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Family History of Katrina Altenreid

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**The Family History of
Katrina L. Altenreid**

21 August 2018

Katrina Altenreid 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 Pittsburgh State University **Digital Commons**. Please contact the author directly with any questions or comments:
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GENERATION ONE

A1. Katrina Laura-Lea Heidenreich (1974-)

Katrina Laura-Lea Heidenreich (1974-) was born Katrina Laura-Lea Morris on to **Linda Rae Heidenreich (1954-2012)** and **Michael Eugene Morris (1953-)** on April 25, 1974 at St. John's Hospital in Springfield, Missouri. Katrina had heard many stories surrounding the situation of her birth, but, due to mental illness, Linda had a tendency to dramatize the events of her life to suit whatever purpose was in her best interest at the time. According to Linda, Katrina's original due date was March 23 and the doctors wanted to induce labor. That was unnecessary; Linda went into labor on her own the night of April 24 and gave birth over twenty-four hours later¹.

Due to enlisting in the United States Air Force, Michael was away doing his Basic Training at the time of Katrina's birth. When Katrina was a few weeks old, Michael returned home on two weeks leave and announced the family would be moving to a base in Illinois while Michael was doing added training. After training, the Air Force stationed Michael at Luke Air Force Base near Phoenix, Arizona. Due to the prohibitive cost of living in Phoenix, the family lived in government-subsidized housing. While in Phoenix, Linda gave birth to another daughter, **Selene Mary-Alexandra Morris (1975-)** (later also changed to Heidenreich). While living in government housing supplied some financial stability for the family, they still struggled. This

¹ Personal knowledge of Katrina L. Altenreid

struggle urged Michael to take on a second job at a local doughnut shop where he met a young girl named **Mary Ellen Peterson (1957-)** and an affair ensued. In the summer of 1975, Linda packed up herself and her two daughters and moved to Colorado Springs, Colorado to be near her parents. While she was away in Colorado, Michael took the opportunity to sell what items Linda left behind and quickly file for divorce. In January 1976, the divorce was final, and Michael began his new life with Mary².

Linda found single motherhood challenging, the tricky situation worsened with Selene's poor health. Linda's mental health status combined with Selene's routine trips to the hospital emergency room concerned health care officials who reported Linda to Social Services. The first report was resolved with training and intervention of the social worker. The second call was made by law enforcement after they entered the apartment Linda resided in and found she had left her two small children alone while she went to do laundry at the onsite laundry facilities. Linda's father put the family on a bus and sent them to live with Linda's grandmother, **Ardith Vivian Simmons (1911-1993)** in Springfield, Missouri. The story varies at this point as to who is supplying the information. The fact is, Linda returned to Colorado and gave up custody of her two daughters and signed over her rights to her parents, **Vernon Alexander Heidenreich (1928-2002)** and **Peggie Lea Dunn (1930-2000)**. Katrina and Selene's surnames changed to

² Ibid.

Heidenreich and Vernon and Peggie moved first to Cripple Creek, Colorado then to Kisse Mills, Missouri³.

Katrina began school in August of 1979 attending an afternoon Kindergarten program at Forsyth Elementary School in Forsythe, Missouri. Vernon had perpetual wonder lust, and the family moved several times during Katrina's childhood. By the time Katrina reached high school, she had attended eight different schools. Moving around made socializing difficult for Katrina, she was always the "new kid" which made making friends difficult. While in high school, Katrina developed a love for theatre and drama and took part in speech and debate contests. She earned four school letters for drama and four for debate as well as winning several awards. Katrina graduated from Bolivar High School in Bolivar Missouri in May of 1992⁴.

Vernon did not handle the family finances well, so after high school Katrina entered the work force. While working for a local bar, Katrina met **William James Altenreid (1972-)** in May of 1993. August 1 of that same year, they married in Springfield, Missouri. In May of 1994, they had their first child, a girl they named Peggie after Katrina's maternal grandmother. The following year, also in May, they had their second child, another girl they named Eva after William's paternal grandmother. After the birth of Eva, Katrina became pregnant again, miscarrying the baby at twelve weeks gestation. Two weeks after her miscarriage, Katrina fell while walking home from a nearby

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

convenience store and injured her right ankle. She spent twelve weeks off her feet. Shortly after Katrina recovered from her injury, her marriage to William ended⁵.

At this time, Katrina moved temporarily to Phoenix, Arizona to live with her father and stepmother. While she was able to find employment, it was not enough to afford to live in Phoenix, so in February of 1997, Katrina decided to return to Springfield. At this time, she and her mother, Linda, rented a house in the inner city and Katrina got a job at a nearby turkey processing plant. At this plant, Katrina met **Cecil Carl Wheeler Jr. (1978-)** and **Todd Allen Reedy (1966-)**. While Cecil was kind and more attractive, he was only nineteen and Katrina was unsure of his ability and willingness to take on a woman with two children. Todd was thirty-two and already had children, so Katrina started dating Todd. Together they produced one son, Stephan, named for Katrina's uncle, **Stephan Patrick Heidenreich (1956-1956)**. Todd was unwilling to take on Katrina's two daughters and was uninterested in the child they had produced, so Katrina found herself alone, this time with three children instead of two.⁶

Katrina ended up running into Cecil and the two began a relationship, which produced two sons, Simon, named for the apostle and Zachary, named for President Zachary Taylor. Cecil took responsibility for Katrina's other three children and in September of 2002, they made the decision for Katrina to stay home and raise the children while Cecil worked two jobs.

⁵ Personal Knowledge of Author Katrina Altenreid; Springfield News Leader, May 25, 1995.

⁶ Personal Knowledge of Author, Katrina Altenreid.

The family moved to Caney, Kansas in April of 2004. They lived in Caney until August of 2005 when they moved to Sedan, Kansas. In February of 2006, Katrina and Cecil bought a home and the family moved to Coffeyville, Kansas. That July, a devastating fire left the family homeless for about a month, in September of 2006, Katrina and Cecil bought another home and in October the family moved in and made a life in their new home.⁷

All this time, Katrina was still legally married to her first husband, William. She was afraid to divorce him due to his mental instability and constant threats to abduct and murder their two daughters. In 2010, Katrina received a letter from William's sister and made the decision it was finally time to let go of her first marriage. In February of 2011, Katrina filed for divorce from William and in June of that same year, finalized at the Montgomery County Courthouse in Coffeyville, Kansas.⁸

That year, Katrina and Cecil began to plan their wedding. The original date was in the first week of July, and then changed with the addition of the Shot Gun Wedding at the local Dalton Defender's Days festival.⁹

Dalton Defenders Days is an annual festival held the first weekend of October that honors the events of October 5, 1892. That day the infamous Dalton gang rode into Coffeyville with an ambitious plan, they were going to rob two banks in one day. All but one of the members of the gang lost their lives that day. The celebration not

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

only commemorates the events of that day, but also pays tribute to the four citizens that gave up their lives to defend their hometown.

Events at the festival include several reenactments of the robbery, a hold up at a local hotel, games and vendor booths, several contests, a train ride, and a shotgun wedding.¹⁰

Since their wedding, Katrina and Cecil have remained in Coffeyville. They have added two sons-in-law and six grandchildren to their family. Katrina's daughter Peggie is married, has three children and lives about an hour away from her family. Eva is also married, has three children and lives close to her parents. Stephan graduated from Independence Community College and lives in Northern Kansas where he is finishing his degree and plans to attend law school. Simon and Zachary both are still with their parents.¹¹

¹⁰Dalton Defenders Days October 1-4, Coffeyville Chamber of Commerce, date accessed: September 20, 2018

¹¹ Personal knowledge of author, Katrina Altenreid.

GENERATION TWO

A1a. Linda Rae Heidenreich (1954-2012)

A1b. Michael Eugene Morris (1953-)

Linda Rae Heidenreich (1954-2012) was born September 1, 1954 to Vernon and Peggie Heidenreich at Fort Sam Houston, Texas. She was the second child for both her father and mother. In 1957, Peggie gave birth to a stillborn son and in 1959, she gave birth to a daughter she called **Laura Kay Heidenreich (1959-)**. Linda and Laura would grow up together as the only two children in the Heidenreich household¹².

