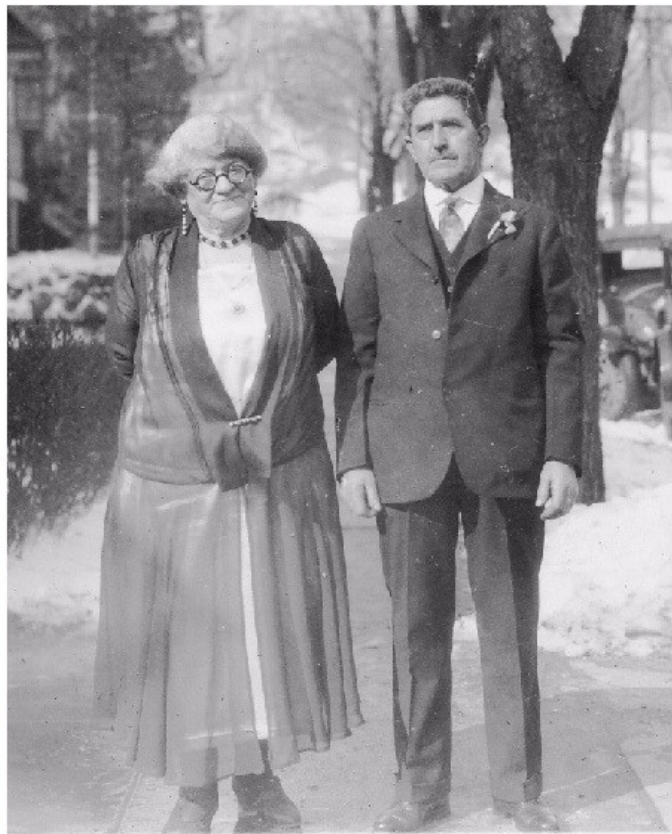
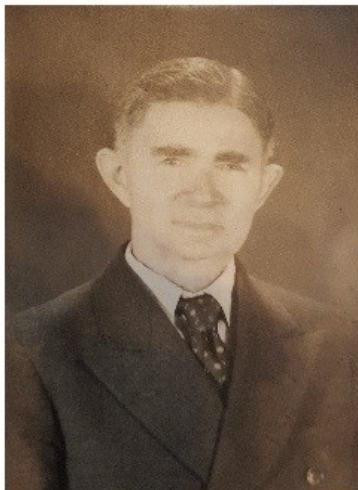


Von Der Linn - Heil Family History



Karen Story

Von Der Linn-Heil Family History

Karen Story

nwnative.us

Fourth Edition

May 2024

Dedicated to my father
James Arthur Von Der Linn
1936-2021

Although his father died when Jim was 7, Jim figured out all on his own how to be a supportive and loving father to his five children.

I miss you, Dad

Cover photos

Left: Grace and Lewis Heil

Right: Barbara and Frank Von Der Linn

Changes to Fourth Edition, May 2024

Update the meaning of the Von Der Linn name.

Arthur was known as "Von".

Add Robert Paddock, Plymouth colonist, Ethel's ancestor.

Add info about Clausen from my trip to Germany in 2023.

Added a few new things about McNamara descendants.

Changes to Third Edition, Oct. 2022

Correction: only four of Frank and Barbara's kids have living descendants

Lewis Heil and Van Ostrand cemetery plot info

New tree captures for Virginia Heil, Loretta Fisher, John VDL (removed grandkids for consistency),

Loretta Meissner, Lester Heil

Fisher family stories

More info about Eleanor VDL McNamara

New Frank VDL info (correct birth year, add photos, military service)

New info about Donald Meissner (diabetic, never married)

Add info about Burg Linn, Krefeld, and Otto Linn

Definition of 1st, 2nd, 3rd cousins

Gerry McNamara sent postcards to his aunt Loretta

Bielmans (Lewis Heil ancestors)

Grave photo and cemetery info for Felix Arner

Various minor edits

John Anthony VDL died 2022

P 58: There is no headstone for Grace and Lewis Heil

Shorten TOC

p. 78 corrected photo of Jessica Mahlow

Changes to Second Edition, May 2022

Pg 3, Introduction: This book also contains information about Frank's brothers Nicholas and Anthony and their descendants. [This info has always been there, but wasn't mentioned in the introduction.]

Pg 26: Added photos of the Epps children (Frank's daughter Eleanor's grandchildren.)

Added death dates for James VDL, Eugene Marley, and Pat Conran, and removed them from list of living descendants (page 39)

Pg 69, X=77

Page 45: Added corrections from Concetta Phillipps <cfbandit@gmail.com>, a historian who contacted me: Changed Joris's birth date to be his christening date. (His christening is listed under his original name, in the French form of George Rapareillet. Joris is the Dutchified name for him.) Added: It's actually unclear who his mother is - there's a possibility that he was an illegitimate child, or he may have been listed as illegitimate because his parents were Protestant. The name Lodewyck appears to be a random addition through internet genealogies -- it's possible that this refers to the Lodewyck District, a location near where Elizabeth was from.

Page 49: Removed picture because it's the children of Garret Rapalje, pretty far removed from us.

<https://wams.nyhistory.org/settler-colonialism-and-revolution/settler-colonialism/rapalje-children/>

Page 64: Update Virginia Heil death date and descendants; removed Virginia from list of living descendants on page 75.

Page 77: Added picture of Arthur and Ethel's trailer

Page 118: Added paragraph about steerage conditions

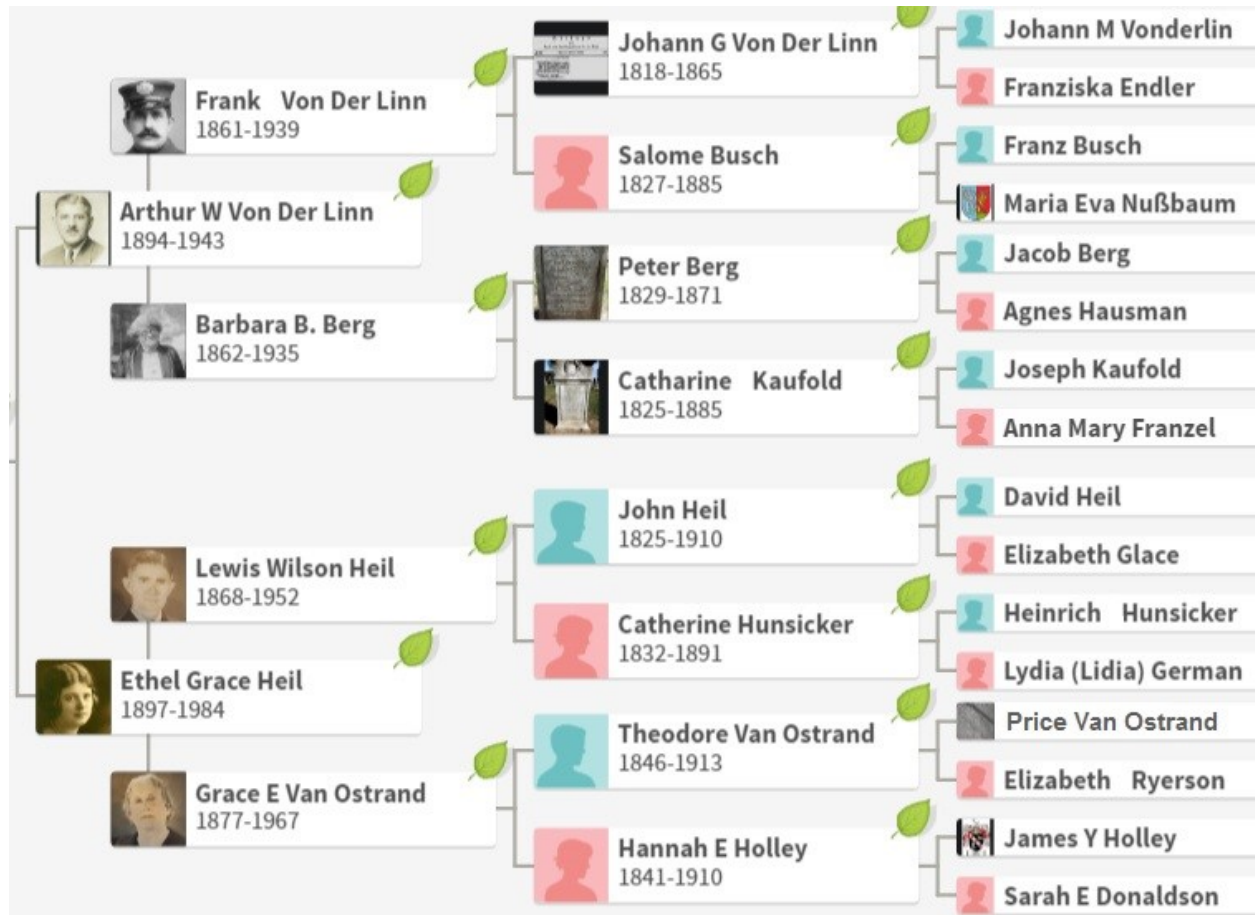
Page 115: Credited Andrew Murray

Contents

Introduction.....	3
Part 1: The Von Der Linns and Bergs	5
From Bavaria to America: The Von Der Linns and Bergs	7
Frank Von Der Linn and Barbara Berg.....	10
Children of Frank and Barbara Von Der Linn	17
Living Descendants of Frank and Barbara Von Der Linn	46
Articles about the Frank Von Der Linn family	47
Clausen, Germany	50
Von Der Linn Houses in Clausen.....	51
Clausen Municipal Records	52
Part 2: The Heils and Van Ostrands	53
From Amsterdam to America: The Van Ostrands.....	53
The Heils.....	61
Lewis and Grace Heil	70
Children of Lewis and Grace Heil.....	73
Living Descendants of Lewis and Grace Heil.....	84
Part 3: Arthur Von Der Linn and Ethel Heil.....	85
Children of Arthur and Ethel Von Der Linn	89
Part 4: Memories of Ethel.....	93
Part 5: Grandma Ethel's Recipes	105
Part 6: Descendants of Anthony & Nicholas Von Der Linn.....	119
Anthony Phillip Von Der Linn.....	121
Nicholas Von Der Linn.....	125
Addendum: What was it like to travel steerage?.....	128

Introduction

This document is primarily for the descendants of Arthur Von Der Linn and Ethel Heil, but will also be of interest to anyone who is related to Frank Von Der Linn, Barbara Berg, Lewis Heil, or Grace Van Ostrand. There is also information about Frank's brothers Nicholas and Anthony and their descendants.



Ancestors of Arthur Von Der Linn and Ethel Heil

Every human being has four grandparents, eight great grandparents, 16 great great grandparents, and so on. If you go back 10 generations we each have 1024 direct ancestors. The genealogist must draw the line somewhere! Thus this document includes only a fraction of our ancestors. I have tried to capture a subset of the available data that helps bring our family history to life. I have learned where most, but not all, of our ancestors emigrated from, and I have uncovered a treasure trove of fascinating stories.

One of my goals has been to locate all of the living descendants of Frank Von Der Linn, Barbara Berg, Lewis Heil, and Grace Van Ostrand. I think I have found all of them, but please let me know if I missed anyone. (See "Living Descendants" at the end of Parts 1 and 2 of this document.)

There is more information about some people than others. I have included what I was able to collect, which varied from person to person.

If you would like to customize this document for your immediate clan, I would be happy to send you the Word version.

I've made every effort to fact check everything included in this document, and to clearly state what is conjecture or opinion. I apologize for any mistakes or omissions, and I welcome corrections and suggestions. You can reach me at karen@nwnative.us or 425-941-3737 (text or call).

I hope this document will spark additional memories and clues for further research. It is my greatest wish that this document be available for future generations to peruse and build upon.

For additional information, including sources, specific dates, and more photos, see my genealogy website at nwnative.us/Karen/Genealogy/Genealogy.html.

Lots more info online

FamilySearch.org, the free database maintained by the Mormon church, has incredible records available, going back to hundreds of years BC. Enter the name of one of our ancestors and start clicking, and you will be amazed. I have not added all of this data to my Ancestry.com tree, because it would take a lifetime to verify and enter it all. (The data is crowd sourced, which means anyone can enter data, and anyone can modify it. It's important to verify the information before assuming it is correct.)

Acknowledgements

Thank you to the many people who shared stories, research, and photos for this document! You are too numerous to name, but you are very appreciated!

A note about names

Name spellings varied widely in old records, and may thus vary in this document. Some of the reasons for the variations are that many people were illiterate and only knew how to speak their names, church records often used the Latin version of names, census takers might misspell names, and names were modified during immigration or for political reasons. If a child died, the same name was often used for the next child of the same gender.

Family tree diagrams and symbols

The family tree diagrams in this document contain small green leaf symbols. Please ignore them. They represent "hints" in the Ancestry.com software, and have no relevance for this document. Ditto for the little pink and blue "additional tree info" symbols.

In order to fit them onto the page, some of the tree diagrams are small and hard to read; they are intended to show relationships, not details. Please ask me if you'd like to see a larger version.

Please note that some birth years are approximations, and that some of the people shown as "Living" may no longer be alive.

What is a second cousin?

Want to know if someone is your first, second, or third cousin? It's easy: Count the Gs! If you share Grandparents (one G) you are first cousins; if you share Great Grandparents (2 Gs) you are second cousins, etc.

Part 1: The Von Der Linns and Bergs

Origin and spelling of the name Von Der Linn

We have no information about the origin of the Von Der Linn name, but we're almost certainly common folk. Aristocratic German names with a "Von Der" prefix are rare; for aristocrats, "von" by itself is more common (e.g., Otto von Bismarck). "Von der" means "from the," and Linn could possibly refer to the town of Linn, now part of Krefeld, Germany. Perhaps our ancestors were serfs working as bonded peasants for Otto von Linn (whose bones from the year 1219 can be seen at Burg Linn Castle in Krefeld). Note that Otto has no living descendants, so we are definitely not descended from him. If we are from the town of Linn, one or more of our ancestors migrated 200 miles south to Petersberg, where we find our first Von Der Linn ancestor in the town record in 1718.

Michael Von Der Linn says:

Germans often moved around quite a bit. The move to Clausen would have been an easy one, both physically and socially. In general, "von der" prefixes translate to "from" or "of" a topographical location or landmark. Examples: von der Leyen = from Castle Leyen and its environs; von der Hayden = from the Hay Fields; von Essen = from (the state of) Essen; von Turnau = from (the city of) Turnau. If you translate "von der" names you will find rivers, fields, castles, towers, mountains, sites of activities, etc.

[If we lived in Linn and then left,] the name "von der Linn" makes sense. It would also explain why there are no records in Linn or Krefeld for our family: they wouldn't have appeared in the historical record as von der Linn. They may have had a different surname, or none at all. A hypothetical ancestor could have been "Johann the Tailor." Had his descendants stayed in Linn, they may have become "the Schneiders" (tailors). But since Johann moved away, he became "Johann from the place where Linn castle is."

The name Von Der Linn has also been spelled Vonderlin, Vonderlinn, and even Fonderlin (v is pronounced f in German), and is inconsistent in records and Ancestry.com trees. Living family members spell it with varying spacing and capitalization.



The charming town of Linn survived both world wars unscathed, and is a historic preservation district.



View of the tiny town of Linn from Burg Linn. The city of Krefeld is in the distance.

From Bavaria to America: The Von Der Linns and Bergs



Parents of Frank Von Der Linn and Barbara Berg

The Von Der Linn and Berg roots are in the German Rhineland, which was part of the Kingdom of Bavaria until 1918. The Bergs are from the Mannheim area, and the Von Der Linns are from the nearby towns of Petersberg and Clausen, less than 60 miles away.



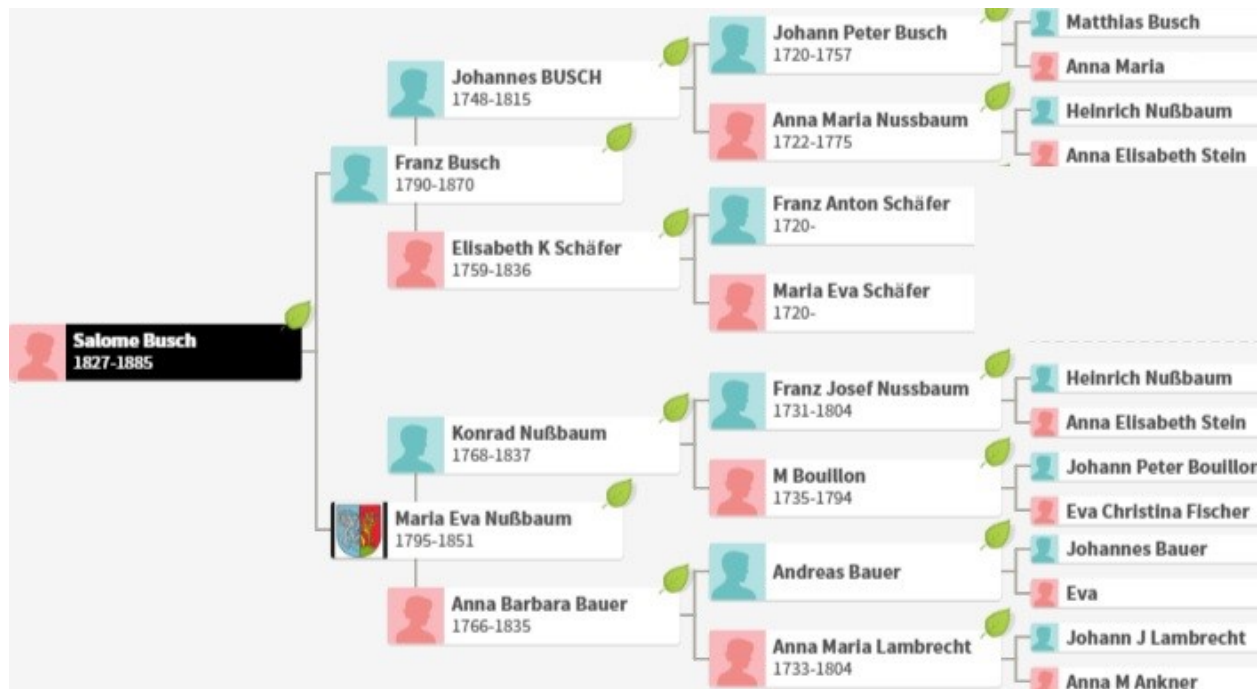
Clausen is in the German state of Rhineland-Palatinate, near the French border, 100 miles from Frankfurt

Frank Von Der Linn's parents were Johann Georg Von Der Linn and Salome Busch, who emigrated from Clausen to New York in 1852, with several small children in tow.

Barbara Berg's parents were Peter Berg, born in Mannheim, and Catherine Kaufold, born in nearby Weitersweiler. They were married in New York in 1852. Their immigration dates are unknown.

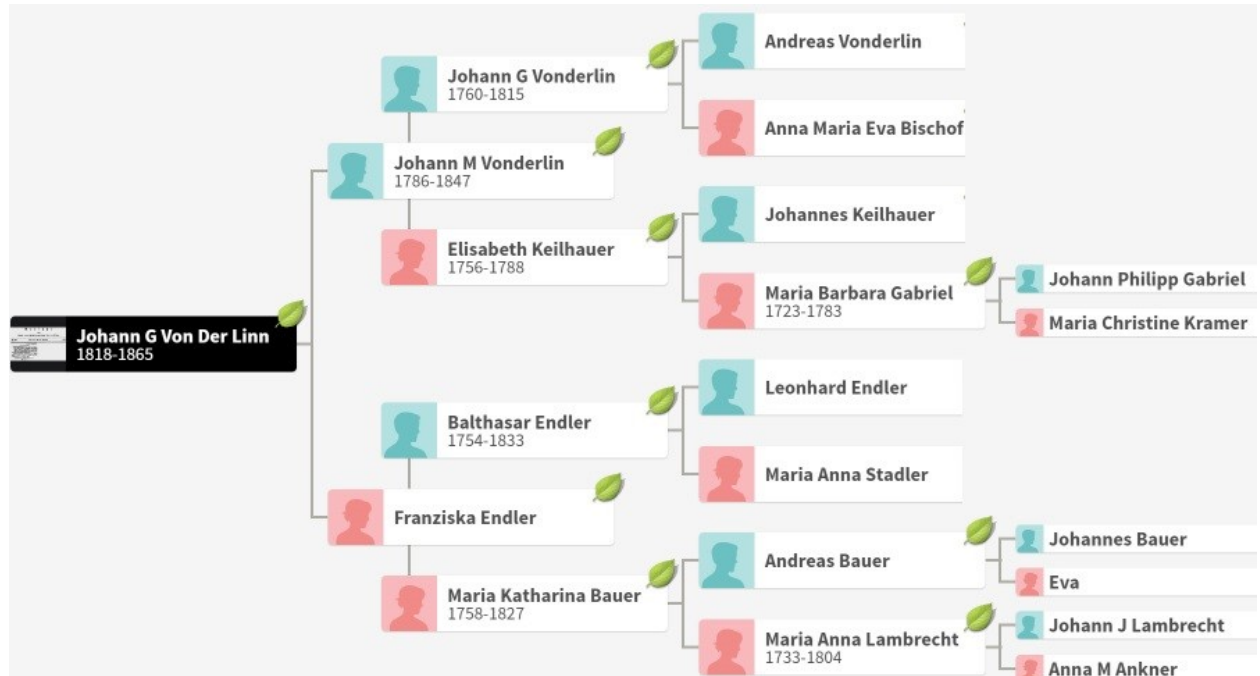
Frank Von Der Linn's mother, Salome Busch, was born in Clausen in 1827 to Franz Busch and Maria Eva Nussbaum (or Nußbaum¹):

¹ ß is a German character that is pronounced "s" and is often spelled ss.



Ancestors of Salome Busch

Frank's father, Johann Georg Von Der Linn, was born in Clausen, Germany, in 1818 to Johann Michael Von Der Linn and Franziska Endler:



Ancestors of Johann Georg Von Der Linn

We can trace the Busch and Von Der Linn families back to the 1700s in the German Rhineland. We don't know much about the Busch family, but we know many interesting tidbits about the Von Der Linns.

In 1718, Andreas Von Der Linn, a tailor, married Anna Maria Eva Bischof in Petersberg, Germany, six miles southwest of Clausen.

One of their children was Johann Georg Von Der Linn (the grandfather of the Johann Georg who immigrated to America). This elder Johann Georg was born in 1760 in Petersberg and moved to Clausen as a young man. The Clausen municipal record says, "The Vonderlin family has been living in Clausen since 1784." So Johann must have moved there when he was about 24. This is also the year he married Elisabeth Keilhauer.

This Johann Georg the elder was a tailor. In 1785 he bought a one-story house with "a garden of 26 rods for 138 guilders" (equivalent to about 7100 square feet and \$1600 in today's dollars). He died in 1815 in Clausen, at age 55.

Johann and Elisabeth had one child, our ancestor Johann Michael. (Elisabeth died young and Johann then married Maria Eva Matheis, with whom he had nine children.) Johann Michael was born in 1786 in Clausen. Like his father and grandfather, he was a tailor by trade. He was also a church servant and gravedigger of the parish of Clausen. In 1817 he was a Corporal of the Security Police. In 1822 he was a member of the factory council of the parish of Clausen. On Christmas Eve of 1827 he went to France to look for work, presumably returning to Clausen at some point.

Johann Michael married Franziska Endler. In 1824 he inherited the one-story house of his father-in-law, Balthasar Endler. Johann Michael died in 1847 at age 61.

Johann Michael and Franziska had four known children, one of whom was the Johann Georg who immigrated to America. This Johann Georg was born in 1818 in Clausen. He too was a tailor. He was known as Georg in Germany and George in the US. In 1848 he married Salome Busch, who was also from Clausen. He was 29 and she was 20.

Immigration and Little Germany

Georg and Salome had three young daughters when they left Germany in 1852. As far as we know, Georg is the only Von Der Linn who came to America. The rest stayed in the old country, and we have a lot of Von Der Linn relatives in Europe. We don't know why Georg and Salome left Germany, but there were serious crop failures and famines in their area in 1846-47 and 1853-54.

Little Germany was an immigrant neighborhood in the Lower East Side and East Village neighborhoods of Manhattan in New York City. We don't know if this is where Georg (now called George) and Salome lived after they arrived in 1852, but it seems likely. (The first census in which the family appears is 1880, after George had died. At that time Salome was living in Brooklyn with her sister Mary and three of her sons.)

By 1855 New York had the third largest German population of any city in the world, after Berlin and Vienna. By 1860, Bavarians (including George and Salome) were the largest group of German immigrants in the city.

George Von Der Linn died in New York in 1865 at age 46. Salome died in Queens, New York, in 1885, at age 58.

Frank Von Der Linn and Barbara Berg



Barbara and Frank VDL

George and Salome had seven children. Their youngest child, Frank Von Der Linn, was born in 1862 in Queens, New York (according to his enlistment record and death certificate). George died when Frank was three years old. (See Part 6 of this document to learn more about two of Frank's older brothers, Anthony and Nicholas.)

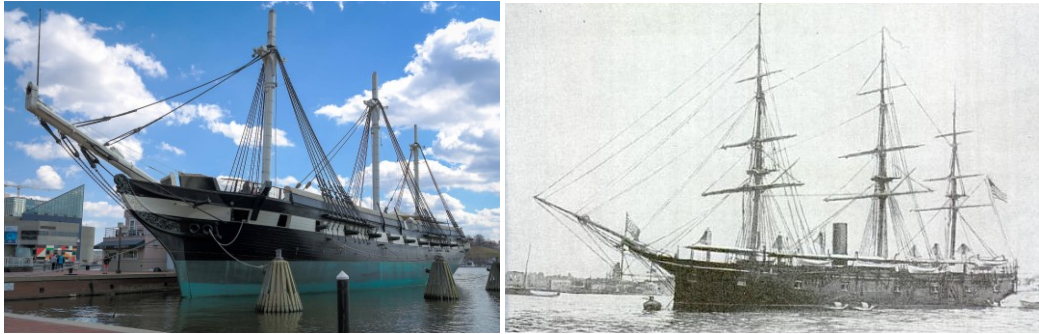
Frank enlisted in the Navy in November, 1878, when he was 16. The enlistment form says he was 5'6" tall, with light brown eyes, brown hair, and a dark complexion.

One year later, on November 10, 1879, Frank departed for Gibraltar, Spain, aboard the USS Constellation with supplies and a replacement crew for the USS Trenton, which was stationed in the Mediterranean. A sloop-of-war, and the last sail-only warship designed and built by the United States Navy, the Constellation was mainly used as a training ship. The restored ship is open to the public in Baltimore's Inner Harbor, and is designated a National Historic Landmark.

Frank was aboard the Constellation near the Azores during a week-long storm, when they spotted a vessel in distress. They rescued the crew and then burned the sinking ship so it wouldn't become a navigation hazard.

Frank arrived in Gibraltar on December 13, 1879, after a month at sea, and transferred to the warship Trenton, a wooden-hulled screw steamer (screw frigate). In the book "The Cruise of the Trenton," Frank is listed as an ordinary seaman apprentice (all men under age 18 were apprentices). On April 3, after four months in the western Mediterranean, the Trenton and her crew headed east for two months, stopping in Italy, Egypt, Turkey, Greece, and France. Then they headed north to English, Belgian, and Dutch ports

before returning to the western Mediterranean in August, 1881. They sailed for the U.S. on September 7, arriving in the New York Navy Yard on October 23, 1881. Frank had been gone for two years.



(l) The restored USS Constellation in Baltimore Harbor; (r) The USS Trenton

In June, 1882, Frank joined the crew of the USS Minnesota. He was honorably discharged from the Navy on December 26, 1882, and from the ship Minnesota on January 10, 1883. He was 21 years old (his enlistment papers say he had committed to serving until age 21). His Minnesota discharge papers say that his general conduct was “excellent,” and his seamanship, gunnery, and general appearance and bearing were “very good.” He weighed 150 pounds, had 20/20 vision, and was in excellent health. He also had a scar on his forehead, which had not been mentioned when he enlisted, so presumably it was acquired during his service. We can only guess how he got it!



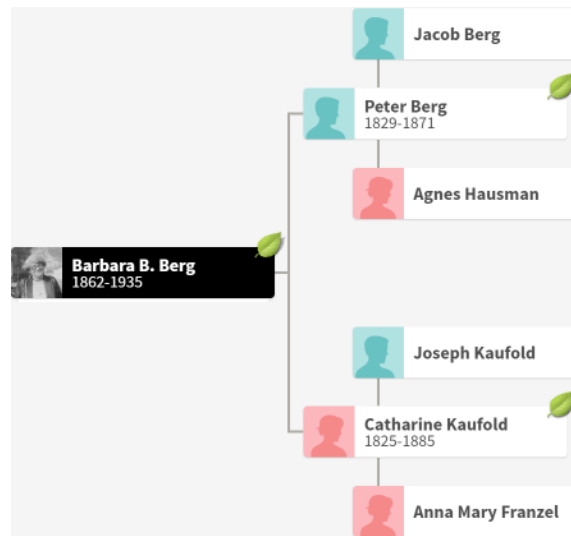
(l) Frank in USS Minnesota uniform; (r) The USS Minnesota

Frank joined the Brooklyn Fire Department in 1884, when he was 23 years old, and in 1885, at age 24, he married 23-year-old Barbara Berg.

Barbara’s grandparents, Joseph and Anna Kaufold, owned a large bakery on the corner of Attorney St. and Broome St. on the Lower East Side in Manhattan. They also owned three houses in Brooklyn and two on Broome St.

Frank and Barbara had 12 children, five of whom died young. They lived at 178 Penn St in Brooklyn.

Frank’s daughter Marcella said that Frank used to beat his children with a leather strap. In fairness to Frank, many dads of that time may have done the same, and we can only hope he didn’t hit too hard.



Ancestors of Barbara Berg

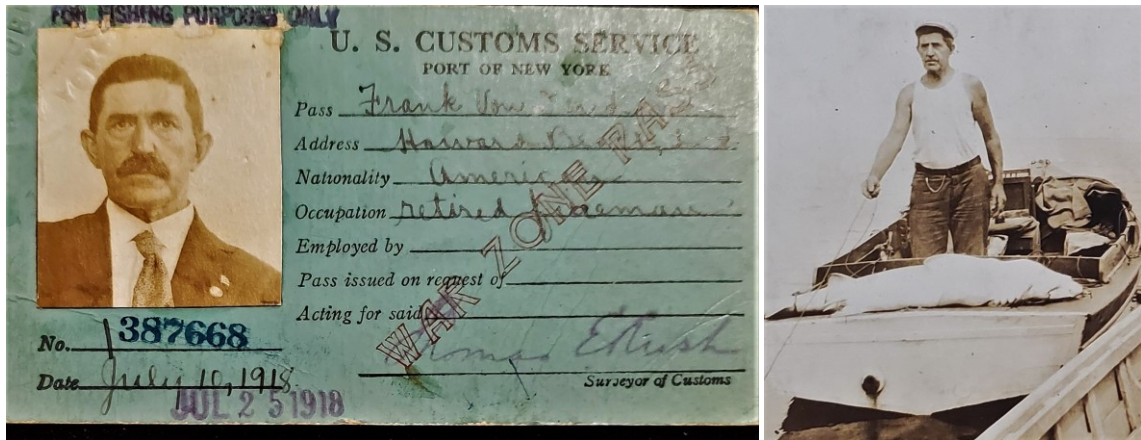
Frank may have been part of the Brooklyn Democratic machine, which had close ties to the fire and police departments.² That could help explain how he was able to buy multiple parcels of land in Ramblersville (read on for more about Ramblersville). Barbara may also have inherited money. Grandson Eugene (Gene) Marley believed that Barbara was the mastermind behind the land acquisitions. (Great grandson Michael Von Der Linn found a newspaper record of a real estate transaction under Barbara Von Der Linn's name, which appears to corroborate Gene's claim.)

Frank was attached to Engine 30. In 1895 he was promoted to Engineer of Steamer. In 1898 Brooklyn became part of the City of New York; its fire department merged with the New York City Fire Department (FDNY) on January 28, 1898. In 1909 Frank received "a handsome gold medal" for 25 years of service. Five years later, in 1914, he retired from FDNY at age 53.

Frank enjoyed 25 years of retirement. He was an avid boater and fisherman, known on Jamaica Bay as "Captain Frank." He went fishing in the Bay for shark, and in Florida for swordfish and marlin. His grandson John says that Frank liked to float in the canal at Ramblersville, eyes closed and hands behind his head.

Barbara died in 1935 at age 73. Frank died in 1939 in Stuart, Florida, probably on one of his fishing trips. He was 78. His daughter Lucia brought his body back to Brooklyn for burial in Holy Cross Cemetery. (Section: SELE | Row: 13 | Plot: 49.)

² From Michael VDL: Urban fire, police, and sanitation departments were very politicized during the 19th century and they functioned as adjuncts to Democratic political machines, which drew their power by mobilizing immigrants. As for patronage: it was a world of quid pro quo. Frank was probably a capable ward heeler in the Catholic-German part of Williamsburg.



(l) 1918 War Zone fishing pass; (r) Frank with a shark in Jamaica Bay

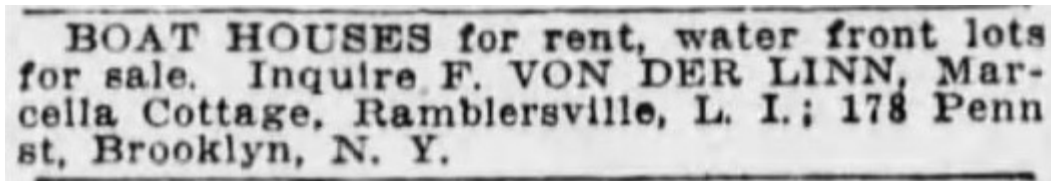


Frank Von Der Linn: fire fighter, boatman

Ramblersville

Frank and Barbara were known by some as “the rich Von Der Linns from Howard Beach,” because they owned multiple properties in the Ramblersville section of that neighborhood. (Family lore even says they owned 10,000 shares of IBM stock at the height of the depression.) Ramblersville (also called Old Howard Beach) was a fishing village on Jamaica Bay that was popular for weekend getaways.

Frank and Barbara owned at least five cottages, and named them for their daughters (they also had two sons). The family lived in “Marcella House” and rented out the others to vacationers. At one point they loaned one of their cottages for use as a Catholic church.



Ad from The Brooklyn Daily Eagle, 10 April, 1915

A 2016 article³ about Ramblersville said:

In 1880, the New York, Woodhaven and Rockaway Railroad opened its four-mile trestle over Jamaica Bay (then often called Grassy Bay), offering direct service to Far Rockaway. It also provided easier access to the farmland and swamps north of the bay. By the end of the decade, Oscar Rust had constructed "a small fishing station" on the swampland surrounding Hawtree Creek.

Several other intrepid builders quickly followed suit, placing their vacation homes on stilts, just high enough to let the tides lap their front doors twice a day.

Each household considered itself a yacht club, and residents spent much of their time on the water.

[A developer] tried to rebrand the area "Marcella Park." [Did this have anything to do with Marcella Von Der Linn?] [The name] failed to catch on.

Like any good hamlet, it had its own "mayor," and any land-owning male was eligible to vote, provided he had caught at least 50 pounds of fish.

Fishing was held in high esteem for good reason: on Sunday evening, it was "either dinner or no dinner, all according to the luck which the male Ramblersvillers have had during the wee small hours of Sunday morning." The joy of eat-what-you-catch was not to last, however. Thanks to pollution from industry and sewage, in 1916 the city closed Jamaica Bay to recreation and fishing.

Frank's grandson Jim Von Der Linn remembers visiting relatives in Ramblersville, including his Aunt Lu (Lucia, Frank's daughter), and walking on the boardwalks.

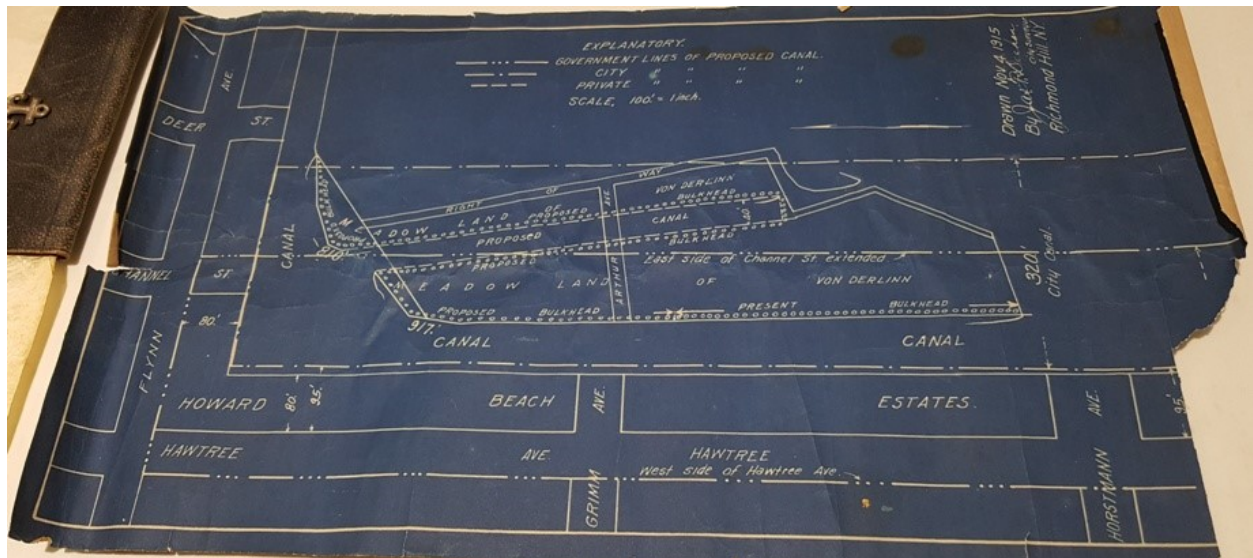
Michael Von Der Linn researched Ramblersville and learned the following:

Van Der Linn Street in Ramblersville is also known as Church Street. ... However, several real estate listings refer to the street as Van Der Linn Street. One of them said "Church Street, also known as Van Der Linn Street."

