Williams

The story of my dad and his folks is mostly set in Schuylkill County PA. To follow it you need to key into the place names:

Specifically, the communities of Ashland, Girardville, Gilberton, Pottsville, Schuylkill Haven, and Tamaqua and the townships of Cass, Branch, Norwegian and Schuylkill all make appearances.

But I will begin in Carbon County because that’s where the first bit of Williams family history entered my memory.
Elmer’s Story

When I was young we often visited my grandfather Elmer Williams grave in Citizen’s Cemetery, Beaver Meadows PA, which is a few miles south of Hazleton in Carbon County.
From that and the little bit my father said about it, I knew that he had been killed in the mines in 1933 when my dad was 17. I knew that Elmer had learned to be an electrician through a correspondence course (We had the books still, when I was home, which I sometimes tried to read), and that the accident was electrical. I never asked and never knew how or why they got from Ashland to Beaver Meadows. On one of the rare visits we made to Ashland, my Dad mentioned that he was there, on the mountain looming over the town, when someone came up to tell him about his father’s death. Like many personal things, it was not something he talked about easily.

Ashland PA

Looking down Center St

My dad and his parents and their parent lived a block or two to the right of this shot.

So what happened?

I know that in the 1930 census the family was running a boarding house in Ashland.

The details of that census entry show that they lived at 1525 Center St. Household members are listed:

Elmer 41, my grandfather

Edith A 34, my grandmother

E. Louis 14, my dad
J. Elsie 12, my Aunt Jane

Raymond T. 6, my Uncle Ray

+ 6 boarders.

Elmer is listed as a Laborer in the mines who had not worked the previous work day. It lists an “unemployment code” of 11, which I do not understand. This was the Depression after all. Each census seems to echo the concerns of the moment. (Literacy is replaced by immigration status is replaced by employment status.) Nancy reports that Elmer suffered from TB and spent some time in a sanitarium, but we don’t know exactly when or where. It may be that the boarding house was a stop gap way of having some income while he was unable to work.

“Louis” was evidently an invention of the census taker. He was Lewis. “J Elsie” was my aunt Jane. I think only her mother called her Elsie. The “T” in Raymond is for Terrill… Edith’s maiden name. Aunt Jane named her daughter Terrill (or Terry) I did not know how common family derived names were until I started looking into the family history.

Google Street View of 1525 Centre. 16th St is on the left, so the view is looking north. The next street up is Chestnut, then Market, where Elmer grew up. According to Google Maps, the building on the corner is
1533, then 1527 then 1523. 1525 is listed as the home of “Quality Plus Builders”, but it doesn’t really show up on street view. The main building may be in the back, which is how it is marked in the aerial view. No way of knowing if the buildings have changed much since 1930. The ones on the street clearly have not.

So this is what was going on in 1930.

Then in 1933 they are in Beaver Meadows, a long way from Ashland. The reason for the move must be guessed. Clearly this was the worst of the Depression. Maybe the boarders lost their jobs and the boarding house was no longer sustainable. Whatever the truth of that, Elmer certainly landed a job as an electrician, which precipitated the move.

My sister found a record of the accident posted at

http://www.phmc.state.pa.us/bah/dam/rg/di/r45_MineAccidentRegisters/r45-14AnthraciteAccidentRegisters1933_1972.htm#1924_1932

What it says is that he was killed July 10, 1933 as a result of touching a power line, while working outside (i.e. not underground) at the Coleraine mine, which was operated by Penn Anthracite. He was listed as 42 years old with 2 children, 24 years experience in the mines, 24 years experience as an electrician.

Actually, he had three children: my Dad, his younger brother Ray, and sister Jane.

Also he wasn't 42. He was 44, two days shy of 45 (born in July 12 88, died in July 10, 33). My guess is the accident logs were using somewhat old data. Even if the records on which the accident report were 2 or 3 years out of date, it still should have shown 3 kids. I’d guess just sloppiness, like “Louis”.

Since his father and grandfather were miners, the 24 years experience in the mines was entirely plausible. He is listed in the 1910 census as a miner.

However, the 24 years experience as an electrician is entirely implausible. Either the records are wrong, or, as my cynical sister suggested he may have lied to get the job. There is a second accident report in the same database from 1925. There he is listed as a 36 years old electrician working at the Locust Run Washery of the Replier Coal Co. (The accident was “fell getting off car”, presumably the tramcar that ferries people into and out of the mine). The Locust Run Colliery was in Connerton PA, just slightly north of Girardville. It was founded by John Conner of Ashland, whose bio is available at

http://files.usgwarchives.net/pa/schuykill/xmisc/c560001.txt

and was one of the first in the region. This was a stones throw from the colliery he worked at in 1917.
Another tidbit I have to gauge his experience is a vague memory of the correspondence school books being dated around 1915. So potentially he had at least 8 years experience at an electrician and possibly as much as 18 at the time of the accident. I don’t think he was a novice. Just unlucky. Or maybe clumsy.