The family lived in Texas until 1961 when Vernon transferred to Germany. Since there was a waiting list for base housing, Vernon went to Germany alone and planned to arrange for his family to join him as soon as base housing became available. Peggie took her two daughters and moved to Joplin, Missouri where she arranged to stay with her parents Ardith and Merle Dunn until her husband sent for her. The summer of 1961, Peggie sent her daughter, Linda, to Colorado to spend time with Peggie's sister Barbara. In August, when Peggie and Laura

¹² "Texas Birth Index, 1903-1997," database, <i>FamilySearch</i> (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:V63H-CZF> : 5 December 2014), Vernon Alexander Heidenreich in entry for Linda Rae Heidenreich, 01 Sep 1954; from "Texas Birth Index, 1903-1997," database and images, <i>Ancestry</i> (<http://www.ancestry.com> : 2005); citing Texas Department of State Health Services. "Texas Birth Index, 1903-1997," database, <i>FamilySearch</i> (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:VDHY-BXH> : 1 January 2015), Vernon Alexander Heidenreich in entry for Laura Kay Heidenreich, 27 Jul 1959; from "Texas Birth Index, 1903-1997," database and images, <i>Ancestry</i> (<http://www.ancestry.com> : 2005); citing Texas Department of State Health Services.

came to take Linda back to Joplin, Barbara's husband, Bruce, insisted the family stay in Colorado, even helping them to rent a cabin in the area. That November, Vernon sent for his family out of loneliness, and rented temporary housing off base. Linda remembered flying over Paris and her mother pointing out the Eifel Tower telling her children they would never see it again.¹³

The family spent a year in Germany before, due to family issues, Vernon transferred again, this time to his home state of Michigan. While in Michigan, Linda would meet a young service member who was leaving for Vietnam. He asked permission to correspond with Linda, and the two exchanged letters until Linda got word from his father that he died in combat. It was at this moment Linda began to question the status quo and began her interest in politics and social justice.¹⁴

In 1966, Vernon suffered a major heart attack that left him unavailable for worldwide assignment. The Air Force offered early retirement and Vernon took the option. The family would move to Joplin where Linda would attend and graduate from Memorial High School.¹⁵

Linda took her social justice ideals to high school where she spent much of the time suspended from school. Vernon often went to the school and fought for his daughter's right to free speech. As an adult, Linda ended up arrested on several occasions for standing up for her beliefs and principles.¹⁶

¹³ Interview with Laura Heidenreich conducted October 1, 2018.

¹⁴ Personal knowledge of author Katrina Altenreid.

¹⁵ Interview with Laura Heidenreich conducted October 1, 2018.

¹⁶ Personal knowledge of author Katrina Altenreid.

August of 1985, Southwest Missouri State University (SMSU) in Springfield, Missouri scheduled Reverend Jerry Falwell to speak.¹⁷ Linda, disgusted by his ideologies, organized a march protesting his presence and message. This event made the front page of the local newspaper, The Springfield News Leader, August 27, 1985¹⁸.

In November of 1972, Linda met **Michael Eugene Morris (1952 -)** at a party in Springfield Missouri where she was attending SMSU as a social work major. By Thanksgiving, the two had eloped, much to the surprise of both sets of parents.¹⁹

This union produced two children. In 1974, Linda gave birth to a daughter she named Katrina after her great-grandmother, **Katherine Elizabeth Gammal (1887-?)** and in 1975 she gave birth to another daughter Michael named Selene after a character in a book he was reading at the time of her birth.²⁰

Before the birth of Katrina, Michael decided to join the United States Air Force. This decision upset Linda, who did not enjoy her upbringing in a military family. Michael moved the family to Illinois then on to Phoenix, Arizona.²¹

While in Arizona, the family lived in government housing. Linda began to show signs of depression, claiming to be a victim of domestic violence. Michael denies having been abusive to his family. Linda also claimed Michael began an affair with a co-worker at the doughnut shop

¹⁷ Later renamed Missouri State University (MSU)

¹⁸ Chris Whitley, "Apartheid Issues Follow Falwell to SMS," Springfield Leader and Press, August 27, 1985.

¹⁹ Personal knowledge of author, Katrina Altenreid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

where he worked to gain added income for his family; again, Michael denies beginning a relationship with his co-worker until after it was obvious Linda was leaving.²²

In July of 1975, Linda told Michael she was going to visit her family in Colorado. She packed all the clothing she and her two daughters owned as well as all her family photos. Looking back, she would realize she was intending of staying in Colorado whether she knew it at the time or not. On September 1, 1975, Linda's twenty-first birthday, Michael arranged to serve divorce papers. By January of 1976, the divorce was final and leaving Linda to take care of herself and her two daughters.²³

Being a single mother was quite difficult for Linda. She struggled with substance abuse as well as mental health issues. To place further stress on the situation, Selene was plagued with various health problems that would follow her into adulthood. Medical staff admitted Selene to the hospital several times, resulting in social services involvement in the family situation.²⁴

In 1976, Linda was living in an apartment with her two children and would often take opportunity to do the family laundry at night while her two daughters were sleeping. The laundry facility was located on the property of the apartment complex and Linda would leave her two daughters while she would put clothes in the washer and then into the dryer. One night, while she was doing the laundry, Selene, who would wake up several times a night, woke up and had been crying

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

quite a while when concerned neighbors called law enforcement. The police entered the apartment and found the home to be messy and the children alone. When Linda returned to her apartment, law enforcement informed her they had notified social services who planned to remove the children.²⁵

According to the stories Linda would tell, she contacted her parents who sent her to Missouri where she took time going from home to home, visiting various family members and friends, including her ex-in-laws, her ex-husband's best friend, her grandmother, and her best friend. While she was gone, her parents hired a lawyer and arranged to take custody of their two granddaughters. They contacted Linda and told her to return to Colorado and bring the children with her. She returned, and her parents had enrolled her in a local community college, rented her a one-bedroom apartment and rented themselves a two-bedroom apartment. They told Linda they were taking custody of the girls at once and that it was for the best. Now she could attend school and they could better support the needs of Katrina and Selene. After quite a bit of convincing and many promises, Linda agreed to sign over her rights and in 1978; her parents officially adopted her two daughters. This was the events according to Linda when she relayed the story to her oldest daughter Katrina in the early 1990's. It is unknown if this was the truth or if this was an attempt to turn Katrina against her grandparents, who raised her.²⁶

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

In 1978, a psychiatrist diagnosed Linda with bi-polar disorder, for which she self-medicated with marijuana, speed, and alcohol. That year, Linda attempted suicide and her doctor admitted her to a psychiatric hospital in Joplin, Missouri.²⁷

Linda remained in Joplin upon release from the hospital. There Linda met a man named Bobbie and two quickly moved in together. Later that year, Linda and Bobbie moved to Forsyth, Missouri to be closer to Katrina and Selene who were living in nearby Kisse Mills. While in Forsyth, Linda began the process of becoming sober. She attended Alcoholics Anonymous and was having quite a bit of success. While attending AA, Linda also sought treatment with a local Psychiatrist for treatment for her mental illness. These two programs helped Linda to realize she was unhappy with Bobbie and the two separated in November of 1979. Soon after, Linda discovered she was pregnant and moved to Colorado to be near her sister Laura. One night she was getting ready to go out drinking when she fell down a flight of stairs, severely injuring her back, it seemed the baby was unharmed at that time. Due to the need for a great amount of care, and Laura's desire to be near her parents, the sisters moved to Galena, Missouri where Peggie and Vernon were living with Katrina and Selene.²⁸

In March of 1980, Linda and her parents and daughters moved back to Kisse Mills. In July of that year, Linda gave birth to her only son whom she named Alexander after her paternal grandfather, Alexander Heidenreich. During her pregnancy, the obstetrician diagnosed Linda

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

with gallstones. Two weeks after the birth of her son, Linda's gall bladder got to a dangerous state and her parents rushed her to Skaggs Hospital in Branson, Missouri where she immediately went into emergency surgery, after the surgery, she developed a pulmonary embolism and ended up in the ICU unit.²⁹

Vernon, who was anti-Catholic at the time, called for a priest to preform last rites. After the priest had visited, medical staff informed Vernon and Peggie their daughter would likely pass away during the night. However, the next morning, Linda's condition had improved, and she recovered quickly after that.³⁰

Linda would spend the next two years in Taney and Stone county Missouri, raising her son alone. In 1982, Linda moved to Springfield Missouri where she could access the public transportation and affordable housing. After moving in different apartments in Springfield, Linda finally moved to a small two-bedroom house on Travis Street located in the North Side of Springfield in 1987. There she raised her son and enjoyed summer and holiday visits from her two daughters.³¹