I believe Van Der Linn street is now Bayview Avenue. I am basing this idea on another real estate listing, which lists a property on Van Der Linn Street, which turns out to be Bayview Street when you consult a map.

³ <https://ny.curbed.com/2015/2/24/9989218/new-york-city-ramblersville>

Real estate listings date the Ramblersville cottages to the early 1900s to 1920. They were adapted over the years into year-round homes. I wouldn't be surprised if the VDL cottages are standing today under layers of additions.



Proposed development plans for Ramblersville property owned by Frank and Barbara

[It is] a curious settlement of about 300 houses which stand high and dry on stilts on either side of the banks of Haw Tree Creek. The creek serves as a highway, speedway and boulevard to the aquatic population, who each year leave the noisy city and join the colony. Known as Ramblersville, and with a summer population of about one thousand, which is augmented on Sundays by another thousand, this little colony is without government, politics, police, churches, or regulations of any sort save good will to each other. And it is probably one of the happiest and most harmonious communities in the greater city.

...when the tide is low Ramblersville is left high and dry on its stilts. When the tide is flood the front and backyards of the settlement are submerged and the doorsteps are awash. ...the conglomeration of boat houses, fishing clubs and summer houses are thrown together in happy confusion. ...all the houses are built for comfort. They are watertight, will weather the showers of summer and the bleak storms of winter. Every place is equipped with a camping outfit of beds, cooking utensils and other necessary articles, so that when the season opens hundreds of women and children take up their

abodes in the apparently rickety buildings, contented and happy, and settle down to spend the summer. ...In the fall they leave their summer homes with regret and look forward to a reunion in the coming year.

...waters surge back and forth under the floors, lapping the piles. ...communication from one house to another is either by boat or the narrow, raised footwalks that zigzag from the rear of one house to another. This isolation is one of the charms of the place. ... Women and even children go calling in boats. ...the women handle the boats themselves ...they bend to the oars like professionals. Even little children become experts in handling a boat. ...Fanciful names are painted on different houses. ...The principal families which make up the colony are residents of Brooklyn... At present there are many fishing colonies scattered in and along the bay, but for quaintness and real outdoor enjoyment Ramblersville leads them all.

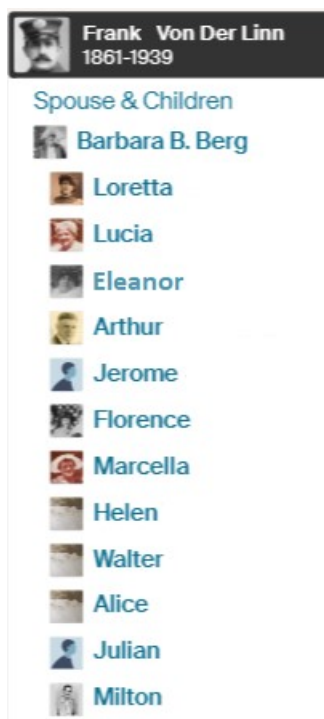


Marcella House, Ramblersville

Today, Ramblersville still feels like a quaint and sleepy fishing village.

Children of Frank and Barbara Von Der Linn

Frank and Barbara had 12 children, seven of whom lived to adulthood. Four of those have living descendants (Eleanor, Arthur, Marcella, and Milton). They lost the following five children in infancy (can you imagine?!): Jerome (died in 1896 at age 4.5 months); triplets Helen (died in 1899 at 3 months), Walter (died in 1899 at 4 months), and Alice (died in 1901 at 23 months); and Julian (died in 1901 at 1-2 months old). Alice and Julian died within four days of each other. It was quite possibly smallpox, which swept through New York City from 1901 to 1902.



1. Loretta Von Der Linn

Frank and Barbara's daughter Loretta Von Der Linn was born in Brooklyn in 1886 and died in Queens in 1974 at age 88. In 1909, at age 22, she married Albert Francis Meissner, an architect who designed churches. They owned a nice house in Huntington. Al inherited a lot of money and bought vacation properties in Sharon, Connecticut, and Centerport, New York. Nephew Gene Marley said he loved to go to the Connecticut property, which was like a farm, with an outhouse, a hand water pump, and a vegetable garden. The Connecticut property was next to William F. Buckley's estate, and the Centerport property (two or three acres of waterfront) was next to one of the Vanderbilts. The Meissner's owned nice boats, and there are photos of Loretta in fur coats.

Loretta and Al had one son, Donald, who never married or had children. (He was a type 1 diabetic, and didn't want to burden a wife or family.) When he died, he left his house to his girlfriend. He was a tenor who toured with the Robert Shaw Chorale and the Trapp Family Singers (the latter for two seasons, from 1949-1951). Geraldine McNamara remembers Donald singing in her family's finished basement in Valhalla, NY, at a family gathering. Ken Fisher remembers his family owned recordings of Don.



Loretta Von Der Linn circa 1904



Donald, Loretta, and Albert Meissner

2. Lucia Von Der Linn

Frank and Barbara's daughter Lucia Margaret Von Der Linn (pronounced Loosha, called "Lu") was born in 1887. She married James Alfred Hahn in Buffalo in 1911. Their only child, Raymond, was born in 1912 and died at nine months of age. Lu's great niece Kathleen Epps remembers visiting Lu in about 1953, when Lu was living on a tugboat in New York harbor.

James Hahn died in 1954. When Lu died in 1970, she was living in Howard Beach, presumably in one of the cottages her parents had owned. Her address listed on Frank's death certificate in 1939 was 44 Church St.



Lucia with a fish she caught with her dad in Florida



Lucia (far right) with (l to r) Marcella, Loretta, Al, and Florence

Lu is remembered as loveable and “mannish.” She had a booming voice and gave bear hugs. Her nephew John Von Der Linn says she “told it like it was.” She smoked cigars, had tattoos, deep sea fished, and was a volunteer firefighter. This is from The Brooklyn Daily Eagle newspaper of July 10, 1909:

Miss Lucia has the distinction of being the only woman member of a volunteer fire department in Queens County. That honor was accorded her for her heroic work at a fierce fire something over a year ago which threatened to wipe out Ramblersville. Climbing up onto the roof of a blazing building, Miss Lucia, unnoticed at first by the firemen, called loudly for them to hand her some buckets filled with water. Her voice could not be heard above the din, but a fireman soon espied her skirts and cried out to fellow firemen to hurry up with the ladder as a woman was in dire straits on the roof of the burning building and he wanted to rescue her.

“Never mind me,” shouted Miss Lucia. “I can take care of myself, thank you. Just hand me up the buckets and I’ll help you put this fire out.” The firemen formed in two lines. One line passed along the filled buckets and handed them

up to the girl on the roof, and Miss Lucia gave the head of the other line the pails as fast as they were emptied, so that they could be refilled again. The firemen perspired and the girl on the roof worked like a Trojan. Within twenty minutes the fire was under control. The firemen, one and all, fairly adored Miss Lucia after that, and thenceforth she was one of “the boys.”

And this devil-may-care spirit, this readiness to do things, even at the expense of being called odd, makes Miss Lucia a leader wherever she goes. Miss Lucia ascribes her love for all things having to do with firemen, to the fact that her father, Frank Von Der Linn, is an engineer in the fire department of Brook-

lyn, and that, since she was a little child she never tired hearing her father’s tales of heroic deeds performed by firemen in conflagrations he had witnessed during the twenty years of his service.

3. Eleanor Von Der Linn

Frank and Barbara's daughter Eleanor Romana Von Der Linn was born in January, 1889. At age 19 she made the news when she fell off a ladder. She was volunteering to paint the new church in Ramblersville, on property donated by her parents. The article says she fractured three fingers and cut open her palm, and was taken to Marcella cottage, where her family lived, so the doctor could stitch her palm and set her fingers. Her grandson Greg says that when she told him this story many years later, she said that she simply wrapped her injured fingers in tobacco leaves, went back up the ladder, and kept right on painting!



Eleanor with her older sisters Loretta and Lucia



Eleanor Von Der Linn (l) with brother Arthur, mother Barbara, and sister Loretta

GIRL HURT PAINTING CHURCH.

Volunteer Decorator Falls from the Top of Ladder, Breaking Three Fingers

Miss Elinor Von de Linn, 19 years old, and three helpers were at work yesterday afternoon putting the finishing touches of paint on the little Catholic Chapel of St. Montfort's in Ramblersville, which is near Rockaway Beach, on the edge of Jamaica Bay. The other three volunteer painters were Miss Lucy Von de Linn, Miss Elinor's sister, Mrs. James Nolan, and Mrs. Francis Green.

For three years the Rev. Father Castrex of the Gate of Heaven Church in Ozone Park has been conducting services also at Ramblersville. Up to this year he had his church in a cottage there. This Summer the residents raised money with which to build the little chapel.

When the woodwork was completed about three weeks ago it was found that nearly all the subscription money was gone. There might be enough to buy paint, it was pointed out, but certainly there wasn't enough to pay painters. And surely the chapel could not go unpainted.

The Misses Von de Linn volunteered to do the painting, and then the other two women joined in. Paint brushes were bought, and last Friday the volunteer painters began work. There was always a gathering to cheer them on.

By yesterday noon the body of the church had received its coat of white, the window frames had their coat of green, and nothing was left to do except the gilding of the cross, which stands above the forward end of the roof-pole. Miss Lucy Von de Linn said she would do that difficult job. The others watched below.

At 2:30 o'clock she paused in her work to shout to her co-workers:

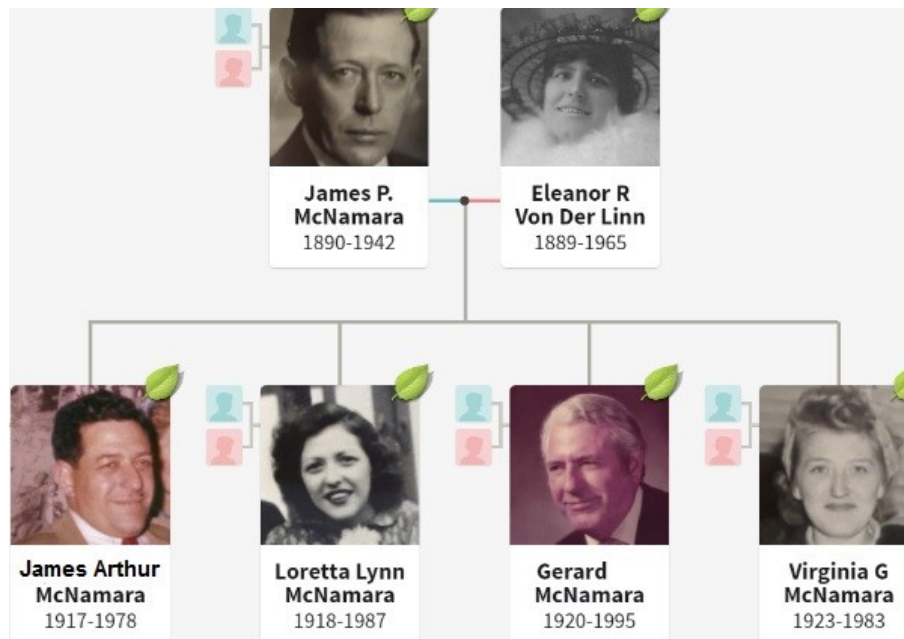
"Bring up some more gilding. I'm all out."

Seizing a can of gilding, her sister started up the twenty-six-foot ladder. She had just reached the top of it when she halted, wavered back and forth in the attempt to regain her balance, screamed, and then fell to the ground. Her sister dropped her brushes and came scrambling down to earth. Mrs. Nolan and Mrs. Green ran to the fallen painter's side.

The ground upon which she fell was soft. Three fingers of her right hand were fractured and the palm of that hand was cut open. She was quickly carried to the Marcella cottage near by, in which she lives, and there Dr. D. E. Ordson stitched up her opened palm and set her fractured fingers.

The gilding of the cross will be finished later.

Eleanor married James McNamara, a pharmaceutical comptroller. They had four children: Arthur, Loretta (named for her aunt), Gerry, and Virginia. Eleanor was known to some of her grandchildren as Grandma Mac.





Arthur, Gerry, Loretta, and Virginia circa 1924

Some family members were told that James lost his job during the Great Depression; his obituary says he resigned from his pharmacy job in 1938 to become a tax consultant. He was appointed to the SEC in 1940, and was also a dollar-a-year man⁴, doing top secret work. He died of a heart attack in 1942, at age 51. Grandson Ken remembers his mom (Eleanor's daughter Loretta) saying that her parents suffered financially during the Depression. Some grandchildren heard that after James died, Eleanor had to sell things to pay off debts. Others are not aware of any financial hardship, and think Eleanor may have sold possessions because she was moving to California.

The timing of James's death coincided with WWII. Eleanor's son Arthur, and Loretta's husband, Al Fisher, were both sent to California. (Eleanor's son Gerry was stationed in Europe.) So Eleanor, Virginia, and Loretta packed up and took the train west to be near Arthur and Al. The women rented a big apartment on Filbert Street in San Francisco, where they lived during the war. (Arthur's wife Eleanor stayed with them for a while as well.)

Kathleen Epps remembers hearing Loretta and Virginia say that many possessions had to be left behind when they moved to California, including oriental rugs. Eleanor's sisters stored some of these items for

⁴ Wikipedia: In the early-to-mid-20th century, "dollar-a-year men" were business and government executives who helped the government mobilize and manage American industry during periods of war, notably World War I, World War II, and the Korean War. U.S. law forbids the government from accepting the services of unpaid volunteers. Those employed by the government had to be paid a nominal salary, and the salary establishes their legal relationship as employees of the government.

Eleanor, but Eleanor never returned to New York to reclaim them. One or more Haviland china tea sets did travel to California, and were eventually parceled out to some of the granddaughters. These may have been from Eleanor's wedding trousseau. Granddaughter Geraldine heard that Eleanor was fond of throwing luncheons and tea parties in New York.

At some point, Eleanor had a tracheotomy, probably due to a goiter operation (removal of enlarged thyroid). In photos of Eleanor during the war, she does not have a trach hole, so the operation probably occurred sometime in the late 1940s. Her grandchildren remember her having it in their earliest memories.



(l) Eleanor Von Der Linn McNamara in 1916; (r) with her trach, date unknown

Eleanor also suffered from osteoarthritis, which left her hands deformed and crippled. In the late 40s she fell and broke one or both hips. There were no hip replacements then. For the rest of her life she was confined to a bed or wheelchair, and lived on an upper floor of the Fisher home. Loretta really loved her mom, but taking care of her plus small children was a lot of work. Although Virginia was very close with her mom, she must have felt it made more sense for Eleanor to live with Loretta. Not only was Al a doctor and Loretta a nurse, but Virginia worked fulltime and Loretta didn't. Eleanor did sometimes stay with the Epps family when the Fishers went to their cabin. Later, when Kathleen Epps was older, she stayed with Eleanor at the Fisher's when they traveled, because it was so hard to transport Eleanor to the Epps home.

Eleanor had a bell she could ring, and Loretta would send one of the kids upstairs to see what grandma needed. Granddaughter Clare Fisher remembers:

I recall "helping" her from as far back in my mind as I can remember. She dropped things often because of her hand deformities, and we were called on to retrieve them, as she could not bend over. It was always a good opportunity to read the "funnies" or sneak a piece of hard candy from her. This was one of the reasons we were most often called to assist: "Please change the channel." She loved the companionship and this was one of the ways she could get it. She would often change it to something WE liked so we would stay

and watch it with her. I remember many a foggy summer afternoon curling next to her in her bed and watching Art Linkletter. Mom always seemed to be busy with meals, laundry, etc., so we (mostly Greg and I) took care of Grandma's needs. We were very close and spent hours of time together in the room that would later become mine when she had to be transferred to a nursing home because of declining health.

Eleanor and Loretta liked to read the obituaries in the San Francisco Chronicle together (they referred to it as "the Irish Sporting Green"). Eleanor read the comics to her grandkids, and this is how they learned to read at a young age. Eleanor wasn't interested in the sports or entertainment sections, and she was well-versed in world affairs. She couldn't read books, as she was unable to hold them due to her arthritic hands.

Eleanor babysat the kids one night a week when Lori and Al went out to dinner. She let them stay up past their bedtime, and when they heard the garage door opening, they'd scurry quickly to their beds.

Granddaughter Kathleen Epps (Virginia's daughter), often went to visit Eleanor, and remembers her as intelligent, with a fun and sly sense of humor.

Eleanor was also a talented painter and crafter, despite her hands. She made decorative designs on drinking glasses, mugs, giant sugar pine cones the grandkids collected in Tahoe, and Holy cards. Grandson Greg was impressed by her patience and skill, and regrets that his mom did not save these items. He also remembers that Eleanor would sit at a sewing machine and do mending. She liked to sew, and wanted to be helpful. Clare remembers:

Grandma would utilize whatever "ornamentations" my mom would get at the Five & Dime: beads, sequins, glitter, glass shaped resembling various leaf forms, etc. It would take her HOURS, sometimes days, to complete a piece because of her finger deformities. She was also an accomplished seamstress, sewing clothes for me and my dolls (often matching)! She taught me how to [sew], sitting on her lap. I became quite proficient because of her tutelage, sewing many a ball gown for proms, and later dresses for my entire wedding party.

Eleanor didn't talk about her life in New York before moving to California. She did tell Greg that she missed her sisters.

Eleanor was a devout Catholic, like her parents, but since she couldn't go to church, the priest came to visit her. Greg said it was a "Sunday ritual" for Eleanor to receive communion in her room. (Loretta and Virginia's families went to church on Sundays.)

Eleanor went into assisted living in Marin County in the early 1960s. She died in 1965 at age 76.

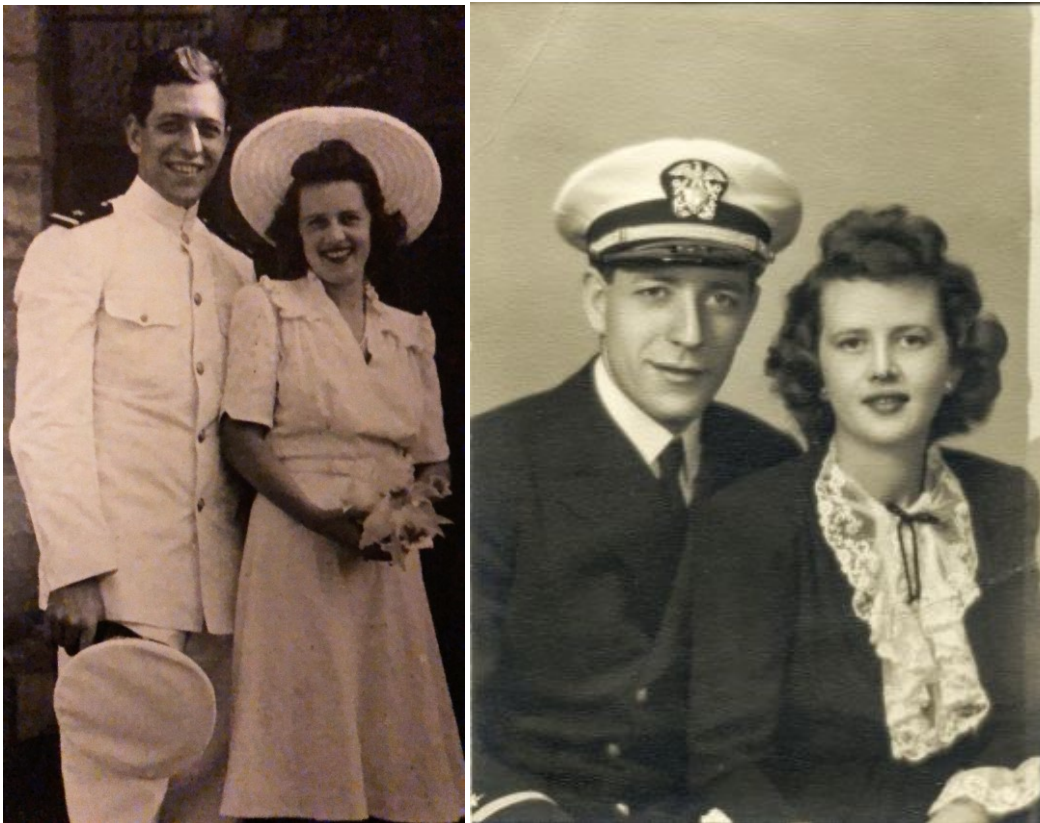
Eleanor's granddaughter Susan McNamara recalls:

I never met Grandma (as we called her). Dede and I went with my dad to San Francisco for the funeral. It was a big deal for us, as we got to leave school. I was in second grade. I remember being at the church and then overnight at the Fishers. Then Dad surprised us with a trip to Disneyland ... it was very exciting. The following summer Dede and I went out for at least two weeks with stops in San Francisco, Lake Tahoe with the Fishers, Livermore with the Epps and then to Phoenix to see Uncle Gerry, [Ollie] and baby James (Jamie). After Dad died, I was out west a few times. In 1982 I stayed overnight with the

Fishers on the way to Mammoth. In 1986 a visit to LA ... included a trip to La Jolla for lunch with Ollie and Gerry. In 1991, on a family van trip to the Grand Canyon we caught up with Joan, then Nancy and Hilal. Last time out there was 1999? Betse, Mom, Dede and I got a chance to see some of the Epps on a trip to San Francisco. Mom showed us the house on Filbert St.

Granddaughter Geraldine says, "I only remember meeting Grandma Eleanor VDL McNamara once... in 1955 on a road trip NY to CA. I think I was terrified by her trach hole and gravel-like voice, but then again I was only 6 years old."

3.1. Eleanor's son **James Arthur McNamara** was called Arthur. He was born in 1917 in Brooklyn. In 1943 he married Eleanor McCarty.



(l) Arthur and Eleanor McNamara on their wedding day in 1943; (r) date unknown

During WWII Arthur was called into the Navy. He worked on PT boats in Hawaii, and served as an officer in the South Pacific. His daughter Betse says:

Our parents were married in Hamden, Connecticut, (St. Rita's Church) at 7:30 a.m. on Tuesday, July 6, 1943. They had a breakfast reception in the church hall after the service. They left for their "honeymoon" trip to California that day.

Arthur was a sailor and may have completed basic training in San Diego and then went to Officer Training School (OTS) near Chicago [possibly at Great Lakes Naval Training Station]. We think he met Mom while home on leave in early 1943, went to OTS, and

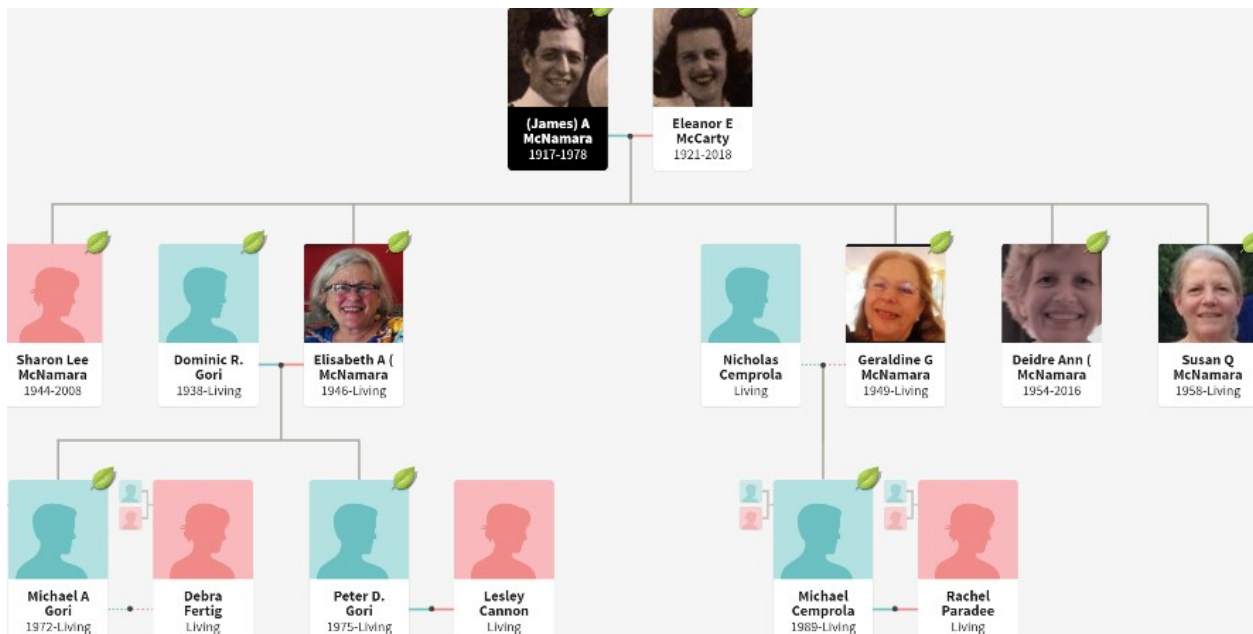
then they married and he had his orders to ship out to the Pacific [via California].

Mom was reportedly in Chicago with Dad for some period of time, a visit if you will, to attend his graduation, and she would not agree to marry until our Dad asked her father's permission. So they went from Chicago to Connecticut, by bus, to accomplish this tradition.

[In California, Mom shared] an apartment with Loretta, Virginia, and her mother-in-law, Eleanor, and she in fact loved living/being in San Francisco. She was excited to be married, and working at the Presidio (we don't know what she did but she'd had considerable clerical, office experience prior to meeting Dad). Throughout her life she loved "working" outside the home and was gainfully employed in most of the years following Dad's death. While he was alive, of course, she managed their home, children, meals, transport, etc., and at some low points in Dad's income stream she in fact worked part-time to keep family meals going and support him during times of transition.

When Arthur's wife Eleanor was pregnant with her first child, she left California and took the train back to Connecticut to be with her family.

After the war, Arthur was in the Navy reserve and worked as an accountant. He died in 1978 at age 60.



Descendants of Arthur McNamara (great grandchildren not shown)

Arthur and Eleanor had five daughters. They had a beautiful home for almost 20 years overlooking Wychmere Harbor in Harwich Port, Massachusetts. Eleanor and her daughters moved to Florida in about 2000. The three living daughters (Betse, Geraldine, and Susan) are in West Palm Beach, Florida. Daughter Betse writes:

We all completed college degrees and three of us went on for Masters (I got two) so we did alright in the schooling department, but none of us are as talented on the home front, though Sue has quite accomplished sewing skills and loves DIY projects in her apartment

... We reside in the same building, and before Mom and Dede passed away, we might have been thought to be a "syndicate" of sorts, as we owned five apartments in our condo building --- we loved being close, and still do, but each of us has a critical need for independence. Sharon, who had intellectual challenges throughout her life, struggled and succeeded, despite all odds, in asserting her independence, especially after Dad died. She rebelled against his well intentioned protections and provisions for her and gave Mom a rough ride for years on Cape Cod, but our days and visits were, thank God, always laced with some humor, hubris, faith and compromise. We were/are a very close knit family of seven fiercely independent personalities.

Arthur's daughter Geraldine was in Barbara Von Der Linn Agnelli's wedding in 1953, at age 4. She writes: "I remember my dress being aqua and beautiful until I blew a large bubblegum bubble which stuck in my hair and tulle netting!! The gum had been my reward from Barbara for doing such a good job." Geraldine also fondly remembers her mom's cooking: "My mom ... made great pea soup and tapioca pudding, "porcupine" meatballs and bread pudding with raisins. Mac and cheese on Fridays."

3.2. Eleanor's daughter **Loretta Lynn McNamara** was born in 1918 in New Haven, Connecticut. She was called Lori. She was given the middle name Rita at birth, but later changed it to something she liked better. This had nothing to do with the country singer Loretta Lynn; in fact, Loretta McNamara did not like country music. She married Alfred J. Fisher, a pediatrician, and they had five children.

Her niece Kathleen Epps says that Loretta got the Irish genes from the McNamara side of the family; she was "teeny-tiny and Irish-looking, with dark reddish-brown hair."



(l to r) Al and Loretta Fisher, date unknown; 1942 wedding; 1958

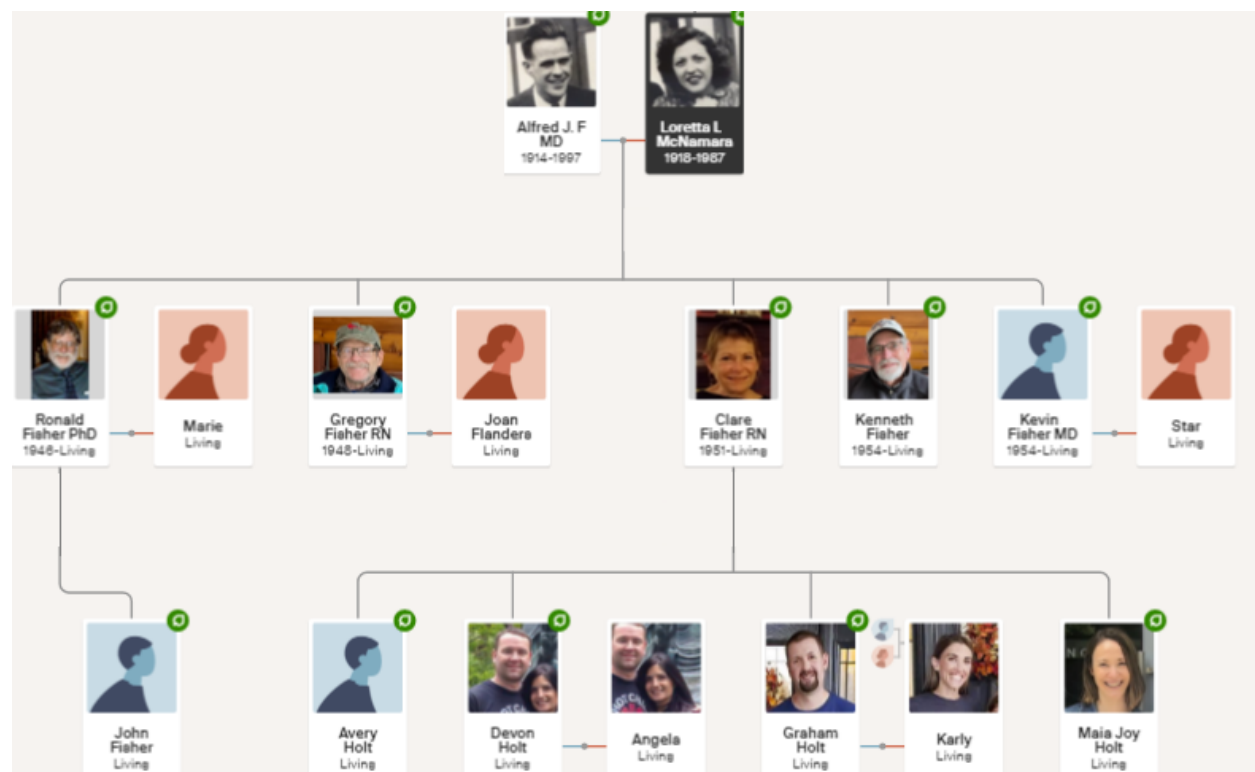
Loretta and her sister Virginia attended boarding school at Our Lady of Mercy Academy in Syosset, NY. Loretta went on to get a nursing degree. Her daughter Clare says,

She got [her degree] from a Hospital program in NY; I had her pin and cape from that time, but lost them both in a fire I sustained in a SF apt when in my mid-twenties. When she and Grandma moved to SF in the forties, she was charge RN of the first Neo-natal ICU in SF at St. Joseph's hospital. She stopped working as an RN when she gave birth to Ron and never worked as a nurse again. My Father was STRICTLY traditional, and ... felt a woman's primary calling was to be an at-home mother. It was a real waste of a

talented, restless mind. When we were in High school, she volunteered through Catholic Charities to teach children to read. She LOVED it, and it made me think she had missed her true calling, to teach in some capacity. She was a brilliant woman and could be found reading several books at the same time, while being up on news and the Giants statistics!

Loretta and Al Fisher were married in June of 1942, after Al finished medical school in New York. Al was then conscripted into the Army Medical Corps and assigned to Hawaii via San Francisco. He served at Tripler Army Hospital in Honolulu for the duration of the war, while Loretta lived in San Francisco with her mom and sister.

After the war, Al and Loretta moved to a planned community in the Bay Area. In 1946 they bought a house at 810 Pacheco St. in San Francisco, where they lived for the remainder of their lives.



Descendants of Loretta Lynn McNamara

During his residency, Al commuted to Oakland every day (coincidentally across the street from the Epps home). Loretta needed a car to ferry kids and do the shopping, so, unusually for families at that time, they owned two cars. Greg thinks his dad felt a lot of pressure to keep up with his wealthier doctor friends, who may have assumed he made more money than he did. To Loretta's chagrin, said colleagues convinced Al to buy the last one-acre lot at Fallen Leaf Lake near Tahoe, where they all had vacation cabins. Son Ken Fisher has warm memories of summers spent at the cabin.

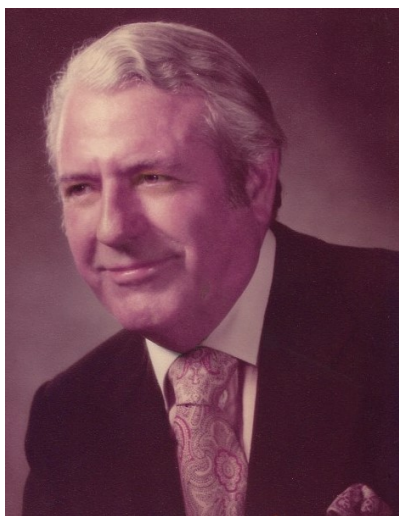
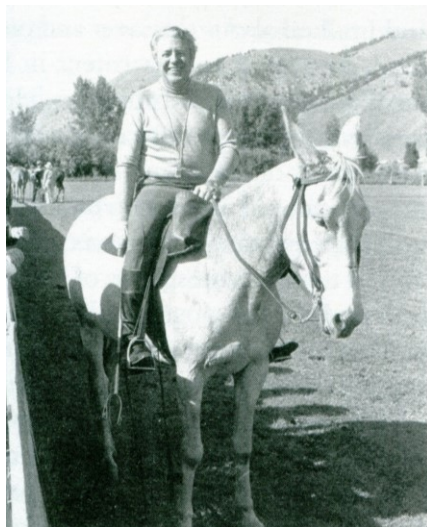
Al worked long hours to run his practice (he did his own charting and billing), and to pay for the Tahoe land and cabin, plus the San Francisco house mortgage, and two cars. He also took Lori out to a nice dinner once a week, and they had a housekeeper five days a week. He worked Saturday mornings, but spent the rest of the weekend with his family, often taking the kids somewhere to give Lori a break. Al was an amazing tennis player (though a bit too competitive for his kids). Son Ken remembers Sunday

family drives, and stopping at farmstands for fresh fruits and vegetables.

Loretta was a sports nut who devoured the sports pages every morning. She would often listen to a game on her transistor radio, with the earpiece in one ear, while watching TV with the kids or doing a crossword puzzle. She'd been a Giants fan in NY, so when they moved to San Francisco, she and Al went to many games at Seals Stadium and Candlestick Park, with tickets given to them by pharmacist friends of Al's. Son Ken has cherished memories of occasionally attending a game with his mom or dad (mom was more generous with trips to the snack bar!).

Loretta had to have one kidney removed in the late 1950s. Later in life she suffered from COPD, then called emphysema. She died in 1987 at age 68. Al died in 1997. None of the Fisher kids lived nearby, so niece Kathleen cared for her uncle at the end of his life, and was the executor of his estate. She says that Al "was an institution in pediatrics" in San Francisco. Many of the aides and nurses who cared for him in hospice had been patients of his.

3.3. Eleanor's son Gerard Francis McNamara (called Gerry and sometimes spelled Jerry) was born in Brooklyn in 1920. He was elegant, good-looking and a talented artist. He joined the merchant marines, and served in the Army Air Force in WWII as a fighter pilot and bombardier in Europe. He won many medals for his service. After being shot down, he met his first wife, Milou, a Frenchwoman who was volunteering for the Red Cross. He sent postcards to his Aunt Loretta, with whom he was apparently close.



