Emily Orr Family History

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The Family History of

Emily Anne Knapp Orr

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Emily Anne Knapp Orr authored this family history as part of the course requirements for HIST 550/700 Your Family in History offered online in Fall 2017 and was submitted to the Pittsburg State University Digital Commons. Please contact the author directly with any questions or comments: Emily.orr@pittstate.edu

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**GENERATION ONE**

Emily Anne Knapp Orr (1993- ) born was in Menorah Medical Center in Kansas City, Jackson County, Missouri, in 1993 to Gaylen Lee Knapp (1962- ) and Malinda Kay Brooks Knapp (1964- ). Malinda frequently tells the story of Emily’s birth. Malinda awoke in labor in the early hours of the morning on April 9. When she woke Gaylen to tell him to get ready, he asked if there was time for breakfast first. Emily’s older sister, Audrey Leigh Knapp Schlagel (1989- ), was dropped off at the end of the driveway at Gaylen’s parent’s house, before they went to the hospital. Emily was born at 9:33 in the morning, she was very cold and was rushed to the nursery at the hospital. Malinda yelled at Gaylen to follow the baby and stay with her.1

Emily’s parents, Gaylen and Malinda, had been living in a rental house in Basehor, Leavenworth County, Kansas, since their marriage in 1985. The rental house, located on 155th Terrace, belonged to Alfred Knapp Mussett (1909-2001), a cousin of Gaylen. Soon after Emily was born they bought a larger house nearby that was closer to Gaylen’s parents, Bertha Marie Thomas Knapp (1926- ) and Albert W. Knapp, Jr. (1924- ). This house was white with green shutters and two massive oak trees in the front yard.

Malinda worked as a teller at the Wyandotte Credit Union located at 77th Street and Parallel Parkway in Kansas City, Wyandotte County, Kansas, until Audrey was born in 1989. Then she quit her job to become a stay at home mom. She also worked as a baby sitter for other children at the same time and these are children that Emily grew up with.

When Emily turned three she started attending a preschool program run by the local high school students at Basehor-Linwood High School. Emily called this “high school preschool” when she was young. When she turned four she attended a different preschool located at the Knapp family’s church, the First Baptist Church of Basehor, and was called Little Friends

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1 Personal knowledge of the author, Emily Anne Knapp Orr.
Preschool. While at preschool Emily met many children that would be her classmates until she graduated from high school. Emily remembers her time at Little Friends Preschool, specifically the time that she brought a baby pig to school for show and tell, and making Christmas ornaments to give to her mom.

Emily attended kindergarten at Basehor Elementary School where her sister, Audrey, was in the fourth grade. Emily remembers being dropped off for the first day of kindergarten by her dad, Gaylen. Emily was scared to go in until she recognized some of the children she had met in preschool. She remained at Basehor Elementary until Basehor-Linwood School District opened a new school in March of her first grade year called Glenwood Ridge Elementary that was closer to her home.

Emily currently lives in Basehor, Leavenworth County, Kansas, which is a part of the Kansas City Metro. All four of her biological grandparent also live in Basehor. Emily’s paternal grandfather, Albert W. Knapp, Jr. was born "north of Basehor" in 1924, and he can still drive by and show her where the house used to be. Albert is old enough to remember the Great Depression. His family were farmers and it hit them really hard. He did however still graduate from Basehor High School in 1942. Incidentally, that would be the exact same building where Emily attended the sixth grade. According to Wikipedia that building, located at 155th Street and Leavenworth Road, was built as a W.P.A. project in 1938. That building has been in almost constant use by the school district since then and now houses the Special Education Department.

Emily’s fondest memories from childhood involve her family. Her family didn’t have very many neighbors but they lived very close to her paternal grandparents and an aunt and uncle. Every Sunday Emily’s grandmother Bertha, or Bert as her grandchildren called her, would fix
dinner for family after church. Emily remembers that Bert made the best pie, Emily’s favorite was cherry but when she was little she only ate the filling.

Bert and Albert, or Jr. as his family call him, have lived in the same house since 1954 just south of Basehor, Kansas. Emily loved spending time on her grandparent’s pig farm as a child, especially helping her grandmother cook in the kitchen. According to stories that Emily has heard, there was a fire in Bert’s kitchen one day and the whole kitchen had to be rebuilt, but even then Bert wouldn’t let them install a dishwasher. Dishes are still done by hand at Bert’s house and everyone takes turns helping her dry the dishes on Sunday after lunch.

Bert and Jr’s house is a single story red and white farm house. Emily remembers helping Bert repaper the walls many times as a child. All family and friends use the back door which opens into the kitchen. On any evening at 5:00 there will be a pot of coffee and cookies at the ready. Frequently Bertha’s children and grandchildren and even great-grandchildren will stop by after work to visit and have a snack. There is also a formal dining room with a dining table that seats six. On the average Sunday, 12 people will eat in here. On holidays an extra long board is brought in and set on top of the table and as many as 16 will be seated in the dining room. Most years Emily still helps Bert prepare for Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Easter dinners. The day before, the two of them will spend hours making all of the family’s favorite dishes. This includes Croatian specialties such as povitica and sarma.