In 1995, Linda began to have difficulty with Alexander, who had begun shoplifting and was using different illegal substances. To keep him out of trouble, Linda moved to what was supposed to be a better neighborhood, renting a small two-bedroom apartment on South National Street. The move proved disastrous, while this neighborhood was

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

supposed to be better, it was full of teenagers with wealthy parents and better drugs, which they were more than happy to share with Alexander.³²

In 1996, Linda moved to a trailer park on Kearney Street, near the home she had lived in on Travis Street. She lived in the Trailer park until February of 1997, when she and her daughter rented a home on Missouri Street in the inner-city region of Springfield. In 1998, Linda and Katrina were living together in an apartment on South National Street, just a block from the apartment Linda had lived in three years prior.³³

In January of 1999, a fire in the apartment forced Katrina and Linda to move to Bolivar, Missouri. Linda lived in Bolivar until July of 2004, when she moved to Caney, Kansas to live again with Katrina and her family. She would remain in the home of Katrina and her family, moving to Sedan and then to Coffeyville, until August of 2012.³⁴

On August 2, 2012, Linda began to suffer from an upset stomach, Katrina tried to convince Linda to go to the emergency room, but Linda refused. Finally, Linda wanted to go, but Katrina had to go to work, she told Linda to wait until her fiancée, Cecil came home. By the time Cecil arrived at home, Linda was incoherent, and Cecil called 911. An ambulance took her to Coffeyville Regional Medical Center. Doctors transferred her to St. John's Medical Center in Tulsa.³⁵

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

At first, the prognosis was positive, and the doctors said Linda would improve. Unfortunately, on August 15, 2012, Linda's white blood cell count tripled over night. The doctors said there was little chance Linda would recover and recommended removing life support. Katrina signed the papers giving the doctors permission to stop life support and Linda died that night. Her funeral was the following Wednesday and her cremated remains are in the home of Katrina's oldest daughter, Peggie.³⁶

Katrina's father, **Michael Eugene Morris (1952-)** was born March 3, 1952, at the Burgess Protestant Hospital in Springfield, Missouri to **Homer Eugene Morris (1921-2006)** and **Willa Lea McAdams (1929-)**. He was the second child of three and the first son of two. His mother said he was a large baby.³⁷

Michael endured a difficult childhood. Due to his quiet nature and high intellect, he had few friends at school. His mother was unstable, and he spent much of his childhood moving between his parents, his grandparents and a friend home. While at his grandparent's home, his grandfather would teach him about electrical work and show him how to work on telephones connections. This would inspire him to work in the tech industry ³⁸

He got his GED in the early 1970's and scored so high, he was given college credit at a local University. While studying for his

³⁶ Ibid

³⁷ Interview with Lelah Marie Smith conducted November 18, 2018. Personal knowledge of author, Katrina Altenreid.

³⁸ Interview with Lelah Marie Smith conducted November 18, 2018.

GED, he also got an opportunity to learn about television repair, this knowledge led to a lengthy career in computer engineering.³⁹

In November of 1972, Michael eloped with Linda Heidenreich. The two produced two children, Katrina and Selene. In April of 1974, out of concern for the cost of having a child, Michael joined the United States Air Force, hoping to become an air plane mechanic. His goal was not reached due to past mental health issues. He was stationed at Luke Air Force Base in Arizona. Here he would work on base as a mechanic during the day and work at a doughnut shop at night. While working at the doughnut shop, Michael met Mary Ellen Peterson. They two began a friendship that eventually became romantic in nature. It is uncertain if this relationship ended his marriage to Linda.⁴⁰

In 1975, Linda took the children and moved to Colorado Springs. Following her departure, Michael was discharged from the Air Force. He filed for divorce that same year and the divorce was finalized in January of 1976. That March he married Mary and the two began their life together.⁴¹

In 1977, Michael was approached by a private investigator about signing over his rights to his two daughters, Katrina and Selene. At first, he said no, then the investigator threatened to have him arrested for failure to pay child support. Michael finally agreed to sign over his rights.⁴²

³⁹ Personal knowledge of author Katrina Altenreid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

In 1979, Michael and Mary became employed with newly established Motorola. Soon after, they decided to start a family together. In 1981, Michael Junior was born. In 1986, Michael got a job in Green Bay, Wisconsin. There they had three more sons, Matthew in 1986, and Richard and Randal in 1988. The family lived in Green Bay until 1994 when they moved back to Phoenix.⁴³

Michael held several positions in varying computer engineering companies located in Phoenix. In 2008, Michael took up photography as a hobby, one he still enjoys today. Currently Michael lives in San Jose, California and still works as a computer engineer.⁴⁴

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

GENERATION THREE

A1a1. Peggie Lea Dunn (1930-2000)

A1a2. Vernon Alexander Heidenreich (1928-2002)

A1b1. Willa Lea McAdams (1929-)

A1b2. Homer Eugene Morris (1921-2006)

Katrina's maternal grandmother, **Peggie Lea Dunn (1930-2000)** was born September 15, 1930 to **Ardith Vivian Simmons (1911-1993)** and **Merle Everett Dunn (1905-1969)** in Hastings, Nebraska. She was the second of four children born to this union. Peggie had two brothers, an older brother named Robert and a younger brother named Donald and one younger sister name Barbara.

Merle and Ardith divorced shortly after the birth of their fourth child and Ardith relocated to Colorado with her four children. Ardith dated various men and, according to information provided by Peggie's daughter Linda before she passed away in August of 2012, Ardith left to go out on a date one night and did not return leaving her four small children alone in an apartment. Neighbors called law enforcement who placed the children in a local orphanage. Peggie's father happened to be traveling through Denver on business, noticed his children's pictures on the front page of the paper, and called his parents,

William Henry Dunn(1867-1948) and **Kata Eva Gardner(1872-1956)**, to take the children to their farm in Naponee, Nebraska.⁴⁵

Peggie would later recall many happy memories of her grandparents and the farm in Nebraska. However, her mother came to the farm and demanded her children. Kata Eva refused to turn over the children, but Ardith insisted, to pacify Ardith, Kata Eva released Peggie to her mother saying Robert had been born at the farm and she had been raising Barbara and Donald. While in Colorado, Peggie missed the companionship of her siblings and begged her mother to bring her baby sister to her. Ardith made an attempt to retrieve Barbara, but Kata Eva again refused to release Barbara. Again, to pacify Ardith, Kata Eva agreed to allow Ardith to take Donald to Colorado. While Peggie was disappointed, she was somewhat happy to have one of her siblings with her. The 1940 census from Colorado shows Ardith, remarried to Anthony Dunnigan, living in Denver and listing Peggie and Donald under their stepfather's last name as his children.⁴⁶

Peggie would spend her childhood between living with her mother and one of her many husbands and living with her grandparents in Nebraska. Eventually, she would live with her mother permanently, and graduate from high school in Denver.

⁴⁵ Personal knowledge of author, Katrina Altenreid.

⁴⁶ "United States Census, 1940," database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:VRDV-XLH> : 23 August 2018), Peggie Dunnigan in household of Anthony Dunnigan, Tract 30, Denver, Election District G, Denver, Colorado, United States; citing enumeration district (ED) 16-87, sheet 11B, line 53, family 277, Sixteenth Census of the United States, 1940, NARA digital publication T627. Records of the Bureau of the Census, 1790 - 2007, RG 29. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 2012, roll 486.