Gerry McNamara

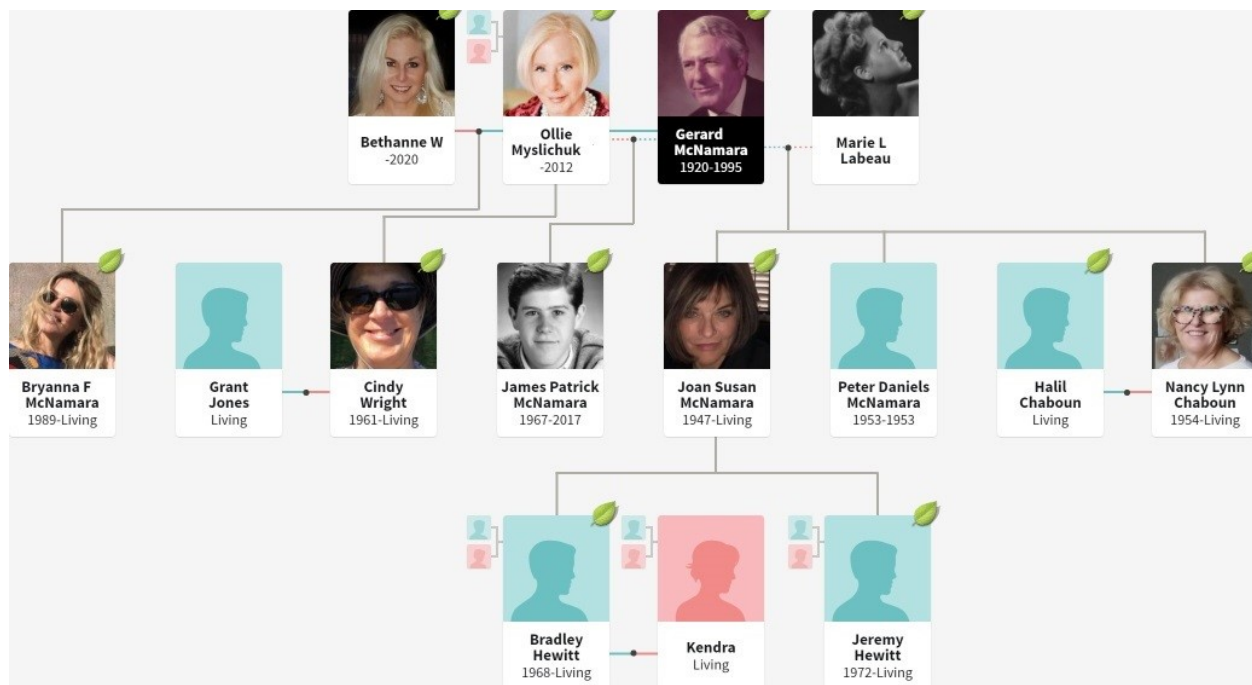
Gerry and Milou came back to the States together and had two daughters, Nancy and Joan (they also lost an infant son). After the war they moved to Dallas, where Gerry had a position at Neiman Marcus. Around 1952, Barry Goldwater, who had been elected to the US Senate, recruited Gerry to run his family's department store, called Goldwater's, in Phoenix.

Gerry then started his own store, called Gerry McNamara's, before selling it to Saks Fifth Avenue in Phoenix and becoming general manager of that store. He loved playing polo and would ride to Saks after a game, hitch up his horse, and go in wearing his uniform. While working at Saks, he popularized Native American jewelry as high fashion. The look was featured in Arizona Highways magazines. Daughter Joan remembers:

In the 1970s I had many American Indian friends and I began trading their art. I dealt with Navajo, Hopi, Santo Domingo, Acoma, and Zuni. I was a jobber and sold to most of the stores in Arizona. Dad started buying it for Saks and got most of their inventory from me because I could authenticate every piece, as I dealt with all the top artists.

My dad was a creative innovator. He started a national Indian jewelry craze. Unfortunately it sparked a huge fraudulent market of beautiful jewelry made by non Indians signing their names as fake Indians. Then it moved from there to jewelry made in Taiwan and sold as American Indian. It got so bad that some Navajo would buy the Taiwan jewelry and sell it in the roadside stands. This still happens today. The tribes began authenticating their wares to stop the fraud.

I joined Capriccio in 1977 but we never sold Indian jewelry there. Capriccio soon became the most successful small couture boutique in the USA. We sold to very famous people like Joan Kennedy when she was campaigning with Ted for the presidency, Dionne Warwick, Diana Ross, Stevie Nicks, Grace Slick, Liberace, Tova Borgnine, many Saudi princesses, Mrs. Brook Astor, Mrs. Mennen, Mrs. Dow, the Gettys, and many, many others too numerous to name.



Descendants of Gerry McNamara (great grandchildren not shown)

Gerry and Milou divorced in 1963. In 1965 Gerry married fashionista Ollie Myslichuk and they had a son, James. About 1975 they established their own elegant boutique, Capriccio, at the Borgata in Scottsdale, AZ, then at Biltmore Fashion Park in Phoenix, AZ, and in La Jolla, CA. Niece Kathleen Smith heard it said that “Gerry was the front man, and Ollie was the businessman” in their fashion empire.

Gerry was a charming and fun people person. Joan says, “Dad really was hilarious. He had a terrific wit. He cracked everyone up with his sense of humor.” Nephew Ken Fisher says, “Gerry was the life of the party. He had a great laugh, and could really spin the yarns.” Ken remembers staying with Gerry and Ollie in about 1969 with his parents, older sister Clare (who was going to ASU), and twin brother Kevin.

Gerry's son James was a toddler. Gerry and Al Fisher got along great. Ken says that Gerry loved to hunt, and took him and Kevin hunting on the reservation with very expensive shotguns.

Gerry and Ollie divorced, and in 1989 Gerry married Bethanne Walz. They had a daughter, Bryanna, called Breezy. Gerry, Bethanne, and Bryanna, then nine months old, were in San Francisco during the earthquake of October, 1989; Gerry needed a stent and was looking for a doctor to give him a second opinion. The threesome were world travelers. Breezy was the youngest person to set foot in Antarctica, when she was less than six years old.

Gerry lived in Oregon with Bethanne, then moved back to Arizona, where he lived for a time with daughter Nancy and her husband, Hilal. (Nancy's mom, Milou, Gerry's ex, was also living at Nancy's, as she had suffered a stroke at about age 60. She lived with Nancy for 20 years, going home to her husband on weekends.) Gerry died in Scottsdale in 1995 at age 75.

Gerry's daughters Nancy and Joan live in Scottsdale, Arizona. James died in 2017. Daughter Bryanna (Breezy) lives in Los Angeles. Ollie's daughter Cindy lives in Colorado.

3.4. Eleanor's daughter Virginia Gertrude McNamara was born in Garden City, New York, in 1923. Virginia got the Von Der Linn genes: she was tall and Germanic-looking.

Virginia and her sister Loretta went to boarding school at Our Lady of Mercy Academy in Syosset, New York. Virginia attended from 1928 until her graduation from eighth grade in 1936. She felt abandoned there, with no one to rely upon; her parents didn't visit, and Loretta was five years older, with her own friends. So in 1936 Virginia transferred to high school at the brand new Mary Louis Academy in Jamaica Estates as a day student, and lived at home. She was in the first graduating class, of 1940.

In 1942 Virginia's father died, and she moved to California with her mom and sister. In 1943 Virginia married Richard (Dick) Epps, who was on leave from the Navy. In his memoir, Dick described how they met:

On Christmas day [1942] I caught a bus to San Francisco to see this beautiful city. ...I saw a USO room open with people inside. As soon as I stepped in the door, a lady behind a table called to me and asked if I wanted to go to a home for Christmas dinner. Of course I said yes and she gave directions. I finally arrived at an apartment building (on Filbert Street) and rang the bell. When the door opened, there stood a beautiful blue-eyed blond, about my age. Her name was Virginia McNamara and she invited me in. She shared an apartment with her mother (Eleanor) and her sister (Loretta). She had two older brothers, one (Arthur) was in the Navy..., and the other (Gerry) was flying B-26s in Europe. Her sister Loretta was married to a medical doctor (Al Fisher) who was serving in the Army in Hawaii. Virginia and I corresponded daily after my ship returned to its duty station in the Aleutian Islands at that time.

My ship arrived back at San Francisco on Sept 11th [1943] and was expected to be in port for a month. Virginia and I had decided to get married with her sister Loretta standing-up for her. We first had to get permission from the Catholic Church as Virginia was of that faith but I was not. In fact, I decided to be baptised as a Catholic before our wedding and everything was settled. We were married on September 21, 1943, at St. Brigid's Catholic Church on Van Ness Avenue in San Francisco.

After the war, Dick studied electrical engineering at UC Berkeley and worked on the original cyclotron at

the Radiation Laboratory. He also worked at a TV repair shop. Meanwhile Virginia was working days at a bank, and nights as a waitress. Somehow they juggled all this while also raising four young children.

In 1951, Dick was called to the Korean War, where he served as a sonar specialist in the Mediterranean. Virginia and her then-four children moved back east for about two years, and lived in Navy housing in Rhode Island and Massachusetts. When Dick returned from the war, the family went back to California. In 1956 they moved to Livermore, where Dick had a job at Lawrence Livermore Laboratory. Virginia liked working, and continued to do so until her oldest kids were in high school. One of the places she worked was Sandia Laboratory.

Virginia and her sister Loretta got along fine, and saw each other at holidays, but they weren't especially close. Virginia's daughter Kathleen doesn't remember them talking on the phone, for example. But they had busy lives, and it was a long trek to go between Loretta's home in San Francisco and Virginia's house in Oakland, and later in Livermore.

According to her daughter, Kathleen, Virginia and her brother Gerry's first wife, Milou, were "great friends."

Dick and Virginia were teetotalers. Virginia's father, James McNamara, had been a drinker. Dick's family were Midwestern Bible Belt Protestants who abstained from alcohol entirely. Daughter Kathleen says that Virginia welcomed this trait in her spouse, and alcohol did not play a part in her home.



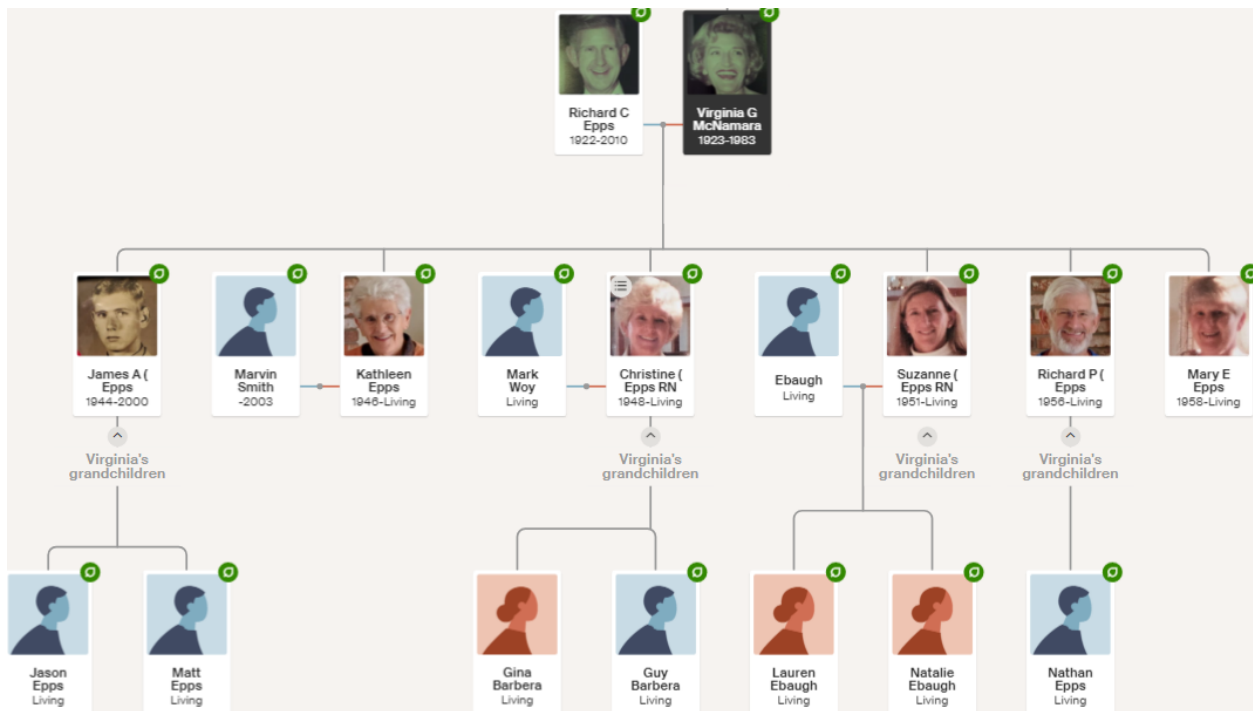
Virginia McNamara and husband Dick Epps (photos taken many years apart)

Dick and Virginia were each the youngest of four children, and both of them had felt like "add-ons." Neither liked to dwell on the past, but instead focused on the present and future. So their daughter, Kathleen, never heard stories about her mother's life in New York before she moved to California. Despite feeling like an add-on, Virginia was nonetheless closer to her mother than her three older siblings were.

Virginia and Dick had six children, and they have always been close. Virginia used to tell them, "Don't

fight with your brothers and sisters; they are the people who love you for who you are.”

Virginia died of COPD in 1983, at age 60.



Descendants of Virginia McNamara (great grandchildren not shown)

4. Arthur Von Der Linn

Frank and Barbara Von Der Linn's son Arthur William Von Der Linn was born in 1894 in Brooklyn, New York. He was sometimes called Lindy (as in 'Von Der Lindy'), and the Brooklyn Engineering Club obituary says he was called "Von."

Arthur was an altar boy and attended Catholic church with his family every Sunday. According to a letter of reference written by a parish priest, the Von Der Linn family was "the outstanding family in the parish and in the community."

Arthur grew up fishing with his father in Ramblersville. Several photos show a smiling adult Arthur fishing on Barnegat Bay in New Jersey. He also fished with his father in Florida, and took his wife and kids there as well. A certificate from the Stuart Sailfish Club dated February, 1938, says he caught, "in a sportsmanlike manner," a sailfish measuring 7 feet 3½ inches while fishing off St. Lucie Inlet.

In February, 1911, when he was only 16 years old, Arthur joined the New York National Guard as a private in Company A of the 47th infantry. Training was at Camp Townsend (now Camp Smith) in Peekskill, NY.

Arthur turned 18 in 1912. Around that time he followed his father into the New York fire department (FDNY). He was in the fire department band.



*New York Fire Department band in front of the New York Customs House
Arthur is in the photo somewhere*

In November, 1913, he became a musician in Company L, 47th infantry of the National Guard. In April, 1914, he became a sergeant in the Machine Gun Company of the 47th infantry. A picture of him on horseback is labeled "Taken at training camp, Peekskill, NY, June 21, 1916, during the Mexican disturbance." Many members of the New York National Guard were sent to the Texas border during the Mexican Border War, and Arthur may have been among them.



Arthur at National Guard training camp, Peekskill, NY, 1916

Arthur left the National Guard in August of 1916. In May, 1917, he joined the Army E.R.C. (Enlisted Reserve Corps), which comprised medical personnel (his dog tag says M.R.C., or Medical Reserve Corps). He served overseas in WWI from July 1917 to March 1919 at US Army Base Hospital No. 15 of the AEF (American Expeditionary Forces). This hospital was located in the town of Chaumont in the Haute-Marne department in northeastern France. Arthur drove an ambulance and became assistant chief in the ambulance company. Ambulance drivers often had to go right up to the front lines, and Arthur's son Jim was told that Arthur was mustard gassed during the war. There is a lot of information on the internet about the base hospitals in WWI⁵:

Base Hospital No. 15 was organized at Roosevelt Hospital, New York, N. Y., on April 12, 1917, and was mobilized at New York City in June, 1917. It sailed from New York for Europe on the [ship] Lapland on July 2, 1917, arriving in Europe on July 12, 1917. It was the first base hospital to arrive overseas for duty with the American Expeditionary Forces and was stationed at Chaumont, Haute Marne, France, where it arrived on July 16, 1917.

It ceased operating on January 15, 1919; sailed for the United States on the [ship] Olympic February 18, 1919; arrived in the United States on February 24, 1919, and was demobilized shortly thereafter.

Arthur became a corporal in the ambulance company and was recommended for commission in the Motor Transport Corps. His son Jim remembers some of the items his dad brought home from the war, such as a German sword, a 45 caliber pistol, a bazooka round, and a helmet.

⁵ <https://history.amedd.army.mil/booksdocs/wwi/adminamerexp/chapter24.html>

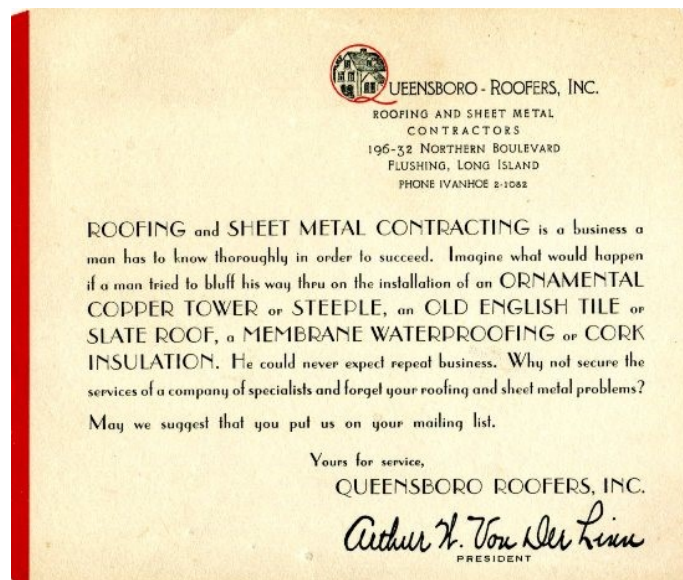


Army Base Hospital No. 15, Chaumont, France

Arthur's honorable discharge document states that he left the Army in 1919 as "Corporal – 4th Co. 152 D.B. (last assigned Ambulance Corps. Med. Dept.)." His occupation was listed as mechanic, he had received no wounds, and his character was "excellent." He was given a bronze Victory Button.

Arthur returned to the fire department after WWI. He was with Engine 221, Williamsburg, Brooklyn (now Engine 221/Ladder 104). He ended his career with the FDNY as a fire inspector (an arson detective, or person who determines the cause of a fire).

In 1920, probably while working for the fire department, he enrolled in an evening high school program through the Knights of Columbus in New York City, and received a diploma in Plan Reading and Estimating. At some point he started a company called Queensboro Roofers, which may have failed during the Great Depression.



Advertising card for Queensboro Roofers

In January, 1928, when he was 33 years old, Arthur married Ethel Grace Heil.

In December of 1929, Arthur joined the William McDonald Company, a civil engineering firm that specialized in roadways and parking lots. He was the Sales Manager, supervising up to 50 people, and earned \$6000 a year (about \$100,000 in today's dollars). His territory included "the entire Eastern Seaboard and Canada." Between 1929 and 1932 he traveled "continuously" for the "promotion and manufacture of cold laid bituminous paving materials" (his words).

In 1932 he became General Manager of the company and his salary was doubled to \$12,000. Later he was promoted to Assistant to the President, responsible for company policy, public relations, contract negotiations, field supervision, and liaison with government agencies.

The William McDonald Company did paving work for the 1939 World's Fair, including "roads, walks, parking fields, and flooring." Arthur oversaw the paving of two million square yards (over 400 acres). A letter of thanks from the World's Fair Engineer of Paving stated:

...I wish to express to you my appreciation of the invaluable assistance you have personally given during the three years of planning and construction in the solution of the various problems presented by the selection of suitable paved surfaces for the very unusual conditions encountered at the Fair site. ... You have given invaluable counsel ... your advice has been of the greatest value. ... I am very appreciative of ... my happy personal relations with you.

The company received numerous contracts for military installations, as well as for city, county, and state streets and highways. They were "technical advisor and paving consultant" to the Queens Planning Commission as well as to various private architectural firms and engineering companies.

Arthur's grandson Michael says:

[Arthur] was quite successful. I have a feeling he got some work through Albert Meissner (sister Loretta's architect husband). Both men did a number of commissions for the Catholic Church. Arthur earned a solidly upper middle-class income. He and his family lived well. Arthur may have had a lean year or two when the market crashed and his work in the private real estate market dried up. But he was able to reinvent himself as a civil engineer and work for companies that specialized in large-scale projects.

Arthur was a busy guy. Besides his job and family, he was active in a number of organizations. In 1940 he attended a public speaking class two nights a week for a year. Grandson Michael learned the following from his father (Arthur's son Tom):

Arthur did not attend engineering school or college. He took a number of at-home courses as his career evolved. He made it a point to join, or get elected to, as many professional organizations as possible and to hang his membership certificates on his office wall.

Arthur was an associate member of the American Society of Civil Engineers and a member of the Municipal Engineers of the City of New York. From 1940 until at least 1942 he was Director of the New York Chapter of the Society of American Military Engineers, and Vice Chairman of the Greater New York Fund, Flushing (probably the 1199SEIU labor union), for which he organized committees for fund raising campaigns. In 1942 he was Vice President and Fellow of the Brooklyn Engineers Club and a member of the executive committee of United Service Organization for the Boro of Queens. At some point he was also Assistant Boro Chief for the Public Works Emergency Division Civilian Defense

Corps. He was a member of the VFW, and his Elks plaque is dated 1922.

In 1942 Arthur submitted a “Personnel Placement” application to the War Department. In it, he said he was 5’10” tall, 175 pounds, and in excellent physical condition.

His grandson Michael says, “It seems that Arthur was a very smart, very personable individual who was as comfortable with management as he was with the laborer. He must have been an ideal liaison between those groups. He must have been an excellent manager.”

Tragically, Arthur died on Feb. 20, 1943, at age 48 of complications from gall bladder surgery (he may have had cancer from being gassed in the war). His son Jim remembers that his father was in terrible pain before finally agreeing to the operation. Arthur may have put it off as long as he could because he did not believe he would survive the surgery. He purchased a family gravesite (six plots) at Gate of Heaven Cemetery on Jan 13, 1942, just a year before he died.

See Part 2 of this book to learn about Ethel Heil, and Part 3 to learn about Arthur and Ethel’s marriage and children.



Arthur Von Der Linn in 1919 after WWI, and circa 1942



Arthur memorabilia: Elks plaque, Fire Dept. 10-year service pin, 1939 World's Fair pin

REV. JOHN J. HOLLAND
St. Mary of the Angels Home
Syosset, Long Island
New York

October 1, 1941.

To whom it may concern :--

The bearer of this letter Mr. Arthur W. Der Linn has been known by me personally since he was a boy fifteen years of age.

As an altar boy in the mission chapel, he and his family attended, I met him Sunday after Sunday for five years. His family was the outstanding family in the parish and in the Community. The priest and myself always had breakfast with this family and each and every member was always at the beck and call of the priest at all times. The family donated the property for the chapel and aided in its construction. The family was responsible for its care and maintenance and Arthur was usually the supervisor and superintendent in all this work. Thus from the time he was a little boy, he was interested in construction work and especially in this work when connected with the Church. Like that of every member of his family, his life centered around the Church and he took a personal interest in everything connected with it.

Since Arthur has made such rapid strides in the work of his choice, I have had occasion to consult him every now and then in matters concerning the institutions with which I am associated, the orphanage named above, Our Lady of Mercy Academy and Mercy Novitiate, all located in Syosset. I have absolute confidence in his judgement and ability and respect his complete integrity.

Arthur needs no recommendation for his work. It speaks for itself. The numerous Pastors, for whom he has supervised roads and highways all around Church property as well as the Sisters for whom he has worked in their schools and institutions have constantly praised him for the excellence of the work done and the complete responsibility he offers as security whenever he signs a contract.

To my mind the greatest tribute that can be paid to him is that many of the priests with whom he has dealt have told me that a handshake rather than a signature was all that was necessary to close an agreement.

It is a pleasure to recommend him in any capacity. His staunch Catholicity, his family integrity, his excellent and mature judgement, his years of experience in the past all will make him a valuable asset to anyone who sees fit to employ him. The firm that takes him on is the gainer.

This glowing letter of reference speaks to Arthur's lifelong character

5. Florence Von Der Linn

Frank and Barbara's daughter Florence Von Der Linn was born in 1897 and died in 1999 at age 102. Her marriage to a Mr. Smith (or Swift?) was annulled after about six months. She lived in Brooklyn Heights on Henry St. She did not have children. Richard Epps called her "Flossy." Her sister Marcella affectionately called her "yak yak"—I guess she liked to talk!



Florence (center) with her parents (in front), sisters Eleanor and Loretta, and brothers Arthur and Milton

6. Marcella Von Der Linn

Frank and Barbara's daughter Marcella Von Der Linn was born in 1898 in New York City, and died in 1995 at age 97. One of her granddaughters says Marcella was "competitive, romantic, histrionic, prone to exaggeration, had a mean streak, and was a character." She was apparently not a "warm and fuzzy" person. Marcella married Charles Aloisius Marley, but her marriage was unhappy. Some people said she married below herself. After Charles lost his profitable insurance business (Russel and Marley) in the Great Depression, he and Marcella moved to Ridgewood, in Queens. Charles was without work after that, and his son Eugene thinks they got financial help from Marcella's parents. Charles was 61 when he died.

Marcella's granddaughter Catherine Marley Haras says that Marcella and her sister Florence were very close and were "two peas in a pod." They would dress alike in furs, with matching lipstick and hair nets.

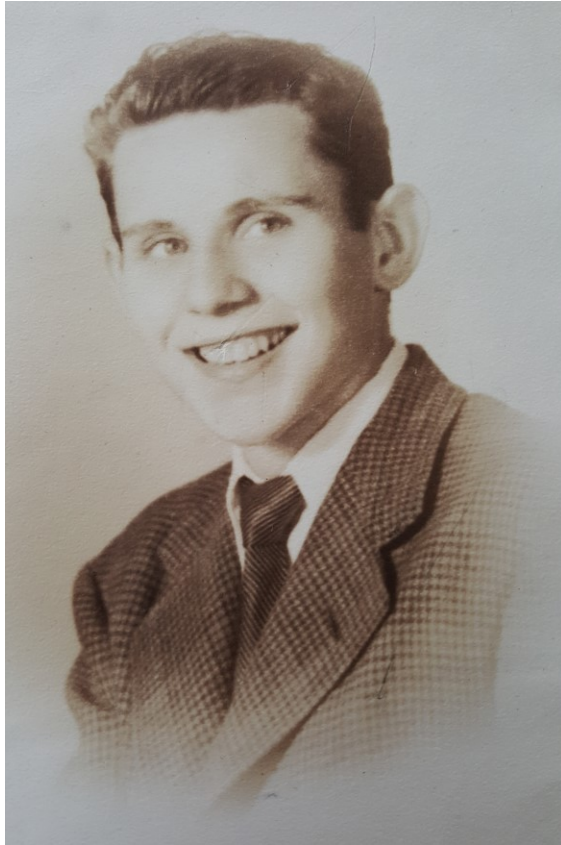
Marcella's great niece, Kathleen Epps Smith, has a ceramic bas-relief plaque of a woman's profile, which she inherited from her grandmother, Eleanor (Marcella's sister). Eleanor, who liked to buy antiques, found the portrait at an antique shop in New York in 1927, and bought it because it looked just like her sister Marcella. Many years later, Kathleen's sister Sue's husband asked why Kathleen had a portrait of Sue on her wall. Apparently Sue Epps looks just like Marcella.



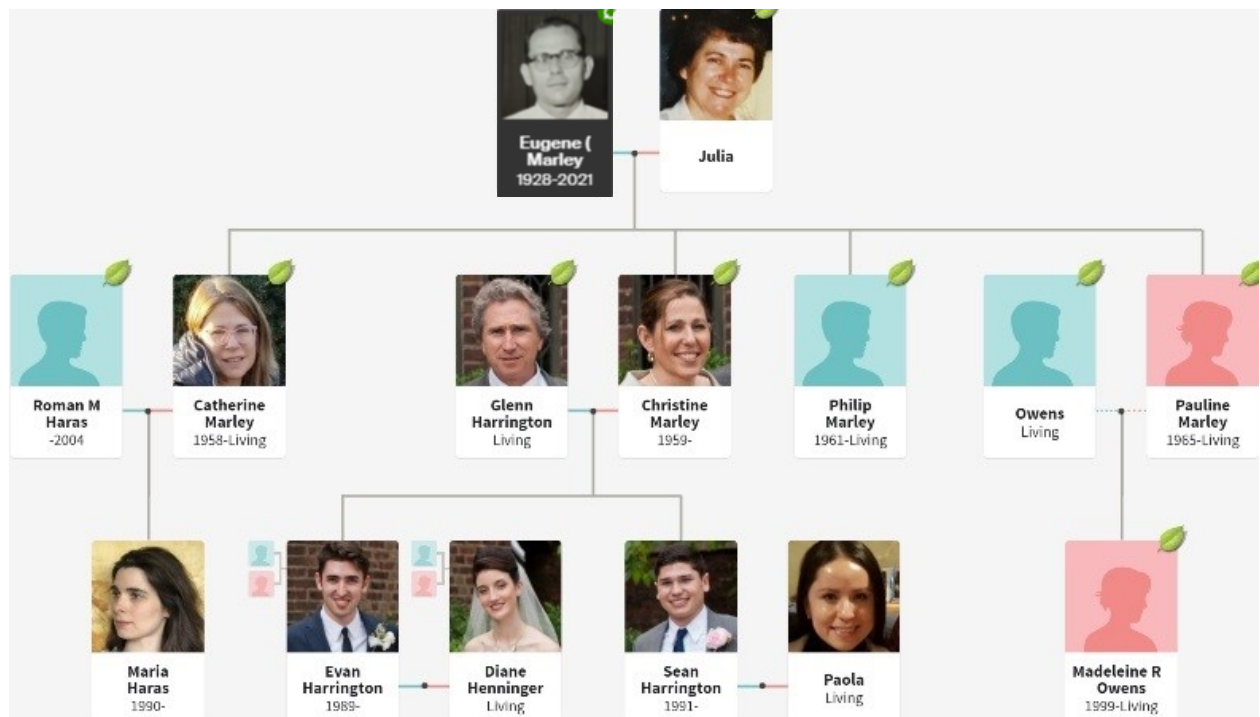
(l) Marcella Marley with Pat, Francis, and Eugene; (r) Plaque of Marcella look-alike

Marcella and Charles had three children: Eugene, Pat, and Francis. Eugene said they had a "tough childhood," probably due to their parents' unhappy marriage. All three had great singing and speaking voices. It is said that Marcella went to church every day.

6.1. Marcella's son Eugene ("Gene") Marley was born in 1928 in Queens, New York, and died in 2021 in Florida, at age 92. He was in the Holy Cross Fathers seminary for six years. He married Julia in 1957. A few years later, with a young child or two in tow, the family moved to Guam, where Gene spent four years teaching at the University of Maryland education program for the Air Force. After that the family moved to Miami because Gene said New York was too expensive. They lived in Little Havana and the kids learned Spanish. Gene and Julia had four children: Catherine lives in Pasadena, California; Christine lives in Pipersville, Pennsylvania; Pauline lives in Dallas, Texas; and Philip lives near West Palm Beach, Florida.

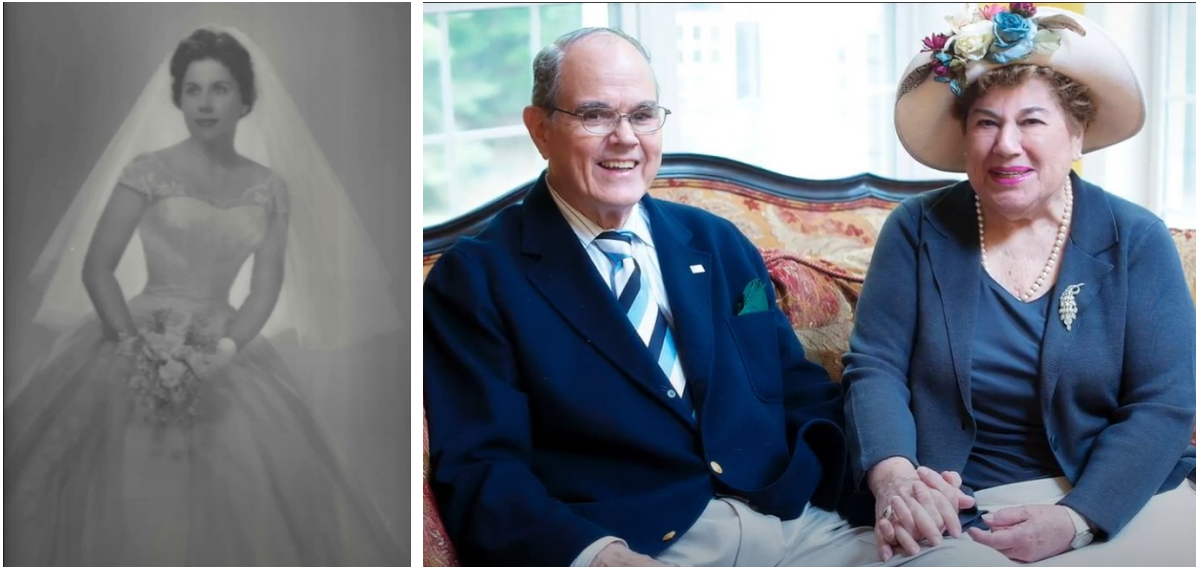


Eugene Marley

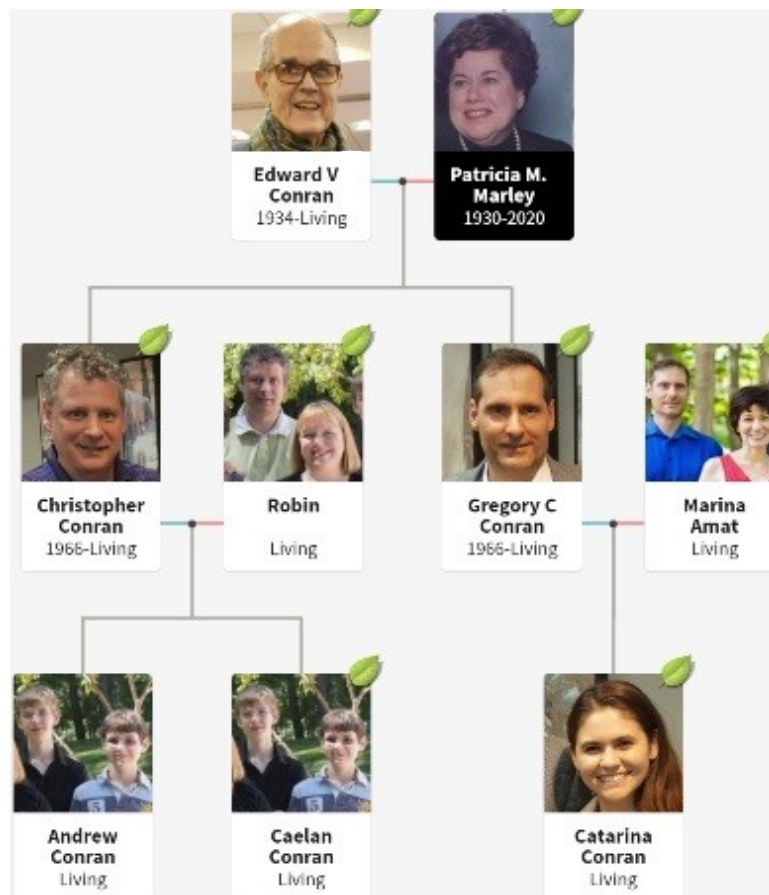


Descendants of Eugene Marley (Evan Harrington has a daughter)

6.2. Marcella's daughter, **Patricia (Pat) Marley**, was born in 1930. She had an advanced degree in social work and a beautiful singing voice. Pat and her husband, Edward (Jed) Conran, had twin boys, Christopher and Gregory. Pat died in Hartford, Connecticut, in 2020 at age 90.

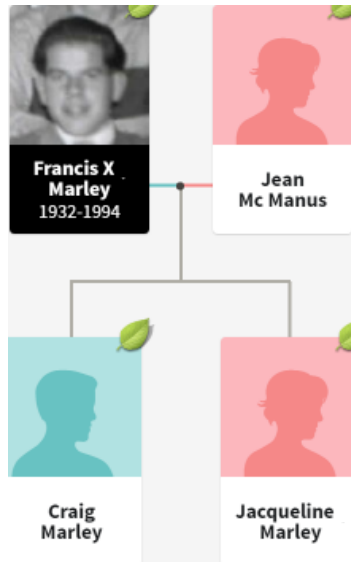


(l) Pat on her wedding day; (r) Jed and Pat Conran



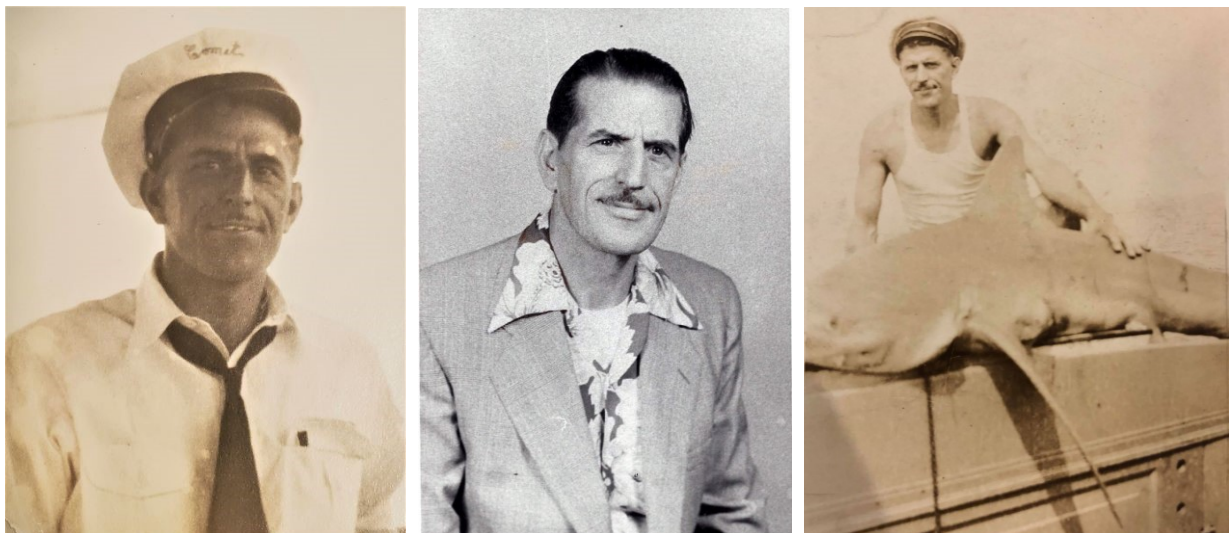
Descendants of Pat Marley

6.3. Marcella's son **Francis Xavier ("Brad") Marley** was born in 1932. He was a Marine Corps sergeant in the Korean War, and an editor for Newsweek. He and his wife, Jean, had three children, the youngest of whom died of SIDS. Brad and Jean divorced when their kids were very young. Brad died of cancer in 1994. I have been unable to locate his two children, Craig and Jacqueline.



