

Pittsburg State University

Pittsburg State University Digital Commons

Your Family in History: HIST 550/700

History

Spring 2018

Jodeci Turner Family History

Jodeci Turner

Pittsburg State University, jodecit@hotmail.com

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.pittstate.edu/hist550>



Part of the [Genealogy Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Turner, Jodeci, "Jodeci Turner Family History" (2018). *Your Family in History: HIST 550/700*. 62.
<https://digitalcommons.pittstate.edu/hist550/62>

This Undergraduate Research is brought to you for free and open access by the History at Pittsburg State University Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Your Family in History: HIST 550/700 by an authorized administrator of Pittsburg State University Digital Commons. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@pittstate.edu.

The Family History of

Jodeci S. Turner

17 April 2018

Jodeci Turner authored this family history as part of the course requirements for HIST 550/700 Your Family in History offered online in Spring 2018 and was submitted to the Pittsburg State University [Digital Commons](#). Please contact the author directly with any questions or comments: jsturner@gus.pittstate.edu

This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](#).

List of Direct Line Family Members

Generation One

A1. Jodeci Shawnea Turner (1992-)

Generation Two

A1a. Allison Dyan Blansett (1973-)

A1b. Sean Michael Turner (1972-)

Generation Three

A1a1. Judith Waylene Merchant (1944-2012)

A1a2. James Elmo Blansett (1944-)

A1b1. Robert Collum (deceased)

A1b2. Gail Turner (-2005)

Generation Four

A1a1a. Lorraine Bryson (1919- 2001)

A1a1b. Wayne Harvey Merchant (1919-1994)

A1a2a. Stanley Elmo Blansett (1908-1983)

A1a2b. Martha Forgas (1910-1993)

A1b1b. UNk.

A1b2b. UNk.

Generation Five

A1a1a1. Clara Lou Ella Fowler (1894-1967)

A1a1a2. Andrew Jackson Bryson (1886-1986)

A1a1b1. Bertha Noretta (Novella) Roach (1890-1972)

A1a1b2. Walter J. Merchant (1884-1958)

A1a2a1. Frances M. Baker (1890-1965)

A1a2a2. Arthur Jay Blansett (1888-1960)

A1a2b1. Victoria C Poratzki (1870-1935)

A1a2b2. Stephen J Forgas (1866-1946)

A1b1b1. UNk.

A1b2b2. UNk.

GENERATION ONE

Jodeci Shawnea Turner (1992-) was born in at Labette County Medical Center (now known as Labette Health) in Parsons, Kansas, to **Sean Michael Turner (1972-)** and **Allison Dyan Blansett (1973-)** on January 18, 1992. She was born with pneumonia and stayed in the hospital for a week after birth. During that time doctor's discovered she also had a heart murmur.

On January 26, 1992, Jodeci was all set to finally go home after a week in the hospital. This was a particularly exciting day for the Blansett family. While most of the family was at the hospital, James "Jimmy" Blansett Junior, Jodeci's uncle, accidentally burned the family home down. It was reported in the Parsons Sun¹ that Jimmy had smoked a cigarette and thrown in into a small trashcan in one of the upstairs bedrooms. The entire upstairs was engulfed and the lower level had significant water and smoke damage. The family stayed in a hotel for a month before an apartment became Prairie West Condominiums in Parsons. Jodeci spent her first seven months in that apartment with her mother and grandmother while the family home was being rebuilt.

Jodeci's parents did not stay together long, and when she was two years old, her father moved to North Carolina to play college football. He did not stay in contact with Jodeci or her mother. Because of this Jodeci was raised by her mother Allison, and her maternal grandmother, Judy. Jodeci was extremely close with her grandma, Allison worked multiple jobs to provide for her daughter, so it left Jodeci in her grandmother's care most of the time.

¹ Smith, James. *Local News*, The Parsons Sun, January, 1992.