After living in Denver, Ardith and Peggie moved to Texas where Ardith attempted to climb the social ladder of Old Texas Money and take her daughter with her. Peggie was encouraged to date men from the best families. Ardith claimed one of these men fathered and illegitimate child Peggie gave birth to in 1950. Ardith ended up arranging for some wealthy associates of hers to take the baby, which they renamed Jo Ann.⁴⁷

It was during this time Peggie met an Air Force NCO named **Vernon Alexander Heidenreich (1928-2002)**. Vernon was still married to his first wife, but, this did not stop Peggie from pursuing a relationship and the couple starting an affair before Vernon went overseas to fight in the Korean War. It was this affair that later helped Peggie convince Vernon Jo Ann was his child and encourage him to help her regain custody of her daughter.⁴⁸

After Vernon returned from Korea, he quickly divorced his first wife and resumed his relationship with Peggie. The couple planned a wedding in May of 1954; however, these plans changed when Peggie discovered she was pregnant. The wedding date changed to December 16, 1953 and their first child, Linda, was born September 1, 1954. In February of 1957, Peggie gave birth to a stillborn son she called Stephan Patrick. Stephan's remains are at the Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery in San Antonio, Texas.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Personal knowledge of author Katrina Altenreid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ "Find A Grave Index," database, FamilySearch
(<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QVVG-9FCR> : 13 December 2015),
Stephan P Heidenreich, 1957; Burial, San Antonio, Bexar, Texas, United

After Stephan, Peggie gave birth to a daughter she called Laura at Lackland Air Force Base where Vernon was stationed in July of 1959. At her birth, Peggie was concerned she had given birth to another stillborn baby but was happy to find out her child was alive.⁵⁰

Vernon transferred to a base in Germany in 1961. While he was overseas, Peggie lived with her mother who had remarried her father. After her daughter Linda had spent a summer with Peggie's sister Barbara, her brother in law, Bruce, insisted Peggie move to Colorado with her children. She and her two daughters remained in Colorado until Vernon sent for them.⁵¹

The family lived in Germany until Vernon transferred to Michigan. While in Michigan, Peggie became pregnant again. In March of 1967, Peggie gave birth to a baby boy she called Matthew. He died just minutes after birth. The pregnancy was difficult for Peggie as well, and she almost died while giving birth. After this pregnancy, the military insisted Peggie not have any more children. The death of her son coupled with now being barren devastated Peggie, later she would go through bouts of depression during February and March thinking of the loss of her two sons⁵² .

States of America, Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery; citing record ID 774331, Find a Grave, <http://www.findagrave.com>.

⁵⁰ "Texas Birth Index, 1903-1997," database, <i>FamilySearch</i> (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:VDHY-BXH> : 1 January 2015), Peggie Lea Dunn in entry for Laura Kay Heidenreich, 27 Jul 1959; from "Texas Birth Index, 1903-1997," database and images, <i>Ancestry</i> (<http://www.ancestry.com> : 2005); citing Texas Department of State Health Services.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Michigan Deaths and Burials, 1800-1995," database, <i>FamilySearch</i> (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:FHYD-QG4> : 10 February 2018),

Shortly after the death of Matthew, doctors diagnosed Peggie with uterine cancer and she underwent a vaginal hysterectomy. The surgeon was unaware the cancer had grown to the abdomen and Peggie almost died during the procedure. Peggie received a blood transfusion from a soldier pulled out of a local bar. From this donor, Peggie got Hepatitis B. Later, this blood transfusion would be the cause of several health issues in Peggie's life.⁵³

Vernon took early retirement from the Air Force after a heart attack left him unavailable for world wide assignment, and the family moved to Joplin, Missouri. Peggie worked in an employment agency to help financially support her family while Vernon attended college at Missouri Southern State College (now Missouri Southern State University).⁵⁴

In 1970, Peggie's mother, who had been running an antique shop in Hollister, Missouri, decided to quit the business and Peggie took the opportunity to own a small business. Out of her shop, Peggie bought and sold antiques and sold homemade candy, even developing her own recipes for unique confections like her Butterscotch Nugget. Eventually, Peggie's candy became the primary source of revenue for the shop, even resulting in orders, which she shipped all over the United States. In 1972, Vernon suffered a massive stroke and Peggie struggled to run her business and care for her husband. In the end, Peggie's physician felt she was compromising her own health continuing

Peggie Lea Dunn in entry for Matthew Shawn Heidenreich, 21 Mar 1967; citing , reference ; FHL microfilm 2,020,782

⁵³ Interview with Laura Heidenreich conducted October 1, 2018.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

to work and care for her husband, so Peggie sold the shop and its contents, and the family bought a pink cement block house in Kissee Mills, Missouri.⁵⁵

In 1974, the family decided to move to Colorado, so Peggie could be closer to her sister, Barbara, struggling with a cancer diagnosis. The family settled in Colorado Springs and Laura attended Wasson High School. Vernon and Peggie bought a nice four-bedroom two and a half bath home with fully finished basement on Clarkson Street. In 1976, due to Vernon and Peggie's inability to manage their finances, the family filed for bankruptcy, deciding to keep the home in Kissee Mills because Peggie's mother was currently living in the home. The family moved to an apartment complex where their daughter Linda also lived with her two children. Since they did not want to hear the noise of children, Peggie and Vernon rented two one-bedroom apartments across the hall from each other in the adults only building, one for them, and one for their daughter who was finishing her senior year in high school.⁵⁶

The following year, Linda had some difficulty with social services, and Peggie and Vernon sent Linda and her two children to Missouri to prevent the removal of Linda's children. When they spoke with social services, made it clear the instant Linda returned to Colorado, the intent was to remove the children and place them in foster care with no guarantees of placement. Social services claimed that if a family member were willing to take permanent custody of the

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

children, social services would leave the situation alone. Vernon and Peggie obtained legal representation to aid them in their decision. Meanwhile, Linda called her parents saying her grandmother was trying to convert her to the Assembly of God Church and she just wanted to return to Colorado. According to Laura, Linda returned to Colorado on the date of her high school graduation forcing Peggie and Vernon to act at once, almost having to miss their daughter's graduation ceremony.⁵⁷

Shortly after Linda's return, Vernon and Peggie began the process of adopting their two granddaughters and in February of 1978, the girls were officially Peggie and Vernon's children. While Linda would try to undercut their authority several times while the girls were growing up, including informing her oldest daughter at the age of seven that she had been adopted, Peggie and Vernon tried to give their granddaughters the best upbringing they could provide.⁵⁸

After the adoption, Vernon went through a period of wanderlust, moving his family several times between 1978 and 1991. Peggie would pack the house and move to the next home. It was a running joke in the family that the house had not fully been unpacked since 1965. In 1991, Peggie had found a home on Fairplay Street in Bolivar, Missouri in which she fell in love and finally stood up to her husband saying she would not move again, no matter what he said.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Personal knowledge of author Katrina Altenreid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

In 1982, while Peggie's mother was living in the pink house in Kisse Mills, Missouri, Ardith stopped making house payments, a condition that she agreed to live in the house. Peggie and Vernon had decided to move back into the pink house to keep from losing it, when Peggie and her daughter Linda came to force Ardith to leave the house, Ardith had already arranged for a neighbor to call the sheriff, who came and arrested Peggie and Linda. It would be eight years before Peggie would visit or speak with her mother again.⁶⁰

In 1990, Peggie was told her mother was remarried and in an unpleasant situation. Ardith's husband (her eighth) had forced her to move to a rural home near the Lake of the Ozarks. Her husband, Fred Cunningham, suffered from kidney disease. Peggie came in and began to help her mother. In 1991, Fred passed away and Peggie quickly moved her mother in with the family, and tried to provide care, but again, Peggie's health became compromised and she moved her mother to a nursing facility, where Ardith would remain until her death in August of 1993.⁶¹

In the winter of 1993, Peggie's twenty-year-old washer finally went out, Vernon suggested buying a new set, but Peggie said the dryer still worked, and there was no need to waste the money. In the summer of 1994, the dryer caught the house in fire; luckily, a neighbor noticed the smoke and called 911 then entered the house to rescue Peggie who had been overwhelmed by the smoke. The house was uninhabitable for a year, so Peggie and Vernon lived in the Marriot

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

Residence in Springfield, Missouri. While there, Peggie fell down a flight of stairs and broke her humorous bone, which needed surgery. After six weeks, the bone had failed to heal. Doctors diagnosed her with osteoporosis. By 1998, Peggie's bones were so brittle; Peggie went to a nursing home in Bolivar, Missouri.⁶²

In 1999, an individual giving Peggie a bath discovered a lump in her breast; Peggie decided to take no action. That same year another person giving Peggie a bath accidentally broke her arm while lifting it to clean under the arm. In August of 2000, Peggie went to the hospital where the doctor said she had once again quit producing blood. There was no sign as to the cause, when asked if blood transfusions would improve Peggie's condition, the doctor said that transfusions would be necessary every ten to fourteen days, and this would only extend her life six months at the longest and there would be no improvement to her condition. Linda and Laura decided to take no action and the medical staff placed Peggie on hospice and gave her two weeks to live. She lasted until September 26, 2002 when she finally passed. Her beloved husband's final words to her were, "You've been a good wife and good mother, it's time to go home to see your babies and you still have the prettiest green eyes I have ever seen."⁶³

Her funeral service flowed with yellow roses because Vernon had called her his Yellow Rose of Texas (usually following by singing the song off key). Her services were at Sacred Heart Roman Catholic

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

Church, officiated by Reverend J. Patrick Weismann. Peggie's remains are located at St. Wenceslaus Cemetery in Brighton, Missouri. She lies next to her husband, Vernon, who died shortly after.⁶⁴

Katrina's paternal grandfather, **Vernon Alexander Heidenreich (1928-2002)** was born to **Alexander Heidenreich (1885-?)** and **Katherine Elizabeth Gammal (1887-?)** on May 11, 1928 in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. He was the second child of his father, the fifth for his mother and the youngest in the family. He had three older sisters, two half-sisters, Margaret, and Leona, whom he never knew due to her death at the age of three, and a full sister named Caroline, and one older half-brother named Harold.

