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### Darah Miller Family History

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# **The Family History of**

**Darah D. Miller**

**15 April 2017**

Darah Dawn Miller authored this family history as part of the course requirements for HIST 550/700 Your Family in History offered online in Spring 2017 and was submitted to the Pittsburg State University Digital Commons. Please contact the author directly with any questions or comments: [darahdawnmiller@gmail.com](mailto:darahdawnmiller@gmail.com)

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**List of Direct Line Family Members**

## **Generation One**

- A1. Darah Dawn Miller (1994- )**
- A2. Robert Gage Miller (1995- )**

## **Generation Two**

- A1a. Angela Dawn Birney (1975- )**
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## **Generation Three**

- A1a1. Rebecca Ann Bruce (1955- )**
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- A1b1. Regina Edwards Birney (1941-2000)**
- A1b2. Sherman Daryl Birney (1940-2017)**

## **Generation Four**

- A1a1a. Barbara Jean Bradley-Hepner (1931-2001)**
- A1a1b. Walter Bradley (1925-1966)**
- A1a2a. Mary Lou Bruce (1930-2005)**
- A1a2b. John Robert Bruce (1928-1981)**
- A1b1a. Sybil Clapp Edwards (1921-2014)**
- A1b1b. Charles W Edwards (1919-1993)**
- A1b2a. Elna Leona Mae Wade (unk - unk)**
- A1b2b. Harold Wellington Birney (unk - unk)**

## **Generation Five**

**A1a1a1. Elisabeth Bella Gerwert Mock (1897-1992)**

**A1a1a2. Thomas Oren Mock (1887- unk)**

**A1a1b1. Unk**

**A1a1b2. Unk**

**A1a2a1. Virgie Lois Fry (1909-unk)**

**A1a2a2. Floyd Arvel Yeubanks (1900-1978)**

**A1a2b1. Howard Bruce (1900-unk)**

**A1a2b2. Dollie Marie Moore (1904-unk)**

**A1b1a1. Iris Harper (unk-unk)**

**A1b1a2. Dayton Clapp (1898-1932)**

**A1b1b1. Unk**

**A1b1b2. Unk**

**A1b2a1. Unk**

**A1b2a2. Unk**

**A1b2b1. Unk**

**A1b2b2. Unk**

## GENERATION ONE

**Darah Dawn Miller (1994- )** was born in Independence, KS at Mercy Hospital on July 18<sup>th</sup>, 1994 at 11:18 p.m. to **Angela Dawn Birney (1975- )**. Angela went in to labor on the morning of July 18<sup>th</sup>, 1994. Jupiter was being hit by fragments of the shoemaker levy comet, the largest fragment hit around the same time that her water broke<sup>1</sup>. She was in labor with Darah for over 19 hours before her doctors decided that it was best to do a C-section.

During labor, Darah's biological father left Angela alone at the hospital while she labored instead of staying by her side and helping her through it. This is important to the story because that is where Darah got the spelling of her name. Darah's biological father and Angela fought back and forth over how they wanted to spell it. He wanted it to be Dara and she wanted it to be Darah. He got back to the hospital in time to see Darah being born via C-section but left shortly after. Angela, being there alone with a new baby, got brought the paperwork for the birth certificate, and filled her name as Darah in spite of him for leaving her during a time in which she needed him.

Darah was the oldest of two children, having one full sister, Nicole Marie Sherwood (1996-2015). Her biological dad went on to have 5 more children, her half-siblings, 1 brother and 4 sisters, Edyn Deanna Rae Sherwood (2001- ), Elisabeth Sherwood (2008- ), Isabelle Sherwood (2008- ), Alexander Michael Sherwood (2009- ), and Joslyn Kay LeighAnn Sherwood (2012- ). She hasn't had any contact with them in many years due to the relationship with her biological father being very muddy.

Darah was born to a not so nice father, a number of horrible things happened to their family as direct result of him. For that reason, her mother Angela got divorced when Darah was really young, in 2001. But this wasn't before Angela gave birth to her second child with him. Darah recalls back to the day her sister Nicole was born. This was her first memory. After attending the country music show that

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<sup>1</sup>. Comet Shoemaker-Levy 9. (2017, April 30). Retrieved April 30, 2017, from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comet\\_Shoemaker%E2%80%9393Levy\\_9](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comet_Shoemaker%E2%80%9393Levy_9)

her grandfather played in twice a month, they rushed to the hospital. Darah remembers running up and down the hallway and being told “You’re a big sister now.” Darah thought that her new sister’s name was ‘Nickle’ rather than ‘Nicole’ and she called her that for a long time.