Emily attended the Basehor-Linwood School District until she graduated in 2011. She was very proud to graduate as the valedictorian of her class. Emily was the third generation of her family to graduate from Basehor High School. Emily also met her husband, Kyle Shawn Orr (1991- ), while she was in high school. They met at a youth group meeting for First Baptist Church of Basehor. Kyle and Emily were married in 2015, after they both graduated from college.

Emily’s sister, Audrey, was four years older. When Audrey graduated from high school she attended Kansas City Kansas Community College and then Johnson County College to
obtain a degree in dental hygiene. Audrey then pursued her Bachelor’s degree from the University of Missouri at Kansas City. Because Audrey’s educational program took longer, Audrey and Emily received their Bachelor’s degrees on the same day, May 12, 2014. They were the first members of their family to receive four year college degrees.

In Figure 2.2 “High School Graduation Rates for All and by Gender, Region, and Racial Ancestry, by Year Person Turned Twenty-One,” Fischer and Hout present the data on high school graduates that turned twenty-one in the twentieth century. The first representation shows the increase of American-born high school graduates from 19 percent in 1900 to 87 percent in 2000. This data is then divided to show the percentages of male and female high school graduates, the region of the United States in which these graduates lived, and lastly by ancestry.4

Bertha Knapp was born in Kansas City, Kansas to an immigrant father and first generation American mother. According to the graphs in figure 2.2 only 55 percent of Americans graduated from high school in 1940. That percentage remains nearly constant across the three other graphs that represent Bertha. Fifty-five percent of women, 55 percent in the midwest, and 55 percent of European descendants graduated from high school in 1940. Neither of Bertha’s parents graduated from high school. Her father, Jake Thomas is not represented by these graphs because he was not born in America. Bertha’s mother, Anna, is represented. She only had approximately a 25 percent chance of graduation.

Not all of Bertha’s siblings graduated from high school, but Bertha went on to obtain her teaching certificate after high school, which influenced Emily’s own career choices. Emily attended William Jewell College in Liberty, Missouri. As a child she was very fond of reading, especially historical fiction, which led to her major of history and education. In college Emily

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4 Claude S. Fischer and Michael Hout, Century of Difference; How America Changed in the Last One Hundred Years (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2006), 13.
joined Alpha Delta Pi sorority and met some of her lifelong friends. After college Emily worked at Community

an alternative school in Kansas City, Jackson County, Missouri, located at 15th and Holmes. This job proved too challenging for Emily and she spent the 2016-2017 school year unemployed and working a variety of odd jobs. In August of 2017, Emily started a job at J.C. Harmon High School located in the Argentine area of Kansas City, Kansas.

GENERATION TWO

A1b. Gaylen Lee Knapp (1935- )

Malinda Kay Brooks (1964- ) was born in November 1964 in the old Providence Hospital on 18th Street, Kansas City, Wyandotte County, Kansas, to Martha Jane Haines Brooks (1943- ) and Donald Lee Brooks (1937- ). She was the eldest of three children. Amanda Lea Brooks (1966- ) and Curtis Wayne Brooks (1969- ) would join the family in the coming years.

The Brooks family lived in a small house at 40th and Parallel Parkway, Kansas City, Wyandotte County, Kansas, and the children attended William Allen White Elementary School located on North 43rd Terrace. Malinda recounts having to walk to school each day through a tunnel that ran underneath Interstate 635. She says that the tunnel was terrifying and she would run all the way to and from school. As of 2017, the tunnel is blocked off and William Allen White is still a functioning elementary school for the Kansas City Kansas Public Schools.

When Malinda was in the seventh grade the Brooks family relocated to Basehor, Leavenworth County, Kansas. Malinda and her siblings say that they thought they were moving to the middle of nowhere when they drove from Kansas City to Basehor. The family moved into a split level home on 156th Terrace where Malinda and Amanda had to share a bedroom.
Malinda and Amanda both say that their brother, Curtis, loved animals and they always had a variety of pets, including a dog named Shaggy. 5

Malinda met Gaylen Lee Knapp (1962- ) in 1980. Malinda was dating a man named Bill Kibler and Gaylen was dating a woman named Tami Kelly, and the four of them went on a double date. Gaylen had already graduated from high school and Malinda was a junior in high school when they went on their first date in December 1980. They continued to date for several years and were married on June 22, 1985. The newly married couple lived in a rental house on 155th Terrace, Basehor, Kansas, until 1994.