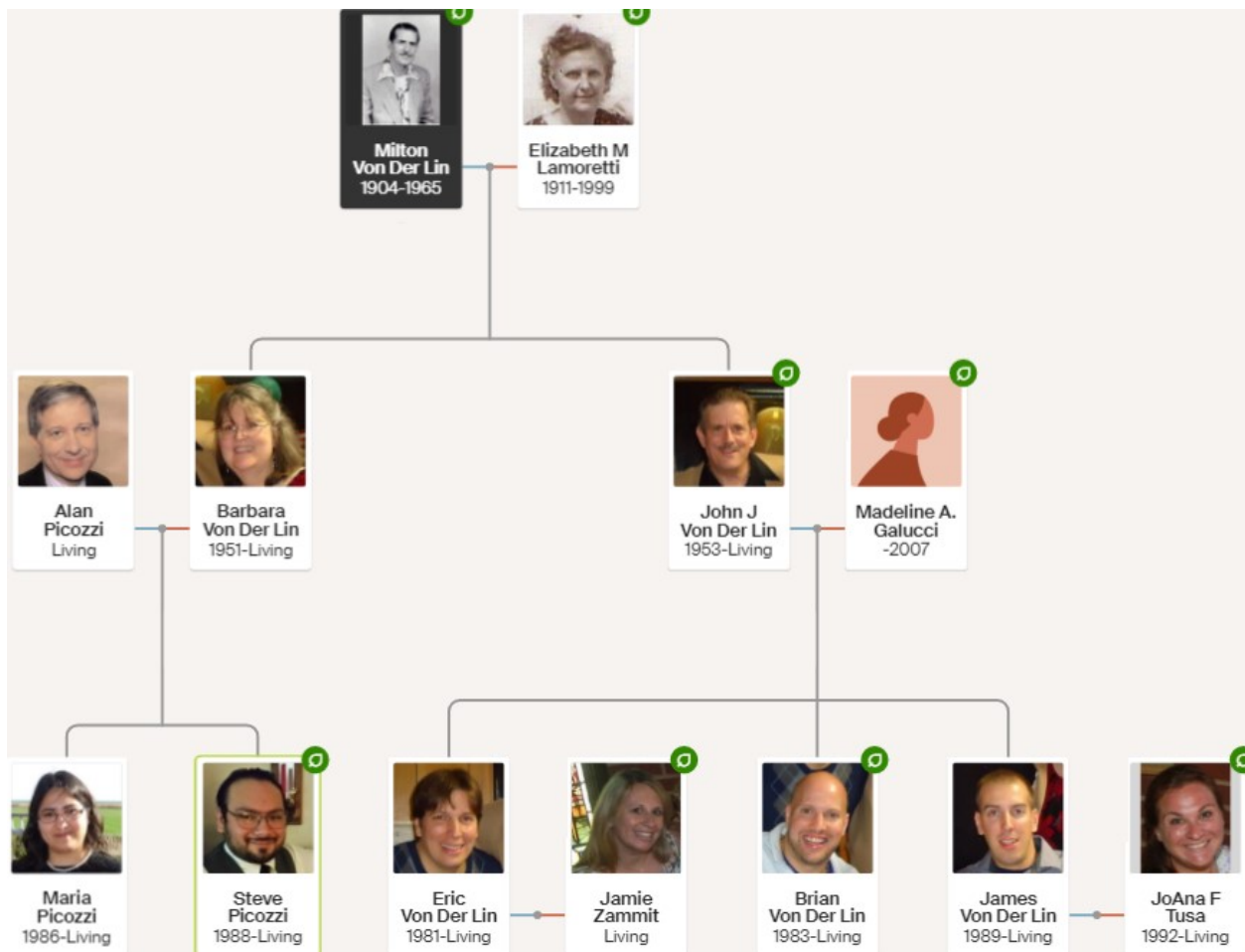
7. Milton Von Der Linn

Frank and Barbara's son Milton Von Der Linn was born in 1904. As a young man he liked to go shark fishing with his dad.



(l) 1939 World's Fair Comet ride operator; (c) date unknown; (r) with a shark he caught

Milton married Elizabeth Lamoretti. They lived in Jamaica, Queens. Milton spent 25 years as an electronics technician with the U.S. Naval Applied Science Laboratory at the Brooklyn Navy Yard. He died in 1965 at age 60. He and Elizabeth had two children: Barbara lives in Connecticut; John lives in Pennsylvania.



Descendants of Milton Von Der Linn (great grandchildren not shown)

Living Descendants of Frank and Barbara Von Der Linn

I have contact info for most of the people on these lists.

Grandchildren

John Joseph Von Der Linn (Mountaintop PA)

Barbara Von Der Linn Picozzi (Wilton CT)

Great Grandchildren

Betse McNamara Gori	Kevin Fisher	Brian Von Der Linn
Geraldine McNamara	Ron Fisher	James Von Der Linn (NY)
Susan McNamara	Lauren Agnelli	Cat Marley Haras
Breezy McNamara	Carrie Agnelli McKenna	Christine Marley Harrington
Nancy McNamara Chaboun	Mark Agnelli	Phillip Marley
Joan McNamara	Karen Von Der Linn Story	Pauline Marley Owens
Christine Epps	Kelly Von Der Linn Gallant	Craig Marley
Kathleen Epps	Susan Von Der Linn Ortega	Jacqueline Marley
Mary Epps	David Von Der Linn	Chris Conran
Richard Epps	Mark Von Der Linn	Greg Conran
Suzanne Epps	Peter Von Der Linn	Maria Picozzi (Ad)
Clare Fisher	Michael Von Der Linn	Steve Picozzi (Ad)
Greg Fisher	Ellen Sanita	
Ken Fisher	Eric Von Der Linn	

Articles about the Frank Von Der Linn family

My Ancestry.com tree contains a number of articles about Frank, Barbara, and their kids. Here are a few selections.

Pretty Girls to Paint Ramblersville Chapel

PRETTY GIRLS TO PAINT RAMBLERSVILLE CHAPEL

The Von Der Linn Sisters Have
Agreed to Do the
Work.

PAINT TO BE FURNISHED THEM

Girls Are Pretty and Energetic—It's
a Safe Prediction They Will Do
a Good Job.

The Catholics of Ramblersville, the picturesque fishing village on Jamaica Bay, nestled up alongside the trestle of the Rockaway Beach Division of the Long Island Railroad, dedicated their first house of worship last Sunday morning. Father John Castex of the Gate of Heaven Church of Ozone Park officiated at the ceremonies incident to the dedication of a handsome chapel, which has been named in honor of Blessed Montfort.

The little chapel was erected at a cost of about \$1,200. This does not include furnishings, altar, etc. The building, which is 26x35 feet, and will seat 250 people, is set up on spiles, as are all the houses in Ramblersville, and will be reached by a boardwalk, which has yet to be constructed to connect with the main boardwalk.

Mr. and Mrs. Frank Von Der Linn, who own the Marcella House and considerable property in Ramblersville, and who are well known in Brooklyn, where they live in winter, gave the ground on which the house of worship was erected. They and their daughters were instrumental in raising the money to defray the expenses for the building and the furnishing of same.

It was largely through the efforts of the Von Der Linns that a congregation was established two years ago in Ramblersville. Until then it was necessary for Catholics to journey to Ozone Park for their devotions. The Von Der Linns gave the use of a little bungalow they own and had it nicely fitted up with an altar and statuary. Regularly, every Sunday, Father Castex, or his assistant, Father Somers, of the Gate of Heaven Church, celebrated mass. At first about thirty persons attended the Sunday services, but the number soon became so large that it was found necessary to secure more commodious quarters. Then it was that money was raised by subscription to build a chapel.

Several days ago there was a little gathering of Catholics at the home of the Von Der Linns, and there was some talk as to how the chapel was to be painted, and who was to do the work. To the surprise of everyone, Miss Lucia Margaret, the 21-year-old daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Von Der Linn, said, with a toss of her head, that she was ready to pitch in and do the work herself provided she was furnished with the paint. Lucia's sister, Eleanor Romana, a year younger, cheerfully volunteered to assist in the work, and now it is an understood thing that on or about July 12 the two young women will don suitable clothing and ply the brush. They are an energetic pair, and no one who knows them doubts that once they get on the job they will complete the work as quickly and as ably as any union men.

Both the girls are graduates of the Girls High School of Brooklyn, are attractive, accomplished conversationalists and musicians of no small ability. In Brooklyn they are well known for their work in the field of charity, having engineered many musicales and bazars for the benefit of the poor.

Backyard Sharks

"Captain Frank" was profiled in this newspaper article about his love of shark fishing in Jamaica Bay.

Backyard Sharks—

Caught on a Clothesline and Carved by Capt. von der Linn in Jamaica Bay

By HAROLD F. PARROTT

It isn't hard to listen to Capt. Frank von der Linn.

Yesterday we tied up to his dock in Ramblersville, Queens, just as he was brandishing an ugly knife over an even uglier deep sea beast that was strung up with a rope and pulleys.

It isn't unusual to see a shark or two trussed up by his gills on the Von der Lin dock.

But this one—he measured almost 7 feet and weighed over 200 pounds—drew the photographers as well as a chorus of o-ohs and a-ahs from the local populace.

"Everybody makes a lot of fuss about a fish like this," confided the captain, fondling his leering-eyed pet as a child would a new toy "but none of 'em realizes that this is the best fish there is—to eat."

Whereupon he actually started to sharpen his knife on the emory-like skin of the big fellow. He laughed when we gasped, "It's the toughest skin there is," said the captain. "Shoes made from it never wear out. I have a piece by the kitchen range that I've been striking matches on for 5 years—and it hasn't dulled a bit."

You don't have to be a deep-sea fisherman to go sharking. "Most any sunny afternoon you'll come across Captain von der Linn and his son, Milton, as they lie anchored in Big Paul, a channel that's within a stone's throw of the Cross Bay Boulevard in Jamaica Bay.

How It's Done

A live eel on a hook that's almost as big as your fist, attached to rope as thick as clothesline—that's the equipment. When the shark bites, he tows the boat around in circles until he's tired out. Then the two men crew hauls him to the surface, where he's rendered harmless by a few applications of a heavy baseball bat.

The Captain is a veteran fisherman, but he says he prefers sharks for the fight they make. He first started to go after the big gray fellows almost ten years ago when he was weakfishing one day and

the boat beside him hauled in a little shark.

He tried it the next day and has seldom come back empty-handed since then. Sharks feed on weakfish, and he always has lines out for both, though one bite on the shark line quickly tells that there will be no weakfish that day.

Others have found sharkfishing great sport right in Pa. Knickerbocker's back yard. Gus Hollmann of Howard Beach used to bring them in regularly with a clothesline and a five-gallon gasoline can for a bobber.

"Of course, they're not man-eaters," explained the Captain. "They wouldn't hurt anybody." But a glance at one of Mr. von der Linn's pets would send all of Coney Island on a hot Sunday scampering for the bathhouses.

Another Sea-Beast

By this time he had hacked his way through the leathery skin and had carved off a round of white meat. "We once had a chef prepare this for some men from the city," laughed the captain. "When they ate it, they said it was better than scallops."

With five pounds of shark under our arm, we were preparing to depart when we brushed against some thing else. Two wicked little eyes peered out from cavernous eyebrows on a fish almost as long and wide as the sitting room carpet—it was five feet long and even wider, with a spiny tail six feet long.

"That," said the Captain contemptuously, "is just a skate, though it's bigger than usual. We throw them away, because they're not good to eat."

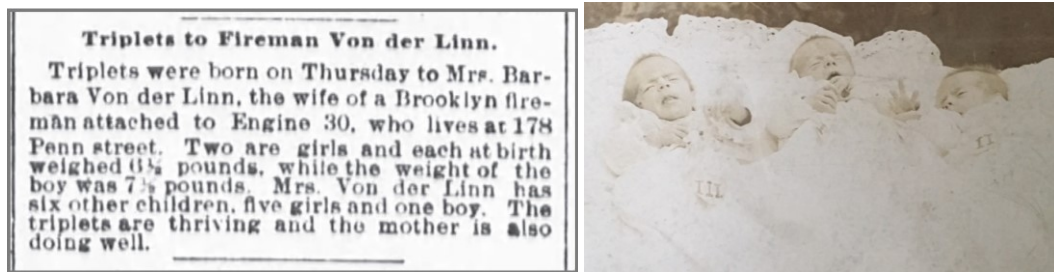
And Jamaica Bay always seemed like such a nice place to swim!

Frank VDL Church Donation

“Folks at Ramblersville petitioned Father Castex of St. Mary's Gate of Heaven Church to say mass in Ramblersville. The first mass was celebrated in Frank Vonderlinn's cottage in 1906. The Blessed Louis Marie De Monifort Chapel was established on Church Street in 1908 [on property donated by the Von Der Linns].”

Triplets to Fireman Von Der Linn

June 24, 1899. The babies weighed 20.5 pounds total! Sadly, despite the fact that they were thriving at birth, all three children died in infancy.



Triplets Alice, Helen, and Walter

Clausen, Germany

Both Clausen and Petersberg are small towns with no shops, and no tourist office or town hall to visit. It's a beautiful rural area, with country roads, forests, and farmland. It's a popular hiking destination. The towns are not especially picturesque, with mainly functional working class stucco buildings.



Clausen in 2017



The oldest house I saw in Clausen



Fountain in the center of the very small and quiet town of Clausen

Von Der Linn Houses in Clausen

The Von Der Linn ancestral houses in Clausen have mostly been torn down and redeveloped, and the ones that are still standing are not original. The following Clausen houses were lived in by various ancestors. “House number” refers to the old numbering system. All of these houses are clustered in the center of town. It’s still a very small town, but it has grown outwards a bit since George left.

House number 227

This house was lived in by Johann Georg Von Der Linn (b. 1760 – d. 1815) and Johann Michael Von Der Linn (b. 1786 – d. 1847). Current address is Hauptstrasse 25. As of 2023 there is a new house on this site.

House number 177

This house was lived in by Johann Georg Von Der Linn (b. 1818 – d. 1865). Current address is Hauptstrasse 83. House was restored in 1935.

House number 31

This house was lived in by Johannes Vonderlin (b. 1792 – d. 1851). Current address is Hauptstrasse 66. As of 2023 there is a new house on this site.

House number 51

This house was lived in by Georg Anton Vonderlin (b. 1806) and Georg Anton Vonderlin (b. 1840). Current address is Marhöferstrasse 8. As of 2023 there is a new house on this site.

House number 64

This house was lived in by Georg Anton Vonderlin (b. 1814 – d. 1869) and Heinrich Vonderlin (b. 1846 – d. 1907). Current address is Marhöferstrasse 9. House was restored in 1906.

House number 68

This house was lived in by Adam Vonderlin (b. 1836 – d. 1913). Current address is Marhöferstrasse 5. House was restored in 1912.



Marhöferstrasse 5. This house was lived in by Adam Vonderlin and restored in 1912.

Clausen Municipal Records

These treasure troves of local history include all available birth, marriage, property sales, and other records collected by local historians. You can find these documents on my website: nwnative.us. Click on “Karen’s Page,” then “Karen Family Genealogy.” There are two books: *Clausen Municipal Records 1466-1806* and *Clausen Municipal Records 1807-1875*.

Part 2: The Heils and Van Ostrands

From Amsterdam to America: The Van Ostrands

Ethel Heil's mother was Grace Van Ostrand (sometimes spelled Van Nostrand). Grace's sixth great grandparents, Joris Jansen Rapalje and Catalyntje Trico, came to America in 1624. They were some of the earliest immigrants to what was then called New Netherland. Author Russell Shorto has said they were "the Adam and Eve" of New Netherland, because the number of their descendants has been estimated at about a million. There is a lot of information about them online.

Spellings of Joris and Catalyntje's first and last names vary greatly. The name Rapalje was a Dutchification of the French name Rapareillet. Trico is a Dutchification of Tricault, Catalyntje's original French surname.

Joris (George) Jansen Rapalje

Joris (George) was christened April 28, 1604, in Valenciennes, a Protestant (Huguenot) stronghold in northern France. Huguenots were French Protestants of the 16th and 17th centuries. They suffered severe persecution at the hands of the Catholic majority, and many thousands left France.

Joris was born during the time of the Spanish occupation, in what was then part of the Spanish Netherlands. He was the youngest of nine children of Jean de Rapareillet and Elizabeth Lodewyck Baudouin. Records indicate that Jean and Elizabeth died on the same day in 1606, when Joris was less than 2 years old. This is either an inaccuracy, or a tragedy. (This is from a historian who contacted me: It's actually unclear who his mother is - there's a possibility that he was an illegitimate child, or he may have been listed as illegitimate because his parents were Protestant. The name Lodewyck appears to be a random addition through internet genealogies – it's possible that this refers to the Lodewyck District, a location near where Elizabeth was from.)



In her book, *Famous Families Of New York*⁶, Margherita-Arlina-Hamm says:

⁶ Famous Families Of New York, Margherita-Arlina-Hamm, Heraldic Publishing Company, New York, 1970, Vol II, Page 63, "RAPALJE"

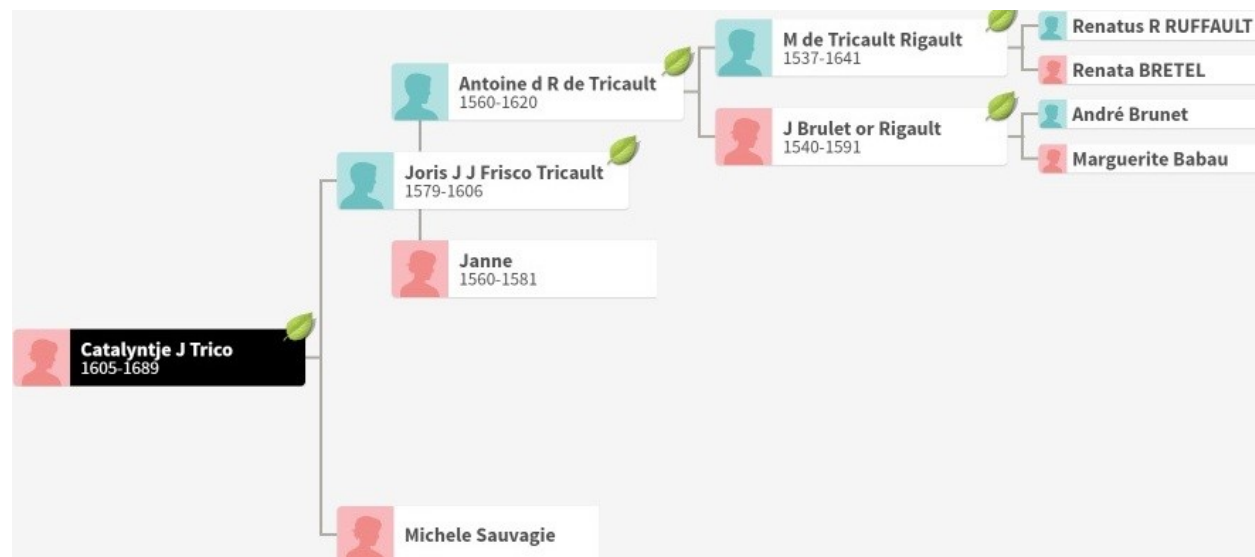
[Joris's] family had been distinguished in the history of Brittany from the middle of the eleventh century. ...they owned large estates, and were famous for their valor and patriotism. Many of them took part in the Crusades, while others achieved distinction in the French wars at home and abroad. They were among the first converts to the Reformed faith, and paid the usual penalty for their non-conformity. Some were killed, while the majority were forced to flee to Switzerland, Belgium, and Holland.

Joris was among those who escaped to Holland. Here he remained a short time, and then, with a company of adventurous men and women, he [and Catalyntje] took passage in the ship "Unity" of the Dutch West India Company, and arrived in Nieuw Amsterdam (NYC) in 1624, being one of the earliest settlers. He stayed a short while at Nieuw Amsterdam (NYC), and then went to Fort Orange, now Albany. There he remained three years, and returned to Nieuw Amsterdam (NYC), where he lived until 1637. In June of that year he bought a large tract of land from the Indians on the Long Island side of the East River, and there made his permanent home. The tract was 225 acres, and included a large part of what was called the Wallabout. He was a man of high integrity, and a few years after his arrival in Brooklyn he was made a magistrate.

Catalyntje Trico

Catalyntje Jeronimus Trico (Tricault) was born in 1605 in Prisches, County of Hainaut, Spanish Netherlands (now Departement du Nord, France).

We can trace Catalyntje's parentage back to her paternal great great grandparents:



Names and dates are somewhat suspect, but Renatus Ruffault was born around 1510 in Cesson, Ille-et-Vilaine, Bretagne, France; and Andre Brunet was born around 1520 somewhere in France.

Joris and Catalyntje come to America

Joris and Catalyntje were married in the Protestant church in Amsterdam, Netherlands, on January 21, 1624. Joris was an illiterate 19-year-old textile worker, and Catalyntje was 18 years old (and presumably also illiterate). They had no family present to witness the ceremony.

Four days later, on January 25, 1624, the couple departed from Amsterdam aboard the Nieu Nederlandt, one of the first ships to bring immigrants and workers to New Netherland in North America. The families aboard these ships were principally Walloons and Huguenots. (Walloons are people who speak a French dialect and live in southern and eastern Belgium and neighboring parts of France.)

Margherita-Arlina-Hamm says:

The wars between the Romanists and Huguenots of France ... drove tens of thousands of the Reformed faith into more liberal countries ... a considerable portion crossed the Atlantic and settled in the Dutch colonies of America... Among the first settlers in the Nieuw Nederlandt (NY), was Joris Jansen de Rapalie, a noble Huguenot of La Rochelle, France.

The Rapalje family were first employed at Fort Orange, in what would eventually become Albany, New York. The fort was being erected by the Dutch West India Company as a trading post on the west bank of the Hudson River, and became the company's official outpost in the upper Hudson Valley.

Author Bill Greer, who has written extensively about the early Dutch settlers in New York, says:

Eight families plus ten or twelve men would plant the settlement to be called Fort Orange. The Covenant of Friendship that they concluded with the Mohicans and the Mohawks would lead to a prosperous start for the new community.

[Within a year] the grain sowed in the fields offered by the Mohicans reached as high as a man. The gardens had grown green and a mill was turning on Nordman's Kill. Commander May filled his ship with 500 otter skins and 1500 beaver. By the end of 1624, he was selling his cargo in Amsterdam for 28,000 guilders. Three more ships followed in 1625 bringing cattle, horses, hogs, and sheep, plus equipment with which to build a dairy. And forty-five more people came to New Netherland.

If Catalina felt trepidation living in an uncharted wilderness surrounded by savages, she didn't mention it when she looked back sixty years later. The Covenant of Friendship ... endured. The Indians daily brought great multitudes of beaver, she remembered, and they were all as quiet as lambs and came and traded with all the freedom imaginable.

But by 1626 things had gone awry with the Indians, and Dutch authorities relocated most settlers from Fort Orange to Fort Amsterdam at the southern end of Manhattan Island (now Battery Park). Joris and Catalyntje established a residence near the fort, and were among the earliest purchasers of land in Manhattan. In 1637, they also bought several hundred acres of farmland across the river on Wallabout Bay, in what is now the Red Hook area of Brooklyn.

Joris built the first house on Long Island. It was one and a half stories tall, made of logs, with one room on the ground floor used as a parlor, kitchen, and bedroom. Curtains served as partitions.⁷

A leading citizen, Joris played a prominent part in the public affairs of the colony, and served in the

⁷ Miller, C. K., *Historic Families of America*, Charles Kingsbury Miller, Chicago, IL, 1897

magistracy of Brooklyn from 1655 to 1662. After a few years of farming, he and Catalyntje opened a small tavern, or "tap house," on the north side of what is now Pearl Street in Manhattan. They later built two houses on Pearl Street, abutting Fort Amsterdam. They managed the tap house and grew vegetables to serve their guests. They must have had to cross the river by boat to go between the tavern and the farm.



*Home of descendants of the Rapalje family, foot of 34th Street and the Hudson River
Drawing by Eliza Pratt Groatorex, 1800*

Joris and Catalyntje were the parents of 11 children, including Sarah Rapalje, who was granted a large tract of land in Brooklyn by Dutch authorities for being the first European child to be born in New Netherland. Sarah's chair is in the collection of the Museum of the City of New York.

In 1641, Joris Rapalje was one of the Council of Twelve Men⁸ representing Manhattan, Breukelen (Brooklyn), and Pavonia (now Hudson County, New Jersey).

About 1655, Joris and Catalyntje turned the tap house over to their daughter, Sarah, and moved to the farm on Wallabout Bay. The farm would stay in the family until the Revolutionary era. Today the land where the Rapalje's farm stood is the Brooklyn Navy Yard.

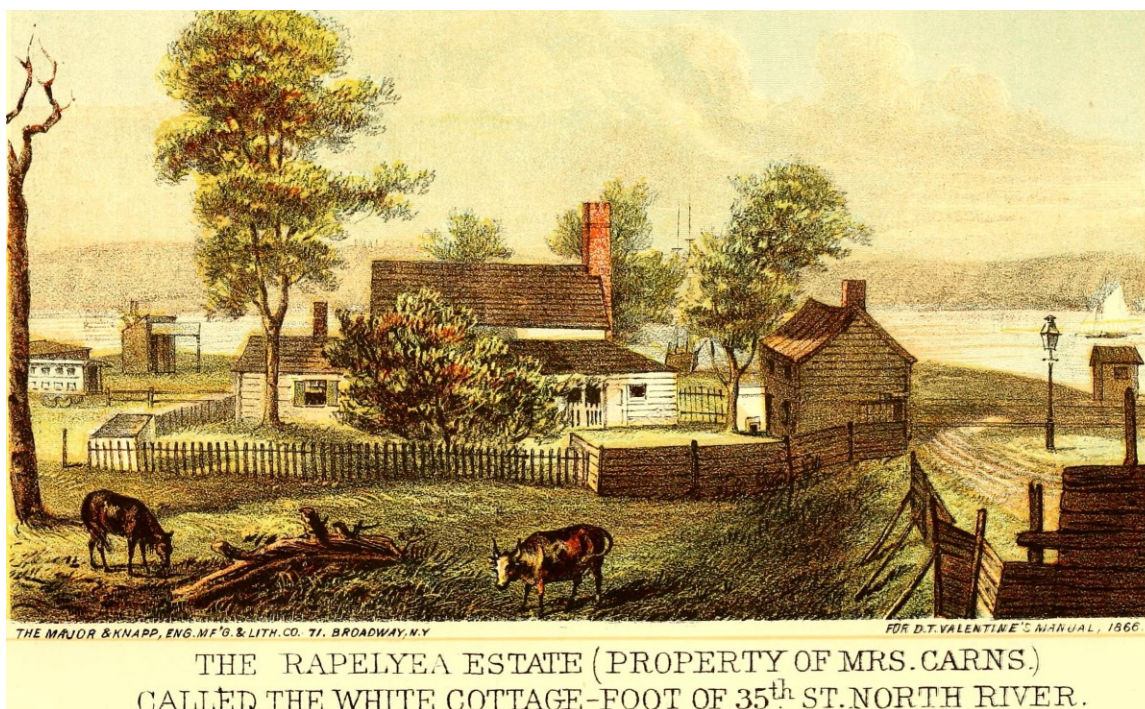
Joris died around 1663 in Breuckelen, New Netherland, at about 58 years old.

After Joris's death, Catalyntje continued to live on the farm, where she helped raise her large extended

⁸ The Council of Twelve Men advised the Director of New Netherland on relations with the Native Americans. It was the first representational form of democracy in the Dutch colony.

family, and grew vegetables and flowers. She was known as “the old widow from Valenciennes.” She was 74 years old in 1679, when two visitors described her in their journal:

She is worldly minded, living with her whole heart, as well as body, among her progeny which now number 145 and will soon reach 150. Nevertheless, she lived alone by herself a little apart from the others, having her little garden and other conveniences, with which she helped herself.



*Drawing of a farm belonging to descendants of Joris Jansen Rapalje.
(North River was the Dutch name for the Hudson River.)*

Catalyntje died in 1689 at age 84, and is buried in Flatbush Reformed Dutch Church Cemetery in Flatbush, New York. Brooklyn's Rapelye Street is named for the family, and Rapalje, Montana, is named for a family descendant. Famous descendants include Cornelius and Gloria Vanderbilt.

One of Joris and Catalyntje's sixth great granddaughters was our ancestor Grace Elizabeth Van Ostrand. The following paragraphs and charts trace the lineage.

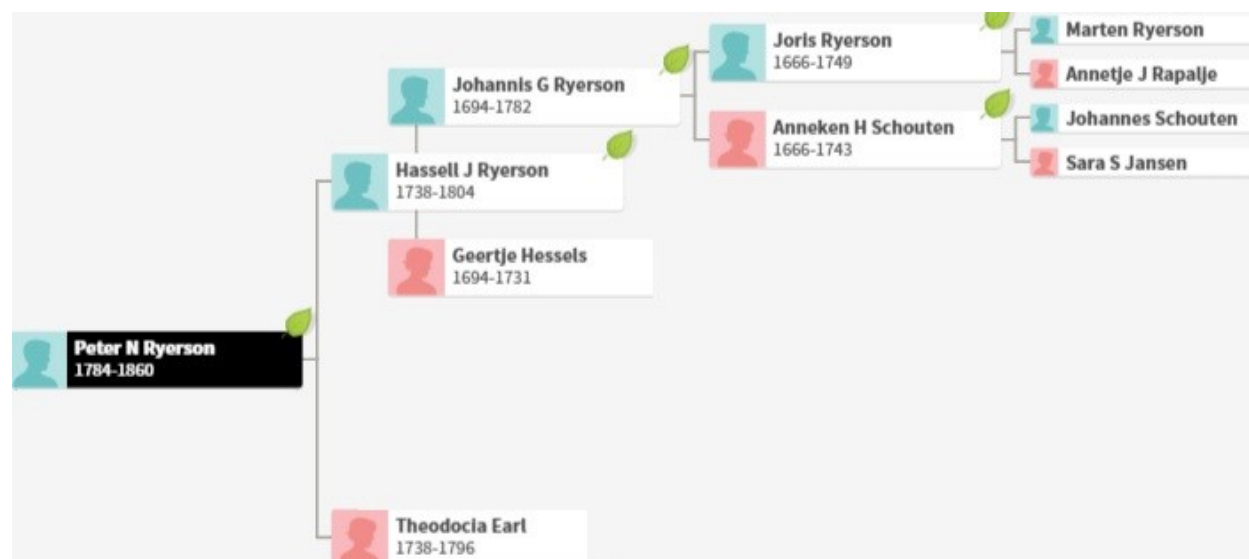
Joris and Catalyntje's daughter Annetje was born in 1646. In 1663 she married Martin Ryerson, a Dutch man who emigrated from Amsterdam in 1646 and settled at Flatlands, on Long Island.

Martin and Annetje were married in the Protestant Reformed Dutch church of Brooklyn, New York. In 1677 Martin was appointed Justice of the Peace, and in 1682 he was made constable.

Martin and Annetje had 11 children. Their second child, Joris (also called Yores and George), was born in 1666. In 1691, at age 24, he married Anneken (Hannah) Schouten. Her husband had died and left her with three small children and a five-acre farm.

Joris and Hannah initially farmed Hannah's land on Manhattan Island. In about 1695 Martin co-purchased

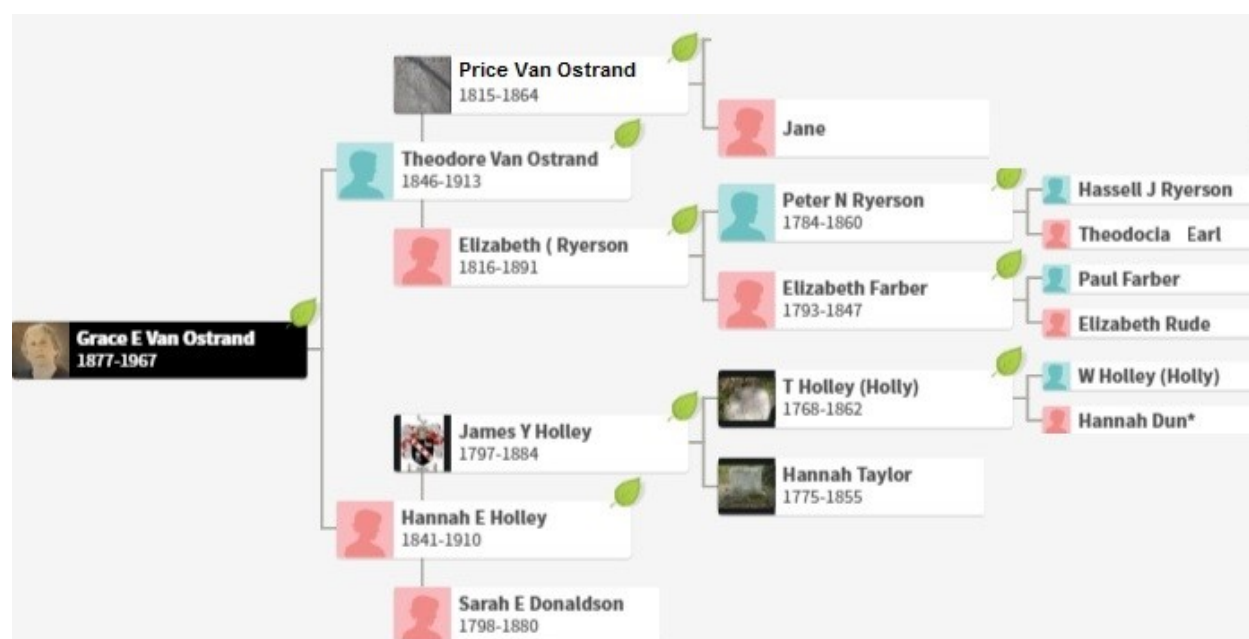
5500 acres of land in Pacquanac, New Jersey, near the present Mountain View, which was then a wilderness. In about 1708 he and Hannah sold their Manhattan land and moved to New Jersey. Martin became a leading citizen there, and his residence was the most prominent in that region for many years. He was one of His Majesty's Judges for Bergen County, New Jersey.



Descendants of Joris and Catalyntje's daughter Annetje; Peter Ryerson is Grace's great grandfather

Joris and Hannah's third child, Johannes, was born in 1694. After his first wife died, he married Geertje Hessels. They lived on a farm given to Johannes by his father. Johannes was Justice of the Peace of Bergen County.

Johannes and Geertje's ninth and youngest child was Hassel, born in 1738. He was a farmer and inherited two thirds of his family's property, called "The Goffle." His first wife was Theodocia Earl, a Quaker.



Grace's parents were Theodore Van Ostrand and Hannah Holley

John and Theodocia's fifth child, Peter Ryerson, was born in 1784. He was a farmer in Sussex County, New Jersey, and also owned and operated a large tanning plant.

Peter Ryerson married Elizabeth Farber. Eliza, their fourth child, married the Reverend Zachariah Price Van Ostrand. The eighth child of Price and Eliza was Theodore. He married his next-door neighbor, Hannah Holley, and they had Grace.

Theodore Van Ostrand

Theodore's mother, Elizabeth Farber was the great great granddaughter of Plymouth colonist Robert Paddock. His ancestry is disputed, but he is likely from Ireland, and, before that, French Huguenots. According to online sources, the following is the most agreed-upon story of his ancestry.

Guillaume Paddoc was born about 1350 in northern France. He was a Lord, and the title rolled down to his son, Guillaume, and his grandson, Jean Paddoc. Jean was born about 1405 in Bavay, in northern France. In 1461, he purchased the manor and lands of Le Chesne.

Jean's son Jacques was born in 1429. He inherited Le Chesne from his father, but he was the youngest son, and upon his death, Le Chesne went to his older brother. Jacques also owned property in Le Cateau acquired through his marriage to Adalaide Blabon, and he inherited the manor of Maubeuge (look it up!) from his mother in 1469.

Jacques' son, Henri Paddoc was born in 1461 in Le Cateau, in northern France. As oldest son he inherited the title Esquire, Lord of the Manors of Le Cateau and Orchies. At age 9 he was apprenticed to Jan van der Goes of Rotterdam, Holland, where he learned jewelry and goldsmithing. In 1508 he inherited Le Cateau from his father, and joined the Duke of Brittany's forces that same year.

Henri's son Paul was born in 1507 in Le Cateau. He purchased the manor of Montherme in 1552, becoming Lord of the Manors of Le Cateau and Montherme.

Paul's son Jean was born at Le Cateau in 1550. According to RootsWeb, he "was a Huguenot who fled from France about 1580. He eventually settled near Dublin [Ireland] in Stephenstown, though he also owned land at Tullygovan, County Louth, and apparently moved there at some point, as he died there." He was a blacksmith. His wife, Jeanette Jennin (Jennings), "Came to Ireland with her uncle Jean Jennin in 1570 from France," according to one internet source.