In Figure 6.7<sup>2</sup> “Subjective Assessments of Family’s Financial Situation and Satisfaction with It, by Income Level” from the book *Century of Difference*, Fischer and Hout show how family’s incomes have an impact on how satisfied they are with their lives. Their research suggests that, in well-off nations, going from having little money to have some money increases people’s happiness or overall satisfaction, but going from having some to having lots adds little to happiness or overall satisfaction. The left-hand side of Figure 6.7 displays how respondent’s rated their family’s financial situation compared to the average, from 1 (far below) to 5 (far above average). The right-hand side uses respondent’s ratings of how satisfied they were with their family’s financial situation from 1 (not at all satisfied) to 3 (satisfied). They were sorted into 3 groups based on their annual family income. The lowest 20 percent rated their financial situation at around a 2.25 compared to the average, and around a 1.8 on terms of satisfaction. The middle 60 percent rated their financial situation at around a 3 compared to the average, and around 2 on terms of satisfaction. And the highest 20 percent rated their financial situation at around a 3.75 compared to the average, and around a 2.5 on terms or satisfaction. This of course, is the overall satisfaction from the 1990s to the 2000s.

Darah Miller came from a family that was more or less satisfied with their income, like the middle 60 percent of people. As she reached adolescence, her family began to slowly drift toward the ‘not satisfied with their income’ group of people, or the lower 20 percent of people, because of cost of living increases.

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1. <sup>2</sup> Claude S. Fischer and Michael Hout, *Century of Difference; How America Changed in the Last One Hundred Years* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2006), 160.

During the early years, Darah's family had most everything they needed, a car, groceries, TV's, they even had multiple computers, which was a very rare thing back in the 1990's. They were a well off, middle class family. The great recession of 2008 hit her family very hard, as her grandfather, whom she was living with, lost his job. This created a very hard time for their family as they had to learn to live differently than they once had, sinking into poverty with just the bare essentials. Going from being pretty well off to struggling to get by, the family's overall happiness dwindled a bit. It took a few years to return to the state in which they were once again satisfied with their overall financial situation.

Darah grew up in the small town of Independence, KS. There is a lot of history in that little town. It was settled in 1869 on land that was purchased from the Osage Indians for \$50. Miss Able, a monkey born at the Riverside Park and Zoo in Independence, was one of the first monkeys to fly in space. She returned home alive on May 28th, 1959. Independence was the boyhood home to the playwright William Inge. Independence Community College's William Inge Center for the Arts sponsors the annual William Inge Festival.

Each year during the festival, a lifetime achievement award is bestowed on a nationally-recognized American playwright. The William Inge house is a block away from Darah's grandparent's house, the house she grew up in. Every year during the festival, Darah had to park in the yard of her grandparent's house because of all the traffic going to his house. Another cool thing about her home town is that it was home to Laura Ingalls Wilder, whose life was described in the book *Little House on the prairie*. Her house is now a museum just west of town. But her all-time favorite part about the town is Neewollah, which is the largest annual Halloween festival in the state of Kansas. Her family lives and breathes for this festival; it is her town's homecoming.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Independence, Kansas. (2017, April 28). Retrieved February 1, 2017, from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Independence,\\_Kansas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Independence,_Kansas)

She spent most of her childhood with her maternal grandparents due to the long nurse's hours that her mother was working to support their family. Darah's family lived with her maternal grandparents until 2003, when they moved in with Angela's 2<sup>nd</sup> husband Dathan Reed. Life at this time was not so great for the family, as Angela had a lot of issues with her psychotic ex-husband, but they managed alright. Eventually they moved out of Independence, KS to Cherryvale, KS in order to put some distance between them. It didn't help much.

Darah was in between 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade when they moved to Cherryvale. She was a little apprehensive about moving to a new school because she was leaving her friends behind. The only thing that kept her going through this was that her best friend at the time, Hunter Allison, had recently transferred into that school district as well. It made things a lot easier for her. She joined sports teams and clubs and tried to make the best of being in a new school. She eventually made lots of friends and was over all happy with her life there. That is when her mother and Dathan got divorced. Darah's father, James Birney, joined the family in September of 2006, around 6 months after the divorce, when she was in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade. Darah hated him so much. There was so much going on at this time, with her mother getting divorced; she was not ready to welcome another man into their life. It was very hard on her. Eventually she grew to love him, but it was hard starting off.

Darah's high school experience was very horrible. She was bullied mercilessly every day for 4 years. She attempted suicide several times because of it. Life changed dramatically after that in 2010. At the end of Darah's sophomore year, May of 2010, Darah met Robert "Gage" Miller (1995- ). At the time, they picked on each other in passing, but Darah fancied him. By August, they were friends, and they hung out on a daily basis after that. Gage was Darah's one and only friend in high school. 6 months into their friendship, Gage and Darah started dating. They went through everything together after that. They were inseparable.

In May of 2013, Darah and Gage moved in together for the first time. They lived in a one bedroom apartment with a little more than breathing room. It was so small, but they got to know each other very well there. She knew at that time that she wanted to marry him; he however, needed some



convincing. She must have asked him to marry her every day for a year. He wanted to wait until they graduated college to even talk about that part of their life. Darah was discouraged by this, thinking that he didn't want to be with her, only to find out the best thing. In May of 2014, Darah graduated from Coffeyville Community College with her associate's degree. Just 2 days after Darah's college graduation, Gage proposed to her. It was dreams come true for her. She had been in love with him since the first time they hung out together in 2010. They decided that they wanted a long engagement and planned for their wedding for the following year, on March 14<sup>th</sup> 2015.

