lee that never materialized. A.T. was sent in to survey the battlefield after the fighting had ended and he described a grisly scene with bullet holes peppering any buildings in the area and bloated bodies strewn about where the fighting was heaviest.⁸²

As the war progressed the 49th was called into more of a more active role. This put the men in more danger as the regiment lost 361 men throughout the war. Of those, nine were

⁸⁰ "Find A Grave Index," database, *FamilySearch*(<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QV2W-MPKK> : 13 December 2015), Abram T Hilands, 1887; Burial, Minneapolis, Ottawa, Kansas, United States of America, Highland Cemetery; citing record ID 65315937, *Find a Grave*, <http://www.findagrave.com> (Accessed 12 November 2016).

⁸¹ Wikipedia. "49th Pennsylvania Infantry," accessed 13 November 2016, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/49th_Pennsylvania_Infantry

⁸² Abraham T. Hilands, *A.T. Hilands to Mary A. Hilands*. Letter. 1861-1865.

officers, 184 died in battle, and another 168 succumbed to disease.⁸³ It also provided opportunities for advancement through the ranks, however. A.T. Hilands was one who benefited from this. He began his service as a Sergeant, but by the end of the war had reached the rank of First Lieutenant/Adjutant.⁸⁴

Throughout his letters home A.T. expressed concern for his mother and her health and also wrote candidly about the war and his experiences. He also did not shy away from politics. Later in his letters home he is highly critical of General Grant and President Lincoln in their handling of the war and their apparent disregard for the lives of their men. He also refers regularly to the newspapers and asks Mary how they cover the conflict, critiquing some of what is reported. After looking into details of the local paper, I assume that A.T. was not an admirer of their work.

The Hilands likely read the *Juniata Sentinel*, which was published in Mifflintown, Pennsylvania. According to A.T.'s obituary that was the area where he had lived at the time of the war.⁸⁵ The paper began as a Whig news source, but with the split up of the Whig Party prior to the Civil War the paper took a more radical Republican slant. In the 26 October 1864 issue, Abraham Guss wrote a piece encouraging a vote for Lincoln by denouncing the Democrats as treasonous and encouraging disunion.⁸⁶ While it is clear that A.T. strongly believed in the Union, he also expressed concerns with Lincoln on numerous occasions. He was likely still more of a conservative Whig rather than a true Republican.

⁸³ Wikipedia, "49th Pennsylvania."

⁸⁴ "United States Civil War Soldiers Index, 1861-1865," database, *FamilySearch*(<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:FSF6-NNB> : 4 December 2014), Abraham T. Hilands, First Lieutenant/Adjutant, Company HA, 49th Regiment, Pennsylvania Infantry, Union; citing NARA microfilm publication M554 (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.), roll 54; FHL microfilm 882,389 (Accessed 12 November 2016).

⁸⁵ "Find A Grave Index," database, *FamilySearch*(<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QV2W-MPKK> : 13 December 2015), Abram T Hilands, 1887; Burial, Minneapolis, Ottawa, Kansas, United States of America, Highland Cemetery; citing record ID 65315937, *Find a Grave*, <http://www.findagrave.com> (Accessed 12 November 2016).

⁸⁶ *Juniata Sentinel*. (Mifflintown, Pa.), 26 October 1864. "About Juniata Sentinel. (Mifflintown, Pa.) 1846-1873," accessed 13 November 2016, <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84026118/>

A.T.'s strong Union sentiments also clearly followed patterns of the era. According to Margot Anderson in *The American Census*, the 1850 Census showed clear evidence of the massive expansion and growth that the U.S. had experienced through the preceding decades. This process of manifest destiny sparked incredible pride and nationalism across the U.S. However, the process played out in a very sectional way. Both North and South misused the data to illustrate the strength of their own way of life. The North saw the expansion of industry and wage labor, while the South saw the continuation of slavery. So, this nationalism actually worked to further divide the nation. A.T.'s writings show that he was a strong believer in the Union's version of the U.S. and that was a key reason he seems to have served in the Union Army, not for any anti-slavery goals.

While there are numerous stories that could be told from his letters about his experiences in the Civil War, one that stands out was the Battle of Spotsylvania Courthouse. Having already seen the horrors of battle at so many bloody engagements and likely witnessing untold horrors like the wildfires of the Wilderness, A.T. nearly met his end at Spotsylvania Courthouse. After reading his account and comparing notes to Wikipedia articles over the 49th Pennsylvania Infantry and the Battle of Spotsylvania Courthouse it's clear that A.T. served under John Sedgwick at the start of the battle and was likely involved in the assault on Lauren Hill. After Sedgwick fell in battle Horatio G. Wright took over the VI Corps and once again attacked Lauren Hill, this time along the edge of the Mule Shoe known as the Bloody Angle.⁸⁷

It is hard to imagine exactly what A.T. must have experienced. His letter about the fray is very brief and long after the fighting there had ended. Stories about this particular engagement describe it as some of the most intense fighting of the entire war, however. Historians have claimed that men fought at basically arms' length on either side of a defensive breastwork for

⁸⁷ Wikipedia. "Battle of Spotsylvania Courthouse," accessed 13 November 2016, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Spotsylvania_Court_House

twenty-four solid hours. There is even a story of a tree being cut in half by nothing more than musket fire.