After graduating from Basehor High School in 1982, Malinda went to work at Wyandotte Credit Union located at 77th and Parallel Parkway, Kansas City, Kansas. Malinda’s sister, Amanda, worked at the Wyandotte Credit Union as well while she attended Kansas City Kansas Community College. Malinda worked there until her daughter, Audrey, was born in 1989. Gaylen and Malinda always say that it made more financial sense for Malinda to be a stay at home mom, rather than pay for day care. In 2000 Malinda went back to work as a preschool teacher at Little Friends Preschool, the same place her daughters had attended preschool. Malinda was happy with her work for several years, but she felt unappreciated. In 2009 Malinda chose to leave her job at the preschool and start her own home daycare business.

Gaylen Lee Knapp (1962- ) was born at Lawrence Memorial Hospital, Lawrence, Douglas County, Kansas, in March 1962 to Bertha Marie Thomas Knapp (1926- ) and Albert W. Knapp, Jr. (1924- ). Gaylen’s birth was full of complications, including being born breech. Gaylen and Bertha were in the hospital for ten days before they were allowed to come home.

They were at home on the farm in Basehor, Kansas, for one week before Gaylen was taken back to the hospital with complications. He stayed in the hospital until the end of May. 6

Gaylen’s only sibling, Albert W. Knapp III (1951- ), was much older than Gaylen. When Gaylen was in kindergarten, Bill was in high school. The whole family tells this story that one day Bill dropped Gaylen off at school. Bill was wearing a tie because that was the tradition for basketball players on game day. Gaylen’s teacher mistakenly thought that Bill was Gaylen’s father.

Gaylen is very close to his parents. When Gaylen and his wife made the decision to buy a new home in 1994, the biggest factor was that the house be close to Gaylen’s parents. Gaylen has only lived in three homes. The first was his parent’s farm in Bonner Springs, Leavenworth County, Kansas. Then the rental house in Basehor, Kansas. Lastly, in his current residence, also in Basehor.

Gaylen graduated from Basehor High School in 1980. He attended Kansas City Kansas Community College and then DeVry University, which he graduated from in 1985. He went to work at a company called Comtronics from 1985 until 1994. From there he went to work for Ronan Communications, which was bought by Allegiant Networks in 2003 and where Gaylen is still employed.7

GENERATION THREE

A1a1. Martha Jane Haines Brooks (1943- )  
A1a2. Donald Lee Brooks (1937- )  

A1b1. Bertha Marie Thomas Knapp (1926- )  
A1b2. Albert W. Knapp, Jr. (1924- )  

Emily’s maternal grandmother, Martha Jane Haines (1943- ), was born at home near Nevada, Vernon County, Missouri, in 1945 to Ola Ethel Cross Davis (1913-1995) and Lonzo

7 Gaylen Lee Knapp, interview with author, November 11, 2017.
Haines (1900-1975). Martha was the couple’s first child, but would be joined by siblings Ruthie, David, and Danny in coming years. She also had two older sisters, Patsy and Debbie, on her mother’s side.

Emily’s maternal grandfather, Donald Lee Brooks (1937- ), was born at home near Middletown, Montgomery County, Missouri, to Eula Grace Stuart Brooks (1912-1995) and James Curtis Brooks (1881-deceased). Don was the second of six siblings, all the rest of which were daughters; Evie, Marge, Pauline, Juanita, and Helen.

Martha and Don were married on March 12, 1960 in Kansas City, Jackson County, Missouri. Don had a job at the General Motors Plant in Fairfax, Kansas City, Wyandotte County, Kansas. Martha worked as a registrar at St. John’s Hospital, Leavenworth, Leavenworth County, Kansas. The couple had three children; Malinda Kay Brooks Knapp (1964- ), Amanda Lea Brooks (1966- ), and Curtis Wayne Brooks (1969- ). Don and Martha still live in Basehor, Kansas. Don celebrated his 80th birthday in July 2017 with all of his family and friends. Even though he is retired, Don has been driving a school bus for the Basehor-Linwood School District since 2002.

Emily’s paternal grandmother, Bertha Marie Thomas Knapp (1926- ), was born at St. Margaret’s Hospital, 759 Vermont, Kansas City, Wyandotte County, Kansas, to Anna Magdalene Fratzel Thomas (1904-1995) and Jakob Tomasic (1894-1974). She had two older sisters, Rose Anna Thomas Anderson (1922-1995) and Helen Marie Thomas Fotovich (1923-2007). Her brother Jake Samuel Thomas, Jr. (1931-2007) would be born on July 27, 1931.