Info on the mine where the fatal accident happened is available at http://www.minesite.com/3609176,Coleraine-Operation-Rossi-Excavating-Co.html

It is located 2.4 mi from Beaver Meadows on the road to Trescow. In the satellite view below, Beaver Meadows is on the right edge, Trescow on the lower left, and Hazleton on the upper left. I think the now abandoned Coleraine operation must have been about where I show it. (Note that the latitude and longitude are a bit off in the minesite link. I am going by the verbal description).
My sister Nancy picked up some bits and pieces from our mother and grandmother. It seems likely they had just moved from Ashland to Beaver Meadows and Elmer was starting his new job. Dad stayed back in Ashland for the summer, which is why he was there when he heard the news. The next fall he would do his last year of school at Hazleton High (as a result of which he got to know my aunt, then, through her. my Mom). Mother said Dad got to wear the same suit to his father’s funeral and his high school graduation (She never spoke of such things to me, but she did with Nancy) My guess is it was the only suit he had for many years. His graduation photo is the oldest photo I have of him. (There are hardly any surviving old photos from his side of the family; none of Elmer). You can’t tell from this, of course, but his hair is red. Of course my memory of him is all black, white and bald… pretty much like me, now. But our mother had red hair as well, then, so the three of us all inherited the recessive gene and came out with auburn reddish hair. It was a source of painful teasing and bullying when I was young, but I would love to have some of it back, now that it is a distant memory.

The family, of course, was thrown into very hard times after the accident. My Dad was old enough to fend for himself. After graduation he worked for a while on WPA, and then got a job as a surveyor in the mines, before joining the Army. His brother Ray was too young to be on his own and his mother didn’t have the wherewithal to keep him at home. He ended up going to the newly founded Hershey School for Boys. His mother kept Jane, who was about 15, and I think she took in boarders again. I remember her
talking about cooking for the boarders... she was a great cook... but I never had a clear notion when that was. By 1940 she was married to George Russel, but it’s not clear when that happened (except between ‘37 and ‘40.) It is interesting that she is buried next to Elmer in Beaver Meadows. (George is in the Hazleton cemetery, a block or so from where my mother grew up... just coincidently)
Ashland

For all practical purposes the Williams’ in America all happened in Ashland... up to the time they moved, fatefully, to Beaver Meadows. The map below is a pretty clear picture of the layout of the southern coal regions. Ashland is on the left center, Hazleton upper right.

A good place to start is the 1900 Census for Ashland. The following entries are revealing:

Address 1307 Market St

Head David Williams  M 67 b Sept 1832

Wife Mary Williams  F 63 b Jan 1836

David and Mary were born in Wales, married in 1854 and immigrated to the US in 1855. David is listed here as a Mine Laborer, who had not worked in the previous 12 months. (A working definition of “retired”.) He rented their home.
Mary is listed as having had 8 children, only two of whom were still living in 1900. It’s not easy to say who these are. In 1880 David and Mary had 2 kids, William L, 19, and Jane, 20. Another person, David Phillips, lived with them, identified as a Nephew. (This may be a clue to Mary’s maiden name.) Anyway, since Mary was already 43 in 1880, one presumes she had lost 6 of 8 before that date, and the two survivors in 1900 must have been the two survivors in 1880. One of the two was William L, their neighbor at 1303 Market and my Great Grandfather:

1900 Address  1303 Market St

Head  William L Williams  M 39 b Feb 1861 Pennsylvania

Wife  Jane A Williams  F 37 b Sept 1863 England

Son  Hector Williams  M 18 b Nov 1882 Pennsylvania

Son  John Williams  M 16 July 1884 Pennsylvania

Daughter  Edna Williams  F 14 Sept 1887 Pennsylvania

Son  Elmer Williams  M 12 July 1888 Pennsylvania

Son  Newton Williams  M 10 August 1890 Pennsylvania

Son  David Williams  M 8 Sept 1892 Pennsylvania

Daughter  Jennie M Williams  F 3 May 1897 Pennsylvania

Daughter  Mary Williams  F 0 April 1900 Pennsylvania

I don’t know what the L in William L stands for. “Lewis”? That would account for my Dad’s Elmer Lewis, not to mention my brother Lewis David.

Again, my Dad’s younger sister was Jane, one supposes after her English grandmother. So my brother David being named after his great great grandfather seems even more likely, since these folks lived so tight.