They moved to Pittsburg that May, right before graduation, so that Darah could transfer to Pittsburg State University to get her Bachelor's degree. Darah didn't like it there very much because it was too far away from her family, but she dealt with it in order to work towards her degree. Darah went through many majors during her time at Pitt until she finally settled on a Bachelor's of General Studies.

Darah planned her wedding while attending her classes and they were married on March 14<sup>th</sup>, 2015. After their honeymoon, Darah went back to her semester at school. This is the beginning of the worst year of her and her families' life. On July 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2015, at 4:32 pm, Darah got a call from her mother, Angela with the bad news; her sister had died in a car accident. This was the worst day of her life. Since moving to Pittsburg, she had only seen her sister a handful of times, in comparison to seeing her daily before that. It hit her particularly hard. This realization of the finality of life made Darah and Gage decide that it was time to start a family.

They got pregnant relatively fast, after only 3 months, or 2 cycles of trying. They were scared but also very happy about the new edition. They even planned to name it after Darah's sister. The pregnancy ended abruptly, 2 weeks after finding out about it, in miscarriage. This only added to her grief from that year. The miscarriage sent Darah into a spiraling depression, but they didn't stop trying to have a child. 6 months later, she fell pregnant again. This one, however, was perfectly healthy. She carried her baby to term, a little girl. She was born in December of 2016.

During her pregnancy, Darah's parents filed adoption papers so that she could officially become a Birney. All the papers were done and on November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016, she was officially adopted by

James, her dad. This was the best moment in her life, up to that point, followed only by the birth of her child the following month.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Darah's personal knowledge

## GENERATION TWO

**A1a. Angela Dawn Birney (1975- )**

**A1b. James Edwards Birney (1976- )**

Angela Dawn Birney was born on June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1975 in Coffeyville, KS to **Rebecca Ann Bruce (1955- )** and **Dennis Leon Bruce (1952- )**. She has two younger sisters, Cynthia LeAnn Barnett (1980- ) and Tara Denise Rayner (1977- ). Angela lived in Independence, KS most of her life.

As a child growing up, she didn't have to deal with any divorce or family problems. She grew up in a home with two wonderful loving parents. She spent a lot of time fighting with her sisters. Overall, she describes her life as typical, with not much out of the ordinary happening.

Angela was an active member of a variety of activities throughout her high school life. In 9<sup>th</sup> grade, Angela participated in a musical at her high school. The musical was called 42<sup>nd</sup> Street. She had a part in the chorus line. She participated in a musical as a part of the chorus every year for the first three years of high school. In 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade, Angela was the football medical trainer, which she received a football letter for. She was a big fan of the French language. She participated in the French club all four years of high school alongside her actual classes she was taking.

When Angela was 16 years old, she met a guy named Michael Sherwood. Shortly after that, between her junior and senior year, she married him. It was the worst decision of her life. As he aged, he got more and more mean, more and more abusive. She left him in September of 1999 and was divorced in the fall of the next year, 2000.

Immediately following high school, Angela enrolled in the nursing program at Neosho County Community College. She graduated with her LPN the following July, 3 days before giving birth to her first child Darah Dawn Miller (1994- ) Angela gave birth to her second child, Nicole Marie Sherwood (1996-2015), on November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1996.

In June of 2000, before her divorce was finalized, Angela decided to go back to nursing school to get her RN. During this time, she took care of her sick grandmother while simultaneously going to school. She graduated in May of 2001, three months after the death of her grandmother.

In February of 2003, Angela married her second husband Dathan Lee Reed. They had a wedding planned for April of that year, but Dathan, being in the national guard, was then scheduled to be deployed to Iraq in mid- February. This caused them to move the date up. Shortly after their wedding, Dathan got a call from the army stating that he did not have all of the required classes to go, so he would not be shipped out. After 10 years of being in the infantry, he was not qualified to hand out toilet paper with the supply unit. Everyone in the family thought that was quite funny.

Angela was married to Dathan for 3 years until they subsequently divorced. She went to work for a travel nursing company called 'Nurse Stat'. She was working at a hospital in Dodge City when she met Darah's dad, James Edwards Birney. After work one day, on September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2006, Angela went to the restaurant and bar that was at the hotel she was staying with. At the bar, she started talking to this guy who introduced himself as James. They have been inseparable ever since. In October of that same year, Angela brought James home to meet her kids. They were less than thrilled to be meeting him, to say the least. Angela's youngest daughter, Nicole Marie Sherwood, adapted to the new relationship easier than Darah did. Everyone around could tell that Darah absolutely hated him.

In July of 2007, Angela and her family moved out of their little apartment into a big house in Coffeyville, KS. They were lucky to get the lease signed, because shortly after, the big flood of 07' happened. There was no housing available after that due to half of the houses in area being destroyed by water, and it Coffeyville, by oil and water.

In October of 2007, Angela moved the family to Dodge City briefly, to take care of James' sick grandmother. This did not last long as Darah had a depressive breakdown while living there and threatened suicide. She did not like to be away from her home and away from her family that was in Independence, KS. Angela ended up packing them up and moving them back to Coffeyville, with his grandmother, Sybil in tow. Sybil was the worst person to live with. At one point, she even called the cops

on Angela because she didn't get her coffee made for her fast enough. The police broke in through the window while she was upstairs doing some household chores.