Bertha’s first home was located at 3151 Roland, Kansas City, Kansas, and the Thomas family lived there until 1936 when they moved to a house on Route 2, Bethel, Kansas City, Kansas. The big move for the family happened in December 1938 when they relocated to a farm on Route 3, Tonganoxie, Leavenworth County, Kansas. Bertha describes the house as
one and a half stories, with two bedrooms upstairs, one bedroom, a kitchen, living room, and dining room downstairs. The house did not have running water, heat or electricity. This was a shock for the family as their home in Kansas City had all the modern amenities.⁸

Bertha married Albert W. Knapp, Jr. (1924- ) on April 24, 1946 and together they rented a small four room house on Pleasant Street, Tonganoxie, Kansas. This house cost $15 per month in rent and was equipped with running water and electricity, but it did not have a bathroom. Bertha says that they went across the driveway to the landlord’s house each night to shower. In 1947 the landlord’s son returned from the army after serving in World War Two. In June 1947 Bertha and Albert moved into an apartment in the Alameda Hotel, located at 204 South Main Street, Tonganoxie, Kansas. They rented the apartment for $30 a month and lived at the hotel until October 27, 1952 when they moved into their current home on Route 3, Bonner Springs, Kansas. The Alameda Hotel is now called the Myers Hotel Bar. In 1951 Albert and Bertha welcomed their first son, Albert W. Knapp III (1951- ). They wanted more children and eventually Gaylen Lee Knapp (1962- ) was born more than ten years later.⁹

In Figure 8.7 “Married Couples with Different Religions (Protestant, Catholic, Jewish) or Different Denominations (Among Protestants), by Birth Cohort,” of their book Century of Difference: How America Changed in the Last One Hundred Years, authors Fischer and Hout show the percentage of couples that married outside of their religion. Albert and Bertha Knapp were married in 1946. Albert was raised as a Baptist and Bertha was raised as a Catholic. They were both born in the birth cohort of 1920 to 1939. According to Figure 8.7 only 11 percent of people in that cohort married outside of their religion. According to Bertha neither the Knapp family nor the Thomas family approved of the marriage of Bertha and Albert, and many of their

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family members chose not to attend the wedding. None of the bride’s sisters chose to attend because the wedding was being held in a Baptist church.\textsuperscript{10}

Bertha attended Basehor High School and graduated in 1944. Immediately after graduation she went to work at Hercules Powder Plant, which was the Sunflower Army Ammunition Plant that was operated by the Hercules Aerospace Company and manufactured smokeless powder and propellant. The plant was located in De Soto, Kansas.\textsuperscript{11} In 1945 Bertha went to work for Trans World Airlines, or TWA, as a secretary. She worked at TWA until her marriage. Bertha says that her husband came to pick her up at work one day. As they were leaving her boss said, “See you tomorrow.” Albert responded, “No, you won’t.” When they got outside he told her that she couldn’t go back to work at that place after he saw how many men she was working with. Bertha recounts this as a fond memory.\textsuperscript{12}

Next, Bertha briefly worked at the Tonganoxie Bus Stop in the summer of 1946. She had been working on obtaining her teaching certificate from the University of Kansas since her graduation from high school. She spent the 1946 to 1947 school year as a teacher at Mound School located in Tonganoxie, Kansas. She taught 28 students from first through eighth grades. The next year, 1947 to 1948, Bertha worked at Stanwood School in McLouth, Kansas. She planned to return to Stanwood School the following year as well, but her mother-in-law, Aletha Matilda Oliphint Knapp (1885-1980), was in an accident over the summer and Bertha had to help take care of her.

The city of Tonganoxie, Kansas, was platted in 1866 and is named after a Delaware Native American chief. The demographics of Tonganoxie in the year 2010 are 95.2 percent white, and

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{10} Fischer and Hout, \textit{Century of Difference}, 202.
\textsuperscript{12} Bertha Marie Thomas Knapp, interview with author, November 12, 2017.
\end{flushleft}
6.0 percent are living under the poverty line. In 1940, the population of the city was 1,114. As of 2010 the population is 4,996.\(^\text{13}\) The Knapp family fits into the majority population of the city.

After her mother in law recovered from her injury, Bertha returned to work, this time as a checker at Champion’s Grocery Store on Main Street, Tonganoxie, Kansas, from October 1948 to 1951. In 1951 Albert and Bertha bought a grocery store called Log Cabin Grocery on Louisiana Street, Lawrence, Kansas. While Bertha was working at the store, she employed a babysitter to watch her oldest son, Albert W. Knapp III, nicknamed Bill. One day she returned home and Bill didn’t want the babysitter to leave, and he called her “Momma.” Bertha insisted that they sell the grocery store the very next day.\(^\text{14}\)

After selling the grocery store, Bertha did not return to work. Instead her father gifted her with a pig in 1954 and Bertha took over most of the farm work while raising her two sons. In 1978, when Gaylen was a sophomore in high school, Bertha went back to work as a teller and eventual branch manager at Citizen’s Bank and Trust in Basehor, Kansas. Bertha retired from work in 1991.