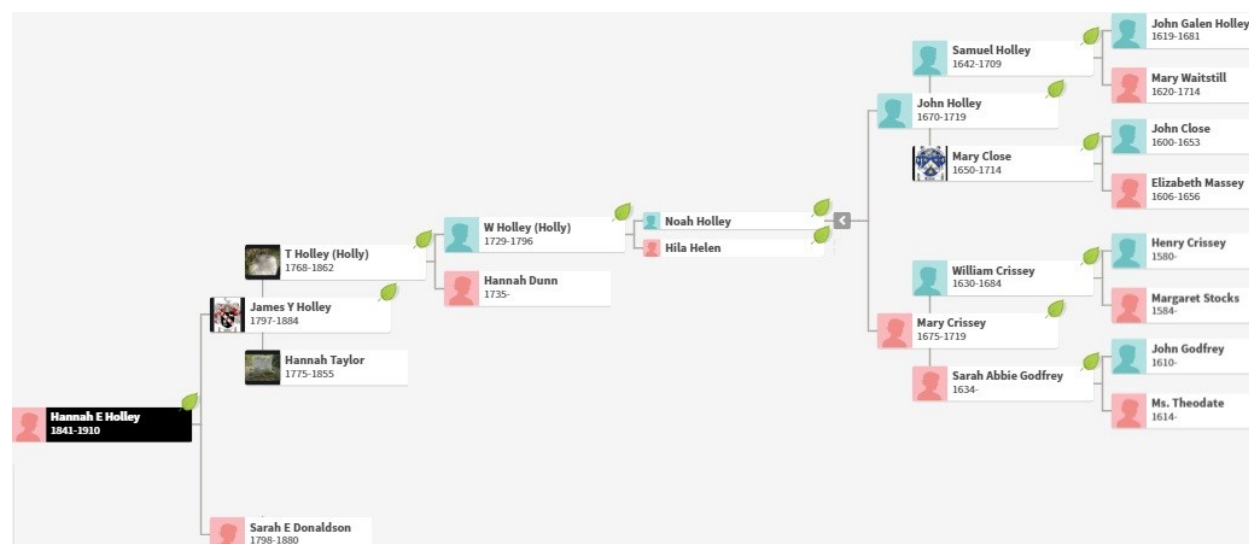
Jean and Jeanette's son Robert was born in 1584 in Stephenstown, Balrothery Parish, Co. Dublin, Ireland. Robert inherited his father's blacksmith shop in Killanny in 1607. He immigrated to Plymouth Colony sometime between 1631 and 1634, and was a blacksmith there. He was given four acres of upland in 1641. He served in the Plymouth Colony Militia, and died in 1650. With his third wife (all three were named Mary), he had a daughter named Susannah. Fast forward a few generations and we come to Elizabeth Farber, who married Peter Ryerson and birthed Theodore Van Ostrand.

Hannah Holley

Grace Van Ostrand's mother was Hannah Holley (or Holly). She was born in 1841 in Glenwood, New Jersey, and died there in 1910. She married her next-door neighbor, Theodore Van Ostrand, in 1871, when she was 30 years old.

Grace's daughter Ethel said that Hannah's father, James Yarrington Holley, was a Rural Free Delivery mail worker, but this service didn't begin until 1896, after he had died. He is listed in the 1850 census as a farmer.

Hannah's ancestry is British. Her fifth great grandfather, John Galen Holley, emigrated from London between 1619 (the year he was born) and 1641 (the year he married Mary Waitstill in Connecticut). Mary Waitstill had emigrated from Chippenham, Wiltshire, England. Hannah's fifth great grandparents John Close and Elizabeth Massey married in Yorkshire before coming to America around 1632.



Hannah Holley's ancestors

The LDS shared family tree traces Hannah's ancestors back over 2000 years to England, Wales, and France. There is much more information than I could possibly include in this document. I encourage you to go [FamilySearch.org](https://www.familysearch.org), click on Search > Family Tree, enter Hannah's info, and start clicking arrows to expand the tree. You will see Sirs, Barons, Counts, Dukes, and Kings. You might see Brylwais ap Ceraint, who lived in 490 BC. Or Anna 'the Prophetess' Bint Joseph Of Arimathea, born in Israel, who married King Berwyn ap Ceri of the Britons and died in Wales in 48 BC.

Grace Van Ostrand

Theodore Van Ostrand and Hannah Holley's daughter Grace Elizabeth Van Ostrand was born in 1877 in Glenwood, Sussex, New Jersey. Grace had a twin brother, Theodore Price, who died in infancy. She had a sister named Minnie May who died at age 4. Grace's daughter Ruth said that Grace had two sisters who Ruth called Aunt Frank and Aunt Libby, but I have not been able to find any records for them.

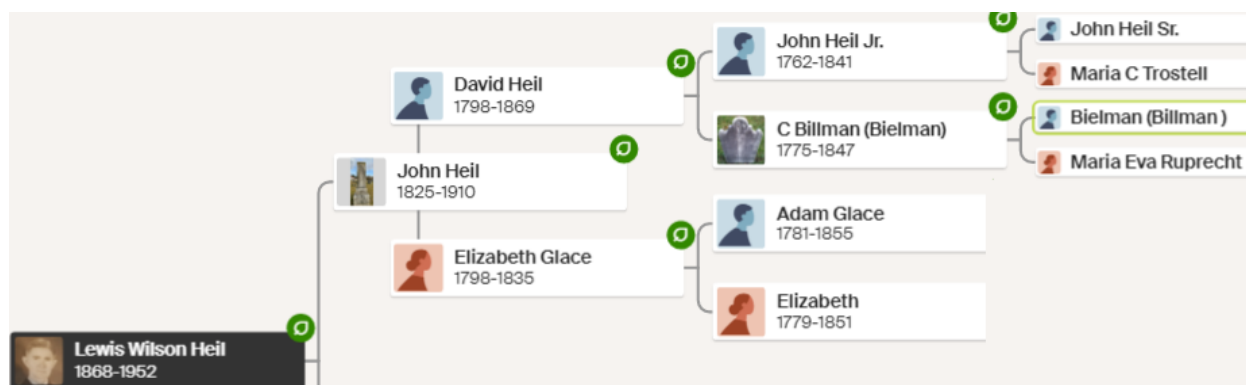
Grace married Lewis Wilson Heil in 1895 and they had four children: Harold, Ethel, Ruth, and Lester. We will learn more about the Heil family later in this document. Grace died in 1967 at age 89. She and Lewis are buried in Warwick cemetery in Warwick, NY, in the Van Ostrand family plot, Site C 128. There is no headstone for either of them.



Grace Van Ostrand, dates unknown

The Heils

The Heils came from Bavaria, and it was probably Johannes (John) Heil Sr. (1725–1798) who immigrated sometime before 1762, which is when his son Johann (John) was born in Lehigh County, Pennsylvania. However, we can trace the ancestry of Lewis's grandmother, Catherine Bielman, back to the 1300s.



Lewis Heil's paternal ancestors

The Bielmans

Lewis Heil's 3rd great grandparents, Hans David Bielman and Anna Maria Bentz, were both born in 1703 in Biberach, Duchy of Wurttemberg, in southwest Germany. They came to Pennsylvania in 1736, when they were 33. There is quite a bit of information about the Bielmans online (see footnotes). This is their line of descent to Lewis:

Hans David Bielman (1703-1768) & Anna Maria Bentz (1703-1756) > Jacob Bielman (1741-1779) > Catherine Barbara Bielman (1775-1847) & John Heil Jr. (1762-1841) > David Heil (1798-1869) > John Heil (1825-1910) > Lewis Heil

(FamilySearch.org traces one of Anna Maria's lineages back to Hans Wagner, born in 1350 in Kirkel, Germany (30 miles west of Clausen).)

The following is from a website called "Descendants of Hans David Bielman of the Duchy of Wurttemberg"⁹:

Located between the Upper Rhine and Danube rivers and extending south to Switzerland, the Duchy of Wurttemberg was devastated by wars between Catholic France and Protestant German states, overpopulation, heavy taxation, and exceptionally harsh winters between 1708 and 1719. Conditions were rife for ex-migration.

[Hans and Anna] emigrated from Rotterdam to the William Penn Colony, arriving on the [ship] Princess Augusta in 1736. In 1738 they obtained warrants for 200 acres of land in Bucks (now Lehigh) County. These were not grants, but authorization to settle; as payment for the land would be demanded sometime in the future. Evidently, the family was successful, adding an additional 150 acres in 1744.

The following account of their voyage from Germany to Philadelphia was written by a passenger on the ship¹⁰:

⁹ From <http://lewis-genealogy.org/genealogy/Weaver/Bielman-97.htm>

¹⁰ From <http://lewis-genealogy.org/genealogy/History/Voyage.htm>

As to the journey, we were detained for 5 weeks, have slept on the Rhine for 2 weeks and traveled from Rotterdam across the sea for 12 weeks and 4 days until Philadelphia, but only 8 weeks from land to land, and we did not have good wind save for 8 days, more contrary winds than side wind. And as we saw land a new pilot came to us and we thought all was well and won. ... [but] the boat ran into a rock, and ... one thought it would break in the middle. The anxious crying began, and one could see where there was faith or not. Then the captain had ... a flag of distress hoisted, but we drove far out to the sea so that we saw no land anymore for days and even thought we would never see it again.

As far as illness are concerned ... in our boat 19 people died [smallpox, spotted fever, etc.]. Those people who have means ... I advise to stay where they are because the journey is onerous and very dangerous.

Once they finally arrived in Pennsylvania, life was not much easier, as described on the “Descendants of Hans David Bielman” website:

Hans David and company were pioneers of the region that would become known as Allemangle. Located about fifty miles northwest of Philadelphia, Allemangle was the ethnic German community situated on the border of northeast Berks county and northwest Bucks/Northampton/Lehigh county (near Kempton PA). This region was completely undeveloped, lacking roads or other instruments of commerce. These pioneers newly arrived from Europe had to fend for themselves.

To get there, they had to cross a barren, swampy wasteland of scrub oaks called Long Swamp, then through the Rittenhouse Gap in the South Mountain, northward to the Schochary Hills. They traveled the tops of the ridges because the valleys were full of vines, mosquitoes, and swamp fever. Arriving at their warrant, they set up a camp-site, usually a small lean-to, at a spring near the protected head of a low valley. Sometimes the wagon was the only shelter for the first several months until a cabin could be constructed.

Hans David and family lived their lives in peril of Indians. In 1756, Anna and two of their adult sons were killed in an Indian attack.

Chapter 3 of “A History Of The Early Brobst/Probst Families In Pennsylvania”¹¹ describes the adversity faced by these early Pennsylvania immigrants:

Once they cleared the medical inspection and pledged allegiance to the King of England, they had to buy horses, wagons, provisions, find out about routes and hazards along the way, probably had to hire some kind of guide, and probably had to travel in at least small wagon trains to try to protect themselves against Indian attacks. Then they had to travel into southeastern Pennsylvania by wagon and foot over unpaved roads/trails/riverbeds, not having much of an idea at all about what dangers might face them during the journey. Somewhere along the way they had to buy their livestock -- cattle, pigs, chickens, goats...

One can only imagine the dismay and disappointment of the German settlers when they

¹¹ <http://homepages.rootsweb.com/~brobst/chronicles/chap3.htm>

Only the hardy survived, and most of the weak succumbed. The area of Berks County in which they settled is called "Stony Run" today; the name is not a coincidence. The settlers not only had to clear trees, but many hundreds of large boulders as well.

The Hunsickers

The chart illustrates the following lineage:

- Catherine Hunsicker** (1832-1891) is the common ancestor at the bottom left.
- Her son is **Heinrich Hunsicker** (1800-1843).
- Heinrich Hunsicker's wife is **Anna Hoffman** (1773-1859).
- Heinrich Hunsicker and Anna Hoffman have two children: **Johannes Hunsicker** (1775-1869) and **Sarah Ann**.
- Johannes Hunsicker** (1775-1869) is married to **(Anna) C Arner** (1754-1789).
- Johannes Hunsicker and (Anna) C Arner have two children: **Johannes J Hunsicker** (1744-1796) and **Henry Hoffman**.
- Johannes J Hunsicker** (1744-1796) is married to **M Bieren (Pierson)**.
- Johannes J Hunsicker and M Bieren (Pierson) have two children: **Johannes Hunsicker** and **Felix Arner**.
- Johannes Hunsicker** (the younger) is married to **Maria E Loesch**.
- Johannes Hunsicker (the younger) and Maria E Loesch have two children: **Hans Arner** (1693-) and **Verena Eberhart** (1701-1778).
- Hans Arner** (1693-) is married to **Anna May Meierhofer**.
- Verena Eberhart** (1701-1778) is married to **Heinrich Eberhart**.
- Heinrich Eberhart and Verena Eberhart have one child: **Anna Gassman**.

The Hunsickers, were from Schalsbach, Mosell, Lorraine, France, also known as Alsace Lorraine. Johannes Hunsicker and Marie Magdalena Bieren (or Pierson) came to America on the ship Two Brothers, which arrived at Philadelphia on September 15, 1748. They were accompanied by two or three children. They were the first Hunsickers to come to Pennsylvania.

From Switzerland to America: The Arnern

64

This excerpt from an internet article¹² describes the emigration situation at that time:

Throughout most of the 18th century the official view in Switzerland was that emigration was a crime against the fatherland equivalent to desertion. It deprived the home country of its labor force and soldiers for its defense. At the same time, the authorities issued warnings about the dangers facing emigrants, both at sea and upon arrival, and the hardships they might expect in the new land.

The areas mainly affected by emigration were the Reformed [Protestant] cantons of Zurich, Bern and Basel. Strict edicts were issued in an attempt to stop it. The first edict, issued in Zurich in 1734, forbade emigration to Carolina and prevented those wishing to leave from selling their property. Anyone distributing literature encouraging emigration was liable to punishment. A tough emigration tax—up to 10%—was rigorously imposed in order to stem some of the outflow of money from the country.

Despite attempts to ban the exodus, most emigrants went with permission, however reluctantly granted.

Economic pressure was the main reason why people wanted to leave, not because they expected to grow rich, but in order to escape dire poverty.

Despite the edicts, in 1734 clandestine advertisements in Zurich, Switzerland, were enticing immigrants to come to South Carolina, called “the new Holy Land, because of its enormous fertility and its healthy air.” Minister Moritz Götschi petitioned the Swiss government to allow him to lead a group of emigrants to this new land, and in early October, 1734, three ships containing about 270 passengers left for “Carolina.” A local newspaper wrote:

Many thousands saw them depart with great pity for them, especially because they were under-taking so thoughtlessly, with wife and child, and but poorly provided for, the dangerous journey of 300 hours in cold, rain and wind, now, when the days are getting shorter. Nevertheless, kindhearted and distinguished persons supplied them with all kinds of articles, such as bread, shawls, caps etc.

After a long delay in Basel, during which many of the passengers resorted to begging in the streets for food, the ships made their way down the Rhine River to Rotterdam. One historian wrote: “Sitting on boxes and bundles, which were piled high in the middle of the boat, could be seen gray-haired men and women, old and feeble; yonder stood the young gazing in wonder at the shores as they slipped by.”

An account based on the diary kept by one of the passengers said:

After leaving Basle their first encampment was upon an island, covered with trees and shrubs, in the middle of the Rhine. Such continued to be their night quarters, although the nights were wet and cold. Moreover the ships were crowded so badly that there was hardly enough room to sit, much less to lie down.

There was no opportunity for cooking on the ships; and as they were sometimes

¹² <https://www.ncpedia.org/anchor/arrival-swiss-immigrants>

compelled to stay days and nights on the ships, the cries of the children were pitiful and heart-rending. Whenever they could get ashore they cooked, warmed themselves and dried their clothes.

Many would have liked to return home, but as the armies of the French and the Austrians lay on both sides of the river, they did not dare to risk it. Quarrels among men and women were frequent. Mrs. [Götschi] ... often quarreled with her husband, called him all kinds of names and one morning tore a cane from his hand and belabored his back soundly.

At night they saw the camp fires of the imperial troops on one side and of the French on the other, which terrified them by their ghostly appearance.

As they were afraid of an attack from one or both armies almost at any time, they refrained carefully from making the least noise, so as to pass by unnoticed. Nevertheless, they were stopped repeatedly.

After many delays and broken promises, Minister Götschi, who had turned out to be an unreliable, wine-loving disappointment as a minister and leader, left the party to fend for itself through late autumn and most of the winter in Rotterdam. There they suffered exposure, hunger, and despair. Götschi eventually returned and announced that he had been offered a church in Pennsylvania. Anyone who wanted to continue with him would now be going there instead of to Carolina. Most of his unfortunate followers had no money to pay their return to Zurich, and 143 of them signed on for passage to Philadelphia. Many would work as indentured servants upon arrival to cover the cost of the crossing.

On Feb. 24, 1735, four and a half months after leaving Zurich, the beleaguered group finally set sail across the Atlantic. The following account was written by Götschi's son John:

Then we had to hear a terrible storm and the awful roaring and raging of the waves... . For twelve weeks we were subjected to this misery and had to suffer all kinds of bad and dangerous storms and terrors of death, which seemed to be even more bitter than death. With these we were subject to all kinds of diseases.

The food was bad, for we had to eat what they call "galley bread." We had to drink stinking, muddy water, full of worms. We had an evil tyrant and rascal for our captain and first mate, who regarded the sick as nothing else than dogs. ... After having been in this misery sufficiently long, God, the Lord, brought us out and showed us the land, which caused great joy among us.

But three days passed, the wind being contrary, before we could enter into the right river. Finally a good south wind came and brought us in one day through the glorious and beautiful [Delaware], which is a little larger than the Rhine, but not by far as wild as the latter, because this country has no mountains, to the long expected and wished for city of Philadelphia.

The condition of the land, is as follows: There are in it Englishmen, Germans and French from all parts of Europe. Most of them are Reformed. The others are people of all kinds of imaginable sects, Atheists, Anabaptists, Quakers, Arians, Enthusiasts, Nestorians, Pietists, Mennonites, Waldensians etc., etc., many hundred kinds, for in this country there is perfect liberty of conscience.

The Arner Book¹³ says:

Following their indenture near Germantown, the Arnerts moved with their religious group to the Jordan Creek area of what is now Lehigh County. The first Arner home was in the Goshenhoppen area that is now Upper Hanover Township around East Greenville, Montgomery County. By 1744, with three more children to feed, they moved to Lehigh County, three miles Northwest of the present Allentown, near the Trexler Game Farm. There they settled in and farmed, raised their children and supported the Pennsylvania German Reformed churches in the area. Eventually, as the children grew, they purchased their own farms and prospered in that area near what is now Rockdale Creek on the north and Fells Creek on the south.

Upper Hanover Township was close to the “wilderness,” but it was no longer the “frontier” in the truest sense. Farms had been established, muddy trails had become rutted roads, smoke from chimneys consumed the slowly contracting forests of the region, and fences denoted land claims.

The Arner family survived the winter of 1737, when many people froze to death. In 1744 they helped found the Heidelberg Union Church (“union” meaning it allowed Lutheran and Reformed congregations to share one house of worship). Hans was on the first list of members of the church, issued March 28, 1745.

It was a rugged life with tremendous challenges. Quotes from diaries and letters of that time give a sense of what it was like:

The people live very far from each other; neighbors often have to walk an hour through brush and hedges and thorns before they can get together... Their houses in the brush are as miserable as no pigsty or sheepcote in all of Switzerland; their housewares are nothing but bark off the trees, their drinking vessels and bowls are nothing else but calabashes and pumpkins... [T]his misery is beyond description.

Strife and vengefulness and other godless deportment are worse here than in any other country. There is no lack here of clergymen and schoolmasters of the Lutheran and Reformed religion, but few that would lead people toward the true faith.

Soon the area would suffer under The French and Indian War (1754–1763), in which the outnumbered French recruited Indians to help them fight the British. This account from December, 1755, describes what was happening in the area where the Arnerts lived:

During this month the Indians have been burning and destroying all before them in the county of Northampton, and have already burned fifty houses here, murdered above one hundred persons, and are still continuing their Ravages, Murders, and Devastations, and have actually overrun and laid waste a great part of that County, even as far as within twenty miles of Easton, its chief town.

¹³ <http://arner.org/>



The Felix Arner home in Slatington, Pennsylvania

But the Arner family survived and prospered. In approximately 1748, Hans and Verena's son, and our ancestor, Felix Arner (1726-1776), built a stone house on his homestead near Slatington, Pennsylvania. It was still standing as of 2022, although the property is no longer in the Arner family. The new owner says he has no plans to demolish the building. There is discussion of a placing a plaque or marker on the property.

Felix is buried in Neffs Union Cemetery, Lehigh, Pennsylvania. His headstone says: "Here lies under God the late Felix Arner who was born of Earth January 14 1726 and lived as a messenger of this Earth for 50 years, 1 month, and 6 days, and died February 20 in The Year of Our Lord 1776."



(l) Monument to Hans and Verena Arner at the Heidelberg Church in Lehigh County, Pennsylvania;

(r) Felix Arner's headstone in Neffs Union Cemetery, Lehigh, Pennsylvania

Felix's daughter Catherine married Johannes Jacob Hunsicker, whose granddaughter Catherine was Lewis Heil's mother. Many Hunsicker descendants still reside in Lehigh Township, Pennsylvania.

In 2002, descendants of Hans and Verena Arner dedicated a monument to their memory at the Heidelberg Church they helped found.

Learn more about the Arner family at arner.org.

Lewis Wilson Heil

Lewis Wilson Heil, son of John Heil and Catherine Hunsicker, was born in 1868 in Germansville, Lehigh, Pennsylvania. We believe he left Pennsylvania for his job as a station agent and telegraph operator with the Erie Railroad. Ethel also said he worked for Western Union. Lewis married Grace Van Ostrand of Glenwood, New Jersey, in 1895. He was 26 and Grace was 17.

Sometime around 1900 he suffered a nervous breakdown and became a farmer. In a 1993 letter to her niece Barbara VDL Levers, Lewis's daughter Ruth wrote that Lewis "was a telegraph operator before my time and when that job ended he took up farming. He had two peach orchards."

Lewis was proud of being Pennsylvania Dutch¹⁴, and he spoke German. Lewis's daughter Ruth remembered that when Lewis's brother would visit, he and Lewis would speak German. Ruth's mother, Grace, would ask them to please speak English so she could understand what they were saying. Ruth remembers Lewis's brother being called William, but we think he only had one brother, whose name was Tilghman; he may have been called William.

Lewis was a member of the Middletown Masonic Lodge (Hoffman). He died in 1943 at age 84. He is buried in Warwick Cemetery in Orange County, New York, in site C 128.

¹⁴ A cultural group formed by early German-speaking immigrants to Pennsylvania. "Dutch" was used to refer to the broad Germanic region, encompassing modern-day Netherlands, Germany, Belgium, Austria, and Switzerland. At the time when the Pennsylvania Dutch left Europe, Germany did not exist as a single nation, but was a patchwork of duchies, kingdoms, and states.

Lewis and Grace Heil



Lewis and Grace Heil

We don't know how Lewis and Grace met, but they were married in 1895 and had four children: Harold, Ethel, Ruth, and Lester.

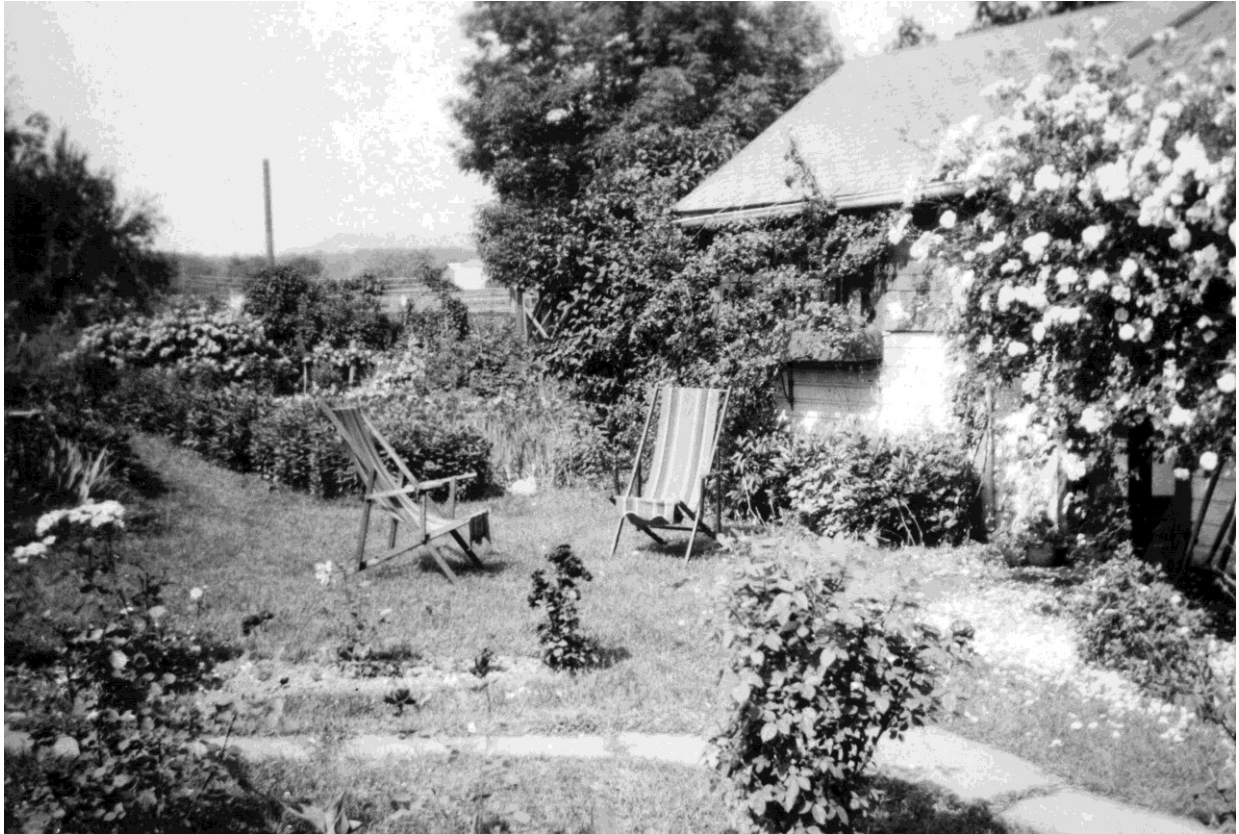
They built a house in Florida, New York. Lewis may have built the home himself, as it is said that he was a builder and contractor. The three oldest Heil children were born there (Harold, Ethel, and Ruth). Ethel said that when her father suffered a nervous breakdown, the family moved to Grace's parents' in New Jersey. Their fourth child, Lester, was born there in 1903.

In about 1908 the Heil family bought a farm in Middletown, New York, of over 100 acres. In 1915 they moved to a smaller farm in nearby Port Jervis. Lewis raised peaches on one or both of these farms. Later the family moved back to Middletown (possibly 6 Charles St.), but Ethel, who had graduated from high school in 1916, stayed in Port Jervis.

Their grandson Jim Von Der Linn clearly remembers playing in Lewis and Grace's backyard in Middletown, NY, with his brother Tom in the 1940s. It was a long, deep lot, with train tracks in the distance. They would watch the trains go by, count the cars, and lose track after 100. It was during WWII, and there were military tanks on the train. To get to Middletown, he and his brother would take the train with their mother, Ethel, from Grand Central Station. He remembers it as a "long" ride (it probably took about an hour). They would stay with their grandparents for a few days or a week.

Grandson Jim Heil remembers Lewis as "a small, wiry guy with a shock of dark hair." He often wore bib overalls. Grace was "grandmotherly looking, with grey hair in a bun." Neither grandparent was the huggy type, and he doesn't remember them ever talking to him. He didn't see them very often, even though they lived in the same town. Grace and Lewis were also described as "dour."

Jim Heil, who was born in 1937, says that Middletown was "a great place to grow up." There were about 22,000 people then, and it was solidly middle class. There was the Clemson factory (they made signature yellow push lawnmowers), a factory that made files (for industry), and one that made pocketbooks. Tompkins was a classy department store where his sister Pat worked.



Lewis and Grace Heil's yard in Middletown, NY, circa 1948-49



(l) Grace with daughter Ethel; (r) Grace and Lewis with daughter Ruth and granddaughter Betty



*The Heil family in 1913: (back seat) Ethel, Ruth, Grace; (front seat) Lewis and Harold; Lester on bumper
Research suggests that the car is a 1909 Reo Model D Touring; we don't know if the family owned it*

Children of Lewis and Grace Heil

1. Harold Heil

Harold Grant Heil was born in 1896 in Florida, NY. Although his formal education was limited, his son Jim says, “He was the smartest man I ever knew. He was always reading.”

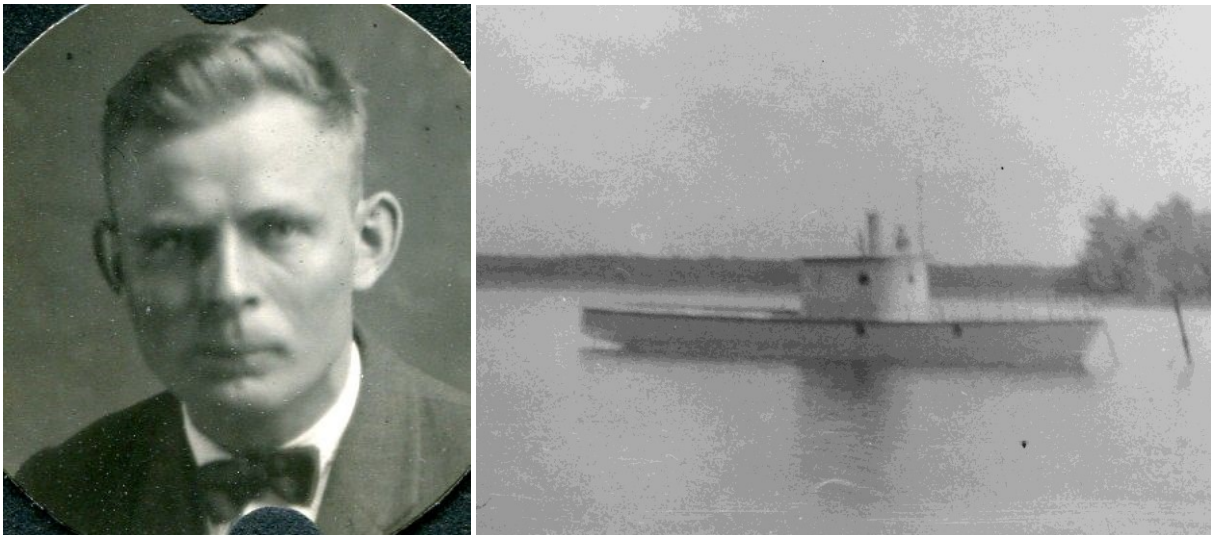
Harold built and raced motorcycles when he was young. In the 1910 census, 14-year-old Harold was living with his recently-widowed 64-year-old grandfather, Theodore Van Ostrand, on Theodore's farm in Vernon, Sussex, New Jersey. Harold may have gone there to help out after his Grandma Hannah died. (Theodore later came to live with Grace and Lewis until his death in 1913.)

In WWI Harold was an airplane mechanic in France. Mechanics were required to test planes after repairing them. One time Harold was on a test flight and got shot down. He was taken to a French hospital, and fully recovered from his injuries.

After the war he worked as a mechanic in the garage of J. W. Grassfield in Middletown, New York. Later he was foreman and chief mechanic of a truck garage for Dairymen's League, working on big diesel tractors. He was widely respected as the "go to" guy.

In 1927, at age 31, Harold married Dorothy Simpson, a nurse. Sadly, their son Jim said his mom was not a nice person, and was quite racist.

Harold built a Sears package home in the late 1920s in Middletown. His father, Lewis, might have helped him.



Harold Heil and the steamboat he built

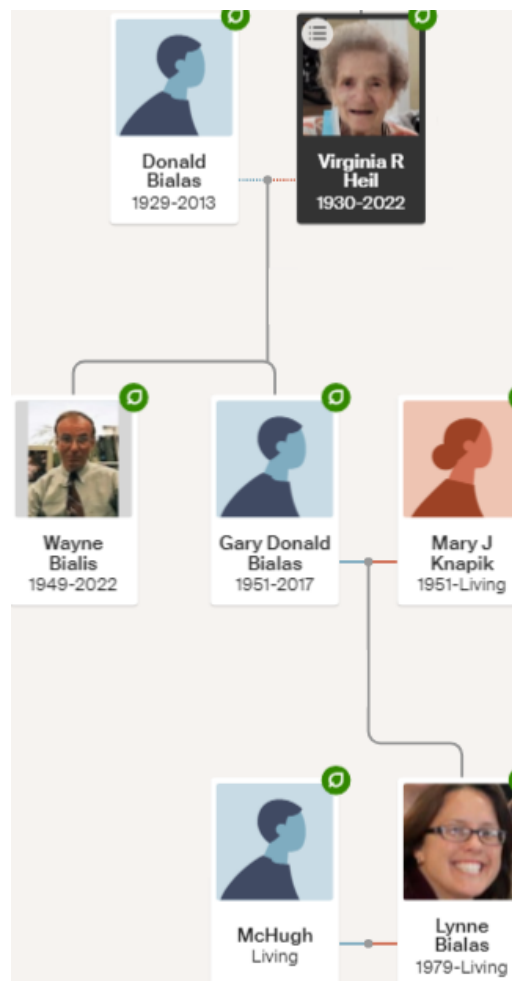
Harold bought about an acre of land on Wanaksink Lake, in the Catskills, about 20 miles north of Middletown, where he built a “camp,” or cabin. Jim said some of his happiest times were fishing there with his dad. During a polio scare the Heil kids were pulled out of school and lived at the camp for many months.

Harold built a wood-burning, steam-powered boat the locals called “Popeye” because of its steam whistle. It plied the waters of Wanaksink Lake, and was written about in the Middletown newspaper. Harold named the vessel Patty Ann, after his daughter. Jim and Harold were the only ones who knew how to operate the boat, and Jim figures it's "probably at the bottom of the lake now."

After the kids left home, Harold and Dorothy moved to Bloomingburg, NY. Harold died in 1981 at age 85. He’s buried in Wallkill Cemetery in Phillipsburg, New York.

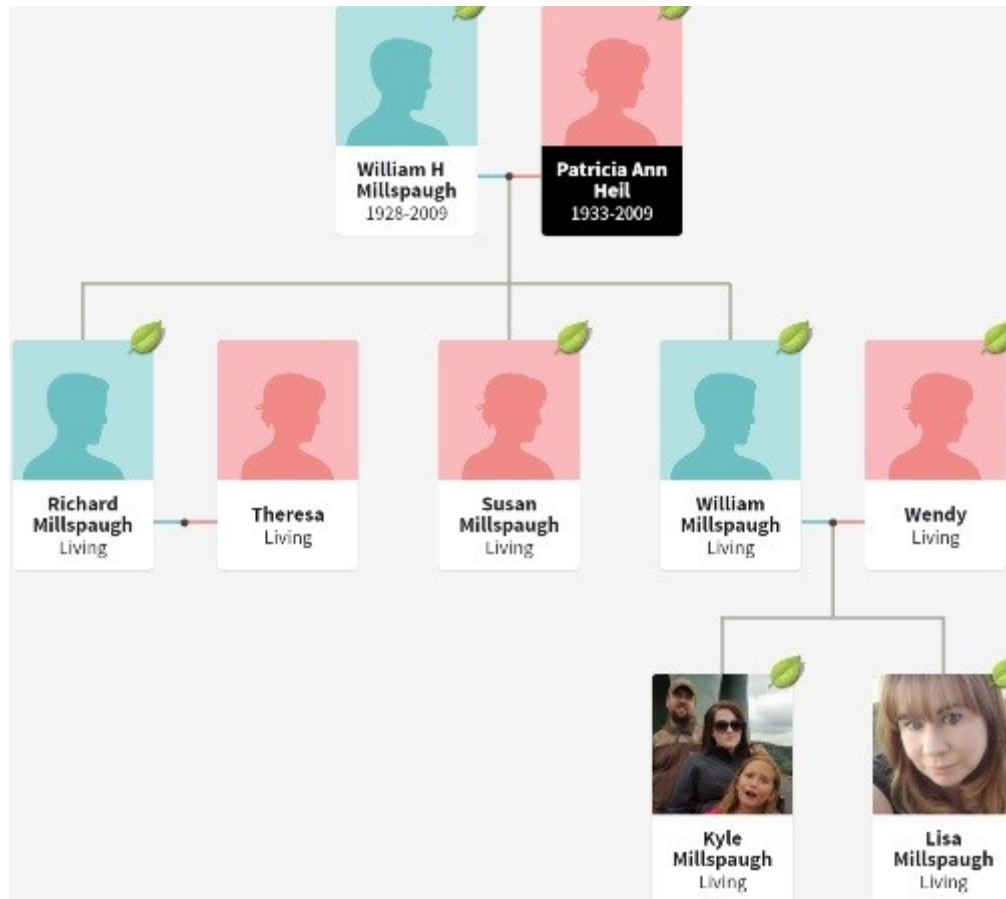
Harold and Dorothy had three kids: Virginia, Patricia, and James.