She attended Mother's Day Out at Wesley United Methodist Church throughout the week where she quickly made friends with the other children. Her cousin, Alex, also attended MDO with Jodeci. The two were very close as young children. Jodeci attended pre-school at Wesley United Methodist Church for two years. Her teacher, Mrs. Trout, soon realized she was very smart and she was tested for the gifted program. Her mother ultimately made the decision to keep her in pre-school for a second year and Jodeci attended Wesley Little Learners again. Although she had made many friends in pre-school, Jodeci was a shy little girl. On her first day of Kindergarten she cried and remembers feeling scared that she wouldn't have any friends. Luckily, her best friend, Cheri Shue was in her Kindergarten class and she made it through the year fine.

Something significant in Jodeci's life is that at age three, she had hard time sitting cross legged on the floor, walking, and running. After a lot of testing Jodeci was diagnosed with a mild form of Muscular Dystrophy, called *Dermatomyositis* an uncommon inflammatory disease marked by muscle weakness and a distinctive skin rash.² Immediately upon diagnosis she was transported to St. Francis Hospital in Wichita, Kansas to run more tests. They expected her to be there for one day for testing, she was actually in the hospital for two weeks. This was the first stint of many hospital stays. She had a muscle biopsy done, started IVIG therapy, was put on steroids for several months. After 5 years, after a lot of swimming therapy, medicine, and physical therapy she was put into "remission". Initial testing and prognosis was that she wouldn't be able to walk past age 7. She showed the doctors that they were wrong.

² Clinic, The Mayo. 2017. *Dermatomyositis*. April 23. Accessed March 23, 2018. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/dermatomyositis/symptoms-causes/syc-20353188>.

Growing up, Jodeci was an only child and she desperately wanted a sibling. She would wish on birthday candles, pray every night before bed, and even resorted to writing to Santa for a sibling once.

Figure 9.6 "Ideal Number of Children, by Year, and the Type of place" This chart shows the decline in fertility and birth rates from 1950 to 2000. This is important as families in smaller rural communities, like Parsons, had traditionally had bigger families and were moving to have fewer children. Families in cities historically had smaller families because of the cost of children and confined spaces. But, in small towns like Parsons, KS and Johnstown, PA large families were common. Now, it's rarer to have a family with more than 2 or 3 kids, but in a places with large religious presence and small town values, there are still some families with 5+ kids.³

Jodeci Turner was born and raised as an only child, until adolescence. Her mother, Allison, had her at a young age and was the first in the family to not express the want for a large family. Allison grew up one of five and her father grew up one of seven. Parsons was considered rural and many families had multiple children. This Jodeci grew up wanting a sibling fiercely because she felt she was missing out on what her friends had. Even her cousins had at least one sibling.

Finally when she was eleven years old, she got her wish. **Iziah Aidan Blansett (2003-)** was born on August 28, 2003. Jodeci was thrilled to finally have a sibling. Jodeci

³ Claude S. Fischer and Michael Hout, *Century of Difference; How America Changed in the Last One Hundred Years* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2006), 228.

and Iziah became extremely close, when he was an infant, Jodeci would read him a story every night before bed. Those memories continue to keep Jodeci and Iziah close.

Because she was an only child, Jodeci was taken on many family vacations. The first she can remember is Disney World in 1994. Jodeci, her mother, her grandmother, her aunt Staci Blansett and two Cousins Gary and Kayla Dodds drove to Florida in a van. Jodeci remembers listening to her tape of Disney songs and stopping at state signs along the way. Another vacation was to visit a family friend in Atlanta, Georgia. The most memorable trip was to San Antonio, Texas, where Jodeci participated in a meteorologist skit, where she gave a fake weather report. ⁴

On one family vacation to visit her grandfather in Virginia one summer, Jodeci and her cousins were told they were descendants of George Washington, our nation's first president. For almost twenty years, Jodeci and her cousins believed this to be true and told anyone and everyone they knew.⁵ Recently, it's come to light that there is no evidence of this ancestry and it's most likely untrue. However, she did discover that through a seventh generation relative, she is possibly distantly related to General George Custer. In her seventh generation ancestors, **Julia Custer (1846-1891)** is said to be the niece of General Custer. Julia is the mother of Jodeci's great great-grandmother **Frances Baker.**⁶

Her grandfather often told stories of growing up "Pennsylvania Dutch" and that his family emigrated from Poland. While his stories are the only real evidence of Polish ancestry, there is evidence of immigrants from Czechoslovakia.