Emily’s paternal grandfather, Albert W. Knapp, Jr. (1924- ), was born at home in Basehor, Leavenworth County, Kansas, to Aletha Oliphint Knapp (1885-1980) and Albert W. Knapp, Sr. (1880-1951). He was the youngest of six siblings, Mildred Knapp Stiglmire (1907-1996), Dorothy Irene Knapp (1910-1920), Clarence Knapp (1911-2005), Irvin Knapp (1913-1986), and Aletha Virginia Knapp Murr (1921-2013) all preceded him. Jr’s first home was on a farm north of the town of Basehor, Kansas. In 1929, Albert Sr. and Aletha lost their farm due to


\(^{14}\) Bertha Marie Thomas Knapp, interview with author, November 14, 2017.
economic hardship. As Jr. recalls, his family was forced to move every year from 1929 until 1942 when his parents finally settled on a farm located on Route 3, Tonganoxie, Kansas.¹⁵

Even though his family faced many hardships and he grew up during the Great Depression, Jr. attended school until he graduated from Basehor High School in 1942 at the age of 18. He has many memories of the Great Depression and the Dust Bowl. He was five years old in 1929 when his parents lost their farm. They had a mortgage on the farm and it is believed that they lost it due to the bank and stock market crash October 29, 1929. For the next 14 years, they moved from farm to farm every couple of years. They were constantly being evicted because they couldn't make the rent. Grandpa says that this is because they harvest was bad every year. They weather was so bad that his mom couldn't even grow a garden to feed her family. The dust was so thick that they used to hang wet sheets over the windows to keep the dust out of the house.

**GENERATION FOUR**

A1a1a. Ola Ethel Cross Davis (1913-1995)  
A1a1b. Lonzo Haines (1900-1975)  

A1a2b. James Curtis Brooks (1881-deceased)  

A1b1a. Anna Magdalene Thomas (1904-1995)  

A1b2b. Albert W. Knapp, Sr. (1880-1951)

**Ola Ethel Cross Davis (1913-1995)** was born on May 7, 1913 to **Mertie Mae**  
**Lockwood Cross (1878-1959)** and **Millus Cross (1871-1951)** at home near Mulberry,

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¹⁵ Albert W. Knapp, Jr., interview with author, September 13, 2017.
Crawford County, Kansas. According to the 1930 census, she lived in parent’s home in Nevada, Vernon County, Missouri, with her several siblings including Lottie Iris Cross Kimrey (1905-1996). Ola died on April 3, 1995 and is buried in Moore Cemetery, Nevada, Vernon County, Missouri. Nevada, Missouri, was platted in 1855. As of 2010, the population of Nevada was 8,386 and 95.1% was white and 20.0% of the population was living under the poverty line.

Lonzo Haines (1900-1975) was the father of Emily’s maternal grandmother, Martha Jane Haines Brooks (1943- ), yet he was never married to Martha’s mother, Ola Cross Davis. According to his granddaughter, Malinda Kay Brooks Knapp (1964- ), Lonzo lived his entire life on his parent’s farm in Deerfield, Vernon County, Missouri. This is confirmed by the 1910, 1920, and 1940 census. Lonzo Haines was born on September 13, 1900 in Deerfield, Vernon County, Missouri to Serena Viola Senat Haines (1862-1955) and John Isaac Haines (1862-1945). He had several siblings; Loren C. Haines (1885-1969), Lula Haines (1887-Deceased), Lloyd Haines (1889-Deceased), Leland M. Haines (1890-1966), Leasel Haines (1894-1975), Listra V. Haines (1897-Deceased) and Lester Haines (1902-Deceased).

According to the 1940 census, Lonzo remained at home with his parents after his other siblings moved away.\(^{22}\) According to Malinda, John and Serena Haines never approved of Ola Cross and would not let Lonzo marry her. However, Malinda does remember visiting the Haines farm a few times when she was a child. Lonzo Haines passed away on September 2, 1975 and is buried in Newton Burial Park, Nevada, Vernon County, Missouri.\(^{23}\)

**Ula Grace Stuart Brooks (1912-1995)** was born August 8, 1912 in Montgomery County, Missouri, to **Mollie Grace O'Donnell Stuart (1890-1953)** and **John Robert Delmar Stuart (1881-1929)**. According to the 1920 census, she lived in her parents' home in Montgomery, Montgomery County, Missouri. Ula had several siblings according to the census but only her two brothers have been confirmed; **John Delmar Stuart (1905-1983)**, and **Gussie Lee Stuart (1907-1955)**.\(^{24}\)

**James Curtis Brooks (1881-deceased)** was born on August 16, 1881 in Wellsville, Montgomery County, Missouri. His parents are unknown. Ula Grace and James were married. However, according to the story and supported by a census record from 1930, James was previously married to a different women and lived in Campbell, Santa Clara County, California.\(^{25}\)


According to the census, James had three children with his first wife before moving back to Missouri.

Anna Magdalene Fratzel Thomas (1904-1995) was born on April 3, 1904 to Maggie and Stanley Fratzel. According to census records in 1920 she resided on Quindaro, Kansas City, Wyandotte County, Kansas, in the household of her father, Stanley Fratzel (1871-1947). The household also included her mother, Magdalene Sebol Fratzel (1872-1959), and her six siblings. By 1930, Anna had moved into the household of her husband, recorded in the census as Jake S. Thomas. This household was located in Kansas City, Wyandotte County, Kansas.