On August 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2009, Angela and James became Mr. and Mrs. Birney. Darah participated in the wedding, and was a bridesmaid. But Angela's youngest daughter refused to go to the wedding. Neither of her kids really liked James at that point, but Darah did the adult thing and went to the wedding because Nicole would not go. Life after the wedding was overall pretty typical for many years.

In January of 2012, there was a bump in the family when Angela's youngest daughter, Nicole, became pregnant at the age of 15. This caused a lot of issues for them, as Angela was very upset and startled by this event. Nicole moved in with her father for a while so that things could cool down between them. Not long after, she was back living with Angela and James due to her father being a raging psychopath. Angela finally came to terms with being a grandmother before age 40 and was supportive of her, even though she hated the situation. Angela's first granddaughter was born in September that year.

The last big event that happened in Angela's life, thus far, was in July of 2015. On July 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2015, Nicole and her daughter left the house to head to Independence, KS. That was the last time she would walk out the door. A police officer came to the house around 40 minutes later to inform them of an accident that occurred in their vehicle. They were asking for James. Due to the vehicle registration, they thought that Angela was the one who was in the accident. Angela quickly realized what had happened. They raced to Independence hospital. Nicole was declared dead in the emergency room that day, at age 18. That's all there is to be said about that.

**James Edwards Birney (1976- )** was born on October 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1976 in Astoria, Oregon to Brenda Regina Birney (1941- 2000) and Sherman Daryl Birney (1940-2017). James lived in Astoria for the first 3 years of his life until his parents divorced. At that time, he moved to Dodge City, KS with his mother. They moved in with James' maternal grandparents Sybil and C.W. Edwards.

James attended school at Lincoln Elementary in Dodge City until third grade. Fourth and fifth grade he spent attending catholic school. James didn't fit in very well because he was the only non-Catholic student that attended school there. He recalls how horrible catholic school was stating "It was like a black

kid going to school in the south in the 60s. I was the only one who wasn't catholic. We had to go to church during school on Thursdays and Fridays. I had to sit in the pew while everyone else participated in communion." He recalls playing Pontius Pilate in the school play. None of the other students would play him because they didn't want to be the one who killed Jesus. James got in a lot of trouble during this time. He acted out a lot. At the end of his 5<sup>th</sup> grade year, his grandparents informed him that he would not be going back to the catholic school. They enrolled him in St. John's Military Academy in Salina, KS due to him "not having enough manners."

This was not a school for a light hearted. This school was a place that people got sentenced to go. His grandparents opted to pay the \$14,000 per semester tuition to send him there. James went to this school for one full year – 365 days. During this time, he only saw his mother two times. "I went from being an outcast at Catholic school to being locked up like an inmate. When I got out of military school, everything was all 'yes sir' 'no sir'. I was not going back to military school." He managed to find his manners at military school out of necessity.

After he finished his year of military school, he got sent back to catholic school. He went from being the low kid to being the top kid in his class. He played football, basketball, ran track, and lettered in all of them. Things were a night and day difference from before he went to military school. After 8<sup>th</sup> grade, he went to a public high school. His 9<sup>th</sup> grade class was the first one to attend high school. Before, the school was only for 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students. Initiation for the underclassmen in high school was horrible. He remembered being forced to wear wigs, dresses and high heels while pushing a mini-van down the main street of Dodge City. "It was absolutely horrible."

After high school, James attended Dodge City Community College on a golf scholarship. He met a girl named Sam. Sam was pregnant at the time. James took care of her daughter for the next three years, raising her like his own. After that he met a girl name Tracy, who became his first wife. She also had a daughter that he raised like his own. He was married to her from July 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2000 to July 27<sup>th</sup> 2005. Both of these kids were ripped from his life by their "whore-ish mothers" says James.

The next year he met Angela, at a hotel bar in Dodge City, KS. They began a serious relationship and got married 3 years later on August 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2009. With their relationship, he gained not only a wife, but two step kids. They didn't really like him, they did everything they could to point out that they hated him, but he didn't go anywhere. Even though there were issues between James and Darah and Nicole, he always showed up to anything and everything they asked of him, which is more than could have been said about their biological father.

When Nicole died in 2015, life shifted a little. No one in the family knew what to do with life. None of it made sense. That is when Darah and James became closer than they previously were. After Darah's final failed attempt at a relationship with her horrible biological father, James asked if he could adopt her. On November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016, the adoption was finalized. Darah finally had a father who wouldn't walk out when things got tough and James finally had a daughter that couldn't be taken away from him.

## GENERATION THREE

**A1a1. Rebecca Ann Bruce (1955- )**

**A1a2. Dennis Leon Bruce (1952- )**

**A1b1. Brenda Regina Edwards Birney (1941-2000)**

**A1b2. Sherman Daryl Birney (1940-2017)**

Darah's maternal grandmother, **Rebecca Ann Bruce (Becky) (1955- )**, was born in Coffeyville, Kansas, in 1955, to **Barbara Jean Bradley Hepner (1931-2001)** and **Walter Bradley (1925-1966)**. Rebecca was the oldest child out of 4 children. She has one sister and two brothers, Bobbi Lynn Bradley (1957- ) Charles Michael Bradley (1958- ), and Richard Eugene Bradley (1959- ).