I remember hearing about “Aunt Jennie”, and maybe even meeting her once. As usual, when I met adults, I had practically no idea who she was.

William L is listed in the 1900 census as being a RR Brakeman who had been idle 5 months of the prior year. The two working age sons, Hector and John, were listed respectively as Collier Laborer and Mine Laborer. Both had worked 6 of the preceding 12 months. It is remarkable that of the 12 family members present on that corner in 1900, there was a net employment of about 1.5 man years. Food and rent must have been dirt cheap.
“Collier “means above ground, in the breaker. “Miner” is below ground. I don’t think strip mining was quite there then. The big shovels required were developed, I think, for the Panama Canal and I don’t think stripping became feasible until after that. In fact, I recall my Grandpa Russel talking about one of his brothers being a steam shovel operator on the Panama Canal construction.

By the time I came along, deep mining was mostly gone and strip mining was it. By the time I grew up it was all mostly gone. (But not entirely… hard coal mining goes on, but on a much smaller scale. I will wax nostalgic about this some other time.)

Jane is listed as having had 9 children, 8 of whom were still living. It looks like they probably lost one between 1892 and 1897.

Like his father, David, William rented their home.

In 1910 the William L household is unchanged, except Hector, 28, is no longer resident, and there are two new additions: Willard, Age 6 and Marion, Age 10 (adopted). The address is 1301 Market St, right next door to the 1900 address. There is no sign of David or Mary, who probably died between 1900 and 1910.

Elmer, age 21, still lives with his parents. I wonder if he was sickly.

The address is readily looked up on Google Maps. It is marked with an “A” in the screenshot below. The lots appear to be vacant now. But it is interesting: This is a couple of blocks, if that, from where my Dad was born and grew up on Race Street, as well as a couple of blocks from where they kept a boarding house in 1930.
1303 and 1307 Market, Ashland Pa., Homes of William L, Elmer and David P Williams in 1900

My GGF, GF and GGGF respectively.

The boarding house Elmer and Edith ran in 1930, is two blocks south and 2 blocks west of there (again 1525 Centre)

I am unable to find Elmer and Edith in the 1920 census. The reason for this is not at all clear. It may or may not be meaningful. Was he sick? Were they staying with relatives? Were they just out?

William L, age 59, is listed as widowed, and living with his daughter Edna, age 33, at 1301 Market. William’s occupation is listed as RR “car runner”, which apparently is another word for “brakeman”

Elmer’s brother Hector is living on Spruce St (south side of Centre) with his wife and kids.
I have a letter Dad wrote to his brother Ray which talks a little about Ashland. It was written over a period of years in the late 70’s and early 80’s when his mind was being ravaged by Alzheimer’ (he says “I wander, but soon come back to reality”) it’s likely the letter was never sent. He talks about going up there to visit his mother... but she had been dead for years. Maybe he meant visit her grave, but I wouldn’t bet on it. I think he was still driving at this point, so the trip he speaks of might have happened. Later on when they moved into town so Mother could better control him, he slipped out one day and started to hitchhike up to Ashland. He got into Pennsylvania, anyway, before somebody called the police.

It seems clear he is saying they had lived on Race St, which is 2 blocks north of Market and the next to the last street in the town. Of course in 1930 when he was 14 they were on Centre. My guess is they had lived near Race before that and moved when they had to open the boarding house. Dad would likely have had fonder memories of his younger and happier days... presumably on Race St, or near to it.
Dear Ray and Lettie:

I think I answered your letter of October 3.

It is now 1917. My thoughts are spinning and seldom get out even from me. Sounds like I am making excuses. I hope your feelings let me know. So far when I see the light of reason I can respond to it. So I continue to exist. (I hope you enjoy your retirement.)

Sometimes I wonder, but I quickly come back to reality. Ruth is a treasure. I enjoy working separately in the garden. So does Ruth. I've learned a great deal from her including gardening. She has her own yard and gets a lot of green peppers, string beans, tomatoes, all good to eat. She's already got a box in the curate of the parlor (an old and sort of box) in which P.S. in the yard, she has planted a 6-foot 4-green peppers. The tomatoes are sweet. She has planted in her garden 2 large pepper seed which are big. But after the heat 2 two more will spread a grade into a large pepper. I have plant patches every year and get seedlings. I plan to grow 2 as well as cantaloupe and watermelon. It's an interesting occupation because we cultivate a regular furrow. We had each of the two mowers

Raymond W. Williams
Great Cacapon
60 Clayhill West Virginia
R. R. 1, Cacapon, W. Va.
25424

I would be better not to drink this.