Jakob Tomasic (1894-1974) was born in Yugoslavia on April 30, 1894 at house number 8, Lipnik, Karlovac County, Croatia to Bara Listar Tomasic and Janko Tomasic. His story has been difficult to trace because he immigrated to the United States without his parents at a young age. He was also illiterate. It is believed that he was approximately 13 years old at the time of his immigration. According to the 1930 Census, Jakob immigrated from Yugoslavia in 1909. His name was not changed at Ellis Island, but according to Jakob’s daughter, Bertha Marie Thomas Knapp (1926- ), it was never legally changed. Bertha obtained a copy of his birth certificate from the Federal People’s Republic of Yugoslavia, National Republic of Croatia in 1959.

29 Birth certificate from Yugoslavia, page number 338, item number 34 (1 May 1894), Jakob Tomasic, Karlovac County, Croatia.
Jakob immigrated from Yugoslavia when he was between the age of 13 and 15. He came to the United States with five other boys around his age. They boys landed at Ellis Island, New York, which was an immigration station. Jakob had a sister, Katie Lovich, living in Kansas City, Kansas. He and the other boys worked their way across the country to Kansas City. According to the story told by Bertha, Aunt Katie had children that were older than Jakob and they picked on him. One day he was walking on James Street, Kansas City, Kansas, when a gentleman named Mr. Scrotsky offered to help him get a job at a meat packing plant, potentially Baum-Adler Company. He eventually worked his way up until he became a kosher butcher. According to the story, because Jakob was illiterate, he signed his name J.T. and when he started his job at the meat packing plant they started calling him Jack Thomas and all of his employment paperwork read Jack Thomas.

Jack and Anna had four children, Rose Anna Thomas Anderson (1922-1995), Helen Marie Thomas Fotovich (1923-2007), Bertha Marie Thomas Knapp (1926-), and Jake Samuel Thomas, Jr. (1931-2007). The different names that Jack used to go by created lots of confusion in the family. Anna used to think that it was funny to change her sons name from Jakob to Jake to Jack. When he went to join the marines after high school he had to legally have his name changed to Jake Samuel Thomas, Jr. because all of his records had different names on them.

Jack always wanted to own a farm and move out of Kansas City, Kansas. In December 1938, he moved his family to a farm on Route 3, Tonganoxie, Leavenworth County, Kansas. Bertha describes this house as one and a half stories with two bedrooms upstairs, one bedroom, the kitchen, living room and dining room on the main floor. This house did not have

running water, heat, or electricity. This was especially upsetting to Anna, who had never wanted to leave Kansas City. Bertha describes Anna as a "city girl" who was never happy after leaving Kansas City. In 1945 the farm house was equipped with electricity, and in 1947 Jack started work on building a new house which was completed in 1950. Jack built the new house by hand out of concrete blocks. As of 2017, the house is owned by Bertha Knapp and is occupied by Curtis Wayne Brooks (1969- ).

In Figure 7.3 “Distribution of Population Across Types of Places,” of their book Century of Difference: How America Changed in the Last One Hundred Years, authors Fischer and Hout show the percentage of the American population that lived in the countryside, town, suburbs, or cities. In the 1930s, Jakob and Anna Thomas chose to move their family from Kansas City, Kansas to a farm in Tonganoxie, Kansas, which was actually opposite of the trend shown.32

Jack passed away on September 9, 1974 and is buried at Holy Angels Cemetery, Basehor, Leavenworth County, Kansas.33 After his death, his wife Anna continued to live at the farm. In 1974 she was diagnosed with diabetes. She moved to a nursing home in Tonganoxie, Kansas, in 1991 where she was visited every day by her daughter, Bertha. She passed away on February 18, 1995 and is buried next to her husband at Holy Angels Cemetery, Basehor, Leavenworth County, Kansas.34

Aletha Matilda Oliphint Knapp (1885-1980), was born in Weston Township, Platte County, Missouri, on December 22, 1885. In the 1900 census Aletha was living in the home of her father, William Oliphint (1857-1927), with her mother Lydia Frankie Robbins Oliphint (1861-1960), and her sisters Grace Irene Oliphint (1887-1937), Ethel Delila Oliphint (1889-

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32 Fischer and Hout, Century of Difference, 173.
1987), Marie Oliphint (1896-1987), and Wilma Oliphint (1998-1941). Her sister, Faye Oliphint (1906-1969), was not yet born.35

Aletha married Albert W. Knapp, Sr. (1880-1951) on January 31, 1906 in Leavenworth, Kansas.36 According to the 1910 census, Albert and Aletha were living in Kickapoo, Leavenworth County, Kansas.37 By 1930 they were living in Delaware Township, Leavenworth County, Kansas.38 They had six children, Mildred Knapp Stiglmire (1907-1996), Dorothy Irene Knapp (1910-1920), Clarence Knapp (1911-2005), Irvin Knapp (1913-1986), Aletha Virginia Knapp Murr (1921-2013), and Albert W. Knapp, Jr. (1924- ).39 A tragic event happened in the Knapp family on January 11, 1920, when Dorothy died in an accident at the age of ten. Dorothy had been standing next to a stove filling a lamp with coal oil when her clothing caught fire. She was fatally burned before her family managed to put the flames out.40

According to Albert Knapp Jr. the family was forced to move frequently because of economic hardship. Albert Jr. can recount many homes that the family lived in during the 1930s, but the next record reflected in the census is 1940 which says the Knapp family was living in

Stranger Township, Leavenworth County Kansas. According to Albert Jr., his parents settled on Route 3, Tonganoxie, Leavenworth County, Kansas.