⁴ Personal knowledge of the author, Jodeci Turner.

⁵ Personal knowledge of the author, Jodeci Turner.

⁶ The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, "[Pedigree Resource File](#): Individual Record: Julia Custer" in [FamilySearch](#)

Jodeci attended various grade schools in Parsons, as she and her mother moved a lot those early years. She attended middle school at Parsons Middle School, where she was an honor roll student and played volleyball. After her eighth grade graduation, she moved in with her grandmother. In high school, Jodeci was a cheerleader, took honors classes, and spent time with her friends. Her freshman year she was co-captain of the freshman cheerleading team. Throughout high school she remained a cheerleader and became a "Big Sister" for the organization Big Brothers Big Sisters. She fondly remembers her little sister Jasmine, the two are no longer in touch. During her sophomore and junior year Jodeci spent a lot of time at home with her grandmother, she read a lot of books during that time. She made several trips to Kansas City with her grandmother for chemotherapy treatments.

Jodeci's relationship with her father **Sean Turner (1972-)** was tenacious. He disappeared when she was two and didn't show up again until she was seven. Because he was so absent for so long, Jodeci was apprehensive about spending time with him. However, her mother thought it was important for them to have a relationship, so Jodeci began to spend her Spring Breaks from school in Texas with her father. Her last trip to visit him was her sophomore year of high school when she was 15. After that trip, Jodeci spoke with her father on the phone, and he would visit her when he came to Kansas. He came to both her high school and community college graduations. They still don't have a close relationship, but they are in contact with each other, which is better than nothing.

On November 15, 2008, Jodeci took her brother to the Parsons High School performance of *Seussical the Musical*. Her grandmother passed away early that next morning. In May 2009, Jodeci got her first job at Parsons Movie Theatre. She enjoyed

working in the fun environment with her friends and continues to have a close relationship with her former employers.⁷ The death of her grandmother took a large toll on Jodeci. She was *extremely* close with Judy. Prior to her death, Judy asked all the family members to write down what they wanted once she was gone, she didn't keep a traditional will. Because Jodeci was living in the same home with her, and driving her car to school, she assumed those would automatically be hers. After she passed away, the siblings (Jodeci's mother, aunts, and uncles) got into an argument and Jodeci was forced to move out of the house and the car was sold. Jodeci did get to keep her cookbooks. The cookbooks and recipes are her most prized possessions, they contain so many memories of baking and cooking with her grandmother for holidays. The first few years after her grandmother died were rough for her entire family. Jodeci sought a counselor to deal with the loss and continues to deal with the heartbreak today.

During her senior year of high school, Jodeci had a tough time deciding where she would go to college. Her favorite high school memory includes cheering at football games with her friends and her senior prom. She eventually decided to attend Labette Community College on a cheerleading scholarship.

While attending LCC, Jodeci studied a few different majors. She initially enrolled into the Administrative Assistant program, but after one full year, she decided to study Public Relations. During her first semester of her sophomore year at Labette, she decided to go back to her Administrative Assistant program. Jodeci graduated with her Associate's Degree in Applied Science in May 2012.

She then transferred to the University of North Texas in Denton, Texas. UNT is known for their hospitality management program, so Jodeci enrolled into that program

⁷ Personal knowledge of the author, Jodeci Turner.2018

with the intention of becoming an event planner. Her aspiration was to work for Southwest Airlines Headquarters. While she was enrolled at UNT, she joined the Panhellenic sorority, Kappa Kappa Gamma. She made lifelong friends at UNT. In 2015, just two semesters short of graduating at UNT, Jodeci made the decision to move back home to Kansas. Feeling lost, Jodeci decided to take a year off from college and just work. She continued her job at Ernesto's Mexican Restaurant in Parsons, Kansas. After one year of living back in Kansas, Jodeci decided to go back to school to study Communication with an emphasis in Public Relations. She is now a senior at Pittsburg State University graduating in May 2018.