2 1/2 - 7 1/2

(over)
Family: Ruth a person. Too bad she stayed and try to change into a person myself. Eventually I improve. But sometimes it's hard to see. Of course, eventually, it is a result taken by people with me forming a team at the school. Well, I took a trip up to Washington and near to see mother. On the way it stopped in Ashland where I was born and my father was born. My friend and I walked up to the top of the hill where we used to live. Ashland is probably plenty of homes but the streets are so steep they put steps in. Of course that means that the sleigh ride is great in the winter time.

Anyway, as I walked up the Rose Street (where my sister is born) I passed Delbert Rolle's house and started to rap on his door. Just like those times called to me from the Baptist Church and said don't go in that Delbert was killed in the war. Delbert was a wrestler. His mother and father are very great people. But when the teacher says don't you want and don't when you can. I've waited for 3 or 3 years or more already.

In the summer the Southern Railway is like

Coming Our house was on the north side of town and across from our back Catholic church. Once we got there we just ran down the River. Our grandmother is from there. It was 1920 or so long ago when sound came out. You could sit down quiet if you lost your balance.

Cresc Island was our swimming hole. The lake was over to get a ride and out of the pond but it's name from the water we swim. I've seen most remarkable. Oh yes in the fall we picked apples one my and brother. We were caught once but caught but he was some how to do it and when my brother staffed each him out and the other got out our P. Since you didn't talk about the woman with her mother at the adventure.
Looking backward from 1900, there is less information, especially no addresses. The 1890 census was destroyed in a fire. That leaves 1880, 1870 and 1860 where David and Mary might be found. But the earlier census’s simply contained less information. Here is a summary (all from Ashland):

1860  David 28  Miner
     Mary 25

1870  David 38
     Mary 29
     William 10
     Emma 1

1880  David P 47  Miner (3 months unemployed prior year)
     Mary 44
     William L 19 Miner  (3 months unemployed prior year)
     Jane 10
     David Phillips 20 Miner (Nephew) (3 months unemployed prior year)

Mary’s age in 1870 is very clearly written and equally clearly wrong by 6 years. Hard to understand a mistake of that order.

Is Jane in 1880 the same as Emma in 1870? Changing names seems to have been common practice. The listed ages are consistent: if a 10 year old goes to 19 then a 1 year old goes to 10. But recall that Mary had born 8, with 2 surviving to 1900, so Emma and Jane might have been different. My guess is that it was Emma Jane, and the 6 lost were never named in a census.
More of Elmer

One item I found is interesting more for what it doesn’t say, and for what came after:

Church: Gilberton Methodist Episcopal Church Directory
April 1913
Contributed for use in USGenWeb Archives by Dennis Bauer
d.bauer@worldnet.att.net
Among the parishioners are:
Terrill, Mrs. Frank
Terrill, Edith
Terrill, Elsie

Frank is not listed (nor any of the sons). Perhaps he was a heathen. Or didn’t cotton to Episcopalians.

Just two years later, Edith is married, not here but all the way down in Schuylkill Haven.

Elmer Williams of Ashland married Edith Terrill of Gilberton on May 10, 1915 at the Grace Evangelical Congregational Church in Schuylkill Haven. He was 26, she 18. (The church record is posted on Ancestry.com, copied from the Pa Historical Soc. : Historic Pa Church & Town Records, Reel 488. ) The town is 14 miles south of Gilberton where the Terrills lived, and further from Ashland. It’s not evident why they would have gone so far. The nearest connection I’ve found is that Edith’s dad, Frank, was born in Llewellyn, not too far from (5 mi) from Schuylkill Haven. His Dad, John, lived there until at least 1880, and maybe longer. (He’s in the 1880 census but not the next, 1900).

There must have been some compelling family reason to have the wedding so far away.
I found more info on the marriage at “Pennsylvania, County Marriages, 1885 – 1950”… where it specifically lists the mother’s maiden names:

Jane Ann Chisholm married to Williams L Williams

Elizabeth Galespie married to Frank Terrill

I’ll say more about them later

The next available document is Elmer’s draft registration card from 1917.

Draft Registration Card 1917

Note that they lived at 1015 Arch St in Ashland in 1917; This is one block north of Market St where his grandfather and great grandfather lived. It is one block from Race St which my Dad mentioned in his letter to his brother Ray. The Google map of the address is:
This is at the edge of town. My guess is that they lived here through my Dad’s earliest youth. This is the place that he was remembering in his semi-delusional letter to his brother. It would be at the steepest part of town, where steps would have been necessary and a short walk would have taken you out of town and onto the mountain beyond. Where sledding would have been great. Where my Dad may have retreated in the summer of ’33 when he first heard of his father’s death.