The Knapp family remained there until Albert Sr. passed away on January 1, 1951. He is buried in Kickapoo Cemetery, Leavenworth County, Kansas. After his death Aletha moved to Colorado to live with her daughter Virginia. Aletha passed away on May 7, 1980 in Monte Vista, Rio Grande County, Colorado. She is buried at Kickapoo Cemetery, Leavenworth County, Kansas. She was buried on the same day that her grandson, Gaylen Lee Knapp (1962- ), attended prom at Basehor High School with his future wife, Malinda Kay Brooks Knapp (1964- ).

GENERATION FIVE

A1a1a1. Mertie Mae Lockwood Cross (1878-1959)
A1a1a2. Millus Cross (1871-1951)

A1a1b1. Serena Viola Senat Haines (1862-1955)
A1a1b2. John Isaac Haines (1862-Deceased)

A1a2a1. Mollie Grace O'Donnell Stuart (1890-1953)
A1a2a2. John Robert Delmar Stuart (1881-1929)

A1a2b1. unk
A1a2b2. unk

A1b1a1. Magdalene Sebol Fratzel (1872-1959)
A1b1a2. Stanley Fratzel (1871-1947)

A1b1b1. Bara Listar Tomasic (unk)
A1b1b2. Janko Tomasic (unk)


Mertie Mae Lockwood Cross (1878-1959) was born on June 27, 1878 in Rockville, Bates County, Missouri, to Missouri Louisa Jackson (1857-1938) and Hyel Lockwood (1854-1932). She married Millus Cross (1871-1951) on October 25, 1896 in Bates County, Missouri. According to the 1930 census the couple lived in Nevada, Vernon County, Missouri, with their children including daughters Lottie Iris Cross Kimrey (1905-1996) and Ola Ethel Cross Davis (1913-1995). She died on November 15, 1959 and is buried in Deepwood Cemetery, Nevada, Vernon County, Missouri.

Millus Cross was born on September 13, 1871 in Tama, Tama County, Iowa, to Martha Jane Farley (1843-Deceased) and Elliot Cross (1830-Deceased). He died on June 4, 1951 and is buried in Deepwood Cemetery, Nevada, Vernon County, Missouri.

Serena Viola Senat Haines (1862-1955) was born in Ocober 1862. Her parents are unknown. She was married to John Isaac Haines (1863-1945) on December 25, 1883 in Vernon County, Missouri.

John Isaac Haines was born on July 9, 1863 in Knox County, Illinois to Isaac Haines (1811-1892) and Margaret Smith (1828-1907). According the 1900 census, the Haines family lived in Deerfield, Vernon County, Missouri. The couple had children including; Loren C. Haines (1885-1969), Leland M. Haines (1890-1966), Leasel Haines (1894-1975), Lonzo Haines (1900-1975) and Lester Haines (1902-Deceased). According to family stories and confirmed by the census, John and Serena both lived most of their lives on a farm in Deerfield, Missouri.

Serena died in December 1955. John died on January 27, 1945 in Deerfield, Vernon County, Missouri. They are both buried in Newton Burial Park, Nevada, Vernon County, Missouri.

Mollie Grace O’Donnell Stuart (1890-1953) was born on October 15, 1890 at the home of her parents, Samuel and Minerva O’Donnell, in Martinsburg, Montgomery County, Missouri. She married John Robert Delmar Stuart (1889-1929) on June 1, 1904. John Robert Delmar...
Stuart was born in Montgomery County, Missouri, on March 2, 1881 to Frances R. Petty (1857-1937) and Ebenzer Stuart (1846-1915).

Mollie was homemaker and helped care for her husband, according to her obituary.54

The couple had multiple children according to her obituary including; Samuel Stuart, Delmar Stuart, Gus Stuart, Floyd Stuart, Clarence Stuart, Eula Brooks, Madelyn Smith, and Marie Cook. This information is confirmed by the 1910 census which lists the couple’s children and their residence as Loutre, Audrain County, Missouri.55 By the 1920 census they had moved to Montgomery County, Missouri.56

Mollie died on August 5, 1953 and John died on August 5, 1929 in Wellsville, Montgomery County, Missouri. They are both buried at Wright Cemetery, Martinsburg, Audrain County, Missouri.57

Magdalene Sebol Fratzel (1872-1959) was born in Austria. Her parents are unknown. According to the 1920 census, she immigrated to the U.S. in 1902.58 According to stories from her granddaughter, Bertha Thomas Knapp (1926- ), Magdalene had been educated at

schools in Vienna, Austria. Magdalene was married to Stanley Fratzel (1870-1947).