Barbara and Walter Bradley were married on June 11<sup>th</sup>, 1952 but did not give birth to any children until Rebecca in 1955. They had a lot of trouble conceiving children. During this time, Barbara found out that she had a tipped uterus and had to have surgery to correct it in order to conceive any children. Once she got started having kids, she had four kids in five years. Becky has said "momma said that after she had the surgery, all daddy had to do was hang his pants on the bedpost and she was pregnant." Needless to say, after she gave birth to four healthy babies, she called it quits and had a hysterectomy.

Rebecca grew up for the most part in Coffeyville, KS with her family, although, she admits that she lived all over south east Kansas during most of her young childhood. During her younger years, her father, Walter, worked on the pipelines. As she got older, he became a student until he became too sick to work. At that time, he was a stay at home dad. She recalls "...growing up saying daddy where most said mommy." When Becky was 11 years old, January of 1966, her father Walter had open heart surgery. He died of a brain hemorrhage 6 weeks later on March 15<sup>th</sup>.

During the second semester of her 6<sup>th</sup> grade year, she lived in Chanute, during which her mother was finishing up nursing school. Becky's father had recently passed away, so her mother went back to school to become a nurse so she could make more money for the family.



The remainder of her adolescence was remotely uneventful until she met her now husband, Dennis Bruce, while working at the local Dairy Lane. They dated for a few years until they broke up. When Becky was 19 years old, Dennis and her got back together, and decided on a whim, that they were going to get married. Becky recalls only having 2 weeks to plan their wedding from the time they got back together.

After a week before their 1 year anniversary, they welcomed their first child into this world, Angela Dawn Birney (1975- ). They went on to have two more children, Tara Denise Rayner in 1977 and Cynthia LeAnn Barnett in 1980. After Cynthia was born, Becky had planned to have a hysterectomy. The doctors asked her as they pulled Cynthia out, cesarean style, “Another girl! Are you sure you want the hysterectomy? Don’t you want to give your husband a son?” To which she said “NO! If he wants to have a son, he can get it somewhere else. Do the surgery.” She was done having children and she didn’t care that she didn’t give birth to a son.

Darah’s maternal grandfather, **Dennis Leon Bruce (1952- )**, was born on November 10<sup>th</sup>, 1952 at Coffeyville Memorial Hospital in Coffeyville, Kansas, to **Mary Lou Bruce (1887-1959)** and **John Robert Bruce (1928-1981)**. Dennis was the youngest of two, having only one brother, Phillip Lester Bruce (1949-2011).

When Dennis was little, his family didn’t have much. He’s often told Darah stories about how life used to be for him and his brother. He said “Life wasn’t so bad back then, I mean, we didn’t have a lot to eat but we got by, our family survived just fine.” They didn’t have enough money to pay the bills a lot of the time, so in the winter, they would put quilts over the kitchen doorways to keep the heat (that came from their 2 burner hot plate) inside the kitchen. That was all they had to heat the home when they couldn’t afford to pay for gas.

They never had a lot of money, he told me about how they used to go to this paint store and this grocery store, one right after the other, (because they were right next to each other). At the grocery store, they gave him and his brother some candy and at the paint store, they gave them each some paint they had

left-over from whatever they had just finished painting. They would use it to paint their bikes, since they couldn't afford to just go buy new ones, and the ones that they did manage to save up for were used. This was the way they grew up. When he had moved out and started his own family, he wanted them to have more security than he had growing up. He worked hard, and still works hard. When he was able to buy his family their first color TV set and a microwave, he was thrilled. Having that kind of money was something he had never had before.

Mary Lou Bruce worked at ACC – now standard motors – manufacturing car parts. She worked there for over 20 years. She also worked other jobs including restaurant work at Rita's Cafe, the box factory, and manufacturing bombs at Kansas ammunition. His father, John Robert Bruce worked at the foundry, the barrel factory, at a bakery and for Pepsi when they were really young. He recalls his dad bringing home cases of pop on the weekends, but unlike now, they were glass bottles.

Dennis recalled a story his mother told him about when he was one and half years old. He was outside, and the other kids were playing baseball. His aunt Margie let him come outside and told the other kids to watch him. They didn't watch him like they were supposed to. He had wandered off. His mother found him 8 blocks away from their house, walking down the sidewalk on his own. That was one of the first moments that he scared his mother half to death.

Dennis does not remember many noteworthy experiences from his childhood. He did, however, remember a moment from his teenage years. When Dennis was 16, he worked at Dairy Lane in Coffeyville, KS. This is where he met Darah's grandmother Becky, as she worked there as well. He recalls one night that they were working, and they were about to close the store for the night. They were the only place open, as it was Christmas eve, and it was snowing. Their management told them that if there was business, not to close up until it died down, but that night, it never died down. Their boss had to come up and help them close at five in the morning that day.