The draft registration card also gives some support to my belief that his experience as an electrician was substantial when he was killed. He is listed as an Electrician in 1917. Suppose my memory of 1915 on the mail order course is accurate. Suppose he didn’t decide to marry and have a kid until he was “educated”. So put his employment as an electrician at 1916. Then by his death in 1933 he would have had 17 years experience. Not 24 as noted in the final accident report. But not nothin’. He probably, though, had had substantial periods of unemployment during that stretch.

The draft registration card lists his employer as the Hammond Colliery of the Philadelphia and Reading Coal and Iron Co. This was in Girardville, half way between Ashland and Gilberton (where Edith came from ... more of that later).
This picture reminds me mostly of Sarumans’ constructions around Isengard in the Two Towers movie.

Now you would expect to find them again in the 1920 census. But they are not there. Why?

If you look at the original 1920 census logs for the Arch St entries (Ward 3), you find the first entry is 1033. Nothing for 1015. Nothing at all for Williams, except Elmer’s brother Hector is there on Spruce St (on the south side of Centre). (And William is living with one of his daughters where he’d always lived)

HOW COME? Maybe they just weren’t in when the census people came by. But by 1920 they had two kids: Lew and Jane. 4 and 2. People with kids that age don’t travel easily. . It seems surprising. Maybe Elmer was sick and they were elsewhere.

The next known data is the 1925 accident (though there is no home address). The question surrounds the “TB sanitarium” stay Nancy heard about. We don’t know when that was. 1920?
So that’s what I know about my grandfather Elmer. What would I like to know? Where was he in 1920? What was his health like? Frail? Accident prone? I suspect he was ambitious (self taught electrician). How good an electrician was he? Did my Dad’s poetic and peculiar personality come from him? I never imagined it came from his mother, who was anything but poetic. Maybe my Dad’s personality came from his Dad’s death, but I don’t think so. I think peoples personalities are formed young, and I see much of myself in my Dad, so it seems natural to think a lot of his came from Elmer the First. The only, and rather sad, evidence is that Edith chose to be buried beside him... a poetic gesture for sure. I think George was a marriage of necessity, which was most likely why my parents had so little use for him. Life is cruel. I would not have been so judgemental.
Don’t quite know where to begin. My memories start in the 50’s when they lived in Audenried. About the oldest photo from there I have is from 1946.

Showing Ruth, David (age 2 or 3), George Russel, Edith Russel, Lew Williams.

One of the last photos I have of her is with my son Richard, in 1968, taken in the kitchen of their apartment in West Hazleton. She died 4 years later, but I don’t seem to find any pictures from later.
I knew that her maiden name was Terrill and that she had been born in Gilberton, which I knew was near Ashland. I recall she claimed Cornish roots.

That’s about all I recall.

Since I’ve already talked about Elmer and Edith, I think there are two things to discuss... her parents and grandparents, and her second husband, the man I knew as Grandpa Russel. I’ll start with her history before Elmer.
Francis Henry Terrill (Frank)

There is a photo of her father, Frank H. Terrill, that has writing on the back by my father.

I estimate the date to be about 1875, when he would have been 21.

I don’t know when my father annotated the photo, but I suspect it was after his mind started to go in the 70’s or 80’s. No later, since he couldn’t have written anything much later.

I don’t recall seeing a Terrill family bible. I have no idea where these things disappeared to. Maybe the Terrill bible went to Uncle Ray... whose name was Raymond Terrill Williams (Raymond was one of Edith’s brothers).
I also uncovered an obituary on Frank from the Hazleton Plain Speaker (posted on Ancestry.com)


Frank H. Terrill, aged 83 years, who died last night at the home of his son Raymond at Reading, was for years a resident of Audenried in the old days when Audenried's official name was New Pottsville and for several years lived at Beaver Meadow with his daughter, Mrs. Edith Williams, now of town, when she lived in the Carbon borough. Mr. Terrill was born at Llewelly, Schuylkill County and for many years was a resident of St. Nicholas when he was superintendent of the Gilberton colliery. He is survived by the following children: Mrs. Edith Williams, of Hazleton; Raymond Terrill, Mrs. Nellie Lindenmuth of Reading, Frank Terrill, of Pottsville, William Terrill, Mrs. John Hooper and Mrs. John Williams, of Gilberton and Mrs. Harry Weber of Philadelphia. He is also survived by 39 grandchildren, 20 great grandchildren and one great great grandchild. The funeral will be held Wednesday at 2 pm at the Methodist church at Gilberton and interment will follow there.