Whether or not A.T. made it to the second fray is unclear. At some point, whether in the first assault on 8 May, or the second assault on 12 May, A.T. was hit by musket fire and passed out on the battlefield. He was taken to a field hospital and was one of the lucky soldiers to make a full recovery.⁸⁸

A.T. served throughout the remainder of the war and came back home soon after. Within a year of the war's end he and Mary welcomed their third, and last child into the world. They remained in Pennsylvania for several years after the war. In 1870 A.T. was working as a farmer, or possibly a tanner. The writing on the Census is a little difficult to decipher.⁸⁹

In 1878 the family moved to either Minneapolis or Culver, Ottawa County, Kansas. They apparently held property in both towns, so exactly which was their home is a little difficult to tell at this point. While there A.T. helped construct the local church with his old commander from the Civil War and likely many other community members. Nine years later A.T. passed away on 10 April 1887 and was buried in Minneapolis, Ottawa County, Kansas. The obituary written about him in the local paper lauded him as a loving husband, kind father, loyal friend, and a brave soldier.⁹⁰

⁸⁸ Abraham T. Hilands, Letter. 1864.

⁸⁹ "United States Census, 1870," database with images, *FamilySearch*(<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:MZ5Q-F8B> : 17 October 2014), William Hilands in household of Abram T Hilands, Pennsylvania, United States; citing p. 18, family 131, NARA microfilm publication M593 (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.); FHL microfilm 552,874 (Accessed 10 November 2016).

⁹⁰ "Find A Grave Index," database, *FamilySearch*(<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QV2W-MPKK> : 13 December 2015), Abram T Hilands, 1887; Burial, Minneapolis, Ottawa, Kansas, United States of America, Highland Cemetery; citing record ID 65315937, *Find a Grave*, <http://www.findagrave.com> (Accessed 12 November 2016).

Mary moved in with her son William and his family sometime after A.T.'s death. She also began collecting pension payments from the government for his service in 1888⁹¹ and continued until her own death on 9 November 1912.⁹²

Orman and Mary Palmer

Orman Carlos Palmer (1838-1915) was born sometime in 1850 in Waitsfield, Washington County, Vermont. His wife **Mary Rockwell Carpenter Palmer (1838-1874)** was also born somewhere in Vermont on 8 November 1838. The only record I could find of their early life is from the 1850 Census. Orman was twelve at the time and his family lived on a farm valued at \$2100. It can be assumed that Orman helped out quite a bit by that time, but further research is needed to find out more about both individuals' lives prior to 1870.⁹³

At some point Orman and Mary moved to New Hampshire where their daughter Ellen was born, and then again to Kansas after 1866. In 1870 the family was living in Wyandotte Township, Wyandotte County, Kansas in a home valued at \$2260. Orman was working as a teacher at the time. Mary was keeping house with Ellen and their one year old son William in tow.⁹⁴ Only four years later, however, Mary had passed away on 21 October 1874, leaving Orman to care for the children himself.⁹⁵

⁹¹ "United States General Index to Pension Files, 1861-1934", database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:KDYY-R5Q> : 3 April 2015), Abraham T Hilands, 1888 (Accessed 12 November 2016).

⁹² "United States Veterans Administration Pension Payment Cards, 1907-1933," database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:K64Y-3CH> : 12 December 2014), Abraham T Hilands, 1907-1933; citing NARA microfilm publication M850 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.); FHL microfilm 1,635,074 (Accessed 12 November 2016).

⁹³ "United States Census, 1850," database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:MC2F-D1K> : 9 November 2014), Orman Palmer in household of Aaron Palmer, Waitsfield, Washington, Vermont, United States; citing family 169, NARA microfilm publication M432 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.) (Accessed 13 November, 2016).

⁹⁴ "United States Census, 1870," database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:MCJ1-5HR> : 17 October 2014), Mary R Palmer in household of Orman C Palmer, Kansas, United States; citing p. 8, family 62, NARA microfilm publication M593 (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.); FHL microfilm 545,942 (Accessed 12 November 2016).

⁹⁵ "Find A Grave Index," database, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QVLN-4LGG> : 11 July 2016), Mary R. Carpenter Palmer, 1874; Burial, Kansas City, Wyandotte, Kansas, United States

In 1878 Orman married Sarah B. Brooks Palmer. Before the turn of the century the two had moved to Precinct 5 Tacoma City Ward 2, Pierce County, Washington. Orman found a job teaching High School while Sarah kept house.⁹⁶ Only ten years later, Orman had retired, aged 71 at the time, and Sarah had taken a job teaching painting. The two bought a house in Ahtanum, Yakima County, Washington.⁹⁷ Just five years later, after a long, full life, Orman passed away on 10 September 1915 in Seattle, King County, Washington.⁹⁸

of America, Woodlawn Cemetery; citing record ID 94658669, *Find a Grave*, <http://www.findagrave.com> (Accessed 12 November 2016).

⁹⁶ "United States Census, 1900," database with images, *FamilySearch*(<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:MMPG-5TZ> : accessed 13 November 2016), Orman Palmer, Precinct 5 Tacoma city Ward 2, Pierce, Washington, United States; citing enumeration district (ED) 168, sheet 4A, family 71, NARA microfilm publication T623 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1972.); FHL microfilm 1,241,748 (Accessed 13 November 2016).

⁹⁷ "United States Census, 1910," database with images, *FamilySearch*(<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:MGJX-TP5> : accessed 13 November 2016), Orman C Palmer, Ahtanum, Yakima, Washington, United States; citing enumeration district (ED) ED 290, sheet 11A, family 4, NARA microfilm publication T624 (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1982), roll 1675; FHL microfilm 1,375,688 (Accessed 12 November 2016).

⁹⁸ "Washington Death Certificates, 1907-1960," database, *FamilySearch*(<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:N3LL-2ZZ> : 5 December 2014), Orman C. Palmer, 10 Sep 1915; citing Seattle, King, Washington, reference 1875, Bureau of Vital Statistics, Olympia; FHL microfilm 1,992,326 (Accessed 12 November 2016).