**Brenda “Regina” Edwards Birney (1941-2000)<sup>5</sup>** and **Sherman Daryl Birney (1940-2017)<sup>6</sup>** were Darah’s paternal grandparents. She never met her grandmother and only met her grandfather one time, on the eve of her parents wedding in 2009.

Regina was born in Houston, TX on October 8<sup>th</sup>, 1941 to Sybil Edwards and C.W. Edwards. When she was a young child growing up, her father C.W. was off fighting in World War II. She grew up in a small town called Herford. It was just her and her mom for most of that time. Regina did not talk much about her life as a child before she was born

Regina attended school at Fort Hayes State University. This is where she met her first and only husband, Daryl. They got married shortly after in 1965. They tried for 10 years to conceive a child but when they could not, they decided that they were going to adopt a child. They found James and signed the paperwork for him immediately. James’ biological mother was a teenager that was going to abort him, but she decided against it and put him up for adoption, luckily for him. Regina, Daryl, and James lived together as a family for the first three years of his life until Regina and Daryl got divorced in 1979. She never remarried after that.

During the years of James’ childhood, Regina taught history for junior high and high school. She did this for 30 years. She also sold insurance and after she retired from teaching, she took care of her mother’s investments.

One of Regina’s favorite things to do is cook. She was very good at it. She liked to cook every kinds of food, from Italian to Mexican to American to dessert foods. She just loved to cook. James’ recalled that his favorite thing that his mother cooked was pasta. “She made the pasta from scratch. She made the sauce from scratch. Everything she made was from scratch. It was absolutely delicious.”

Another thing that she really loved doing was bird watching. She loved listening to their distinct sounds and viewing their pretty colors. She thought it was very peaceful.

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<sup>5</sup> Cribbs, B. (n.d.). Reno County, Kansas Obituaries - 2. Retrieved April 30, 2017, from [http://www.genealogybuff.com/ks/reno/webbbs\\_config.pl/noframes/read/2](http://www.genealogybuff.com/ks/reno/webbbs_config.pl/noframes/read/2)

<sup>6</sup> Death: Feb. 22, 2017. (2017, February 22). Retrieved April 30, 2017, from <http://www.dailyastorian.com/obituaries/20170222/death-feb-22-2017>

Regina was diagnosed with cancer in 1998 when her lung collapsed. She had a tumor the size of a baseball in between her two lungs, where they split. She had previously had a chest x-ray not 6 months before her diagnosis that didn't show the tumor. It was a very fast growing tumor. She was dealing with pneumonia in her left lung when her right lung collapsed, due to this and other various reasons; they could not remove the tumor. She inevitably suffocated from it. Regina died on March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2000 at St. Francis Hospital in Wichita, KS from lung cancer.

**Sherman "Daryl" Birney (1940-2017)** was born in Bucklin, KS on 1940 to **Elna Leona Mae Wade (1877-1968)** and **Harold Wellington Birney (1873-1933)**. The only information that James could recall about him and his life growing up is that **he** grew up on a farm and that his father, Harold, was a carpenter.

Regina met Daryl at Fort Hayes State University. They were married in 1965. They tried to have kids for 10 years, unsuccessfully. This is due to both of their infertilities. In 1976, they gave up on trying and decided that they were going to adopt a child. This is where James came from. His birth mother was a teenager and wanted to abort him, but instead, she decided to put him up for adoption. He said "My parents signed for me before I even hit the ground."

Daryl and Regina got divorced in 1979 when James was three years old. James did not have much contact with his father after that, spending only two weeks out of the summer with him, in his new house in Oregon, every year until he was around 14 years old.

After many years of no contact with, James reconnected with him in 2008. Daryl was a licensed psychologist, and because of how many psychological issues James was having with Darah, he contacted him in order to get advice. Up until then, he hated his father for abandoning him and his mother. It was one of the best things he did. The following year, Daryl and his new wife flew to Coffeyville, KS to attend the wedding of James and Angela. This was the one and only time he met Darah.

Not much was said between Daryl and James for the remaining years of his life, aside from a call on birthdays and a card on holidays. In 2016, Daryl was diagnosed with Leukemia. Daryl called James

and Angela when he found out, and very rapidly afterwards, his health declined. He was put on hospice almost immediately. One day in mid-February, Daryl stopped talking and he stopped eating. Angela had just spoken with him the day before. He died 3 days later on February 21<sup>st</sup>, in his home in Astoria, OR. <sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> James' memory, verbal account, 30 April 2017

## GENERATION FOUR

**A1a1a. Barbara Jean Bradley Hepner (1883-1934)**

**A1a1b. Walter Bradley (1877-1951)**

**A1a2a. Mary Lou Bruce (1887-1959)**

**A1a2b. John Robert Bruce (1884-1914)**

**A1b1a. Sybil Clapp Edwards (1869-1900)**

**A1b1b. Charles W Edwards (1868-1929)**

**A1b2a. Elna Leona Mae Wade (1877-1968)**

**A1b2b. Harold Wellington Birney (1873-1933)**

**Barbara Jean Bradley-Hepner (1931-2001)**<sup>8</sup> was born on July 28<sup>th</sup>, 1931 in Pittsburg, KS to Elisabeth Bella Mock and Thomas Oren Mock. She was the youngest of two children, the oldest of which Christine, being 9 years older.