The stock market crash of 1929 which devastated the United States affected Vernon's family. The 1930 census shows the family living in Flint, Michigan. While in Flint, Alexander's parents both worked manufacturing jobs with Alexander becoming active in the local United Auto Workers Union.⁶⁵

At an early age, Vernon's father instructed his son to get a job and Vernon became a paper boy. By thirteen, Vernon kept up his paper route and swept and mopped a restaurant in the mornings and evenings. By fifteen, Vernon was working as an usher at a local movie theater. All this time, Vernon would bring home his pay to his father who would

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ "United States Census, 1930," database with images, <i>FamilySearch</i> (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:XQYV-QGD> : accessed 13 September 2018), Vernon A Heidenreich in household of Alexander Heidenreich, Flint, Genesee, Michigan, United States; citing enumeration district (ED) ED 66, sheet 10A, line 3, family 227, NARA microfilm publication T626 (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 2002), roll 986; FHL microfilm 2,340,721.

then give him a small allowance based on how well he had done his chores at home.⁶⁶

At home, the Heidenreich family primarily spoke German, this made school difficult for Vernon who struggled with his studies, especially in Grammar and Mathematics. In the third grade he spent much of the year suffering from various childhood illnesses and was forced to repeat third grade.⁶⁷

While in high school Vernon took part in football and track. He ended up going with the track team to the state competitions and was awarded a scholarship to college. His father, who valued hard work over education, refused to help with the rest of the expenses for college and after graduating in 1947, Vernon went to work in the car factories with his father.⁶⁸

Soon, Vernon found he was not happy with his work and enlisted in the Army Air Corps, with hopes of becoming either a pilot or an airplane mechanic. These two dreams would never be realized because Vernon was colorblind. At first, Vernon was an Architecture Specialist, however, his bad temper caused trouble and he was given the choice of losing rank or changing jobs to personnel. He chose the latter and his primary job for the rest of his military career. Later, when the Army Air Corps decided to become the United States Air Force, Vernon decided to join the newly formed military branch.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ Personal knowledge of author Katrina Altenreid.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

After enlisting, Vernon married his high school sweetheart, Beverly. Their union produced one child, a son he called Michael Jerome after his best friend from high school and his best friend at the time of his son's birth. Shortly after the birth of his son, Vernon received orders deploying him to Korea and Japan. While in Korea, Beverly sent Vernon a letter saying she and his best friend, Jerome, had an affair and she wanted a divorce. Vernon was devastated, but agreed, after returning to the United States, he and his wife divorced on the grounds of adultery on her part, despite his infidelity with his future wife Peggie and an unknown woman in Korea.⁷⁰

After his divorce, Vernon married **Peggie Lea Dunn (1930-2000)**. They began a life together in San Antonio, Texas. Their relationship produced four children, two daughters, Linda and Laura, and two sons, Stephan and Matthew.⁷¹

While stationed in Texas, Vernon rose to the rank of Sargent, and worked in personnel and temporarily as a Drill Instructor. He obtained the highest rank possible for a Non-Commissioned Officer on several occasions, but his bad temper often got the better of him and many times lead to demotions.⁷²

In the early 1960's, America was in the middle of the Cold War and Vernon had a talent for cracking codes and spoke fluent German, these skills granted him the opportunity to hold a position in Over

⁷⁰ Vernon would constantly tell his family to expect a Korean man to visit claiming to be his son. This led the family to assume Vernon had been unfaithful to his wife while stationed in Korea; Personal Interview with Laura Heidenreich. Personal knowledge of author Katrina Altenreid.

⁷¹ Personal knowledge of author Katrina Altenreid.

⁷² Interview with Laura Heidenreich conducted October 1, 2018.

Seas Intelligence (OSI). He was stationed in Germany near the Eastern bloc. Since base housing was full, he went to Germany alone, leaving Peggie and his two children in Joplin, Missouri. The plan was to wait for an apartment to open on base and then his family could join him. Vernon got lonely, and after a few months, he decided to rent an apartment in the village outside the base and sent for his family. By December of 1961, the family reunited and were able to spend Christmas together.⁷³

While Vernon was stationed in Germany, his ex-wife, Beverly, who was now married to his ex-best friend Jerome, convinced Vernon that his son was unhappy and wished for his stepfather to adopt him. Vernon would grow to regret this decision, but he signed papers allowing his ex-wife and her husband to adopt Michael. Michael would resent his father, believing his father did this because he did not want him.⁷⁴

The Heidenreich family enjoyed their time in Germany. On weekends they would visit various points of interest including castles, landmarks and cultural sites. In 1962, Vernon's father suffered a major stroke, his sister asked him to return to the states, but Vernon was enjoying his work in Germany. Caroline insisted, and arranged for the American Red Cross to get Vernon re assigned to his home state of Michigan, claiming he was the only son of his ailing father and was needed at home. Vernon was angry at his sister, but followed orders and was stationed in Detroit, Michigan then later moved to a top secret base in Alpena Michigan. There he and Peggie bought a home on

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Personal knowledge of author Katrina Altenreid.

120 acres of wooded land. In 1966, Vernon got orders saying his flight would be deploying to Vietnam sometime in the next six months. Before his deployment, Vernon suffered a massive heart attack, which left him unavailable for worldwide assignment. The military needed men to deploy to Vietnam, so they asked Vernon to retire early.⁷⁵

The family moved to Joplin Missouri where Vernon took advantage of the GI Bill and attended college at Missouri Southern State College. He majored in Secondary Education with emphasis on History, Art and Special Education. In the Spring of 1972, he was nine hours from his degree. He had a job offer from Hollister High School to teach Art, History and Remedial Reading, when he suffered a major stroke.⁷⁶

He was rushed to Whitman Air Force Base and was sent home by ambulance a few weeks later. The Ambulance drivers stayed in Hollister, where his wife owned an antique shop, fearing they would be needed to transport a body to the hospital. Vernon's family was told he would die in a few weeks.⁷⁷

Vernon defied the odds, and was soon up and walking around. After Peggie gave up the antique shop, the family moved to Kisse Mills Missouri, then to Colorado Springs, Colorado. Vernon's poor financial handling caused the family to file for bankruptcy, and they were forced to move to an apartment complex.⁷⁸

⁷⁵ Interview with Laura Heidenreich.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

Vernon found retirement enjoyable, but Peggie often grew bored and frustrated with Vernon. She had convinced a doctor to periodically admit Vernon to the hospital, so she could get a break from him. While Vernon was in the hospital, Peggie and her sister Barbara would go out, which would anger Vernon. In 1977, as his daughter Laura was getting ready to leave for college, Vernon confided to Laura, that when she left home, he was going to file for divorce. Before this could happen, his daughter Linda ran into trouble with social services, which needed Vernon and Peggie to take custody of their two granddaughter, Katrina and Selene. Vernon had viewed retirement differently, but his sense of honor and duty compelled him to raise his grandchildren.⁷⁹

Vernon's constant wonder lust and poor financial planning caused the family to move from home to home, moving from Colorado Springs, to Cripple Creek, then to Kisse Mill, Missouri. From Kisse Mill, the family moved to Galena, Missouri, then back to Kisse Mill. In 1980, Vernon moved the family to Protem, wanting a quiet county home, however, the home turned out to be in bad shape, and the family moved to Kimberling City. Financial problems forced the family to move to Springfield, Missouri. They lived in three different homes before moving to Eudora, Missouri. Vernon, growing tired of moving, stayed in Eudora from December of 1984 until December of 1987, when he moved the family to Bolivar.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ Interview with Laura Heidenreich; Personal knowledge of Author, Katrina Altenreid.