1.1. Harold’s daughter **Virginia Heil** was born in 1929. She left home after high school and married Donald Bialas (her mother didn’t approve of him). Virginia had two sons with Donald. Later she married Robert Hansen, who had a son named Paul, with whom she was close. Virginia died on Feb. 19, 2022. Virginia’s brother Jim says, “For whatever reason, my sister Virginia and I had been estranged for 50 years with no contact.” He decided to try to find her. “After some digging I found she was living in a mobile home park just 20 miles up the road from me here in Naples, Florida! I knocked on a few doors in the neighborhood and learned that Virginia had moved into a nursing home up the coast near Tampa. I called her and made arrangements to visit [in Nov. 2021]. Since then I have been up there several times to visit. I was so glad that that we were able to make a brief connection before she [died].”



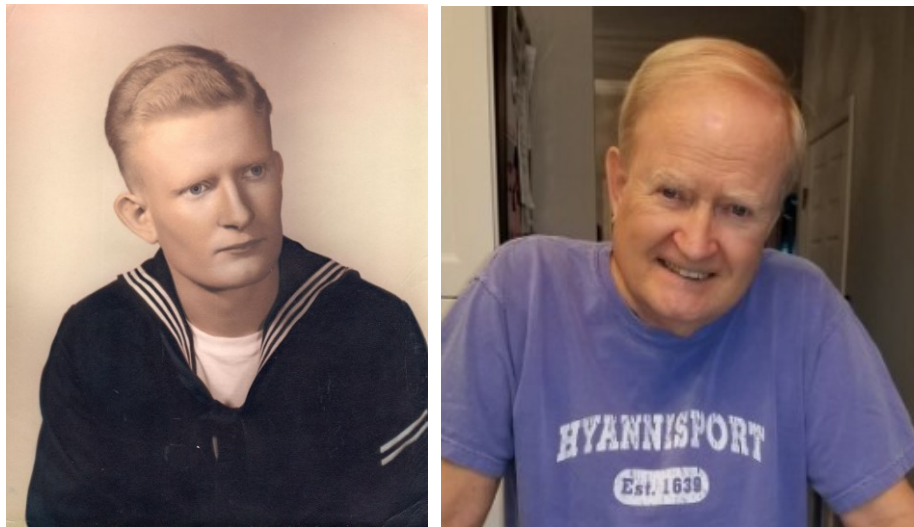
Descendants of Virginia Heil; Lynne has a daughter named Molly

1.2. Patricia Ann Heil (Pat) was born in 1933. She married William Horton Millspaugh, who was called Horton. He was the manager of Tomkins department store in Middletown, where Pat worked. Horton's parents were the owners. Patricia died in 2009, and Horton died just a month later. Their son Bill owns a machine shop in Glendive, Montana. Son Rick lives in Harold and Dorothy's old home in Middletown, NY. Daughter Susan lives in Cortlandt Manor, NY.

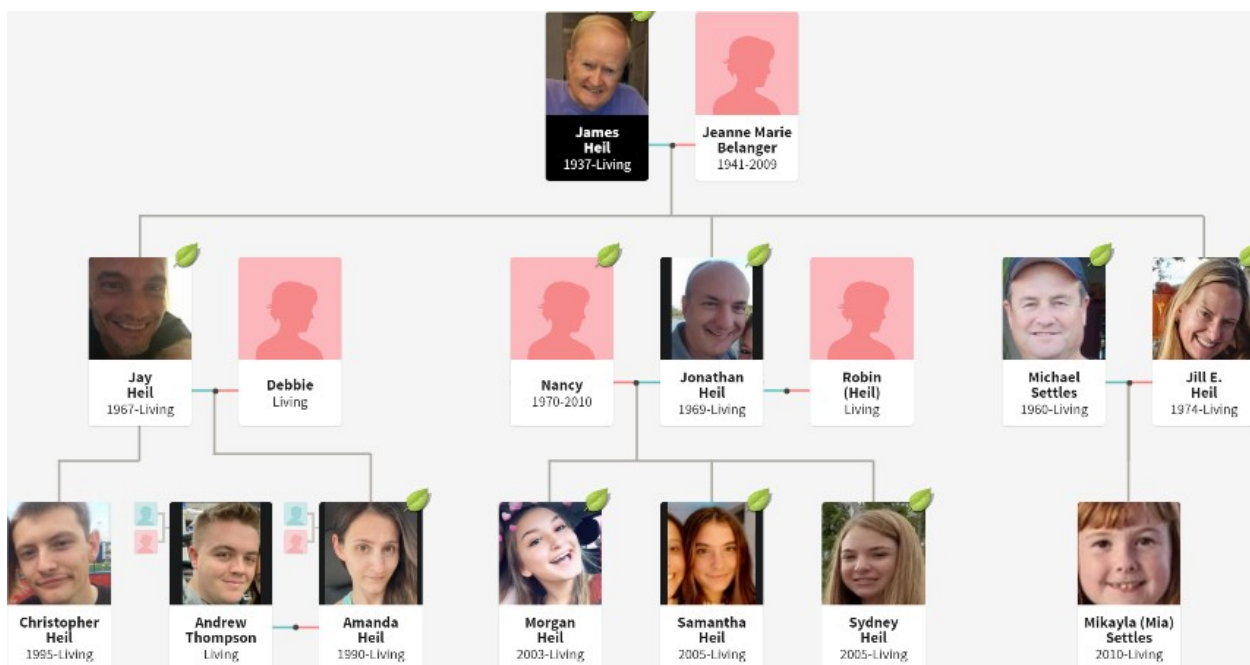


Descendants of Patricia Heil

1.3. James (Jim) Heil was born in 1937. After a stint in the Navy, he worked at GE for 37 years and was a chief engineer in Pittsfield, Massachusetts. He was widowed in 2009 and now lives in Florida, near his three kids.



Jim in the Navy, and in 2018



Descendants of James Heil; Amanda has two children

2. Ethel Heil

Lewis and Grace's daughter Ethel Grace Heil was born in Florida, New York, in 1897. A few years later, Lewis had a nervous breakdown, and the family moved to Glenwood, New Jersey, to live with Grace's parents. Around 1908, when Ethel was about 11, the Heil family bought a farm in Middletown, New York. It was over 100 acres. In 1915 they moved to a smaller farm in Port Jervis. Like many middle class homes of the time, the Heils had a piano, which Ethel learned to play.

Over five no-doubt-grueling days in June, 1916, Ethel took a series of 15 high school Regents exams given by the University of the State of New York at Middletown High School, after which she was awarded her high school diploma. (The scores are not a percentage, they were on a curve. Currently, 65 is considered proficient.)

- English 2 - 87
- English 3 - 90
- English 4 - 83
- English grammar - 82
- German 2 - 73
- German 3 - 68
- Latin 2 - 65
- Elementary algebra - 60
- Plane geometry - 65
- Physics - 74
- Elementary botany - 66
- Physical & hygiene - 87
- Ancient history - 5 hr - 65
- History of Great Britain and Ireland - 5 hr - 66
- Commercial arithmetic - 70

Sometime after Ethel graduated from high school, Lewis and Grace moved back to Middletown. Ethel stayed in Port Jervis and worked in a portrait studio owned by her best friend Ruth Still's family. Ethel colorized and tinted pictures, and did minor photo retouching. Photos from that time show Ethel canoeing, or at the beach with a large group of friends. She looks very happy.

Ethel met William McKinley "Mac" Bullivant in Port Jervis. They married in 1921, when Ethel was 23. Mac died during an appendectomy 15 months later. They did not have children.

Ethel stayed in Port Jervis after Mac died. Several years later she met Arthur Von Der Linn, and they were married in 1928, when Ethel was 30. Ethel's parents were Lutheran, and Arthur's were Catholic. Ethel opted to convert to Catholicism before the marriage.

Ethel and Arthur had three children: Barbara, Jim, and Tom. Arthur died in 1943, when Ethel was 45, leaving her a widow for the second time. Ethel did not remarry.

Although Arthur made a good living and had purchased mortgage and life insurance, Ethel supplemented her income by working as a nanny for wealthy families and occasionally taking in renters. Her grandson Michael says, "I bet Ethel's work after Arthur's death was driven by insecurity and her innate sense of thrift rather than need." Ethel's son Jim says, "I think she liked having a little extra and I know she enjoyed being a nanny to a Jewish family that treated her very well. They helped me too by letting me work in their factory [which made brass ferrules for furniture legs] and making extra money."



Ethel Heil (center) with Ruth Still (striped collar, to the right of Ethel) and friends, circa 1918-19



Ethel (left) and her best friend, Ruth Still, canoeing on Lake Minisink, PA, circa 1918-19

Ethel was indeed thrifty. Having been raised by frugal parents, and having lived through the depression, she especially hated to waste food. She often told her grandchildren that if they wanted curly hair like hers, they had to eat their bread crusts.

See Part 3 of this document for more about Ethel and Arthur's marriage and children. Parts 4 and 5 of this document include reminiscences by Ethel's grandchildren, and some of her recipes.

Ethel died in 1984 in Queens, New York, at age 87.



Ethel Heil (center: retouching photos in Still studio circa 1919-20)

3. Ruth Mapes Heil

Lewis and Grace's third child, Ruth, was born in Florida, New York, in 1899. She worked for the INS, and was beloved by her grandchildren. Ruth died in 1996 at age 97.

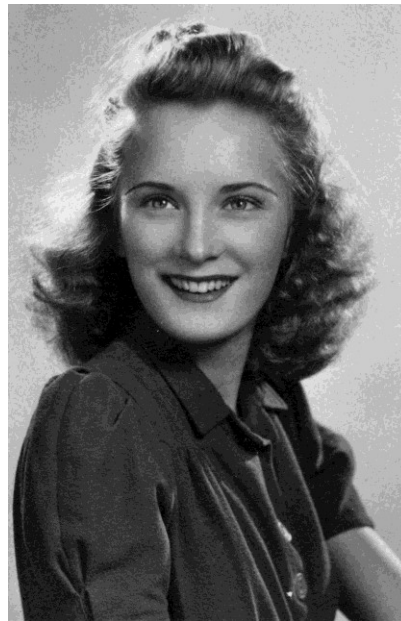


Ruth Heil Custer

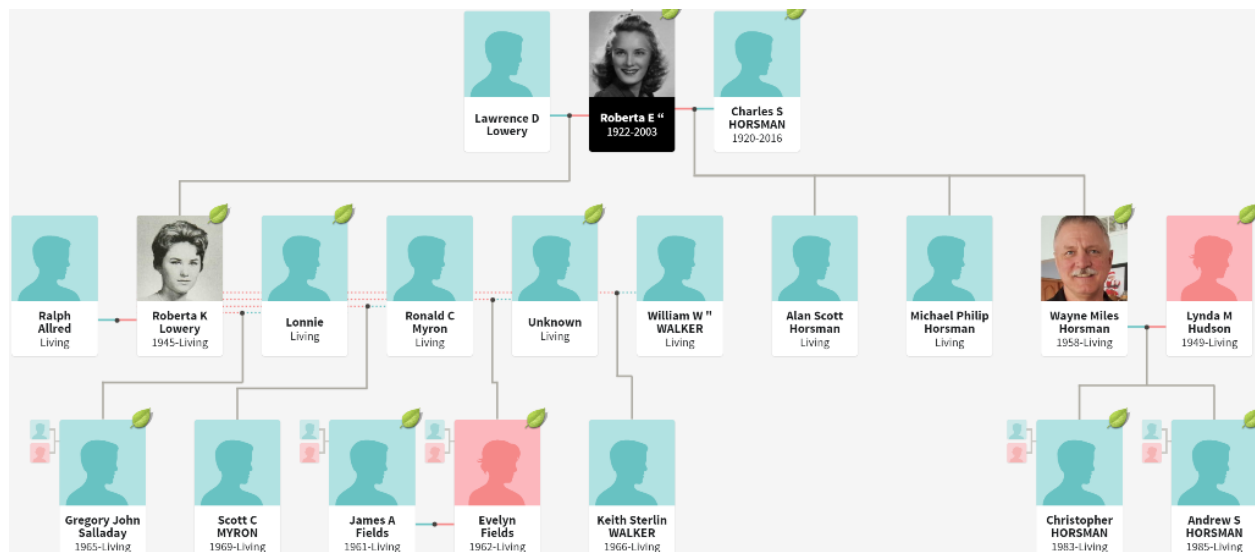
Ruth (r) with her sister Ethel

Ruth married Leon Russel Custer in 1919. It was an ill-fated marriage; apparently he was not a very nice guy. They had three children: Roberta (Bobby), Ruth (Betty), and Robert (Bob). Ruth's grandchildren called her "Gaga."

3.1 Ruth's daughter **Roberta Ethel Custer** was called Bobbie. She was born in 1922 in Middletown, New York. She married Lawrence Lowry and had a daughter, then married Charles Horsman and had three sons. Her obituary says, "She was an avid organic gardener. She enjoyed gardening with her mother and grew both flowers and vegetables. She enjoyed crochet and knitting and keeping up with sewing repairs for her family. She also enjoyed tinkering with appliances, taking them apart and diagnosing malfunctions, and allowing her husband to reassemble them." Bobbie lived in Maryland, and died of cancer in 2003 at age 81.



Bobbie Custer, 1940

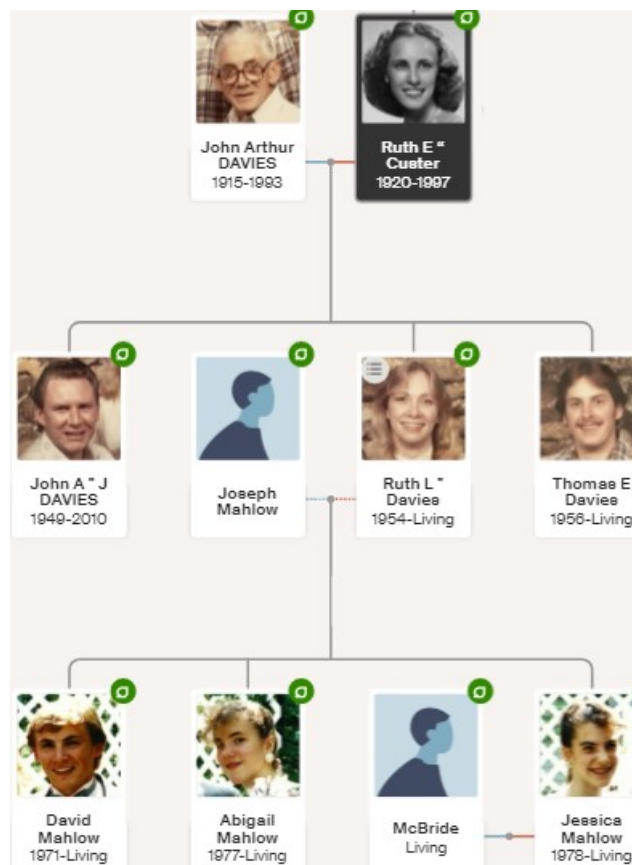


Descendants of Roberta (Bobbie) Custer

3.2 Ruth's daughter **Ruth Elizabeth Custer** was called Betty. She was born in 1920 in Port Jervis, NY. She worked as a secretary for the federal government before getting jobs in retail sales. She attended Methodist and Presbyterian churches. In 1948 she married John Arthur Davies. Her interests included bingo, bowling, and gardening. She died in 1997 in Annapolis, MD, of heart problems and diabetes. She was 77 years old. Ruth and John had three children: John Jr., Ruth, and Thomas.



Betty Custer, 1940

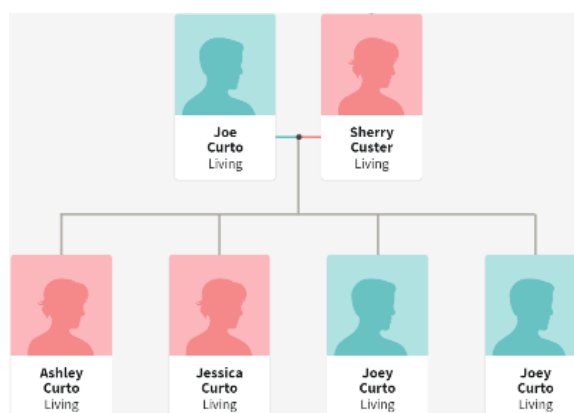


Descendants of Ruth (Betty) Custer

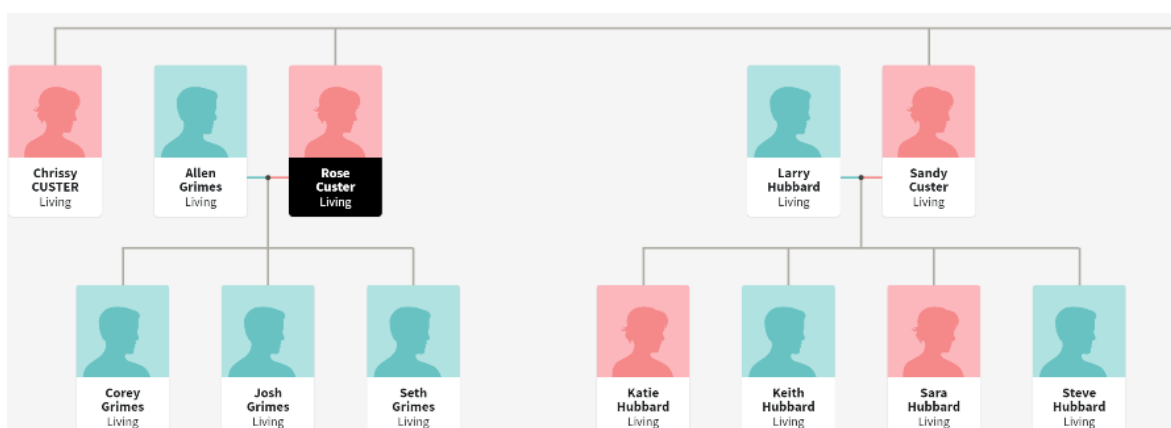
3.3 Ruth's son **Robert Leon Custer** was called Bob. He was born in 1924 in Middletown, NY. He married Rita Keefe and they had six kids: Sherry, Chrissy, Rose, Sandy, Tom, and Wayne. Bob served in the Merchant Marine. He died in Frederick MD in 1997 at age 72.



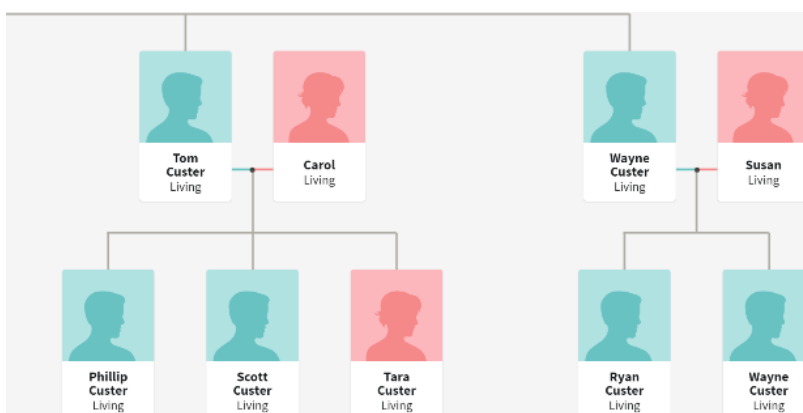
Bob Custer in his Merchant Marine uniform



Descendants of Bob Custer's daughter Sherry



Descendants of Bob Custer's daughters Rose and Sandy

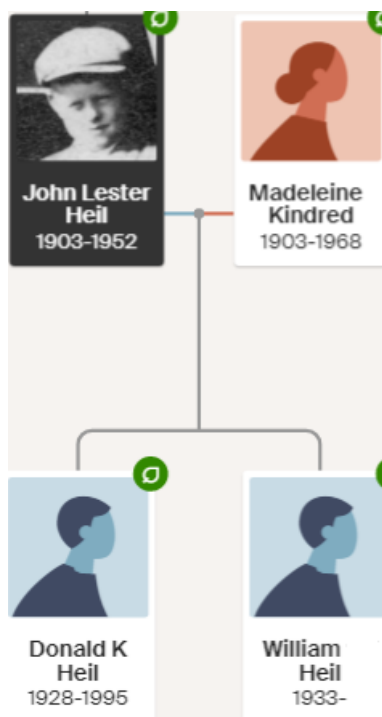


Descendants of Bob Custer's sons Tom and Wayne

4. John Lester Heil

Lewis and Grace Heil's son John Lester Heil was born in 1903 in Glenwood, New Jersey. He was called Lester. He worked at Dundee Textile Company in Middletown. Later he was a janitor in the Merchants Bank building when a gas explosion tore through the first floor in 1945. He suffered severe burns and cuts, and his face remained scarred. At the time of his death in 1952, at age 48, he was a dental technician at Carl Dayton Laboratory. He is buried in Phillipsburg, New York.

In 1923 Lester married Madeleine (Madge) Kindred. Madge contracted polio when she was in her 30s, after her children were born, and used a wheelchair after that. Lester and Madge had two sons. I was unable to find out if the sons ever married or had children.



Living Descendants of Lewis and Grace Heil

I have contact info for most of the people on these lists.

Grandchildren

James Heil (Naples, Florida)

Great Grandchildren

Lauren Agnelli

Jonathan Heil

Carrie Agnelli McKenna

Jill Heil

Mark Agnelli

John Davies

Karen Von Der Linn Story

Ruthie Davies

Kelly Von Der Linn Gallant

Tommy Davies

Susan Von Der Linn Ortega

Karen Lowery

David Von Der Linn

Alan Horsman

Mark Von Der Linn

Michael Horsman

Peter Von Der Linn

Wayne Horsman

Michael Von Der Linn

Chrissy Custer

Ellen Sanita

Rose Custer

Richard Millspaugh

Sandy Custer

Susan Millspaugh

Sherry Custer

William Millspaugh

Tom Custer

Jay Heil

Wayne Custer

Part 3: Arthur Von Der Linn and Ethel Heil



It's uncertain how Arthur and Ethel met. Ethel once told me that she met Arthur in Port Jervis. She said he was an engineer, and "just traveling through." Other family members believe that Ethel was working as a hostess at a resort in the Catskills and met Arthur there. However they met, Arthur and Ethel married in 1928, when Ethel was 30 and Arthur was 33.

Arthur and Ethel lived in Flushing for a year before buying their first house, in a development in Hollis, around 1929. Queensboro Roofers, where Arthur worked, was a contractor. Not long after that the couple bought a big house in St. Albans. Ethel said she became friends with Arthur's sisters Marcella and Florence.

NEW YORK EVENING JOURNAL • America's Greatest Evening Newspaper • SATURDAY, JUNE 24, 1929

Real Estate—Queens Real Estate—Queens Real Estate—Queens Real Estate—Queens Real Estate—Queens

"This Home Satisfies...for more reasons than price?"

[Enthusiastic Owner of Rodman & English Home Tells Why]

230 Sold!
(Since January 1st)
... Just 20 More Remain for Sale!

Mrs. Arthur Von der Linn Tells Why She and Her Husband Are So Satisfied With Their Rodman & English Home in Hollis.

"WE are so pleased with everything about our house that I hardly know where to begin. But let me tell you our story. We bought this house because it was by far the best we could get for the money... every bit as good as many we saw that were much higher priced. It has everything that anyone could want—and more. Just look around. Isn't that the dandiest kitchen? Isn't the living room attractive? I don't know what more anyone could want in a home. We could hardly believe that all the things the builders claimed for it could be true—but they are!

"Isn't this a nice looking street... so attractive and well kept! Through our rear window you can see the school just a block away. As for street, there are plenty of nice cars passing—yes, my husband and I are truly pleased. This home satisfies for more reasons than the price!"

\$59.75 Per Month
Pays all carrying charges, including \$25 monthly reduction of second mortgage.

6 Room Solid Brick—Complete for \$6950
\$275 Cash, \$6775 on Title

Features Without Equal!

- Case refrigerators
- Refrigerator
- Open fireplace
- Hardwood floors
- Double entrance
- Full bath
- Modern plumbing
- Central air conditioning
- Concrete driveway
- Garage
- Electric lights
- Gas
- Water
- Hot water
- Central heating
- Fire insurance
- Life insurance
- Auto insurance
- Health insurance
- Accident insurance
- Fire insurance
- Life insurance
- Auto insurance
- Health insurance
- Accident insurance

OUR BOND

SEWERS

RODMAN & ENGLISH HOMES OF SOLID BRICK

199-16 Hollis Avenue
Hollis, N. Y.

This 1929 ad for new homes in Hollis, Queens, featured Arthur and Ethel



Arthur and Ethel's home in St. Albans, Queens, New York

Arthur's niece Patricia Marley remembered visiting Arthur and Ethel's house in the early 1940s, and said, "They were always so gracious... I remember a state of the art playroom with an enormous map of the world on the wall. [They] had a fine aesthetic sense, evidenced in the lovely furnishings of [their] home."

Ethel loved plants, especially flowers, and their backyard had a beautiful rose garden.

The Great Depression began in 1929 and lasted until 1933. We don't know how this affected Arthur and Ethel financially, but by 1932 Arthur was making good money, and Ethel had nice clothes and jewelry. They owned several cars over the years, including a Packard. Ethel's nephew Jim Heil remembers his aunt as a "grand lady," who looked "regal" and was wearing a fur coat.

Looking at the dates, it appears that Ethel may have had trouble conceiving: no children resulted in over a year of marriage to Mac, and it was over two years after marrying Arthur that she gave birth to her first child, Barbara. Five years later she had Jim, and three years later Tom was born.

Arthur clearly adored his family. He didn't become a father until he was 36, and may have wondered if he would ever have children. For Christmas of 1940 he gave his family a library of over 400 volumes, including history and science books, Twain, Shakespeare, H.G. Wells, and Edgar Allen Poe. Barbara had a large doll collection, and his sons got new Lionel trains each Christmas. Arthur even commissioned a company to design a Von Der Linn family crest.

Arthur's son Jim remembers:

Our playroom was also a bedroom with a bunk bed, which must have been added when mom rented out the upper bedroom. I had the upper bunk, Tom the lower. The world map was probably six feet across and framed by cabinets with drawers for books and toys. Under the map were shelves. One window faced the garden on the back and the window

next to the map and cabinets faced the house next door. In summer it was hard to sleep due to the heat and humidity. I remember climbing out of the window at night just like some of you kids!

Talk about the Lionel trains, it was a ritual with mom to take us into Manhattan, where there was a store, to buy some engine, car, track, or accessory. We had three complete trains set up on a 4x8 sheet of plywood and a ping pong table connected by bridges. These are the trains I gave to the Scottsdale railroad museum.

Arthur and Ethel owned vacation property in Florida, where they planned to build a vacation home someday. Meanwhile, they bought a camping trailer, which they presumably drove down each year. There are several pictures of Arthur, Ethel, Barbara, and Jim on the beach in Florida. At some point, probably after Arthur's death, the property was sold to the Tropicana orange juice company. Arthur loved game fishing, and son Tom remembered that there was a lot of "cool stuff" in their St. Albans basement, including a mounted bill from a swordfish or sailfish, probably caught by Arthur.



Arthur, Barbara, Jimmy, & Ethel in Florida circa 1937

In 1943, after just 15 years of marriage, Arthur died. The death certificate said it was from pneumonia following gallbladder surgery, but the family was not given much information at the time. The children were 12, 7, and 4. Arthur had been in a great deal of pain for a long time, and son Jim thinks that Arthur may have had a premonition that he would not survive the operation. He bought mortgage insurance and a large life insurance policy, which surely helped Ethel after his death. He purchased a cemetery plot 13 months before he died. (Section 42, Corridor: 38)

Whether she needed to or not, Ethel worked after Arthur died. She helped her kids pay for college and gave them money to help them buy their first homes.

Ethel stayed in the St. Albans house until 1975, when she moved to an apartment in Glen Oaks.



The caption on the back of this photo says, "Our car and trailer"



Von Der Linn family crest commissioned by Arthur

Children of Arthur and Ethel Von Der Linn



Ethel, Tom, Barbara, & Jim

1. Barbara Grace Von Der Linn



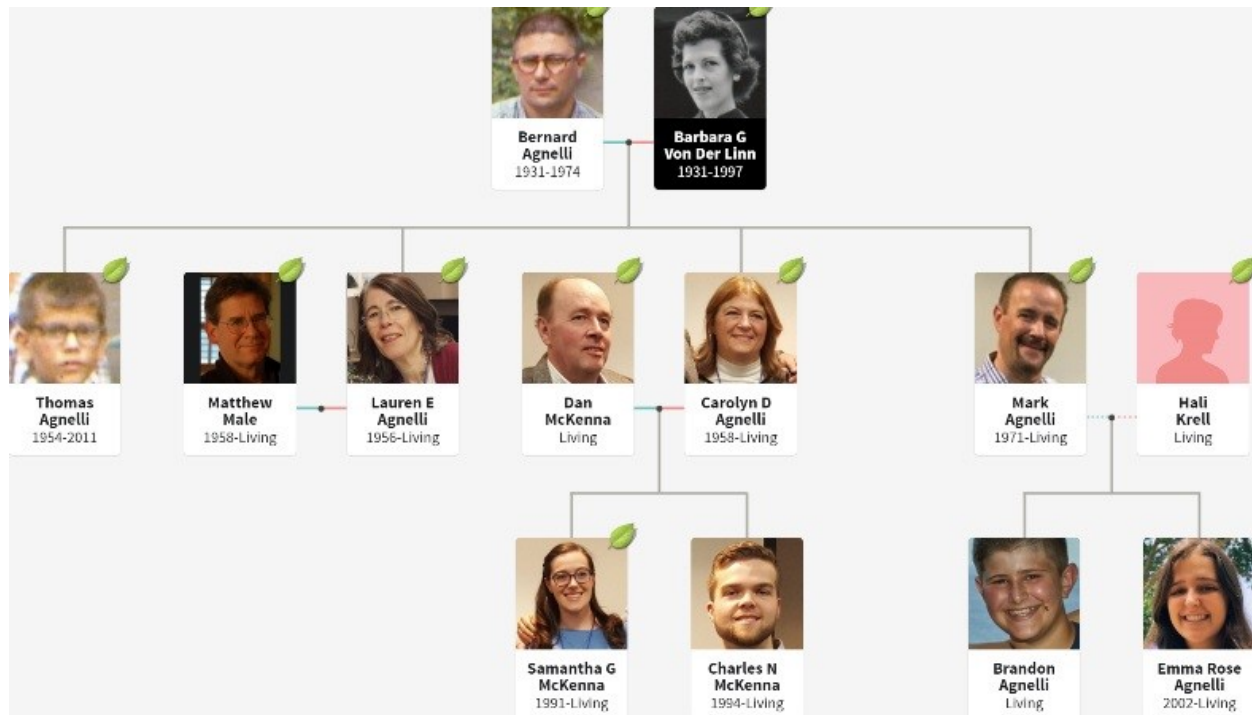
Barbara and Bernie in 1953



Barbara with daughter Lauren in 1956

Barbara was born in 1931 in Jamaica, New York. She married Bernard Agnelli in 1953. Bernie died of a heart attack in 1974. Barbara later married Gene Levers. Barbara was an accomplished pianist and musician. She died of colon cancer in 1997, at age 66.

Barbara and Bernie had four children: Tom died in 2011; Lauren lives in Chester, Connecticut; Carrie lives in Bethel, Connecticut; and Mark lives in Florida.



Descendants of Barbara Von Der Linn

2. James Arthur Von Der Linn

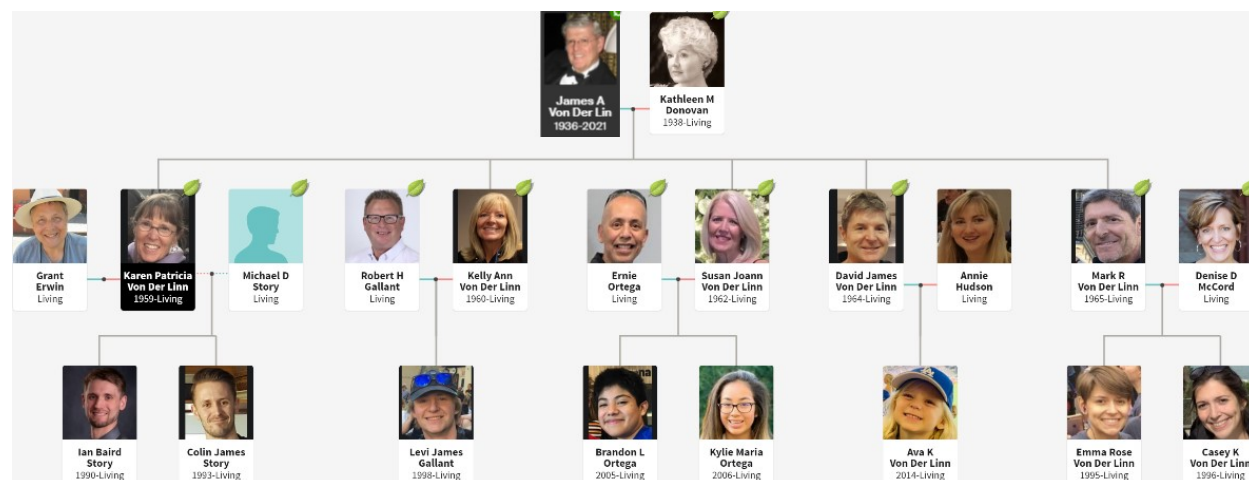


Jim in the mid-50s; Jim and Kathy in 1958 and 1984

Arthur and Ethel's son James was born in 1936 in Jamaica, New York. He got an aeronautical

engineering degree from Brooklyn Polytechnic. He married Kathleen Marie Donovan in 1958 in St. Albans, New York. Right after their wedding they moved to Seattle, where Jim had gotten a job at Boeing. He worked there for 37 years, holding a variety of positions, and traveling the world. With vision and perseverance, and at a cost to his career, he was instrumental in convincing the company to install Head Up Guidance systems in the factory, which probably saved thousands of lives. Jim could build or fix just about anything. He died in 2021 at age 85 of idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis.

Jim and Kathy had five children: Karen lives in Kirkland, Washington; Kelly lives in Cornelius, North Carolina; Susan lives in Lansdowne, Virginia; David lives in Burbank, California; and Mark lives in Scottsdale, Arizona.



Descendants of Jim Von Der Linn

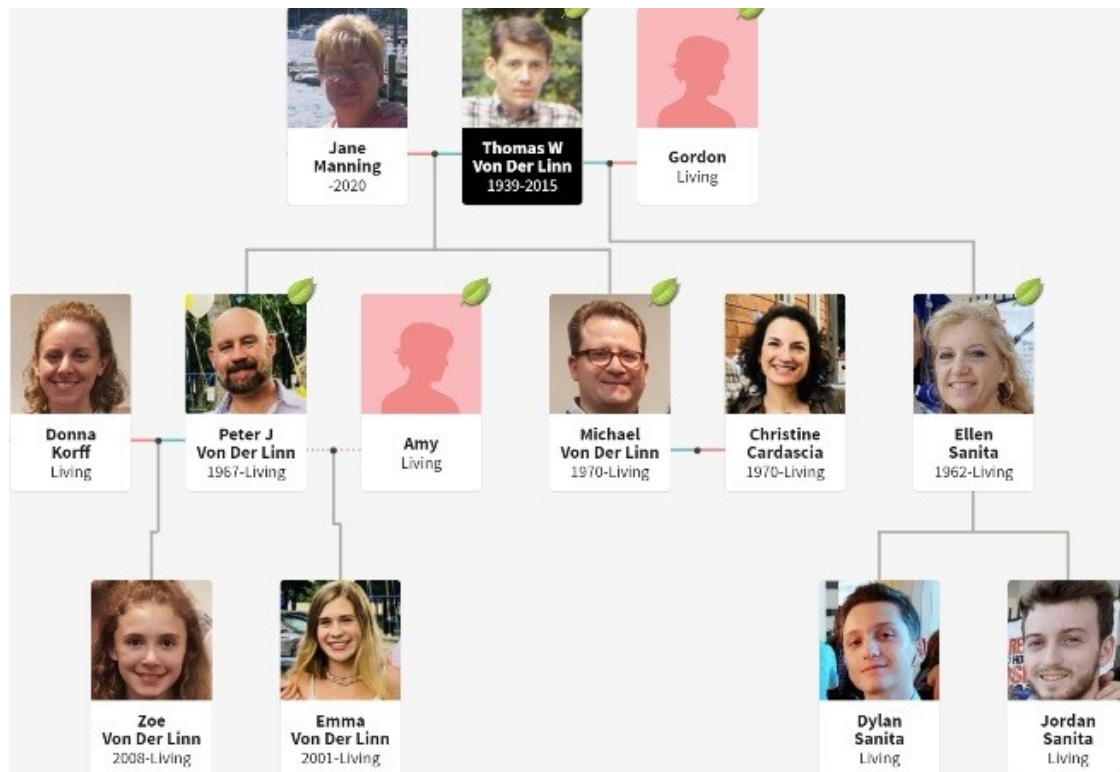
3. Thomas William Von Der Linn

Arthur and Ethel's youngest child, Tom, was born in 1939 in Jamaica, New York. He married Jane Manning in 1965. He was a talented graphic designer and photographer, and a highly-awarded member of the Society of Illustrators. He worked as an art director at Reader's Digest for 30 years. He developed ankylosing spondylitis (a type of arthritis that causes inflammation in the joints and ligaments of the spine) as a young adult, which bent his body but never his spirit. He died in 2015 in Danbury, Connecticut, at age 76.



Tom and Jane Von Der Linn

Tom and Jane had two children: Pete lives in Rochester, New York; Michael lives in Metuchen, NJ. After Tom's death his sons learned that he had a daughter, Ellen, who was given up for adoption at birth (Tom did not know that she existed). Ellen lives in Florida.