There is a lot of information here. Evidently he must have lived with his daughter in Beaver Meadows after Elmer was killed. ‘The Carbon borough” is Beaver Meadows. “Of town” means Hazleton. I’m sure he would have told my Dad the story about the Lincoln assassination during his stay with them. At some point between 1933 and 1937 she moved to Hazleton, exactly when and where I’m not sure. Evidently Frank went from staying with Edith in Beaver Meadows to staying with his son Ray in Reading. Dad graduated from HHS in 1934, probably in June That’s 11 months after his dad’s death. I’d expect his mom moved to Hazleton around then.

Notice that it is Edith Williams in 1937. That narrows her marriage to George to 1937-1940.

It isn’t clear from the obit when Frank lived in or very near Audenried, except in the “olden days.” George Russel was born and lived most of his life in or near Audenried. So Frank and George might have known each other. In any event, by 1940, Edith and George were married. I’ll have more to speculate on a prior connection between George and Frank later on.

Frank was born in Llewellyn (it is misspelled in the transcript), which is a few miles east of Pottsville and about 15 miles from Gilberton. St Nicholas is a colliery on the Ashland-Gilberton
–Mahonoy City road, just a couple of miles south of Shenandoah, shown in the satellite view below.

Satellite view of St Nicholas PA and Suffolk PA… in Branch Twp, Schuylkill County

Census records tell more. He shows up in 1860, 1880, 1900, 1910, 1920 and 1930

The 1860 census reveals his parents. The absence of 1870 also strikes me as significant, as I’ll discuss in a bit. (The absence of 1890 is not significant.. it was destroyed in a fire).
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Birth Year: abt 1827
Birthplace: England
Home in 1860: Branch, Schuylkill, Pennsylvania
Gender: Male
Post Office: Llewellyn
Value of real estate: View image
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### Household Members

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**Color:** W  
** Enumeration District:** 0027  
**Visit:** 0034  
**County:** Schuylkill, Gilberton  
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Source Citation: Year: 1920; Census Place: Gilberton East Ward, Schuylkill, Pennsylvania; Roll: T625_1649; Page: 28; Enumeration District: 32; Image: 998.
### 1930 United States Federal Census about Frank Terrill

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#### Household Members

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Source Citation: Year: 1930; Census
Residences listed

1860  Llewellyn  age 6, with his parents John and Mary Terrell

1870: no entries... why? They must have been there. Frank would have been 16

1876 marries Elizabeth Galespie

1880  Mahanoy  age 26 (parents are in Llewellyn)

1900, 1910, 1920  Gilberton  age 46-66

1930 Pottsville  age 76. Lives with Frank Jr.

1933 stays with Edith in Beaver Meadows

1937  Died while living with Raymond

The obituary says he lived in St Nicholas while he was superintendent of the Gilberton Colliery. It’s 2 miles from St Nicholas to Gilberton, but the former is listed today as part of Shenandoah.

The 1880 census form states that he was in Suffolk Village, in Mahanoy Twp. This is a stones throw from the St Nicholas Breaker. Suffolk and St Nicholas appear to be one and the same. Note that Centre St runs along the center of the entire valley. Follow it west from Suffolk/St Nicholas and you run right through Ashland.

Liza

In the 1880 census Liza is listed as age 32... 6 years older than Frank. In all the others she is 4 years younger than Frank. I suppose that 32 in 1880 was a typo and should have been 22. She must have died between 1930 (when she was living in Pottsville) and 1937, when Frank died (she is not mentioned in the obituary... which is odd in itself, even if she was dead). I’d guess she died between 1930 and 1933.

If Liza was born in 1858, and Frank in 1854 they probably married sometime between 1875 and 1885. The 1900 census says 1876. In fact they are together in 1880, live in Mahanoy Twp, and
have a 4 year old, Carrie. So the Tamaqua photo may have been a wedding picture... but where is she?.

The 1880 census says Liza’s father was born in Scotland and her mother in Ireland. In 1870 they both say Ireland. That confusion probably means something in itself. They were Scotch-Irish and had trouble distinguishing the two.

Recall from the 1915 wedding registration that Liza was born Elizabeth Galespie.

I found a Robert Galespie in St Nicholas (born 1867 in Pa) in 1900 along with 2 Terrills. But the connection is not clear. Robert, who would, I assume, have been Liza’s brother, was the son of Charles Galespie.

In fact Liza and Robert appear in the 1870 census for Mahanoy Twp, living with their parents Charles and Margaret. The parents had been born in Ireland, though their oldest son was born in Scotland in 1852. Liza was born in PA So they must have emigrated around 1855... like everybody else. And, like everybody else in the Williams family, they were coal miners.