GENERATION TWO

A1a. Allison Dyan Blansett (1973-)

A1b. Sean Michael Turner (1972-)

Allison Dyan Blansett was born on December 3, 1973 to **Judith Waylene Blansett (1944-2008)** and **James Elmo Blansett (1944-)**.

Allison was the youngest of 5 children. Her mother operated a home daycare and her father worked on the railroad in Parsons, Kansas, so she spent a lot of time with her older siblings. Being from a Catholic family, Allison grew up with Catholic values. When Allison was nine years old, her parents were divorced. She spent every other weekend at his home in Parsons. They often spent those weekends camping. Allison and her siblings also spent two weeks with their father every summer, on a family vacation. However, as she got older situations changed. Her parents got divorced, they stopped attending church regularly and Allison rebelled. When she was sixteen years old, she began dating **Sean Michael Turner (1972-)**. It wasn't long before Allison found out she was pregnant with Jodeci. That was quite a shock for her, but luckily her mother was supportive and Allison decided to keep the baby. It caused quite a scandal not only because she was so young, but in rural Parsons she was having a mixed race baby. Allison's pregnancy caused tension with her mother's side of the family, to the point that they lost contact with that side of the family for about two years.

In Figure 3.9, "Opposition to Laws Banning Marriages between Blacks and Whites, by Year and by Year of Birth," Fischer and Host show the results of surveyed responders by their year of birth and showed how they viewed interracial marriage. It showed that Americans born before 1900 were more likely to be in favor of laws that did not support interracial marriage. Interestingly enough, baby boomers (1945-1959) seemed to

oppose the ban.⁸ Allison and Sean did not end up getting married, but this graph shows how the families could have viewed Allison and her situation during that time.

For a short while, Allison and Sean were engaged, it quickly fell apart once he went away to college at Butler Community College in El Dorado, Kansas, to play football. After Sean moved again to play football in North Carolina, they broke up. Allison was left to be a single mother of a toddler. She lived with her mother, worked at Wal-Mart, and began taking classes at Labette Community College to become a computer specialist. When Jodeci became sick, Allison stopped pursuing her degree, to work extra shifts to help pay for Jodeci's medical expenses. She continued working at Wal-Mart, but also began working at Friendly's Gas Station on the weekends. Allison did not finish her degree, but has continuously worked administrative professional jobs. In 2003, she gave birth to a second child, a son, **Iziah Aidan Blansett (2003-)**. Finally having a "balance" (son and daughter) she had her tubes tied and her family is complete. Allison shied away from having a large family because she wasn't married. She's often said she's perfectly content having one daughter and one son. Her decision to not have multiple children differs from many in the area who have more than two or three children. Parsons is a largely Catholic community and those beliefs often lead to large families.

8 1. Claude S. Fischer and Michael Hout, *Century of Difference; How America Changed in the Last One Hundred Years* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2006), 51.

Her lifelong dream was to help people and she showed interest in Criminal Justice. In 2017, she began a job working for KVC Health Systems as a placement coordinator and has found her calling.

Sean Michael Turner (1972-) was born to **Gail Turner (1940- 2005)** and **Robert Collum (deceased)**⁹ in May of 1972. Sean was raised by his mother in Coffeyville, Kansas. He was sent to live with his Uncle Kikey in Parsons when he was twelve years old and began going to school in Parsons at Parsons Middle School and Parsons High School, to keep him out of the trouble that boys his age were getting into in Coffeyville. Sean was an incredible athlete his whole life. He excelled at basketball, football, and track and field. He still currently holds the record at Parsons High School for the Shot-Put. Sean graduated from Parsons High School in 1991, he attended Butler Community College on a football scholarship. In 1993, he graduated from Butler Community College and transferred to East Carolina State University in North Carolina, again on a football scholarship. Some years later, he earned both a Bachelor's and a Master's degree from other colleges. Sean has worked in law enforcement in Houston, Texas since 2001.