According to the 1920 census the couple had many children and this was confirmed by Bertha Thomas Knapp. Their children included Anna Magdalene Thomas Knapp (1904-1995), Tony Fratzel, Mary Fratzel Rogers, Ruby Fratzel Kelso, Mildred Fratzel Graves, and Rose Fratzel Gates.

Stanley was born in 1870 in Austria and immigrated to the U.S. in 1902. According to the 1920 census, his family lived on Quindaro, Kansas City, Wyandotte County, Kansas. Magdalene died in 1959 and Stanley died 1947. They are buried at Mount Calvary Cemetery, Kansas City, Wyandotte County, Kansas.

The parents of Jakob Tomasic (1894-1974) are listed on his birth certificate as Bara Listar Tomasic and Janko Tomasic. Their ages are unknown, but according to the birth certificate, in 1894 they lived at house number 8, Lipnik, Karlovac County, Croatia. Their occupation is listed as farmers on the birth certificate. This birth certificate was obtained by Bertha Thomas Knapp from the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia, National Republic of Croatia in 1959.

64 Birth certificate from Yugoslavia, page number 338, item number 34 (1 May 1894), Jakob Tomasic, Karlovac County, Croatia.
Lydia Frankie Robbins Oliphint (1861-1960) was born on August 23, 1861 in Weston, Platte County, Missouri, to Sarah James Simmons Robbins and George Washington Robbins. She married William Edmund Oliphint (1857-1927) on November 8, 1881 in Weston, Platte County, Missouri.  

William was born on September 5, 1857 at home in Oak Mills, Walnut Township, Atchison County, Kansas Territory, to Matilda Thayer Eiler (1835-1881) and William Jasper Oliphint (1829-1877). In the 1860 census, William was 3 years old and living in his parents’ home with siblings Mary, Emma, and Charles. By the 1870 census the family was joined by younger siblings Jacob, Belidora, and James. 

After their marriage in 1881, Lydia and William settled in the same area as the Oliphint family. From 1900 until 1930 they lived at the same residence according to the census located in Walnut Township, Atchison County, Kansas. They had six children; Aletha Matilda Oliphint Knapp (1885-1980), Grace Irene Oliphint (1887-1937), Ethel Delila Oliphint Grisby (1889-1987), Marie Oliphint Knapp (1896-1987), Wilma Oliphint (1898-1941) and Faye Oliphint Pasewark (1906-1969).

William died on November 27, 1927 and Lydia died on March 25, 1960 at the home of her daughter Marie Knapp on route 1, Easton, Leavenworth County, Kansas, according to her obituary. They are both buried at Kickapoo Cemetery, Leavenworth County, Kansas.

Amanda Jane Maget Knapp (1860-1930) was born on June 12, 1860 in Dearborn, Platte County, Missouri to Mary Roach Maget and William Maget (1836-1866). She married Lewis Fred Knapp (1856-1940) on November 28, 1878 in Leavenworth County, Kansas. Lewis Fred Knapp was born on January 5, 1856 in Kickapoo, Leavenworth County, Kansas to Barbara Driessel Knapp and Adam Knapp. They had seven children, including Albert W. Knapp, Sr. (1880-1951).

The Leavenworth Weekly Times reported news from the city of Leavenworth and surrounding areas and was reported to be the oldest newspaper in Kansas. According to an edition of the paper from November, 1878 there were several weddings in Leavenworth County that month, including Amanda and Lewis Knapp. Oddly enough, on the front page was a story about a different wedding in the area that had gone awry with only one bride and two grooms.

According to the 1880 census, Lewis and Amanda were living in Kickapoo, Leavenworth County, Kansas, with an occupation listed as farmer. By the time of the 1920 census the couple were living in Leavenworth Ward 5, Leavenworth County, Kansas.

After Amanda died on January 14, 1930, Lewis moved into his son Walter’s home, in Kickapoo, Leavenworth County, Kansas, and remained there until his death in November 2, 1940. They are both buried at Mount Muncie Cemetery, Lansing, Leavenworth County, Kansas.

Many members of the Knapp and Oliphint branches of Emily’s family come from the area of Kickapoo, Kansas. Kickapoo was founded in 1854 as a station for the Missouri Pacific Railroad, but by 1920 the post office in the town was closed. Today, Kickapoo is an unincorporated community. Kickapoo was named after the Native American tribe that migrated throughout the Midwest including Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas. As of 1876 there were no county roads yet in Kickapoo, but Adam Knapp, Lewis’s father, was named as a viewer by the board of commissioners to help have the road built.