Descendants of Tom Von Der Linn

Part 4: Memories of Ethel

A Toas-Tite, A Black Banana, and an Avenging Canister Vacuum

Written in 2011 by Ethel's eldest granddaughter, Lauren Agnelli

If it's all in a name, what does the name "Ethel" bring to mind? It's old-fashioned, right? And isn't it kind of hard to pin a nickname on a girl named Ethel? What would you call her, "E"? Or "Eth"? Her middle name was Grace, at least that sounds nicer ... Ethel Grace. But of course, as our grandma, nobody ever called her anything but "Mom" or "Grandma." Her maiden name was Heil, so before her first marriage she was Ethel Grace Heil. From one report, the Heils were rather dour people – and very frugal. They were proudly "Pennsylvania Deutsch." Her father, Lewis Heil, hailed from Germansville, PA, and her mother, Grace E. Van Ostrand, was from Glenwood, NJ. How they wound up in Middletown, NY, is anybody's guess. Lewis worked as a train station manager and telegrapher – though Grandma mentioned that he was also a "peach farmer" in New Jersey.

From the family bible (started in the 1800s by Grandma's grandparents, the Van Ostrands, and in the care of Carrie Agnelli McKenna), we know that Ethel had three siblings and that she was the second in a family of four kids: Harold Heil, John "Lester" Heil, and Ruth Mapes Heil Custer. Their Grandpa Theodore Van Ostrand lived with the Heil family until his death in 1913 (Grandma Hannah died in 1910). Ethel grew up in Middletown, New York, at 6 Charles Street. Ethel had a girlfriend whose father had a photo studio in Port Jervis, NY; she became a photo retoucher and met her first husband, William McKinley ("Mac") Bullivant.

Ethel was 23 the first time she married. Her husband was "Mac" Bullivant, "One of the most popular of the younger businessmen of the city" of Port Jervis, New York. On April 21, 1921, Ethel became Mrs. William McKinley Bullivant. On August 5, 1922 she was widowed, just a little over a year later, when "Mac" died in the hospital after an appendicitis operation.

So it was as "Mrs. Bullivant" that my Grandma Ethel met her second husband, my mother's father, Arthur Von Der Linn. [One story is that] She was working at an upstate summer resort for some friends at their hotel, as the hostess. Being sweet and comely, with a lovely smile and big blue eyes, Mrs. Bullivant was certainly popular with the hotel guests. And when Mr. Von Der Linn drove up in his big car, he got out, walked up to the desk to check in, and was very taken with Ethel.

"Mrs. Bullivant, is she?" Arthur asked another hotel employee, *sotto voce*.

Came the fateful reply: "Ah, but our Mrs. B. is a widow. She was only married a year or so; terribly tragic, that—" Arthur Von Der Linn's hopes soared like a new kite on an April day at the beach. Or so you'd imagine...

Eventually, after a courtship that included Ethel Grace's converting to Catholicism, my grandmother became Mrs. Arthur Von Der Linn. Before moving to their brick Tudor-style house in St. Albans at 205-10 115th Avenue, the Von Der Linns lived in Hollis, Queens. Arthur was head mechanical engineer in the McDonald Construction Company (they paved the 1939 World's Fair, in New York). He and his father would spend summers in Florida, deep sea fishing for marlin, swordfish, etc.

And although practically ancient by the standards of the day (over 30!), Ethel went on to give birth to her brood of three: first my mother, Barbara (February 12, 1931), then Jim (February 13, 1936) and Tom

(January 20, 1939), my uncles.

For Ethel and her family during the depression, it was a wonderful life. Her husband, as an engineer during the WPA infrastructure-oriented 1930s, had regular work and contracts; solidly middle class, he aspired to culture and kept a bound directory of their home library with fancy calligraphy. The Bible, Shakespeare, Dickens, Dumas – classic tomes, all. ‘Twas a wonderful life for the young family. That is, until Arthur Von Der Linn passed away on February 20, 1943, from post-gall bladder surgery complications (chalked up to “God’s will,” though some think that infection set in after an initial misdiagnosis and sloppy post-surgical care), leaving Ethel once again a widow, now a widowed mother of three.

Before he passed on, the uncannily prescient Arthur Von Der Linn purchased a family cemetery plot in the Gate of Heaven Roman Catholic cemetery in upstate New York, just 25 miles north of the city, near a town called, appropriately, Valhalla. “Among its most famous residents is baseball great Babe Ruth...” At any rate, it’s a huge place, and Grandpa Arthur Von Der Linn was interred there in 1943. Grandma followed in 1984, and my mother, Barbara, was buried at Valhalla in the family plot in 1997.

Well, you’re probably thinking that poor Ethel was quite the jinx – and just maybe, I think she was feeling angry and guilty about that, especially the second time she was widowed. From their pictures together, they clearly look well suited and happy. We’ll never know, but she probably wondered if she was a bad luck spouse. At any rate, after the passing of husband two, she was through with romance and through with husbands. There she was, a sweet, domestically inclined country girl who buried two husbands by the age of 46. Once he was gone, her second husband’s family was rumored to not be very supportive, emotionally.

Reportedly, there was some insurance money coming in, so that was helpful. Even so, you would never know it. Ethel struggled like “the dickens” to make money during and after she raised her kids (when Arthur died, they were 12, 7, and 4 years of age). They never did lose their house, a 3-bedroom 2-story red brick Tudor with finished basement and a backyard full of fragrant roses in sunny St. Albans, Queens. [Arthur had purchased mortgage insurance.]

Grandma became a childcare provider/babysitter for wealthier ladies. She’d do light cleaning and cooking. For supper, they’d eat her plain, down home cooking, the fare from Ethel’s German-American girlhood: chicken with dumplings, tuna casserole, baked chicken. Some consider the best things that came out of Grandma’s kitchen were her Christmas cookies, hands down. Her Thanksgiving turkey dinners were marvelous, too. The smell of onions and celery, sautéing in the pan, pervaded the house on Thanksgiving mornings while we tuned in to the Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade on NBC (home of the Peacock).

My Uncle Tom, the youngest of her kids, remembers the early lack [of a father] in his life with a rueful manner, offset by a sarcastic sense of humor. His recall of childhood sometimes sounds like “Oliver Twist,” the Dickens tale of a sweet hapless orphan who asks “Please, sir, I want more,” in the musical version. Fact is, Tom grew up and became very successful, as a family man (two very smart, personable, capable sons and a 40+ year marriage to a funny, smart lady, Jane) and a senior art director for *Reader's Digest* [books]. Grandma always had copies of *Reader's Digest* around, so from a young age I assumed it was a senior citizen's publication. I am sure it was right exactly up Grandma's alley intellectually; though she certainly was intelligent she was neither sophisticated nor educated beyond high school. Just a country girl from early 20th century America...

My Uncle Jim, an aeronautical engineer, moved from Queens, NY, to Seattle, Washington, to work for

Boeing in the late '50s. It proved to be such an excellent career move that he stayed with Boeing his entire career. He and his wife, Kathy, built their retirement dream home on Cougar Mountain up in suburban Renton. They had five healthy, smart, very nice children, our west coast cousins who we were sort of competitive with...

My mother, Barbara, was the only girl – and the golden girl – in her family. Daddy's little pet, she was a cute, plump little girl who played the piano and lost her father at the age of twelve. She grew up, thinned out, played in an amateur big band in high school, with her friends. While in high school she met a neighborhood boy, Bernie Agnelli, who was also the oldest of three and a keenly intelligent youth. Barbara and Bernie married after a 4+ year courtship that included Barbara studying at Queens College and receiving a bachelor's degree, magna cum laude. Bernie graduated from Xavier High School, then Fordham University, summa cum laude. Then he had a stint in a Jesuit seminary, in Paris, France. At one point he thought his vocation to be as a priest, but happily for us he married Mom in 1953.

When my mother and uncles got older and one or two of them moved out, Grandma Ethel rented out a room or two, anything to be resourceful, to make or stretch the dollars. I don't think that Ethel bought herself clothes unless a dire emergency. In her later years, she'd wear the same thing repeatedly, almost like a uniform. She was a consummate seamstress and pumped her old Singer sewing machine to create the majority of my fashionable mother's teenaged wardrobe. Somehow I don't really think she paid much attention to personal hygiene, as she tended to have a certain strong *eau de granny* smell ... but that never took away from our affection for her.

When my sister and brother and I were growing up, also in Queens, but in an even "nicer" neighborhood, further out and away from Manhattan, Grandma was our primary caretaker and mom's personal cleaning lady. Several times a week she'd come over to be with us and clean and cook, in between taking care of other people's kids and doing housecleaning jobs, when our mom needed to go out and drive around to work as a piano teacher and fill-in church organist.

Grandma Ethel had had a pretty hard life, and now she was in charge of some pretty spirited kids who were not only related to her, but whip-smart and possibly emotionally deprived. Even more than other kids, we loved to push people and situations to the limit. Grandma yelled at us a lot. I think she was angry in general, about her life, about her daughter's working so hard and always being stressed out, about her frustration that she couldn't keep us in line.

"Wicked, wicked children!" Grandma would scream at us. "You're driving your poor mother crazy!" I'd cringe and hide, thinking over what that meant but never sure if we *really* had what it took to drive somebody crazy. If we did, could we figure out what it was and do the same to others who we really detested? Sure, I'd try not to take this yelling from Grandma all to heart, and I'd try to be good, then I'd forget and continue my young career as a hellion most likely bound for hell.

I've moved beyond that "scarred for life" feeling from that, and all the vacuum cleaning she did. The two most dreaded sounds in my young life had to be Grandma's screaming at us AND her incessant vacuuming, which seemed to happen when she was angry. It must have been a kind of therapy for her. The sound of a vacuum cleaner to this day brings her back to me, a memory of my grandma's angry vacuuming. "Get mad at that dirt! Really mad!" was what she might have been thinking, but as a typical Von Der Linn non-communicator, she'd take it out on the Electrolux, or the Kitchen Aid.

But then, she'd make it up to us by serving us the nicest little toasted cheese or applesauce sandwiches in this old metal contraption, a sandwich mold you grilled on the stovetop with, called a "Toas-Tite." The finished sandwiches resembled perfect low-tech flying saucers from the '50s, and were just the most

delicious things to come out of the kitchen since Pillsbury brownies. We also loved Grandma's tuna noodle casserole (with breadcrumbs on top) and her boiled chicken with Bisquick dumplings. She also made a lovely split pea soup with ham. These are the recipes I'll treasure and remember.

But then, Grandma's ways were otherwise downright quirky. For us kids, it was alternately amusing and horrifying to see some of her Depression-ingrained habits (now I also think her frugal parents were an even bigger factor). First, no rotting leftovers were exempt from eating in our house when Grandma came over, as waste is sinful, and weren't we all sinners enough to start? I can recall many a black banana slipping into her mouth while Grandma smiled at us and insisted it was really nice and sweet at the black stage. She would also tell us to "Outen the light," as we should never "waste of it" – that is, waste the electricity. In fact, her unswerving motto was, "Never waste of it!" To this day I carry a resourceful attitude towards electricity and leftovers. I love to finish off leftovers from my fridge, as long as they are still edible – i.e., not in even the first stages of rot or mold! When my sister and I are together and we do something un wasteful, like scraping out a mixing bowl meticulously with a rubber spatula, or carefully opening our presents, or rescuing leftovers from an untimely discarding, we smile at each other and say, "Grandma would be proud!"

Good ol' Grandma Ethel was unquestionably the queen of the ironing board. I thought it great fun to iron hankies and the like, whether or not she was looking. But of course, children weren't supposed to do such things. Not only can irons burn little fingers, we might not have been careful to banish all the wrinkles. Bless her soul, Grandma tried to teach me a little of how to iron a shirt: you start with the collar and cuffs, then the sleeves, then the yoke of the shirt, then the back and fronts – or at least, that much I can recall after years of taking shirts to the dry cleaners, or tossing them blithely into the washer and dryer, uncaringly. She would sprinkle items from the basket full of clean white "to be ironed" clothes with a small green Canada Dry bottle of water with a cork top that had a sprinkle attachment, and it would make a "jingle sprinkle" sound, like muted jingle bells, when she shook it. And if she didn't have time to iron stuff after dampening the things, she'd ball them up and toss into the freezer. Ethel VDL could have sure beaten Heloise at her hints – or at least given the nationally syndicated domestic doyenne a good scare.

Anyhow, Grandma Ethel was a far more domestic creature than our high-spirited, hard working mother. It was almost as if Grandma acted as handmaiden to the beautiful princess, Barbara, instead of being the queenly matron. No, Grandma worked hard her whole life, and didn't have a lot of time for a lot of "malarkey."

Until about age 75, Grandma seemed to have an edge. And then, the edges started to soften. She would sit for hours, just lost in thought. The jigsaw puzzles that occupied her front tables changed less frequently; once adept at doing many, she seemed to lose interest.

One day, when she was around 86, I asked her, with my little brother and my boyfriend, to tell me about herself as a young woman, and about HER parents. "Oh, well, we had a peach farm," Ethel giggled in unusually high spirits, her blue eyes dancing. "You see, daddy was working for the Western Union, then he had a breakdown and we moved to a peach farm..." Indeed. Her father, Lewis Heil, had married Grace Van Ostrand, a proud-looking beauty and possibly his social superior. I knew somewhere in this family chain there was a strain of "strangeness," resulting in being committed to state hospitals. I wonder if this could be the weak link in the family chain's mental well-being. No matter; life goes on with or without chemical imbalance.

Anyway, by the time I was grown up enough to care and inquire, Grandma in general didn't have much to say, didn't tend to reminisce out loud, just kept more and more to herself. It really was rare to have a conversation with her. One of the high points to her life was when she visited our cousins in Seattle,

Washington, from time to time in the sixties and seventies. She'd return from trips out west with our "perfect" Von Der Linn cousins, simply raving about what nice, well-behaved children they were. The implication being, in my head, why can't YOU, Barbara's kids, be good like THEM? We definitely resented those Seattle cousins, thought of them as "goody-goodys" and wanted to prove to them that WE were better 'cause we were cooler and smarter and all of that. And certainly we were hipper, 'cause we were older and urban and cool, and liked better music. Besides, New York was cool, and Seattle (at that time) definitely wasn't.

Being a "free spirit" like my cousin Karen, and also deemed the sensitive, artistic one in my family, I would get these urges for free-ranging wanderlust, doing adventurous things like moving to London, England, in my mid twenties. I was in search of my heart's desire, of course, so I could not be stopped. Not that my family ever tried to talk me out of any of my schemes – either they were too accepting, or too lazy, or my ideas just weren't actually too weird and dangerous enough to veto. I had to live with that disappointment, so I sighed and got on with it. Another adventure, another experience to write about later on and embellish – like here and now.

Anyway, I knew I'd need money and cash just wasn't my strong suit, being a musician and freelance writer. I nicely asked Grandma to lend me \$500 so I could make the trip. I wanted to go to England and make it as a songwriter and vocalist, just like Chrissie Hynde. It was 1981 and I admired her music and spirit in a huge way; we'd just met at my friend and bandmate, Dianne Athey's, apartment (they were best friends in Akron, Ohio, at college), where the two old friends polished off a bottle of wine and pretty much entertained me. At one point in the evening I told them of my plans to move to London. Chrissie said to me, in her part Ohio, part Brit accent, in an offhanded drunk manner, "Sure, go to England, it'll be good," so I figured it was the modern-day Delphic Oracle predicting success, and firmed up my plans.

Grandma, at this point a sweet tempered, forgetful old lady who daydreamed a lot, mostly communicated with me through the mail. I'd get a page-long handwritten note from her every now and then. She had a flowing, gentle scrawl, almost perfect handwriting but starting to taper off absentmindedly at the ends.

When I was a little girl and broke my collarbone in several places as the result of a faulty skateboard (obviously!), she sent me a get-well card and a little book called "Captain Kitty." No matter I was ten years old, practically reading Proust, and the card and the book were probably for kids who were just starting to read. It was the thought that counted.

Ever thoughtful, she'd written on the back of the card: "... I received Holy Communion for you last Sunday & asked God to make you well soon and to spare you as much pain as possible – I hear you are getting very good care and are being a real good patient." There were riddles in the card, silly ones like "Why is a half moon heavier than a full moon?" (A: because the full moon is lighter) or "What kind of bank has no money?" (A: a river bank).

Grandma's funny get well card concluded, "Try these riddles on your nurse or doctor or even your company. Lots of love from Grandma." Ah, my grandmother, the card – who loved puns and cheery cards. Now I know where I got that trait!

Anyway, in order to pull off my big moving-to-London scheme, in a carefully worded note (persuasive writing is my forte), I sweetly asked her to help fund my foreign travels. I didn't really think she'd agree, so the \$500 check was a pleasant surprise indeed. At the time, it was like having two grand or so. It meant a lot and was very helpful to me. I paid it back – or meant to; can't remember now. I don't know if anybody else asked her for any help, monetarily. It's not like I was her favorite or anything; in fact, I don't remember her ever seeming to favor any of her grandkids—except for those darned Seattle cousins!

"Eat your bread crusts, children," she'd say to us and our Seattle cousins, "and you'll have curly hair, like me." Never mind that Grandma got a permanent at the beauty parlor every few weeks. Was there really a notion that eating crusts gave a person curly hair? I think it was more like during the Great Depression, one couldn't let the bread crusts go to waste, and at the same time an adorable child star, Shirley Temple, ruled the public imagination. Therefore, EVERYBODY wanted to be a little curly top like she was – so they made up this depression-era saying about bread crusts and curly hair. Anyway, that sounds plausible to me and I'm sticking by it!

Anyway, I laugh at most of this now, and I smile when thinking about my Grandma Ethel, a humble heroine in some ways certainly, whom I hope has gone to her true reward, which I'm sure she believed in and deserves. In fact, in my mind's eye I really can see Ethel up there in heaven, in a younger, mischievous form, her blue eyes asparkle, sitting between her two husbands, flirting and giggling.

So here's a toast to you, Grandma Ethel – or a Toas-Tite!

Other Family Memories

Ethel's sons Jim and Tom (from an interview conducted by Lauren Agnelli in 2011)

Jim: My dad died on the operating table. He had an infected gall bladder, or something like that, that went undiagnosed for a long time, and when they finally got him on the operating table he died there. We never were able to find out that much about it. [His death certificate says he died of "pneumonia following gallbladder surgery."]

Tom: In those days, it was called "God's Will," so you just went with it, you know?

Jim: That was before lawyers and malpractice and all that stuff.

Tom: I remember Grandma saying that he suffered a lot of unpleasantness and discomfort and pain for a long, long time and he was being treated by some local doctor. And I don't know whether he was misdiagnosed or what, but eventually he became hospitalized, then had the surgery, and never made it back home again.

Lauren: Did Grandma have musical talent? Did she play the piano & stuff?

Tom: Yeah, she played the piano. Absolutely. And also, our father was in the fire department band. I have a photograph at home, a group shot of the band, and it was around the time he was in the army.

Lauren: I had the impression, I don't know how, that the Von Der Linns weren't really crazy about Grandma, and that she had to convert from being a Protestant to a Catholic?

Tom: She didn't have to; she opted to do that on her own.

Jim: That was her story, anyway.

Tom: I think what you're referring to is that after our father died, there was not a lot of interaction or support from the members of the family who survived. I remember Uncle Milton's wife and Aunt Lou [were supportive].

Jim: Well, you know, that's quite normal. The same thing happened with Kathy's mom when Kathy's father died.

Jane (Tom's wife): I think in those days too that the widow became like a third wheel and she wasn't really accepted because she didn't have a husband anymore. Like they wouldn't invite her to a dinner party because there wouldn't be an even number of people at the table, or, you know, I just think there was a different attitude then than there is today.

Lauren: Was she originally a Lutheran, or what?

Jim: I think her parents were Lutherans.

Tom: She always referred to her family as "Pennsylvania Dutch" [Deutsch, or German].

Lauren: Talk to me about food she made and what did you like that she made?

Tom: You know, I don't really think of her as a great cook in the classic sense, but I think she was kind of a 'meat and potatoes' kind of cook. The meals I remember her making were this chicken & dumplings thing, fricassee chicken? She did it in a pressure cooker, I believe. I think we used to have that on Sunday pretty regularly. And then I think she made a thing she called "Porcupine Balls." Tuna Noodle casserole was one of her staples. A Friday night meatless dinner. She made good soup, like great split pea soup, and lentil soup. And she was a good baker. She made good pies, she made a great apple pie, and blueberry, and rhubarb pie was one of her favorites. She also made stew, a beef stew and lamb stew also. But I can't think of too many other things we'd have. We'd have hamburgers as a dinner fairly regularly.

Lauren: How about rice pudding? Didn't she make rice pudding?

Tom: Yeah, rice pudding, that's a good one – and tapioca.

Jim: And she'd make it with raisins, I think. And bread pudding, with raisins.

Jim: Sardine sandwiches! (chuckles) And didn't we have grilled cheese sandwiches?

Tom: When I got married, I know she gave Jane some recipes but I don't know whether she remembers what they were. Jane had some soup recipes...

Jane: Oh, the chili. And I had her pea soup recipe but I don't have it any more. I don't know what I did with it, honestly... but the chili, that's the only one I have from her.

Tom: And the tuna casserole.

Jane: I never made the tuna casserole! When we got married, Uncle Tom said, "Never make tuna noodle casserole because I had so much of it, I hate it." I've never made it.

Tom: But now I miss it and I wanna go back!

Jane: Well, too bad!!

Tom: I think we used to eat fish because in those days you didn't eat meat on Friday. I'm pretty sure she

used to make flounder, or something like a flat fish. And she used to bread it, and cook it in a cast iron skillet with a little bit of oil on the bottom so it was nice and crispy and tasty. I think we did that. But she was never adventurous or inventive about... in those days. I don't think a lot of people were. I mean, there would be boiled potatoes, carrots – there wouldn't be, like, any exotic vegetables or anything.

Kathy (Jim's wife): I want to tell you something Jim told me never to do when we got married, that your Grandma always did: darn socks. He said, "Please don't ever darn my socks because it hurts when you walk on it with those lumps." Grandma Ethel would have darned anything to keep it from wearing out.

Lauren: Did she fall down in her bathroom in St. Albans and have to be rescued at one point?

Jim: Oh yeah, absolutely. She had a little stroke—

Tom: A petit mal is what she had—and I think she was in the tub for a long day. I know the next-door neighbor called the police and they came and got her out.

Lauren: Do you have any fun little stories about Grandma?

Tom: The only amusing story I can think of now is that she had a very convenient memory about how good her children were.

Jim: Blinders!

Tom: She never remembered that we got into any kind of trouble, ever. "Not MY boys, no no no." And both Jim and I had run-ins with the law.

Jim: (scoffs)

Tom: You were drivin' a car without a license.

Jim: Well, I never got caught!!

Tom: Well, I got caught, driving a car when I was about 15, I didn't have a license. Yeah.

Jim: Motorcycles, motor scooters, cars – never had a license.

Tom: And anyway, I was escorted home by the police. So, I was picked up by the police driving without a license. And I was young, about 15, maybe even less. So he brings me back to Grandma's house, walks me up to the front door, rings the doorbell, Grandma answers the door and she's quite shocked, doesn't understand what's going on. So the policeman explains to her that I was breaking the law and doing this and – those were the days when you didn't get arrested. They took you home and hoped your parents would do the right thing. I mean, some cops would do that.

Well, I told that story years later. It was at some gathering. And [someone] said something like, "Oh, so and so's kids are always in trouble," and Grandma said, "I was so lucky; my boys never got into any kind of trouble."

And I said, "Well, mom, don't you remember the time I was brought up?" and she said, "Oh, stop saying that, you're making that up – it never happened!" So, she was pretty funny, she was pretty selective about

what she remembered about her kids.

Jim: It was her survival mechanism.

Grandson Michael Von Der Linn (Tom and Jane Von Der Linn's youngest son)

I'm sorry to say I didn't really know her very well. She was someone I usually saw during our occasional visits to [the Agnelli's] house and she died when I was 13. I have only the haziest memories of her house in St. Albans and the apartment where she lived afterwards.

She seemed a little distant emotionally and I was bemused by her frugal behavior. I noticed that she always wore the same few pieces of clothing, often a dress in the style of a sailor's uniform, and would unwrap a present carefully so she could re-use the wrapping paper. My mom said these traits reflected her 'Depression-era mentality.'

Regarding food, I enjoyed her Christmas cookies. I was especially fond of her pinwheels, which were rather dry with a good cocoa flavor. I think she packed them between wax paper in round metal butter cookie boxes. My dad had little praise for Grandma's cooking, but he told me he liked her split-pea soup and baked beans. (By the way, I have the ceramic Dutch oven she used for her beans.)

Granddaughter Karen Von Der Linn Story (Jim Von Der Linn's eldest daughter)

I remember Grandma as gentle and sweet. I remember sitting in the car next to her and she was squishy, soft, and powdery-smelling. She told me that if I ate my bread crust I'd have curly hair like her. (Did I want curly hair? It never occurred to me to wonder.) We used to play with her "chicken wings," the folds of skin under her arms, and she was so good-natured about it. We were too young to know it might have hurt her feelings. I was on a road trip to New York when I got the news that she had died. I had of course been planning to visit her, and I felt so sad that I would never have that chance again.

When I was 15 my family went to New York. Grandma was moving I think, and told us we could go through her attic and take anything we wanted. I took some books of 1930's Hollywood paper dolls (Shirley Temple, Deanna Durbin), and a flapper dress and matching purse. I kept everything for many years, sometimes using the purse, always wishing I could wear the tiny dress, marveling at how thin she had once been. I proudly told people that my grandma had been a flapper. Finally I donated the items to the local museum, wanting to ensure they were properly preserved, and could be admired by others.

When I think of Grandma I mainly think of the beautiful young woman she was before I knew her. I also think of the woman who endured widowhood twice, and raised three children alone, and how scary and lonely that must have been.

Grandson Mark Agnelli (Barbara Von Der Linn's youngest son)

My memories of Grandma Ethel come from the frequent babysitting she did for me, mostly after she moved to her apartment in Glen Oaks, Queens. I vaguely remember going to the St. Albans house once and that she had quite a few rosebushes there and one of those old rotary/mechanical lawn-mowers. At the Glen Oaks place, she had a cool fold-out card table (which must have been an antique then and certainly is now!) and we used to play a lot of Rummy and Go-Fish together. She would make tea for us and serve cookies. She also loved to watch her soap-operas, especially Days of our Lives.

Speaking of her tea, she taught me a very valuable life-lesson with it, which was NOT to ever waste ANY resources you may have. She would put the teabag in a dish next to the sink after steeping a cup or two, and she'd re-use it later. I'll bet she got 5-10 cups of tea out of each bag! Between her and our mom's Depression-era experiences and the effects it had on their lives, I definitely learned the value of a dollar, and not to ever squander money or other resources.

I also remember the day Grandma Ethel came over to 45-12 (our Douglaston, NY, house) for a July birthday party (for me and Tom) when I was probably 9 or 10. I hadn't seen her for a few minutes so I went looking for her. I found her in the front yard where she had fallen, and I remember running to the backyard and yelling "Grandma's down in front!" She had slipped and broken her hip so we called an ambulance and I remember going to visit her in North Shore hospital a few times while she recovered.

She was a very nice and kind woman and it hit me pretty hard when she died, as I was about 12 or 13 at the time and she was the first family member that I really knew that had passed away.

Granddaughter Carrie Agnelli McKenna (Barbara Von Der Linn's youngest daughter)

Those incredible Christmas cookies!!

Eating Good & Plenty candy at her kitchen table. Our sleepovers at her house.
Her ironing board that came out of the wall when needed. Her sprinkler bottle when she did ironing.

The back room in her house; floral furniture covering.

Playing tinker toys in her living room. Looking at the witch broom in her fireplace grate.

Never being allowed in her basement.

Her gorgeous rose garden.

How she used to clean out our fridge and eat semi-bad food sometimes, especially black bananas.

How she took us to a store by her home and bought us sugar cane.

How she always used to refer to Mom as 'your poor mother.'

Granddaughter Lauren Agnelli (Barbara Von Der Linn's eldest daughter)

By mistake, my friend Rose left her green igloo lunch carrier at our house the other day. She called to say, "Don't worry, there's nothing that can go bad in there. I'll come pick it up on Tuesday. Oh, there's a peanut butter and jelly sandwich in there with crunchy peanut butter for my husband. Just toss it."

Well, I tried, but couldn't throw out a perfectly good PB&J sandwich – especially since it was only a day old but not by any means spoiled or inedible. After scraping off some of the excess jelly, I nibbled the sandwich for breakfast this morning – even though it wasn't the PB&J that I would make, with toasted whole grain bread and just a dab of raspberry jam. Not only are we going through rough economic times – not unlike the Great Depression, in some ways – I am my Grandma Ethel's granddaughter. "Don't waste of it!" echoes in my head. As I age, that voice gets ever stronger.

Every time I eat something to keep it from being “needlessly” tossed out, my memory of my grandma returns in a soft, sweet, humorous way. While not being overly forceful about her beliefs, her effect on us grandkids became indelible. So when there are leftovers that are reasonably fresh and flavorful in our fridge – but not the fast food or heavy, fried leftovers – I’ll eat ‘em for lunch. As my sister, Carrie, and I chuckle, “Grandma would be proud.”

Grandma’s house was located at 205-10 115th Avenue in St. Albans, Queens, a New York City suburb. It was a small Tudor style house, with bedrooms upstairs, a tiny kitchen, one downstairs bathroom, a finished basement and a great little walled garden in the back. Grandma grew roses; I’ll always remember a large, fragrant rose garden.

The living and dining rooms were off the kitchen, side by side, and full of heavy, dark furniture. There had been a black baby grand piano, a Howard (Grandma and Mom played the piano), in the living room that eventually occupied my mother’s house. In fact, that piano dominated our living room my entire life! However, the room I best recall was a back room on the first floor. I think it had southern exposure; it was Grandma’s sewing room and had light flooding in the windows where shelves full of potted plants proliferated. I’d say there were dozens of plants, in cute little novelty containers, shaped like bunnies and birds and whatnot. Grandma (and mom) had green thumbs, and loved all kinds of plants & flowers. Probably the dominant indoor plant I can remember was the snake plant (“the mother-in-law plant”) and some philodendron... maybe some spider plants too. I’m sure there were cacti of various shapes and lots of other things. Kind of wish we had a picture of that...

The pedal-driven antique Singer sewing machine went to my Uncle Tom and Aunt Jane’s. Grandma would sit there and make all kinds of neat things for us. I particularly remember her sewing a skating skirt and little matching kerchief, in some sort of quilted material. Grandma would often ask me to help her thread needles with my “young eyes.”

Grandma knew how to darn socks, and would use a wooden “darning egg” tool to hold the sock in place. She showed me how to weave the threads so that the hole in the sock would be mended – even better than new! To this day I am skilled at sock repair in a way I believe few others are. But then, isn’t the time it takes to do that worth more than a pair of socks? Anyway, I think it’s a handy skill.

When we got sick, Grandma would make us milky tea (Tetley?) with 2 spoonfuls of sugar. With that, graham crackers were served. Chocolate covered graham crackers were also a big favorite of hers. Date nut bread and cream cheese was a big favorite, along with cottage cheese with pineapple bits.

I especially loved when she made baked apples. She was big on puddings: raspberry Junket (pink rennet custard), chocolate and vanilla pudding (usually instant), jello, and my big favorite, tapioca (with raisins and a splash of cool milk). She also made a rice pudding that tasted great (with raisins & cinnamon, of course) and even a bread pudding. She loved Cream of Wheat with brown sugar and raisins and a splash of milk. Grandma clearly loved raisins; they were included in so many of her recipes.

Grandma’s apple pies were outstanding. I don’t know much about the crusts, but the filling was always just right. The unusual ingredient: tapioca. It’s even more absorbent than flour as a binding agent!

I remember she frowned on drinking beverages during meals, telling us, “It’s better to drink AFTER you eat.” I think she was in to Fletcherism – you know, that trend where you’d chew your food to death, using natural saliva juices to break it down in the mouth. That would explain why she shunned beverages during meals. Right?

Part 5: Grandma Ethel's Recipes

Compiled by granddaughter Lauren Agnelli

Unfortunately, some of Grandma Ethel's recipes have been lost (rice pudding, split pea soup, porcupine balls, stuffed cabbage, tuna noodle casserole, chicken with dumplings, beef stew...), but thankfully Lauren was able to preserve some gems!

Egg Shake

Hard to believe with the fear of Salmonella gnawing at our mind's edges nowadays, but back in the day I do remember Grandma giving us an occasional "Egg Shake" (maybe not the right term but that's what it was). It probably made you big and strong... But if it was curly hair you wanted, you had to eat bread crusts!

- 1 raw egg
- 8 oz. milk
- Dash of vanilla
- 1 spoon of sugar

Add ingredients in a tightly closeable container; shake hard for about 30 seconds; serve.

Baked Apples

(Oven 375 degrees for 30 minutes)

A Note on Apples: The choice of apple seemed crucial. Grandma favored Rome Beauties because they were good cooking apples; their inside flesh maintained its shape once baked, whereas lighter, juicier apples – such as Macintosh – just shrank and disappeared. Look for firm shape and texture with a tart taste. Delicious-type apples were never used for cooking. Granny Smiths, Cortlands and Macouns were unheard of, according to recollection... But Granny Smiths do make great baking apples.

- 4 Rome Beauty or other baking apples (Cortlands, Macouns)
 - Brown sugar
 - Raisins
 - Cinnamon
 - Nutmeg
 - Salt
 - Butter
1. Wash well and core the apples, being sure to leave the skin on the bottom so the cinnamon & sugar juices are retained.
 2. Heat oven to 375 degrees (you could also microwave them nowadays for 3 to 5 minutes, or until desired doneness).
 3. "The stuffing": In a medium sized mixing bowl, combine with a fork or spoon:
 - 1/2 cup brown sugar
 - 1/2 tsp. cinnamon
 - a few shakes of nutmeg

- a shake or two of salt
 - 1/2 cup (or more) raisins
4. Stuff the apple “stuffing” into the cored cavities of the apples.
 5. On top of each stuffed apple, add a little pat of butter.
 6. Place in heated 375-degree oven in a baking dish with at least 1-½ inch sides (glass or metal – of course don’t use a metal one if you’re microwaving them), with about ¼ inch of water on bottom of pan.
 7. Bake for about 30 minutes or until apple is soft.
 8. Serve with whipped cream or ice cream, if desired.

Baked apples are good hot or cold, any time of day or any season – though they do bring to mind the colder months. Try for breakfast!

Apple Pie

(Oven 425 degrees for 40-50 minutes)

Grandma Ethel taught me this at a tender age; what I may not recall verbatim I make up for in other ways. These pies are delicious.

- About 6 – 8 medium sized baking apples
- A 9-inch piecrust, top and bottom
- 1/3 cup White sugar
- 2-3 tbsp. Minute Tapioca (instead of flour for binding)
- 1 tsp. Lemon juice (just a big squeeze)
- 1 tbsp. Butter divided into 5 or 6 small pats
- 1/2 tsp. Cinnamon
- 1/4 tsp. Nutmeg
- Pinch of Salt

Another note on picking the apples: Look for firm shape and texture with a tart taste. As with baked apples, the choice of apple is pretty crucial to the successful outcome. Grandma favored Rome Beauties because they were good cooking apples; once baked, they didn’t disappear in the pie, whereas other lighter, juicier apples – such as Macintosh – didn’t hold up and just turned to mush. Granny Smiths are good in that nice, tart flavor-wise way, especially if you add them to other apple varieties such as Rome Beauties. Nowadays, look to the Cortland or Macoun apples for tart crispy body and flavor.

Peel, core, and thinly slice your apples. Put into a large mixing bowl that has room to stir apples with spices.

Line your 9-inch pie pan with your uncooked crust (Crisco has recipes, as does any regular cookbook; pie shells are available in the supermarket in wide varieties. Grandma didn’t show me how to do a crust – sorry!). NOTE: I recall using Flako piecrust mix... it’s inexpensive, easy to make, and almost foolproof!

Line the bottom of the pan with half of the Minute tapioca. Tapioca was Grandma’s little secret ingredient. But if you don’t have any, flour or cornstarch will do.

In a small mixing bowl, combine the sugar, spices, salt, and remainder of the Minute tapioca.

Add the small mixing bowl's contents to the bowl of apples, stirring apples to coat. Let the apple mixture sit for an hour, then scoop apples into crust, sans juices that remain.

Dot the top evenly with butter, then squeeze about 1 tsp. of fresh lemon over apples.

Add the rest of the juices from the bowl of apples. This way, the apple mixture won't fall and settle as much (by letting it sit an hour, then pouring liquid in afterwards. I heard this trick not from Grandma, so it's not *de rigueur*, but useful).

Cover with top crust and, using a large fork, press down on edges to seal. NOTE: This indeed gives the pie a home-baked look – homely, in fact. What Grandma's food lacked in looks it made up for in taste.

Cover the edges with foil and bake in 425-degree oven for 30 minutes, then remove foil and bake another 15-20 minutes.

Cool and serve, or serve warm, with whipped cream, ice cream – or a piece of cheddar cheese on the side, as my dad, Bernie, was wont to do.

Bread Pudding (with raisins)

(oven 350 degrees for 45 minutes)

Grandma found a use for old bread in addition to making French toast. This is a yummy pudding. "It's like French toast," said my stepdaughter, Olivia. Y-e-e-es, but French toast with raisins, very warm and pudding-y. Why not try using half maple syrup, half sugar?

Prep Time: 15 Min

Cook Time: 45 Min

Yield : 8-inch-square pan, or 2-quart casserole dish

Ingredients

- 6 slices day-old bread
- 2 tablespoons butter, melted
- 1/2 cup raisins (optional)
- 3 eggs, beaten
- 1 & 3/4 cups milk
- 2/3 cup white sugar (or try 1/3 c. maple syrup, 1/3 c. sugar?!)
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/8 tsp. salt

Directions

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C).