⁸⁰ Personal knowledge of author Katrina Altenreid.

Vernon lived in his own home until his health forced his daughters to place him in a nursing home. While in the nursing home, his health improved, and he was able to move to an Assisted Living Apartment. While in the apartment, his wife Peggie died, and he took up with another resident named Francis. He lived in the assisted living apartments until his health worsened. In February of 2002, Vernon went into the hospital, where he remained until April. On April 19, 2002, Vernon was transferred to Maranantha Village in Springfield, Missouri. This facility was chosen because his grandson-in-law, Cecil, worked there as an aid and could keep an eye on him. At 9:00 PM on April 20, Vernon's daughter received a call from a nurse verifying Vernon's status as a no-code. When Linda asked why the nurse was calling, the nurse told Linda Vernon's condition had worsened and he would not last the night.⁸¹

Shortly after midnight, surrounded by family, Vernon passed away. His funeral was two days later, and he is buried next to Peggie at the St. Wenceslaus Cemetery in Brighton Missouri.⁸²

Katrina's paternal grandmother, **Willa Lea McAdams (1929-)** was born January 9, 1929 at the family home in Springfield, Missouri to **John Owen McAdams (1894-1984)** and **Veda Rhetta Ray (1898-1988)**. She was the youngest of her parents mutual four children. When she was young her parents divorced and both remarried. Willa experience abuse at the hands of her step-father. She tried to seek refuge with her father and

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid.

his new wife but was told there was no room for her. Feeling he had abandoned her, she never forgave him.⁸³

The 1930 United States Census shows Willa living with her parents in Springfield, Missouri. The 1940 Census lists her living in the home of her mother and step-father.⁸⁴

At the age of twelve, Willa got two jobs, one as a waitress at a restaurant and one at local movie theater and rented her own apartment to escape her home situation. Though she had an elevated level of intelligence, she was forced to leave school, so she could support herself financially. When she was fifteen, her sister moved in to the apartment as well. ⁸⁵

While she was working as a waitress, she met **Homer Eugene Morris 1921-2006)**. The pair married and produced three children, Lelah, Michael, and Keith. Due to her experiences, Willa had difficulty taking care of her family. She once told her granddaughter, Katrina that she did not want children, she knew she would be a bad mother.⁸⁶

⁸³ Interview with Lelah Marie Smith.

⁸⁴ United States Census, 1930," database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:XHY-558> : accessed 21 November 2018), Willa Lee Mcadams in household of John O Mcadams, Campbell, Greene, Missouri, United States; citing enumeration district (ED) ED 42, sheet 4A, line 33, family 78, NARA microfilm publication T626 (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 2002), roll 1189; FHL microfilm 2,340,924. "United States Census, 1940," database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:K7QX-F6S> : 13 March 2018), Willa Lea Mcadam in household of John W Willbanks, North Campbell Township, Greene, Greene, Missouri, United States; citing enumeration district (ED) 39-60, sheet 2B, line 70, family 47, Sixteenth Census of the United States, 1940, NARA digital publication T627. Records of the Bureau of the Census, 1790 - 2007, RG 29. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 2012, roll 2109.

⁸⁵ Interview with Lelah Marie Smith.

⁸⁶ Interview with Lelah Marie Smith. Personal knowledge of author Katrina Altenreid.

Over the years, Willa worked in the food service industry, even owning a few restaurants. In 1974, while she was employed with a McDonald's as a French fry cook, she competed in the McDonald's All-American Crew Member contest and was chosen to go to the regional competition in Chicago. According to her daughter, Lelah, she won that competition and went on to the national competition where she placed second in the frying competition.⁸⁷

In 1991, after an altercation, Willa and Homer divorced. Willa moved to a small home in Strafford, Missouri where she currently lives. She is retired and lives a quiet life.⁸⁸

Katrina's paternal grandfather, **Homer Eugene Morris (1921-2006)** was born March 11, 1921 at the family home in Marshfield, Missouri to **Homer Shelby Morris (1891-1967)** and **Rockey Ellen Bumgarner (1894-1962)**. He was raised at the family's farm, helping with the various chores and work. He once told his granddaughter, Katrina, he was quite popular with the girls at his school because he had a horse to ride to school and often would give a young lady a ride home on his horse.⁸⁹

Because his family was financially stable, he was able to graduate with a high school diploma. After high school he worked as a diesel mechanic at a local shop as well as helping out on his parent's farm.⁹⁰

While eating at a restaurant he met Willa and the pair married in the late 1940's. They produced three children, Lelah, Michael, and

⁸⁷ Interview with Lelah Marie Smith. Business Briefs, Springfield News Leader, June, 1974.

⁸⁸ Personal knowledge of author Katrina Altenreid.

⁸⁹ Interview with Lelah Marie Smith. Personal knowledge of author Katrina Altenreid.

⁹⁰ Interview with Lelah Marie Smith.

Keith. They spent much of their marriage living in Springfield, Missouri.⁹¹

Homer loved to work with wood producing items he would give to friends and family. He also enjoyed pheasant hunting and bred and raised hunting dogs. He was also known for his sense of humor. When his granddaughter, Katrina, was born he began a running joke of calling her Latrine.⁹²

In 1991, Homer and Willa divorced. Homer kept the family home and Willa moved to Strafford, Missouri. In 2001, Homer's health declined, and he was placed in a nursing facility in Springfield. In March of 2006, Homer passed away. He is buried in Springfield, Missouri.⁹³

GENERATION FOUR

Ala1a. Ardith Vivian Simmons (1911-1993)

Ala1b. Merle Everett Dunn (1906-1969)

Ala2a. Katherine Elizabeth Gammal (1887- ?)

Ala2b. Alexander Heidenreich (1885- ?)

Alb1a. Veda Rhetta Ray (1898-1988)

Alb1b. John Owen McAdams (1894-1984)

⁹¹ Personal knowledge of author Katrina Altenreid.

⁹² Interview with Lelah Marie Smith. Personal knowledge of author Katrina Altenreid.

⁹³ Personal knowledge of author Katrina Altenreid.

A1b2a. Rocky Ellen Bumgarner (1891-1967)

A1b2b. Homer Shelby Morris (1894-1962)

Peggie's mother, **Ardith Vivian Simmons** was born January 11, 1911 in Bloomington Illinois to **Grover Cleveland Simmons (1885-1957)** and **Flossie Mae Herrick (1890-1961)**. She was the first of the couples six children. She had four younger sisters, Gladys, Aileen, Gretchen, and Doris, and one younger brother, Wilson.

Not much is known about Ardith's childhood as she would never talk about growing up in South Dakota. The 1920 US Census and the 1925 South Dakota State Census both show Ardith residing in Murdo, South Dakota in the household of her parents along with several siblings. A school record from 1920 shows Ardith registered at the local public school.⁹⁴

Ardith married at the age of 16 to 21-year-old **Merle Everett Dunn (1905-1969)**. She moved with him to his parent's farm in Naponee,

⁹⁴ "United States Census, 1920," database with images, <i>FamilySearch</i> (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:M6NT-T1S> : accessed 15 November 2018), Ardith V Simmons in household of Grover C Simmons, Murdo, Jones, South Dakota, United States; citing ED 101, sheet 1B, line 65, family 18, NARA microfilm publication T625 (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1992), roll 1721; FHL microfilm 1,821,721: "South Dakota State Census, 1925," database with images, <i>FamilySearch</i> (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:MM4C-BJ1> : 5 August 2017), Ardeth Simmons; citing 731, State Historical Society, Pierre; FHL microfilm 2,368,896.; "South Dakota, School Records, 1879-1970," database with images, <i>FamilySearch</i> (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QK7S-R58G> : accessed 15 November 2018), Ardith Simmons, 1920; citing School enrollment, Murdo, Jerauld, South Dakota, United States, State Historical Society, Pierre; FHL microfilm .