So the entire Williams line back to the UK (all of 1850 or so), came from one valley in the southern anthracite fields extending from Mahanoy City to Ashland. Every guy in this lineage worked in the mines until me. It may not be so shocking that one of the things I thought about when I didn’t think about being a rocket scientist was being a mining engineer. ‘Course I also thought about living in the Alaskan wilderness and spelunking. You think about all sorts of things when you’re young and stupid. Truth is I don’t like really confined spaces. The story of Floyd Collins scared the crap out of me when I was a kid. Mining was not in my cards. But I did feel drawn to the idea.
New Pottsville

Where in all this did Frank live in Audenried (or “New Pottsville”), as stated in his obit?.

Audenried is in Banks township in Carbon Co, but it borders Luzerne, Hazle township. A good spit takes you from one to the other. Banks includes Audenried on the east end, and Beaver Meadows in the middle. So a lot of Ediths’ life was spent in Banks Twp. And her 2nd husband George Russel seems to have spent his life similarly in Hazle Twp and Audenried.

Aside from the obit, the only reference I found to Audenried and New Pottsville was a letter written during the Civil War (http://ehistory.osu.edu/osu/sources/recordView.cfm?Content=124/1004):

PROV. MARSHAL'S OFFICE, TENTH DISTRICT OF PA.,

Pottsville, November 7, 1863.

Colonel JAMES B. FRY,

Prov. March General United States, Washington, D. C.:

DEAR SIR: The little town of Audenried is a mining post town in Carbon County, Eleventh Congressional District of Pennsylvania.

Yorktown is the place of a colliery on the New York and Lehigh Coal Company's estate, in sight and perhaps only a quarter of a mile east of Audenried, and also in Carbon County. Hazleton is a considerable post town some five miles off to the northeast, in Carbon County, from Audenried.

Jeansville is a large mining post town, about a mile northeast of Audenried, in Luzerne County, in the Twelfth Congressional District of Pennsylvania. Frenchtown, or, as it is sometimes called, New Pottsville, and sometimes New Perigneux, is the place of an old colliery in sight and about a quarter of a mile north of Audenried, in Luzerne County.

(The letter mistakenly puts Hazleton in Carbon. He meant Luzerne.)

So according to this New Pottsville was another name for Frenchtown, but that’s only a ¼ mi from Audenried.
If you look on the 1873 Atlas of Luzerne Co. (by de Beers), what’s just north of Audenried is Beaver Brook, not Frenchtown.

But I did find an interesting comment at

http://users.erols.com/sfpayer/CoalR/commcoalr2.htm

“Beaver Brook is one of the oldest Mid-Anthracite Region coal towns. It had the name Frenchtown a long time ago. A building there served as a hospital during the American Civil War.”

So one possibility is that John, Franks Dad, worked in the Beaver Brook colliery in the period between 1866 and 1880 (when he was in Llewellyn) and that’s where Frank grew up. This is the period in which there is no listing for a Terrill in Branch, and in which Frank got married. I haven’t found them in the 1870 census for Hazle Twp either, but I haven’t looked carefully. This would explain the comment in the obituary about having lived in New Pottsville in the “old days”. It also provides a possible link between the Terrill’s and Russel’s, as I’ll speculate on later.
Edith’s Grandparents: Cornish roots

The key that unlocks Edith’s family is a biography of her father’s younger brother Frederick, which appears in “History of Schuylkill County”, by Schalck, 1907, p495-6 (free download from Google books):

Terrill, Frederick Elmer, grocer and justice of the peace, of Llewellyn, was born in that town, on Apr. 11, 1864, a son of John and Mary (Ferris) Terrill, both natives of Cornwall, England. The father came to this country in early life and located in Branch township, where he followed his occupation of miner until his death, which occurred at Llewellyn on Jan. 18, 1893. He had a family of fourteen children, nine of whom grew to maturity, and seven are yet living. John and Stephen F. died after reaching manhood; Mary A. is the widow of Robert Jones; Elizabeth is the wife of John H. Zimmerman; and the other surviving children are James R., Francis, Edwin W., Frederick E., and William. The maternal grandfather of Frederick E. Terrill was Stephen Ferris, native of Cornwall, England, who was among the pioneers of Branch township. He was a civil engineer by profession and lived in Schuylkill county all his life after coming to America. Frederick E. Terrill was educated in the public schools and at the age of eight years became a breaker boy in the mines. Subsequently he became a miner, and he followed that occupation until 1898, when he engaged in the grocery business at Llewellyn, where he has since continued in that line of activity. In his political opinions he is an adherent of the Democratic party and he takes an interest in all questions of public policy. He served one term as school director and in 1897 was elected a justice of the peace for Branch township. Since then he has been twice re-elected and he is now serving his third term of

five years in that office. He is a supporter of the Methodist Episcopal church and belongs to the Mechanics. In 1902 Mr. Terrill married Miss Amelia, daughter of William Adams, of Tremont, and they have one son, Lester W.