Break bread into small pieces into an 8-inch square baking pan at least 2" tall, or a round 2-quart

casserole dish. Drizzle melted butter or margarine over bread, sprinkle in salt. If desired, add raisins.

In a medium mixing bowl or 4-quart Pyrex measuring cup, combine eggs, milk, sugar, cinnamon, and vanilla. Beat until well mixed. Pour over bread, and lightly push down with a fork until bread is covered and soaking up the egg mixture.

Bake in the preheated oven for 45 minutes, or until the top springs back.

A note on raisins:

By now, you could probably tell that Grandma Ethel was big on raisins. Happily I also love them, though I do know those who don't. So, if any of these recipes calling for raisins would taste better to you without the raisins, go ahead. Ruin a perfectly nice recipe... Grandma Ethel won't care, she's long gone. Behind your back – because she was a kindly woman – she'd probably shake her head and go “Tsk, tsk” and find it hard to understand. And do I care that you're missing out on a sweet, chewy, iron-rich little bit o' sunshine addition to certain recipes? (silence)

Really: what's it to you, anyway? What did a raisin ever do to you? Huh? Huh??!

These days (21st century) it's all about the craisin, anyway. But for that good old fashioned 20th century comfort food effect, use raisins, liberally.

Christmas Roll-Out Butter Cookies

Grandma's Legendary Christmas Cookies (aka Butter Cookies, Rolled Cut-Out Cookies, Refrigerator Cookies)

375 degree oven

Yield about 4 dozen

This is the Christmas classic for which you'll also need a rolling pin, wax paper, and a sifter, because it's necessary to sift and roll out dough. Cookie cutters are also required!

Start with ingredients at room temp for a few hours. Then you'll have to refrigerate the dough for about 1-2 hours.

Sift together and set aside:

- 2 cups flour
- 1.5 tsp. baking powder
- 1/4 tsp. salt

Cream together:

- 1/2 cup butter (1 stick)
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 egg
- 1 tsp. vanilla

- 1 tsp. milk

Add the sifted ingredients, bit by bit, until all is combined. Should the mixture feel too soft, sift in a little more flour. Should the mixture feel too dry, add a little milk. Shape the dough into 2 or 3 balls (liberally flour up your clean little hands for this task!) Wrap the dough balls in wax paper and chill for an hour or two.

Roll out the chilled dough on floured wax paper to whatever thickness you like. Cut into festive shapes with floured cookie cutters (so the dough won't stick to them too much).

Place on ungreased cookie sheets an inch apart. Bake at 375 for about 8 minutes until beautifully light brown. (It's easy to burn 'em, so watch 'em!) Remove from cookie sheets at once.

Decorate with pretty colored sugars and edible gimcrack. By all means, get festive and live!

Oatmeal-Nut Macaroons (for Christmas)

Darned if I know why Grandma called these great oatmeal cookies "macaroons," as they haven't a speck of coconut ... but then, the word is in disuse so at one point it probably meant any "drop" cookie (as opposed to a cookie cutter cookie). Call it yumbolicious!

375 degrees for 10 minutes

Yield 6 dozen cookies

Recipe can be halved

Start with all ingredients at room temp. for 2 hours.

Sift together and set aside:

- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 2 cups flour

Cream together:

- 1 cup butter (1 stick)
- 1 tsp. freshly grated orange rind
- 1/2 tsp vanilla
- 1.5 cups sugar

Add:

- 2 eggs
- 1/2 cup sour milk (squeeze half a lemon into regular milk)

Fold in sifted dry ingredients.

Add:

- 3.5 cups oats (more if needed)

Add:

- 1/2 pound raisins and nuts (walnuts or sunflower seeds)

Drop by spoonful onto greased cookie sheets. Bake at 375 for about 10 minutes until golden brown. Remove from sheets at once.

Pinwheel Cookies (for Christmas)

(oven 350 degrees for about 15 minutes)

Grandma packed them between wax paper in round metal cookie tins – usually the same ones every year, as her recycling efforts meant “return to sender” and re-use, yearly. Anyway, Grandma’s cherished recipe has been lost over time (not so the preceding two classic cookies), but after searching and baking up a batch from a recipe that sounded similar, here is a cookie that rivals Grandma’s.

Once a year, I consider this labor-intensive cookie doable. It’s a multi-step process, taking several hours or days (with refrigerating time). Two flavors of dough must be combined in a rolled log and cut into slices to bake. Grandma made some very nice ones and these will definitely “pass” as comparable cookies to commemorate her great Christmas cookie-making spirit. (This recipe is modified, from Martha Stewart.)

YOU WILL NEED:

wax paper, parchment paper, a rolling pin, and plastic wrap, in addition to the ingredients.

Vanilla dough

- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 3/4 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 2 sticks (1 cup) butter (at room temp)*
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 large egg (at room temp)
- 2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract

Whisk together flour, baking powder, and salt in a large bowl. Beat butter and granulated sugar with a mixer on medium-high speed until pale and fluffy. Beat in egg and vanilla. Reduce speed to low. Add flour mixture, and beat until combined. Form into 2 large balls, wrap in wax paper & refrigerate until firm, for 1 hour or overnight.

Chocolate dough

- 2 & 2/3 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/3 cup unsweetened Dutch-process cocoa powder

- 3/4 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 2 sticks (1 cup) butter (at room temp)*
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 large egg (at room temp)
- 2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract

Whisk together flour, cocoa powder, baking powder, and salt in a large bowl. Beat butter and granulated sugar with a mixer on medium-high speed until pale and fluffy. Beat in egg and vanilla. Reduce speed to low. Add flour mixture, and beat until combined. Form into two large balls, wrap in wax paper & refrigerate until firm, for 1 hour or overnight.

* Martha calls for unsalted butter. Grandma used salted, as far as I know...

Directions to assemble and bake chocolate/vanilla pinwheel cookies

Transfer each of the 4 dough ball halves to a lightly floured piece of wax or parchment paper. Roll each out to a 10-by-12-inch rectangle and trim edges with a knife. Repeat with remaining dough halves. Transfer each rectangle on wax paper or parchment to a baking sheet. Refrigerate 30 minutes.

Then, take one of each rectangle – chocolate and vanilla – and place the chocolate on top of the vanilla. Starting with a long side, roll both doughs into a log with clean, lightly floured fingers. Wrap each log in plastic; refrigerate until firm, about 1 hour or overnight.

When ready to bake, preheat oven to 350 degrees. Cut logs into 1/4-inch-thick slices using a sharp knife, transferring to baking sheets lined with parchment paper (and reshaping into rounds, if needed) as you work.

Bake cookies, rotating sheets halfway through, until edges turn golden brown, about 15 minutes. Let cool on sheets on wire racks.

Cookies can be stored between layers of wax paper or parchment in airtight containers at room temperature up to three days. Also: you can store cookies in the freezer for months... they thaw out and still taste good, in my opinion! (Then again, I'm sure I've never et a cookie I didn't like...)

IS IT WORTH IT? ARE THEY THAT GOOD? Of course they are, they're classics!

Pineapple Upside-Down Cake

Our mother, Barbara Grace Von Der Linn Agnelli Levers, had a favorite cake that her mom – Grandma Ethel – would often make. Then mom started making it. Then I watched and made it a few times. Since mom's been gone (May 16, 1997), I've not had any requests for it but then again, it's probably time to bring it back!

- 13 oz. can pineapple slices or rings, in its own juice
- 1/2 cup brown sugar
- 2 tbsp. butter
- box of yellow cake mix (Pillsbury, Betty Crocker, Duncan Hines – whatever was on sale)
- 3 eggs (usually)

- about six maraschino cherries, cut in half
- 1 cup heavy whipping cream
- a spoonful of white sugar
- dash of vanilla

Thoroughly grease and flour a 13 X 9 inch baking pan – sheet cake style.

Open can of pineapple rings and drain the juice into a 2-cup or larger measuring cup. Set the drained rings aside.

Follow directions on cake mix box, making the cake batter -- but substitute the liquid from the pineapple slices when the recipe asks for water (just make sure the required amount of liquid is used; if you run out of pineapple juice, add water).

Set cake batter aside when it's mixed.

Wasting no time, on bottom of cake pan, sprinkle brown sugar and dot with butter, then arrange drained pineapple rings so it kind of looks like a symmetrical dedication to the Olympics ... covering the bottom of the pan. (Or, do this before you mix up the cake batter – you don't want the whipped up batter to lose too much of its valuable air now, do you?)

In the middle of each pineapple ring, place a maraschino cherry half, cut side down.

Once the bottom of the pan is covered with brown sugar, butter, pineapple and cherries, pour the cake batter over it.

Bake as specified on directions the maximum number of minutes.

Test cake to be sure the toothpick comes out clean, then remove from oven and cool on rack for 20-30 minutes.

DON'T WAIT MUCH LONGER than 30 minutes. You need to remove cake from pan while you can...

HOW TO REMOVE UPSIDE-DOWN CAKE FROM PAN:

After you've waited 20-30 minutes, cover a cookie sheet (a few inches longer and wider than the cake pan) with foil, then place it, foil side down, over the cooling cake in the pan.

Smoothly and swiftly flip the cake over so it plops onto the foil covered cookie sheet, helping it along by tapping the top of the cake pan methodically, top to bottom, with a wooden spoon. This should do it, and the pineapple upside down cake should come out.

Serve with freshly made whipped cream (chill a metal mixing bowl in freezer, then pour the heavy whipping cream in, add a spoonful or two of white sugar and a splash of vanilla, then whip on high until just about stiff, but be careful to not whip too much, making butter!).

Grandma Ethel's Chicken Soup

Many meals can be made from a chicken, starting with a whole roast chicken, then as leftovers such as

chicken a la king or a chicken pot pie. Its final gift to us is a boiled carcass, where the meat can be cut and scraped off and used as soup, adding the chicken stock from the boiled bones.

I would marvel at how Grandma could so quickly pick the chicken off the bone – and with no emotion at all! Some people can't bear the sight of a chicken carcass; they're squeamish about it. Well, this recipe is not for the faint hearted – or for those who are pressed for time. It's a good recipe for distracted people who are multi tasking and puttering around the house, who have a good chunk of time in the morning, afternoon, or evening to make this very edible soup that can be frozen & re-heated weeks or months later. Hey, wait – I resemble that remark!

(serves 6 – 8)

- 1 any sized chicken carcass, with some meat on bone
- 6-8 chicken bouillon cubes
- pepper, salt to taste
- 3 quarts water (from boiling pot)
- 2 med onions
- 2 stalks celery
- 3 carrots
- 2 cups egg noodles

Please note that this is a time-consuming soup to make because of the cooling down times between cooking carcass and picking off meat.

Put the chicken carcass in a large (6-8 quart) pot with enough water to cover the bird, bring to a boil, then simmer for about an hour.

While bird boils, chop the onions, celery, and carrots into small pieces and reserve to the side, in a bowl.

After boiling for an hour, remove from heat, then carefully pick the carcass out of the still-hot water, with large tongs or a meat fork and pasta spoon.

Cool the chicken carcass on a large plate for about 20 minutes (now 90 minutes have gone by!), until you can start to pick the meat off the bones without burning your fingers. Thoroughly pick off meat from all areas of the carcass and cut the meat into bite-sized pieces – reserve them in a bowl, next to the bowl of veggies. (This “chicken pickin” will take at least 15 minutes, more if you are new to it.)

Strain the warm chicken water from the boiling pot into another large pot or large pyrex measuring vessel. If you have more than 4 quarts of liquid, get rid of excess.

Return water to large pot, add chicken pieces and veggies, chicken bouillon cubes, salt and pepper to taste.

Return pot to heat and boil for 5 minutes. Stir. Reduce heat and simmer, adding salt and pepper to taste.

After 30 minutes of simmering, heat again to boiling, adding the egg noodles. Boil another 5-10 minutes, until noodles are cooked.

Once noodles are ready, so's the chicken soup. Remove from heat, serve with saltines.

Cool and refrigerate or freeze remainder of soup.

Grandma Ethel's Chili

From my Aunt Jane Von Der Linn: "I have only one recipe from Ethel, and that is for chili. It is really simple, and I still make it today, with a few variations. I will give it to you as she gave it to me."

(Serves 6)

- 1 lb. ground beef
- 1 green pepper chopped
- 1 small onion chopped
- 1 can stewed tomatoes
- 1 can tomato sauce
- 1 can chili beans in Mexican gravy*
- Chili powder

To cook: Brown beef, pepper and onion together. When beef is browned add in rest of ingredients. Add chili powder and cook 30-45 mins. (Then Aunt Jane adds: "How simple is that!")

*This could only be found in the A&P supermarkets then. Now you can find some variation of it in the Spanish food section or you could use kidney beans.

Notice how no mention of the size of the cans is made – or the amount of chili powder? Let's go with these sizes/amounts for those of you who need guidance:

GRANDMA ETHEL'S CHILI (revised with more specific amounts)

- 1 lb. ground beef
- 1 green pepper chopped
- 1 small onion chopped
- 1 15 oz. can stewed tomatoes
- 1 8 oz. can tomato sauce
- 1 15 oz. can chili beans in Mexican gravy*
- 1 tbsp. Chili powder
- (I'd also add salt and pepper to taste...)

Grandma Ethel's Creamy Coleslaw

How glad am I to know a great coleslaw recipe! Of course, that's always debatable – as everybody has a different idea what great coleslaw tastes like. Still in all, I've got to say that my grandma's creamy coleslaw really rocks!

(serves 6 – 8)

- 1 small onion, diced
- 1/2 cup Miracle Whip Salad Dressing (mayonnaise if preferred)
- (add 1 tsp. sugar if you use regular mayonnaise)
- 1/4 cup red wine vinegar

- 1/4 cup milk (NOT skim)
- salt and pepper to taste
- 1/2 head shredded white cabbage (add shredded carrots if you'd like)
- poppy seeds or celery seeds (optional – to sprinkle on top)

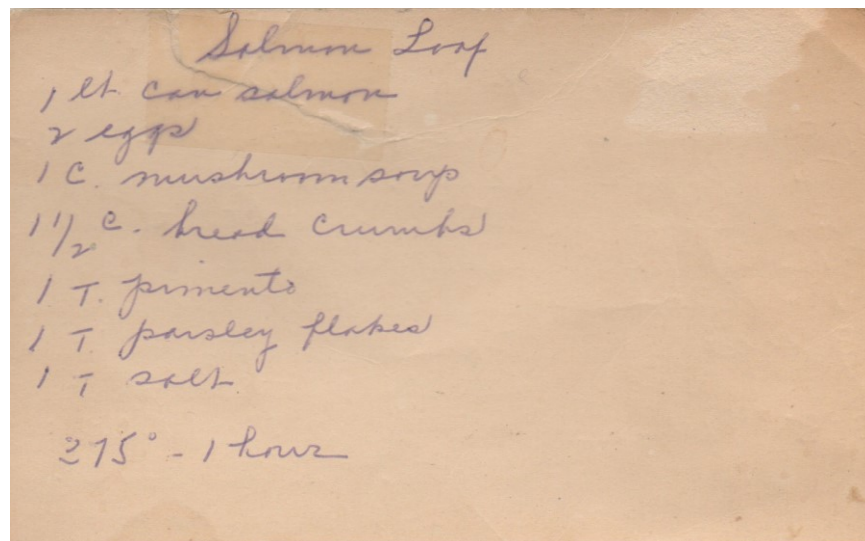
Start by mixing up in a large bowl – with a large fork or spoon – the Miracle Whip or mayo, vinegar, milk, and diced onion. Add salt and pepper to taste.

When satisfied with the dressing mixture, add the cabbage, half at a time, stirring.

Coat all the cabbage with the coleslaw dressing.

When all mixed, sprinkle poppy seeds or celery seeds on top.

Ethel's Salmon Loaf



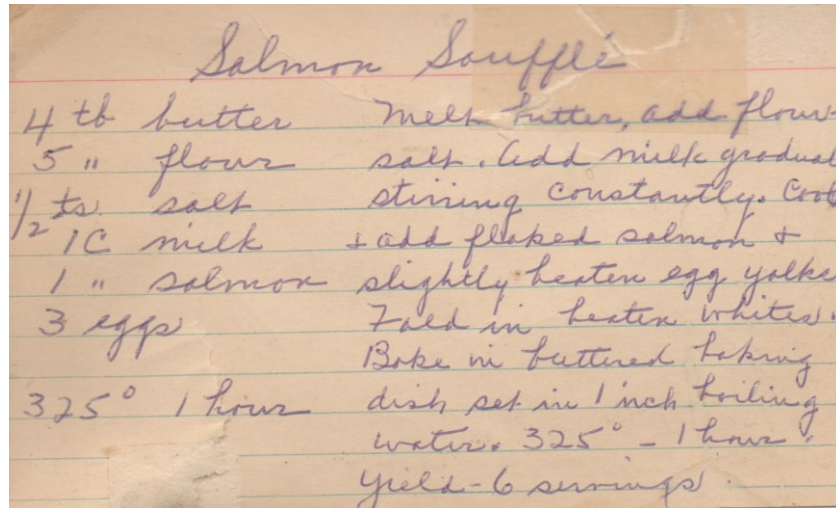
Recipe in Ethel's handwriting

(375 degrees – 1 hour)

- 1 lb. can salmon
- 2 eggs
- 1 can mushroom soup
- 1½ c. bread crumbs
- 1 Tb. pimento
- 1 Tb. parsley flakes
- 1 Tb. Salt

There are no directions. Let's improvise: combine all the ingredients, slap into a pan, then bake for an hour. What could be easier?

Ethel's Salmon Souffle



Recipe in Ethel's handwriting

(325 degrees – 1 hour)

(Serves 6)

- 4 Tb butter
- 5 " flour
- ½ tsp. salt
- 1 c. milk
- 1 c salmon
- 3 eggs

1. Melt butter, add flour & salt.
2. Add milk gradually, stirring constantly.
3. Cool & add flaked salmon & slightly beaten egg whites.
4. Bake in buttered baking dish set in 1 inch boiling water at 325 degrees for 1 hour.

(I believe this could be improved upon, as the consistency wasn't fluffy and light but kind of heavy. Perhaps the egg whites need to be whipped up stiff and folded in?? Try it.)

Chicken a la King

This is another one of those ultimate forties or fifties-type 20th century meals that were made from Campbell's soup, leftover chicken, and frozen peas and carrots. It was served over white toast and truly delicious to our young taste buds. Nice to make when you don't have much time, have leftovers in the house, and crave something with a simple sauce.

Toas-Tite Pies

I most remember Grandma making flying saucer-shaped applesauce pies in the Toas-Tite press. She'd butter two pieces of bread, lay butter side down on the Toas-Tite, fill one side with a couple of spoons of applesauce, shake on some cinnamon, then squeeze together and cook on the stove on a med-low flame until both sides were toasted (about 5 – 10 min. each side). Had to cool down, very hot – but tasty!!








I started making grilled cheddar toast-wiches with dill pickle chips, a green salad and tomato soup on the side. I always enjoy a good Toas-Tite ... would you like one? Mmmm.



A Toas-Tite Press

Part 6: Descendants of Anthony & Nicholas Von Der Linn

(Johann) Georg Von Der Linn and Salome Busch had seven children. We've already learned about Frank. In this section we will learn a bit about Frank's brothers Anthony and Nicholas.

	Elizabeth Von Der Linn 1846–1920
	Maria Anna "Mary" Von Der Linn 1849–
	Margaretta Von Der Linn 1851–
	George (Edward? Anthony?) Von Der Linn 1854–1909
	Anthony "Anton" (Tony?) Phillip Von Der Linn 1856–
	Nicholas Von Der Linn 1859–1945
	Frank (Francis) Von Der Linn 1861–1939

*Children of Georg and Salome Von Der Linn
The three girls were born in Clausen, and the four boys in New York*





Anthony Phillip Von Der Linn

Thank you to Bob Von Der Linn (great grandson of Anthony) for most of the information in this section!

Georg and Salome's fifth child, **Anthony Phillip Von Der Linn** ("Anton"), was born in 1856 in Brooklyn, NY. He was a Nickel Plater in 1880, and a Cigar Box Maker in 1889/90. He resided in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, NY, at 30 Leonard St. (prior to his marriage), at 65 Boerum in 1889-90, and at 61 Boerum St. from 1897 to 1910.

Anthony married **Elizabeth "Lizzie" Neuberger** (Newberg in the marriage register) in 1885 in New York. Elizabeth was born in 1866 in "East" New York, NY. She lived at 342 Grand St. before her marriage, and at 148 Chestnut St. in 1930 in Brooklyn, NY. She died sometime after 1930 in Brooklyn, NY. Anthony died between 1910 and 1920 in Brooklyn, NY. He is found in the 1900 Census index but not in the 1920 index.

"Anton and Lizzie," as they were known, had four children:

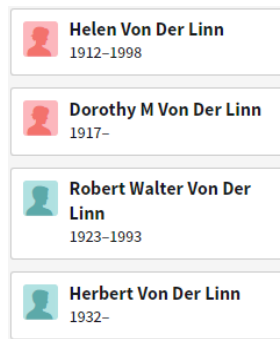
	Frederick Anthony Von Der Linn 1885-1952
	Frank G Von Der Linn 1888-
	Anthony Phillip Von Der Linn Jr 1890-
	Albert Von Der Linn 1893-

Children of Anton and Lizzie

1. Frederick Anthony Von Der Linn

Frederick was born in 1886 in New York, NY. He was a cutter for a clothing company in 1920 in Brooklyn, NY. He resided at 23 Hemlock St. in 1920 in Brooklyn, NY. He lived at 206 Hale Ave. in 1941 in Brooklyn, NY. He died in 1952 in Brooklyn, NY. He was buried in St. Johns Cemetery, Middle Village, Queens, NY. He married Johanna Marie Bindrim (called Hannah, daughter of George F Bindrim and Mary Mosbeck) in about 1911. Johanna was born in 1888 in New York. She died in 1955 in NY. She was buried in St. Johns Cemetery, Middle Village, Queens, NY.

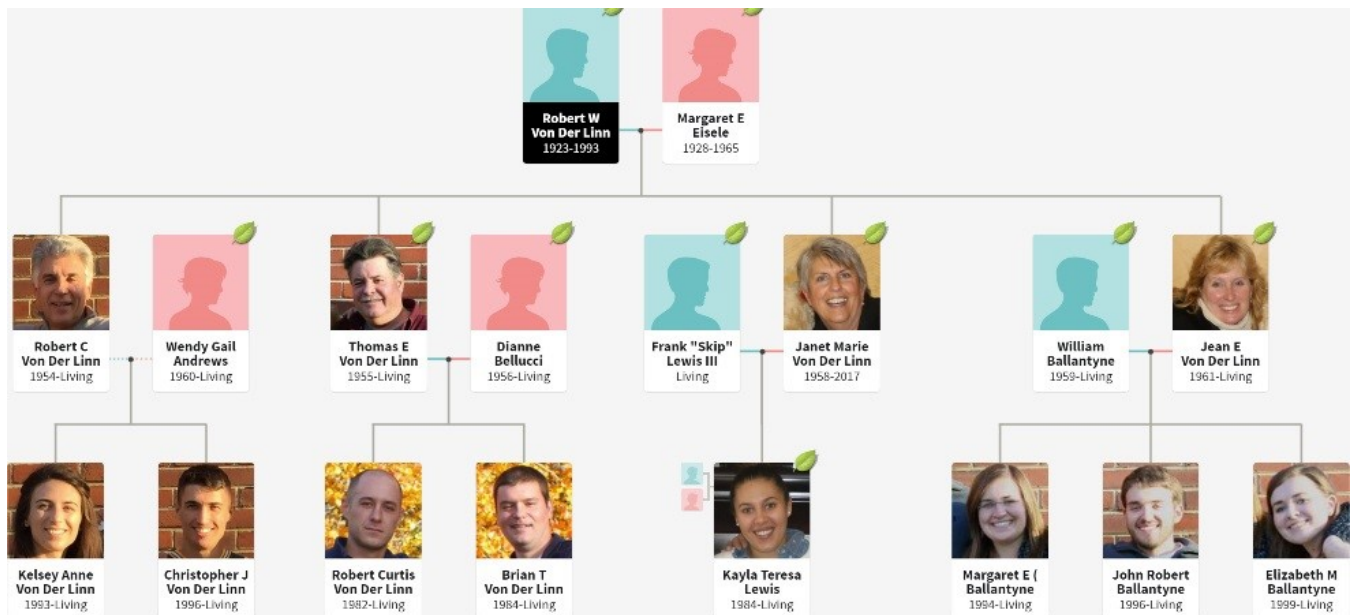
Frederick and Johanna had four children:



1.1. Helen did not marry or have children.

1.2. Dorothy did not marry or have children.

1.3. Robert Walter Von Der Linn was an Office Clerk in Equitable Paper Bag Co., Long Island City, NY. He served in the US Navy – Pacific, USS Belleau Wood (CVL-24). He married Margaret Elizabeth Eisele (daughter of John George Eisele and Margaret Elizabeth Arre) in 1953 in St. Hugh RCC, Huntington Station, NY. Margaret was born in 1928 in Brooklyn, NY. She graduated in June, 1946, from Huntington High School, Huntington, NY. She died of Lupus in Huntington Hospital in 1965. Robert and Margaret had four children.



Descendants of Robert W. Von Der Linn (Kayla has a son)

1.4. Frederick and Johanna's youngest child, **Herbert Von Der Linn**, was born in 1932 in NY and died in 2022. He married Margaret Schmidt. They did not have any children.

2. Frank G. Von Der Linn

Anthony and Lizzie's son Frank was born in 1888 in New York, NY. He married Rose. It is not known whether they had children.

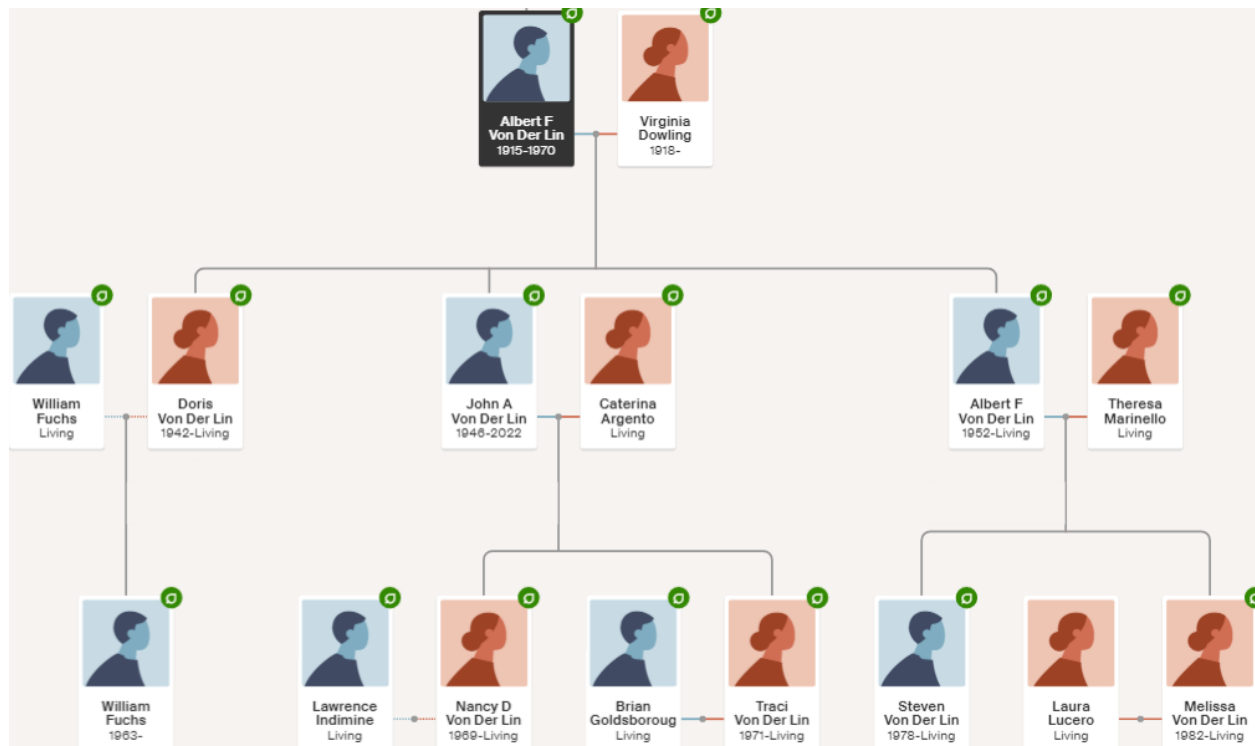
3. Anthony Phillip Von Der Linn Jr.

Anthony was born in 1890 in New York, NY. He married Lillian Mary Schaefer in 1913. Dot and Herb remember them as "Uncle Tony and Aunt Lilly." Tony and Lilly had one child.



Anthony Phillip Von Der Linn Jr.

3.1. Albert Frederick Von Der Linn was born in 1915 in Brooklyn, NY. He was "Best Man" at the marriage of Robert W. Von Der Linn and Margaret Eisele in 1953. He died in 1970. Albert married Virginia Dowling (daughter of Willard Dowling and Hattie Sparrow). Virginia Dowling was born in 1918. Albert and Virginia had three children.



Descendants of Albert F. Von Der Linn

4. Albert Von Der Linn

Anthony and Lizzie's youngest child, Albert, was born in 1893 in New York, NY. He served in the military in 1918 in Europe. From Missing In Action--Wounded Notices 1918, Brooklyn Standard Union, October -December:

Private Albert Von der Linn, reported wounded, degree undetermined, Aug. 24, is 25

years old and the son of Anthony Von der Linn of 61 Boerum street. In a recent letter to his folks he spoke of having been gassed and was in a hospital. He is with Company M, 305th Infantry. Although Von der Linn is married and has a wife and a five year old daughter, he refused to claim exemption. He went overseas last April after having been drafted.


He resided at 528 State St. in 1920 in Brooklyn, NY. Albert married Irene. Irene was born in 1890. Albert and Irene had a daughter born in 1913.


Nicholas Von Der Linn




Thank you to Andrew and Anne Murray for most of the information in this section!


Georg and Salome Von Der Linn's sixth child, Nicholas Von Der Linn, was born in 1858 in Brooklyn, NY. He resided in 1881 in Brooklyn, NY. In 1900 he lived at 37 McKibbin St. in Brooklyn, NY. McKibbin St., Williamsburg, is the block next to Boerum St., where Anthony Von Der Linn lived. Nicholas married Elisabetha "Lilian" Field about 1884. She was the daughter of Edward Field and Sara Moody. Lilian resided in 1881 in Brooklyn, NY. Nicholas and Lilian had six children:


 **Frederick Anthony VON
DER LINN**
1885–1954

 **Edward George Von Der
Linn**
1889–1954

 **Ludwig ("Lewis"?) Von
Der Linn**
1891–

 **Elisabeth Frances Von
Der Linn**
1896–1983

 **Franz Loretta VON DER
LINN**
1899–

 **Helen Lucia VON DER
LINN**
1899–1900

Children of Nicholas and Lilian Von Der Linn

1. Frederick Anthony Von Der Linn

Frederick was born in 1885 in Brooklyn, NY. He married Catherine Noeth in 1912. They had Anna in

1913. Catherine died in 1914. Frederick married Catherine Drayss in 1917. They had Helen in 1918. That Catherine died in 1921. Poor Frederick! He died in 1954.



2. Edward George Von Der Linn

Edward was born in 1889 in Brooklyn, NY. He married Mary Markert, called “Mae,” in 1914.



Back row left to right: Elisabeth Quigley Farrell, Mary "Mae" Von Der Linn, Edward George Von Der Linn, Elisabeth Von Der Linn Quigley, Martin Quigley I; Front row: Millie Farrell, Marilyn Brem Quigley, Robert Quigley I, Agnes Murphy Quigley

3. Ludwig (Lewis?) Von Der Linn

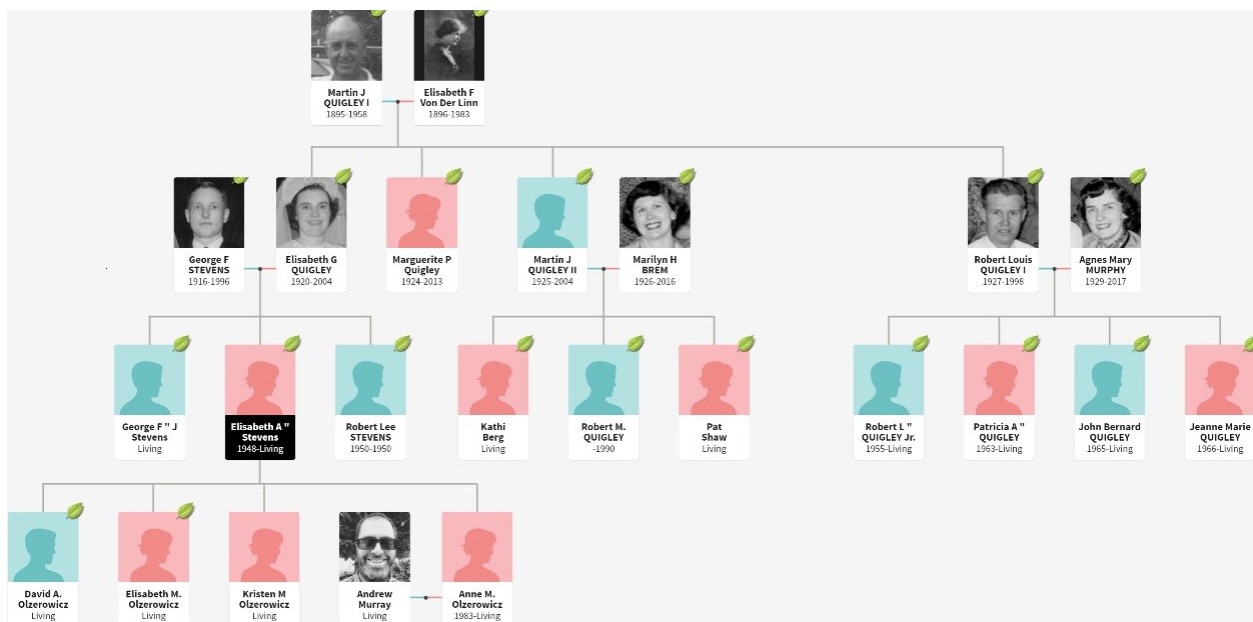
Ludwig was born in 1891 in New York, NY. [I found no records for a Ludwig. A Lewis VDL witnessed the marriage of Edward George and Mary Markert; could Ludwig have been called Lewis?]

4. Elisabeth Frances Von Der Linn

Nicholas and Lilian's sixth child, Elisabeth, was born in 1896 in New York, NY, and died in 1983. She lived at 61 Boerum in 1919 in Brooklyn, NY. Elisabeth married Martin Joseph Quigley in 1919. Martin Quigley was born in 1895 and died July 1958. Elisabeth and Martin had four children: Elisabeth, Marguerite, Martin Jr., and Robert.



Elisabeth Von Der Linn Quigley circa 1919



Descendants of Elisabeth Von Der Linn

4.1. Elisabeth Genevieve “Gen” Quigley was born on September 10, 1920 in Ridgewood, NY. Elisabeth G. Quigley married George Fredrick Stevens on April 4, 1945 in Seattle, WA. George Stevens died in 1996. Elisabeth died in 2004 in Carmel, Indiana. Her obituary reads:

Mrs. Stevens was a founding member of St. Elizabeth Seton Catholic Church where she had been a Eucharistic minister. ... She was a 1938 graduate of Our Lady of Wisdom

Academy, where she received the gold medal for Catholic action. She was a 1942 graduate of Queens College. She was a U.S. Navy veteran of World War II, and a 1943 graduate of the Naval Reserve Midshipmen's School. She married George Stevens, April 4, 1945, in Seattle. ... Mrs. Stevens was active in Girl Scouts, and volunteered with the American Heart Association. She also volunteered for Westfield Village Nursing Home and Central State Hospital. She enjoyed reading and knitting.

4.2. Marguerite Patricia Quigley (1924-2013) was a Sister of the Daughters of Wisdom.

4.3. Martin Joseph Quigley II (1925-2004) married Marilyn Helene Brem (1926-2016).

4.4. Robert Louis Quigley (1927-1998) married Agnes Mary Murphy (1929-2017).

5. Helen Lucia Von Der Linn

Nicholas and Lilian's daughter Helen was born in December, 1899, in New York, NY, and died in 1990.

6. Franz Loretta Von Der Linn

Nicholas and Lilian's son Franz was also born in 1899. Were he and Helen twins? His death date is unknown.

Addendum: What was it like to travel steerage?

Most immigrants traveled "steerage," the cheapest tickets, on the lowest deck of a vessel. Although Congress began attempting to regulate steerage conditions in 1820, conditions endured by passengers improved very little. In 1908, special agents of the U.S. Immigration Commission traveled as passengers to observe firsthand the hunger, lack of privacy, and generally uncomfortable, unsanitary, "disgusting and demoralizing" conditions. In the report, sleeping quarters were described as accommodating 300 or more people. The berths were six feet long and two feet wide. This is where travelers slept and stored all of their luggage. Voyages lasted seven to seventeen days. Most passengers had to provide and wash their own eating utensils. Laws that required clean washrooms were often ignored, and there were far too few washrooms for the number of people. There was only cold saltwater for washing, with maybe one warm water faucet for 300 to share. People were fed from tin trays and the food was "wretched" and insufficient.