Nebraska where she gave birth to her first child, a son she called Robert, at the family farm. Ardith and Merle produced three other children, two daughters, Peggie, and Barbara, and one son, Donald. The 1930 census shows Ardith and her husband and son in Scotts Bluff, Nebraska. Ardith and Merle divorced sometime before December 1935. A marriage record from Adams County, Colorado shows Ardith getting married to A.J.Dunigan ins December of 1935. Furthermore, the 1940 census shows Ardith living in Denver, Colorado with Anthony Dunigan , two of her children, Peggie and Donald, and a nephew, Daniel Simmons. Peggie would tell a story about her cousin Danny, who was born out of wedlock to her Aunt Gretchen. She talked about Danny leaving to be adopted by a third party and an incident where she saw him with his adopted mother, claimed him as her cousin, only to be told he was not her cousin.⁹⁵

⁹⁵"United States Census, 1930," database with images, <i>FamilySearch</i> (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:XQ2X-CT1> : accessed 15 November 2018), Ardith V Dunn in household of Merle E Dunn, Scotts Bluff, Scotts Bluff, Nebraska, United States; citing enumeration district (ED) ED 27, sheet 5B, line 51, family 125, NARA microfilm publication T626 (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 2002), roll 1293; FHL microfilm 2,341,028"Colorado Statewide Marriage Index, 1853-2006," database with images, <i>FamilySearch</i> (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:KNQS-KMQ> : 10 December 2017), A J Dunigan and Ardith Dunn, 04 Dec 1935, Adams City, Adams, Colorado, United States; citing no. 1165, State Archives, Denver; FHL microfilm 1,690,071, "United States Census, 1940," database with images, <i>FamilySearch</i> (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:VRDV-XLH> : 23 August 2018), Ardith Dunnigan in household of Anthony Dunnigan, Tract 30, Denver, Election District G, Denver, Colorado, United States; citing enumeration district (ED) 16-87, sheet 11B, line 53, family 277, Sixteenth Census of the United States, 1940, NARA digital publication T627. Records of the Bureau of the Census, 1790 - 2007, RG 29. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 2012, roll 486

Most of Ardith's life is unknown. Family stories have her marrying anywhere from six to eight times total. According to her granddaughter, Laura Heidenreich, Ardith did remarry her first husband, Merle and the couple lived in Joplin Missouri.⁹⁶

Due to her lifestyle, Ardith had a strained relationship with all four of her children. Her ex mother-in-law kept her away from her oldest and youngest children, and when life got hard, Ardith would abandon Peggie and Donald at a local orphanage, at which point they would end up back with her ex-in-laws.⁹⁷

As an adult, Ardith was extremely prejudice against various groups of individuals. Her sister, Gladys married a Native American, Ardith told her granddaughter, Linda, the family did not accept Gladys or her children. When her daughter Peggie met and married the son of Eastern European Immigrants, she showed her disapproval and tried to stop the wedding, however, Peggie became pregnant and due to the times, there was no choice in the matter. In the mid 1950's, Ardith's son, Donald, married a Japanese woman and they produced four children, Ardith claimed these grandchildren, but made negative comments about them and rarely displayed photos or talked about them. Once, while Katrina was visiting with Ardith, she found a photo of Donald's children and asked about them, Ardith said, "Oh, you know those little mixed babies, they start out cute, but get ugly real fast." These attitudes proved to further alienate Ardith's children.⁹⁸

⁹⁶ Interview with Laura Heidenreich conducted October 1, 2018.

⁹⁷ Interview with Laura Heidenreich conducted October 1, 2018.

⁹⁸ Personal Knowledge of Author, Katrina Altenreid.

At the end of her life, only Peggie was on good terms with Ardith. Her daughter Barbara passed away in 1986, and her two sons did not wish to be close to their mother for assorted reasons.⁹⁹

In 1991, Ardith's final husband, a man named Fred Cunningham, passed away. Soon after Ardith's health began to decline. Peggie tried to care for her mother, but it proved to be too much. She placed Ardith in a nursing home in Bolivar, Missouri. In October of 1993, Ardith passed away of natural causes. Her funeral was held at a local funeral home. Per her wishes, she was cremated, her remains are in the custody of her great-granddaughter, Katrina Altenreid.¹⁰⁰

Peggie's father, **Merle Everett Dunn (1905-1969)** was born March 20, 1905 to **William Henry Dunn (1867-1948)** and **Kata Eva Gardner (1872-1956)** in Bloomington, Nebraska. He was raised at his parent's farm in Naponee, Nebraska. Little is known about his childhood. It is known he married Ardith Simmons at the age of 21. They produced four children. Before December of 1925, Merle divorced Ardith.¹⁰¹

Merle's daughter, Barbara convinced him his former wife, Ardith, had changed and he agreed to remarry her. The couple lived in Joplin, Missouri where he was an advertising sales representative for a local radio station.¹⁰²

⁹⁹ Personal Knowledge of Author, Katrina Altenreid.

¹⁰⁰ Personal Knowledge of Author, Katrina Altenreid.

¹⁰¹ United States Census, 1910," database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:ML48-TTW> : accessed 21 November 2018), Merle E Dunn in household of William H Dunn, Oxford, Furnas, Nebraska, United States; citing enumeration district (ED) ED 84, sheet 5A, family 88, NARA microfilm publication T624 (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1982), roll 846; FHL microfilm 1,374,859.

¹⁰² Interview with Laura Heidenreich conducted October 1, 2018.

His granddaughter, Laura, remembers Merle as a fun and loving grandfather. She said the only photo of her displayed at her grandparent's home was a five by seven on her grandfather's desk. She said Merle enjoyed various games, especially Chess and Bridge, and loved to play practical jokes on people. Once he "took her nose" and placed it in his pocket. He then went to work, later, a call from home informed him his beloved granddaughter thought he had genuinely taken her nose to work and he promptly returned home and put her nose back. She also recalled an Easter in which he had "caught the Easter Bunny." When Laura and her sister, Linda arrived at his home they found he had an actual rabbit in a cage.¹⁰³

Due to a long-term smoking habit, Merle suffered from COPD at the end of his life. In March of 1969, Merle passed away suddenly. His funeral services were ironically held on April 1, the practical joker's favorite holiday. Laura said her sister, Linda assumed this was just another one of Grandpa's jokes and waited the entire service for him to sit up and say, "I'm not dead, April fools!" Merle was cremated after the ceremony and his ashes were given to his oldest son, Robert. Robert passed away in 2003, it is unknown where Merle's remains are located at this time.¹⁰⁴

Vernon's mother, **Katherine Elizabeth Gammal (1887-)**, was born ...while her family was making the journey to the United States. Several records give varying places of birth with one saying she was born in Germany and another saying she was born in Russia. According to family

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Interview with Laura Heidenreich. Personal knowledge of author Katrina Heidenreich.

stories, Katherine and her family arrived in the United States via Canada.

She was fondly known as Bertha to friends and family. Not much is known about her life while traveling to the United States. The 1910 United States Census for Colorado shows Katherine living with her parents in North Delta, Colorado. This census lists her immigration year as 1903.¹⁰⁵

According to marriage records from Colorado, Katherine married her first husband, John Dazey, in January of 1916. She and John produced three children, Margaret, Harold, and Leona. According to the 1920 Federal Census, she was living with John and her two children, Margaret and Harold in Brush, Colorado.¹⁰⁶

Her third child, Leona was born in May of 1922, that August, John died. He is buried in Forth Morgan, Colorado. The following July,

¹⁰⁵ United States Census, 1910," database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:MKWP-SB7> : accessed 21 November 2018), Bertha Gammal in household of Philip Gammal, North Delta, Delta, Colorado, United States; citing enumeration district (ED) ED 26, sheet 2B, family 53, NARA microfilm publication T624 (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1982), roll 114; FHL microfilm 1,374,127.

¹⁰⁶Colorado Statewide Marriage Index, 1853-2006," database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:KNQ9-J1R> : 10 December 2017), John O Dazey and Katherine B Gammel, 18 Jan 1916, Delta, Delta, Colorado, United States; citing no. 2035, State Archives, Denver; FHL microfilm 1,690,068. United States Census, 1920," database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:MXLW-YSW> : accessed 21 November 2018), John O Dazey, Brush, Morgan, Colorado, United States; citing ED 208, sheet 13A, line 40, family 259, NARA microfilm publication T625 (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1992), roll 168; FHL microfilm 1,820,168.