⁹ Conversation with Sean Turner. 2018

GENERATION THREE

A1a1. Judith Waylene Merchant (1944-2008)

A1a2. James Elmo Blansett (1944-)

A1b1. Robert Collum (deceased)

A1b2. Gail Turner (1940- 2005)

Jodeci's maternal grandmother, **Judy Waylene Blansett (1944-2008)**, was born in Parsons, Kansas, in 1944, to **Lorraine Bryson Merchant (1919-2001)** and **Wayne Harvey Merchant (1919-1994)**. Judy was the second oldest of the couple's three children, and she had one brother and two sisters. Her older sister, Joyce Ann passed away at birth.¹⁰ Judy enjoyed sewing, playing softball, and reading as a child. She attended Parsons Senior High School and Parsons Junior College. She met Jim at Labette Community College in 1960. They dated and were married in Vinita, Oklahoma in 1963. She worked at Wal-Mart in Parsons for 25 years. In 1983 Judy and Jim were divorced. She never remarried.

In Figure 4.10 "Americans who live alone by Age and Gender." It's shown that from 1900-2000 more elderly women were living alone.¹¹ It would imply that women were (1) widowed or (2) divorced. Judy falls into the second category. She lived alone until 2005, when Jodeci moved in with her to help take care of her in failing health. This brightened her spirits, having someone around to care for and vice versa. Judy was beloved by everyone around her. Today, people still comment on what a great woman she was.

¹⁰ Personal knowledge of author, Jodeci Turner.2018

¹¹ Claude S. Fischer and Michael Hout, *Century of Difference; How America Changed in the Last One Hundred Years* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2006), 84.

Jodeci was not Judy's first grandchild, but she was clearly her favorite. Judy and Jodeci spent almost every day together. Judy was an avid cook and loved to bake! She enjoyed watching "Price is Right", "Days of Our Lives", and "Wheel of Fortune". In 2003 Judy was diagnosed with Breast Cancer. She fought a courageous battle, but unfortunately lost her battle in November of 2008.

Jodeci's maternal grandfather, **James "Jim" Elmo Blansett (1944-)**, was born in Johnstown, Pennsylvania, in 1944 to **Stanley Elmo Blansett (1908 1983-)** and **Martha Forgas (1910-1993)**.¹² James was the fourth of Stanley and Martha's six children. Growing up in Johnstown, Jim was interested in sports. When it came time for college, he was accepted to Labette Community College in Parsons, Kansas, on a football scholarship. It's ironic, that now his granddaughter, Jodeci, is an employee at the same college that made it possible for her to be alive. A former classmate of Jim's recalled him as "A good lookin' fella from Pennsylvania. We didn't like him because he stole our girlfriends, but he was a good guy."¹³

After Jim and Judy were married, they moved to Jim's home state of Pennsylvania. He worked for an aircraft company and Judy stayed home with their first born, Jimmy. When Jimmy was two and their second born child, a daughter, Staci was an infant, they relocated closer to Wichita, Kansas. In Wichita, Jim worked for Boeing, continuing his work on airplanes. In 1971, Jim got an offer from MKT/Union Pacific railroad for a job that would relocate them back to Parsons, where he and Judy met and her family was. He took the job and the small family moved home. Jim and Judy had two more children, Christopher and Allison in 1972 and 1973. The pressures of the railroad job got

¹² Jodeci Turner "Jodeci Turner Family Tree" in familysearch.org (March 2018).

¹³ Bud Cooper, conversation with Jodeci Turner. February 2018

to Jim and in 1983, the couple divorced. A few years later, while working on the tracks, a railcar broke loose and made its way to Jim and his crew working nearby. Jim initially got out of the way of the runaway railcar, but ran back to the tracks to move the work truck. Unfortunately, he wasn't fast enough and he was struck by the train. He spent months in the hospital recovering and was unable to work for the railroad after. In 1987, Jim packed his things and moved to Virginia Beach, Virginia to be near his brother, Bob. He lived in Virginia Beach until 2005, when he moved back to Parsons to be near Judy, who was in failing health. Jim stayed in Parsons after her death, to be with family and because he was unable to care for himself and his failing health as well. In 2012, he woke up in the hospital from a car accident that almost took his life. He had no recollection of getting in his truck, where he was going, or what he was doing; his license was revoked, and he now resides in a duplex near his youngest daughter, Allison.