Barbara grew up catholic and went to catholic school all of her life, all the way until nurses training until she was kicked out of the program in 1952, when she married her first husband Walter Bradley. When they got together, they moved to Coffeyville, KS.

After their marriage, Barbara struggled with infertility due to her tilted uterus. After 2 years of trying, she went on to have surgery to correct it, and shortly after fell pregnant with her first child, Rebecca Ann Bradley. Barbara and Walter went on to have 3 more children, Bobbi Lynn Bradley, Charles Michael Bradley, and Richard Eugene Bradley.

Throughout this time, she worked as a ward clerk, keeping records on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of the Coffeyville hospital. The year following the death of her husband, around 1967, she went back to school to finish getting her nurses degree at Chanute at Neosho County Community College. She uprooted her family for a school semester while she did it, until she completed it. After she was finished earning her LPN license, she moved her family back to Coffeyville, KS.

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<sup>8</sup> "United States Social Security Death Index," database, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.1.1/J5HK-WM7> : 20 May 2014), Barbara J Hepner, 05 Feb 2001; citing U.S. Social Security Administration, Death Master File, database (Alexandria, Virginia: National Technical Information Service, ongoing).

Barbara worked as an LPN for around 25 years until she was colon cancer in 1995. She had a tumor the size of grapefruit. They went in to remove it on the day of the Oklahoma City bombing. This surgery resulted in her having to get a colostomy bag. If she would have had the surgery a year later, they would have had the knowledge to save her colon. After the surgery, they kept testing for the number of cancer cells in her body. They remained high. They ignored the fact that the count remained high for a year before checking her out. A full year after the colon surgery, they found that she had a completely separate cancer in her lungs. She got treatment in Coffeyville, KS for quite a while until she had a falling out with her doctor over treatment plans. Her oldest daughter, Becky, then called the cancer treatment center of America. They bought her another year of life.

Barbara died in her home on 2001, from congestive heart failure caused by the years of taking the chemo and radiation drugs. <sup>9</sup>

**Walter Bradley (1925-1966)** was born at his parents' home in Bloom, KS on September 16<sup>th</sup>, 1925 to Gaye Bradley and Leonard Charles Bradley. They knew he had problems when he was born, and didn't expect him to live overnight. They put him in a shoebox in a wood stove to keep him warm, because he just couldn't stay warm. Against all odds, he survived the night and grew up. They later found out that he was born with a hole in aorta. At the time of his birth, there was no way to repair such an issue, whereas today, he would have been brought into surgery as soon as he was born to correct the defect.

Growing up, he was sick a lot of the time due to his heart condition, but he still tried to do everything that everyone else did. When World War II started, he tried to sign up to serve but was not accepted due to his health. Becky remembers back on her childhood stating that she never really noticed how sick he was until the year before his death when he went in and out of hospitals.

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<sup>9</sup> Rebecca's memory, verbal account, 20 April 2017

Walter met Barbara in late April of 1952; they were married 6 weeks later on June 11<sup>th</sup>, 1952. This sequentially got her kicked out of her catholic nursing school. The rules of the school stated that a nursing student could not be married.

In January of 1966, Walter had open heart surgery to try to repair the hole in his heart. This was a particularly monumental surgery, as the medical advancements at that time were barely catching up to his condition. In fact, it wasn't until that next year, 1967, the year first heart transplant was performed at Groote Schuur Hospital in Cape Town, South Africa by Dr. Christiaan Barnard who is regarded as the father of heart transplantation. Walter's surgery was successful, they managed to repair the hole in his heart, and he was sent home from the hospital. That is when the problems began for him, as he got sicker and sicker until he had to be sent back to the hospital.

Becky, his oldest daughter, recalled that she did not see him the last week of his life. He died of a brain hemorrhage at the KU medical center in Kansas City, Kansas on March 15<sup>th</sup>, 1966, just 6 weeks after his open heart surgery. It was determined his body could not handle that the increased blood flow, which led him to a hemorrhage in the brain. He was buried in Fairview Cemetery in Coffeyville, KS.<sup>10</sup>

**Mary Lou Bruce (1930-2005)** was born on February 17<sup>th</sup> in Coffeyville, KS to **Virgie Lois Fry (1909-unk)** and **Floyd Arvel Yeubanks (1900-1978)**. She was the second child out of 20 children. Although Virgie and Floyd got pregnant with 20 children, only 13 of them survived. Three children were late term miscarriages and 2 died from illnesses that they obtained in young childhood.

Mary went to school until 9<sup>th</sup> grade. After that, Mary went to work with her mother Virgie at a meat packing plant. They walked 10 miles to work every day, until someone saw them walking every day and offered to give them a ride.