Leona died, according to Katrina's grandfather, Vernon, she drowned in an irrigation ditch.¹⁰⁷

Sometime between 1922 and 1925 Katherine remarried to Alexander Heidenreich, an immigrant from Russia whom her father had introduced to her. This union produced two more children, Caroline in 1925 and Vernon in 1928.¹⁰⁸

Vernon described his mother as a firm but loving disciplinarian. He would tell stories about her left ring finger that was permanently bent at the middle knuckle. The joint was swollen, and she would use this joint as a weapon, often thumping him on the head while she was angry with him. He also said she loved him very much and would often defend him against his father.¹⁰⁹

She worked in manufacturing until her retirement. In the early 1950's. Katherine was hospitalized for routine gall bladder surgery, upon opening her up, it was discovered she had cancer. She was closed back up and given a year. Photographs from that time period show her decline. A year after her surgery, Katherine passed away. The location of her gravesite is unknown.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ Find A Grave Index," database, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QV21-MBR1> : 13 December 2015), John Orval Dazey, 1922; Burial, Fort Morgan, Morgan, Colorado, United States of America, Riverside Cemetery; citing record ID 86699015, Find a Grave, <http://www.findagrave.com> Find A Grave Index," database, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QV22-XZ4G> : 13 December 2015), Leona May Dazey, 1923; Burial, Fort Morgan, Morgan, Colorado, United States of America, Riverside Cemetery; citing record ID 74165214, Find a Grave, <http://www.findagrave.com>.. Personal knowledge of author Katrina Altenreid.

¹⁰⁸ Personal Knowledge of Author, Katrina Altenreid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

Vernon's father, **Alexander Heidenreich (1885- ?)** was born in Messer, Russia December 16, 1885. According to family stories, his parents' names were Henry Peter Heidenreich and Christina Wooker.

He immigrated to the United States in 1916 coming into the country through Baltimore, Maryland. In the 1920's, Alexander was introduced to a widow named Katherine Elizabeth Gammal. The two married and produced two children Caroline Alice Heidenreich and Vernon Alexander Heidenreich. He helped Katherine raise her two children from her earlier marriage, Margaret and Harold. ¹¹¹

During the depression, Alexander lost the family farm in Wisconsin and the family was forced to move to Flint, Michigan where Alexander obtained employment at an automobile factory. Both the 1930 and 1940 US Census show Alexander living in Flint with his family.¹¹²

Alexander was strict parent, often resorting to physical punishment to discipline his children. This punishment often involved a beating

¹¹¹ Maryland, Baltimore Passenger Lists, 1820-1948," database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:2CST-YMV> : 15 March 2018), Alexander Heidenreich, 1913; citing Immigration, Baltimore, Baltimore, Maryland, United States, NARA microfilm publications M255, M596, and T844 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.); FHL film 2,383,484.

¹¹²United States Census, 1930," database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:XQYV-QG4> : accessed 21 November 2018), Alexander Heidenreich, Flint, Genesee, Michigan, United States; citing enumeration district (ED) ED 66, sheet 9B, line 98, family 227, NARA microfilm publication T626 (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 2002), roll 986; FHL microfilm 2,340,721 United States Census, 1940," database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:KHSR-TZM> : 16 March 2018), Alexander Heidenreich, Ward 2, Flint, Flint City, Genesee, Michigan, United States; citing enumeration district (ED) 85-24, sheet 5A, line 36, family 89, Sixteenth Census of the United States, 1940, NARA digital publication T627. Records of the Bureau of the Census, 1790 - 2007, RG 29. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 2012, roll 1892.

with his razor strap. Alexander also physical and emotionally abused his wife, Katherine. The family explained away Alexander's cruelty as his "Old World" upbringing.¹¹³

As he grew older, Alexander enjoyed large family gatherings where he visited with his children and grandchildren. His favorite grandchildren were his grandson, Michael and his granddaughter, Linda, mostly because they had the Heidenreich family name.¹¹⁴

In the early sixties, Alexander suffered a major stroke. Soon after he passed away. The location of his remains are unknown.¹¹⁵

Willa's mother **Veda Rhett Ray (1898-1988)** was born at the family home in Marshfield, Missouri October 24, 1898 to **James Riley Ray (1853-1931)** and **Emma Loretta Hicks (1857-1936)**. She was the youngest of her parents' children. Her father did not care for her his daughter and refused to buy even necessities for her. At an early age she endured abuse at the hands of an older brother.¹¹⁶

She married John Owen McAdams and together they had four children. After they divorced, she married John Wesley Wilbanks. Together they produced one son.¹¹⁷

When asked for a description of Veda, her granddaughter, Lelah, said she was crazy. Katrina's mother once said Veda was scary and had

¹¹³ Interview with Laura Heidenreich conducted October 1, 2018.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Interview with Lelah Marie Smith conducted November 18, 2018.

described in detail one of her births that gave Linda anxiety over her impending birth.¹¹⁸

Veda passed away in 1990 and her remains are in Marshfield, Missouri.¹¹⁹

Willa's father **John Owen McAdams (1894-1984)** was born October 24, 1894 in Chandler, Oklahoma to **Henry McAdams (1831-?)** and **Emma Gray (1873- ?)**. His mother was his father's second wife and younger than several of Henry's children. John's sibling did not care for John. The family moved to Missouri, his mother was pregnant again, but died in childbirth. Henry was unable to care for his child and sent him to live with his siblings in Oklahoma. There his siblings were cruel to him forcing him to walk to Missouri. While on his trip he was sitting on a fence crying and a concerned individual asked him why he was upset. He told this individual his story and the individual took him in and finished raising him.¹²⁰

He met and married Veda Ray and they produced four children, two sons and two daughters. John and Veda divorced and John remarried Maude Green.

John passed away December of 1984 in Springfield, Missouri. His remains are located at White Chapel Cemetery in Springfield.¹²¹

¹¹⁸ Interview with Lelah Marie Smith. Personal knowledge of author, Katrina Altenreid.

¹¹⁹ Interview with Lelah Marie Smith.

¹²⁰ Interview with Lelah Marie Smith,

¹²¹ Find A Grave Index," database, FamilySearch (https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QVK6-W3QQ : 15 March 2016), John Owen McAdams, 1984; Burial, Springfield, Greene, Missouri, United States of America, White Chapel Memorial Gardens; citing record ID 44819130, Find a Grave, http://www.findagrave.com.

Homer's mother **Rockey Ellen Bumgarner (1894-1962)** was born at the family home in Webster County, Missouri on December 16, 1894 to **Absalom Mali chai Bumgarner (1846-1925)** and **Mary Etta Crawley (1869-1933)**. Her father was a successful bank robber. Mary was his third wife. According to Rockey's granddaughter, Lelah, Mary was quite unpleasant and would often order her children about and yell at them. Despite her mother's harsh behavior, Rockey grew up to be a kind and gentle person.¹²²

According to Lelah, Rockey would help those in need and loved to cook and sew. She would make doll clothes for friends and family and won blue ribbons at county fairs for her baking.¹²³

She married Homer Shelby Morris and they produced four children. The family lived on a farm in Webster County, Missouri and spent their life taking care of their property. Her brother, Elton "Jack Bumgarner, was quite the opposite of his sister. He and a nephew decided to rob a bank in Niangua, Missouri in 1927. The men were later apprehended. Elton managed to arrange a change of venue and was found not guilty of all charges. Later, Lelah would hear him bragging about getting away with the robbery.¹²⁴

Rockey passed away April 18, 1962 in a retirement home in Springfield, Missouri. She is buried in Webster county. According to Lelah, she is still fondly remembered and talked about by everyone who knew her or know of her.¹²⁵

¹²² Interview with Lelah Marie Morris.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ "Arrest Third Mand in Niangua Hold Up; Find Part of the Loot," Springfield News Leader, 1928. Interview with Lelah Marie Smith.

¹²⁵¹²⁵ Interview with Lelah Marie Smith,

Homer's father **Homer Shelby Morris (1891-1967)** was born at the family home in Webster County, Missouri October 2, 1891 to **John Shelby Morris (1846-1927)** and **Elizabeth Jane Lacey (1858-1893)**.

He spent his entire life in Webster County Missouri. After marrying Rockey Bumgarner, the couple started a life on land left to Rockey by her father. While digging for a pond allegedly, Homer found money his father in law had obtained robbing banks. He used the money to put in electricity, indoor plumbing, and he built a new milk barn.¹²⁶

After he found the money, his brother in law forced him off his land, threatening to kill him if necessary. The couple relocated to land Homer was left by his parents.¹²⁷

Homer had a natural ability with electrical work. His granddaughter, Lelah, said he had bought an electric radio and would bring in the battery from the tractor to power the radio at night. He taught his grandson Michael about working with electricity, inspiring him to go into technical field at an adult.

Homer passed away in 1967 in Webster County. He is buried in Webster County next to his wife.¹²⁸

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ibid.