Although they were divorced, neither Judy nor Jim remarried; they remained devoted to one another.

Jodeci has very few memories of her paternal grandmother, **Gail Turner (1940-2005)**. She remembers visiting her at her home in Coffeyville and that she had a raspy voice. She referred to her as "Granny Gail". Jodeci has been told that she looks just like her Granny Gail. Gail passed away in 2001 from symptoms of diabetes. Jodeci and her mother attended the funeral in Parsons.¹⁴

¹⁴ Personal memory of author, Jodeci Turner.

Jodeci never met her paternal grandfather **Robert Collum (deceased)** and her father, Sean didn't have much contact with him. It's said he went to prison when Sean was young and died there before Jodeci was born.

GENERATION FOUR

A1a1a. Lorraine Bryson (1919-2001)

A1a1b. Wayne Harvey Merchant (1919-1994)

A1a2a. Martha Forgas (1910-1993)

A1a2b. Stanley Elmo Blansett (1908-1983)

A1b1a. Unk.

A1b1b. Unk.

A1b2a. Unk.

A1b2b. Unk.

Lorraine Bryson (1919-2001) was born to **Clara LouElla Fowler** and **Andrew Jackson Bryson** in Edna, Kansas in June 1919. She married **Wayne Harvey Merchant (1919-1994)** and they had four children together. Their first child, a daughter, **Joyce Ann Merchant** was stillborn. They proceeded to have two more daughters and a son.¹⁵ Jodeci remembers visiting her great grandmother at her home in Parsons, eating vanilla wafers and rearranging the magnets on her refrigerator. Lorraine passed away in 2001 in Wichita, Kansas while in the hospital. Jodeci, her mother, her grandmother, her two aunts, and her cousin Kayla all traveled to Wichita to visit Lorraine before her death.¹⁶

Wayne Harvey Merchant (1919-1994) was born to **Bertha Noretta (Novella) Roach (1890-1972)** and **Walter J. Merchant (1884-1958)** in Parsons, Kansas. When he was twenty, Wayne worked as a stone mason.¹⁷ He married **Lorraine Bryson (1919-2001)** in 1941. He was deployed into the military for 107 days. Details of his deployment are still

¹⁵ Jodeci Turner "Jodeci Turner Family Tree" in familysearch.org (March 2018).

¹⁶ Personal memory of the author, Jodeci Turner.

¹⁷ "United States Census, 1940," database with images, FamilySearch (<https://www.familysearch.org/links-pages/sourceVE?&entityId=L6HJ-6SH&entityType=person&sourceId=9J5R-GLJ&referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.familysearch.org%2Ftree%2Fperson%2Fdetails%2FL6HJ-6SH&showPhotos=true>) "Census records and voting list" Accessed 10 March 2018.

unclear. Wayne died on August 10, 1994 in his home. Jodeci remembers visiting his grave with her grandmother for years after his death.

Martha Forgas (1910-1993) was born to **Stephan Forgas (1866-1946)** and **Victoria C Poratzki (1870-1935)** on July 3, 1910, right before the Independence Day celebration. In spring of 1933, FDR's "New Deal" was taking off, Martha was 23 at the time and could have eagerly read about the exciting New Deal that would bring relief to those affected by the Great Depression. It's unknown how the Great Depression affected Martha and her family.¹⁸

Stanley Elmo Blansett (1909-1994) was born in Johnstown Pennsylvania to **Arthur Cloyd Jay Blansett (1888-1960)** and **Frances M. Baker (1890-1965)**. He grew up poor with many siblings. Stanley went by his middle name "Elmo". In 1933, he met **Martha Forgas (1910- 1993)** and they were married.