When Mary was 17 or 18, she met and married John Robert Bruce, her first husband. They had two children Phillip Lester Bruce and Dennis Leon Bruce (1952- ). After her children were born, Mary

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<sup>10</sup> Rebecca's memory, verbal account, 24 April 2017



worked at ACC – now standard motors – manufacturing car parts. She worked there for over 20 years. She also worked other jobs including restaurant work at Rita's Cafe, the box factory, and manufacturing bombs at Kansas ammunition. In 1970, Mary and John got divorced. Dennis was still a minor at the time, and chose to live with his mother. This is the time when Mary was working at Rita's Café. She worked a split shift there every day.

The later part of her life, Mary was in and out of hospitals. . She was dying of COPD. The list of things that were wrong with her was very long. She was a multiple pack a day smoker and it didn't do anything but hurt her.

Mary Lou Bruce died on May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2005 at Coffeyville Regional Medical center. She died of a staph infection that she acquired during her hospital stay.<sup>11</sup>

**John Robert Bruce** () was born on September 11<sup>th</sup>, 1928 in Coffeyville, KS to Dollie Marie Moore (1904-unk) and Howard Lester Bruce (1900-unk). He was the oldest child of 5. He had a set of twins for a brother and sister. As a child, John hated school. He did everything he could to avoid it. In fifth grade, he quit school. His parents claimed that he needed him at home, but really they were tired of forcing him to go to school. John was a musician. He played guitar, steel guitar, and harmonica. He absolutely loved playing music. He played music with his father every day.

John was married before he got together with Mary Lou. He got a drunk and got married to a girl named Betty. The next morning, her mother came and picked her up and annulled the marriage shortly after, or that's the story Dennis remembers being told. Shortly thereafter, John married Mary Lou and they had two sons together Phillip Lester Bruce and Dennis Leon Bruce.

John's favorite things in the later part of his life were his grandchildren, green apples and salt, and alcohol. He was a serious alcoholic. John died on November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1981 from a heart attack, although, he was dying from a disease of the liver, the heart attack was what took him first. <sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Dennis' memory, verbal account 26 April 2017

Darah's paternal great grandparents on her grandmother's side were **Sybil Clapp Edwards (1921-2014)**<sup>13</sup> and **Charles W Edwards (1915-1993)**. Sybil was born on June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1921. Very little is known about her life. She had one daughter, Brenda Regina Edwards Birney, with her husband C.W. Sybil died in August of 2014 due to pneumonia and complications from hip surgery. C.W. was born on March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1915. He had one child Brenda Regina Edwards Birney, with Sybil. C.W. died in February of 1993 of unknown causes. James' suggests that his grandmother poisoned his grandfather. There was no autopsy to confirm this.<sup>14</sup>

Darah's paternal great grandparents on her grandfather's side were **Elna "Leona" Mae Wade (unk-2010)** and **Harold Wellington Birney (unk-1993)**. The only thing known about them is that Leona died in 2010 and Harold died in February of 1993, shortly before C.W. did.

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<sup>12</sup> Dennis' memory, verbal account, 28 April 2017

<sup>13</sup> (n.d.). Retrieved April 30, 2017, from <https://findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=134863351>

<sup>14</sup> James' memory, verbal account, 30 April 2017

## GENERATION FIVE

**A1a1a1. Elisabeth Bella Gerwert Mock (1897-1992)**

**A1a1a2. Thomas Oren Mock (1887- unk)**

**A1a1b1. Unk**

**A1a1b2. Unk**

**A1a2a1. Virgie Lois Fry (1909-unk)**

**A1a2a2. Floyd Arvel Yeubanks (1900-1978)**

**A1a2b1. Howard Bruce (1900-unk)**

**A1a2b2. Dollie Marie Moore (1904-unk)**

**A1b1a1. Iris Harper (unk-unk)**

**A1b1a2. Dayton Clapp (1898-1932)**

**A1b1b1. Unk**

**A1b1b2. Unk**

**A1b2a1. Unk**

**A1b2a2. Unk**

**A1b2b1. Unk**

**A1b2b2. Unk**

Darah's maternal great- great grandparents on her grandmother's side were **Elisabeth Bella Gerwert Mock (1897-1992)** and **Thomas Oren Mock (1887-unk)**<sup>15</sup>. There isn't much we know about this far back on the family line. Elisabeth and Thomas both came over to the United States with their families prior to WWI. Elisabeth was originally from Germany.

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<sup>15</sup> "United States Census, 1920," database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.3.1/TH-1942-22993-24470-33?cc=1488411> : 14 December 2015), Military and Naval Forces > Philippine Islands > Overseas Military > Fort William McKinley > image 66 of 90; citing NARA microfilm publication T625 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.).

Darah's maternal great- great grandparents on her grandfather's side were **Virgie Lois Fry (1909-unk)** and **Floyd Arvel Yeubanks (1900-1978)**, and **Howard Bruce (1900-unk)** and **Dollie Marie Moore (1904 – unk)**. No information besides their names is known at this time.

Darah's paternal great-great grandparents on her grandfather's side were **Iris Harper (unk-unk)** and **Dayton Clapp (1898-1932)**<sup>16</sup>. No information besides their names is known at this time.

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<sup>16</sup> (n.d.). Retrieved April 30, 2017, from <https://findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=110938650>