When he was in his twenties, Elmo was a member of the Merchant Marine, United States civilian mariners, or to U.S. civilian and federally owned merchant vessels. Both the civilian mariners and the merchant vessels are managed by a combination of the government and private sectors, and engage in commerce or transportation of goods and services in and out of the navigable waters of the United States.¹⁹ The Merchant Marine primarily transports cargo and passengers during peacetime; in times of war, the Merchant Marine can be an auxiliary to the United States Navy, and can be called upon to deliver military personnel and materiel for the military. Later in life, Elmo was in

¹⁸ Familysearch.org. Accessed April 2018

¹⁹ Wikipedia contributors, "United States Merchant Marine," *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=United_States_Merchant_Marine&oldid=838102789 (accessed April 25, 2018).

heart failure so he and Martha moved to Texas for the drier air, it made it easier for him to breathe. During heart surgery on October 9, 1994 Elmo passed away. After his death, Martha moved back to Johnstown to be near her children and family, she passed away in 2003.²⁰ According to his granddaughter Kathleen, "Elmo was a strict father of seven kids, but very gentle and loving with his grandchildren."²¹

²⁰ Interview with family historian, Kathleen Milonas. 2018

²¹ Facebook message from Kathleen Milonas. March 2018

GENERATION FIVE

A1a1a1. Clara Lou Ella Fowler (1894-1967)

A1a1a2. Andrew Jackson Bryson (1886-1986)

A1a1b1. Bertha Noretta (Novella) Roach (1890-1972)

A1a1b2. Walter J. Merchant (1884-1958)

A1a2a1. Frances M. Baker (1890-1965)

A1a2a2. Arthur Jay Blanset (1888-1960)

A1a2b1. Victoria C. Poratzki (1870-1935)

A1a2b2. Stephen J. Forgas (1866-1946)

A1b1b1. UNK.

A1b2b2. UNK.

A1b2b1. Unk.

A1b2b2. Unk.

Jodeci's maternal family beginning with **Clara Lou Ella Fowler (1894-1967)** came to Kansas from Georgia in the early 1900s. Many different newspapers could have influenced them. *The Presbyterian of the South*, which details an article about Prohibition in Kansas City could have been a factor in them making that move. There is no evidence stating they were for or against prohibition, but organized crime was high in Kansas City at the time and they could have settled in Southeast Kansas to avoid that²². *The Parsons Sun* was created in 1871 in Parsons, Kansas. Since then *The Parsons Sun* has been Parsons' most prominent newspaper. Living in Southeast Kansas, the Fowler family certainly came across that newspaper and utilized it back then.

²² *The Presbyterian of the South* : [combining the] *Southwestern Presbyterian*, *Central Presbyterian*, *Southern Presbyterian*. (Atlanta, Ga.), 01 July 1914. *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Lib. of Congress. <<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/10021978/1914-07-01/ed-1/seq-18/> ([Links to an external site.](#))[Links to an external site.](#)>

Jodeci's family on her paternal side can be traced to Czech and Polish immigrants beginning with **Victoria Cecelia Poratzki** who was born in 1870 in Czech Republic, the daughter of **Frank Poratzki** her mother is unknown. It is assumed they came to America for the same reason almost all immigrants did during that time, the "American Dream". Based on research, the Poratzki's most likely fled Czech Republic (then known as The Austrian Empire or the Lands of Bohemia) because of the French Revolution and fear of the Holy Roman Empire²³. She married **Stephen John Forgas** on October 13, 1892, in Johnstown, Pennsylvania. They had seven children in 21 years. She died on May 9, 1935, in Johnstown, Pennsylvania, at the age of 65.

²³ Wikipedia contributors, "History of the Lands of the Bohemian Crown (1648–1867)," *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*, [https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=History_of_the_Lands_of_the_Bohemian_Crown_\(1648%E2%80%931867\)&oldid=828747870](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=History_of_the_Lands_of_the_Bohemian_Crown_(1648%E2%80%931867)&oldid=828747870) (accessed April 25, 2018).