Thomas, Thomas L., junior member of the wholesale grocery firm of Van Horn & Thomas, has been a resident of Mahanoy City since 1864, in which year he accompanied the parental family from Minersville to that place. He was graduated from the
The important part of it for now is:

Franks’ parents were John and Mary Ann Terrell, both of whom were born in Cornwall but lived mostly in Branch Twp.

Mary Ann’s father was Stephen Ferris, who had also come from Cornwall.

**John and Mary**

John was a coal miner, born in 1827, probably from a town called Redruth, near the north coast. At least there was a 15 year old boy there in 1841 (see Notes), working as a “tin mine lad” (lad?). Mary Ann was born in 1831, also in Cornwall.

I found a record (see Notes) that John and Mary were married Feb 3, 1844 in Pottsville.

It is also somewhat startling that if all these dates are correct, John was 17 and Mary 13 when they were married. Hmm... Maybe that’s why they were married in Pottsville instead of Llewellyn. Papa Ferris was probably not happy. The oldest child listed in 1860 (John) was born when Mary was 16. According to the bio of their son Frederick, they had 14 children, 9 of whom lived to maturity. It is likely a couple of the 5 who didn’t make it were in the 1844-1847 gap between the marriage and the appearance of baby John.

The 1850 census puts John and Mary A Terrell in Norwegian Twp, on the north side of Pottsville and east of Branch. He is listed as being 29 years old, and Mary 26. If that’s right then they weren’t 17 and 13 in 1844, they were a respectable 23 and 20. The census shows a son John born in 1846 and daughters Jane and Mary born in 1848 and 1849.

They are present in the 1860 census, in Branch Twp, Llewellyn PO (near Pottsville). He is 31, she 29 and their oldest child John is 13, Jane 11 and Mary 10. (The children’s names confirm that these are the same people)
Obviously they could not have been 29 and 26 in 1850 and 31 and 29 in 1860. All other census reports are consistent with the 1860 dates. Perhaps they were in the habit of lying about their ages when they were young, but gave up on it when they got older. Think about some unknown (or, worse, known) census guy coming into your home and asking about everyone’s ages. You are 19 and have a 4 year old. Wouldn’t you rather be 26?

(I wish the next paragraph were true... but it’s too good to be)

I think that’s a great story, but there is a twist to it. If you look at the original census sheets for 1850, there is an odd footnote, which I’ll show here in blow up:
In the main table John is listed as 29 and Mary A as 26. That’s what’s recorded in the transcription. But what’s that at the bottom, written in with no indication of who it’s talking about? It’s John and Mary’s actual ages of 23 and 19!  How did that happen? Did Mary fib and then John pulled the guy aside afterwards and spilled the beans? This only makes the story better in my mind.

So what’s the truth? If I had looked at the other sheets in the 1850 census (as I did after writing the previous entry), I would have noticed that every page has the same footnote. It is the count of m and f on that page. The fact that this entry happened to agree with John and Mary’s actual ages and to lie close to their entries in the sheet was pure coincidence. I am disappointed! (Meaning I love gossip, even if it’s 160 years old)

As a sidelight I found a bio of someone in the UP of Michigan named Peter Pascoe (see notes), the last sentence of which reads “Capt. Pascoe married Miss Jane Terrill, of Cornwall, England, February 3, 1853. They have nine children—Frank, Carrie, Bessie, Peter, Jr., Jennie, Richard, Millie, Day and Athie.”

It’s pretty clear that Jane Terrill must have been the sister of John Terrill and they both must have emigrated to the US but to different places. Note the common names: Jane, Frank, Carrie, Jennie. Also Jane Terrell is listed as a 10 year old in the 1841 Redruth citation, alongside the 15 year old John. In the 1880 census Frank and Liza had three kids at home: Carrie and Jennie the two older. And of course one of Frank’s sisters was Jane. These folks did not waste a good name.

On Geni (see Notes) there is a listing that identifies Jane Pascoe as the daughter of

Richard Trathen Terrell and Elizabeth Terrell of Redruth Cornwall, not far from the north coast and Lands End. (Richard is marked as the son of John, which makes the connection more believable). This reference does not mention son John, but it is inconceivable that John is not Jane’s sister, given the dates and common names. Unfortunately Elizabeth is listed as born in 1816, which would make her only 11 when John was born. The only way this makes sense is if John’s mother died in childbirth and Richard remarried. That’s not implausible, but it is speculation. So I’m guessing Richard is in fact John’s father, but his mother is unknown. (It’s also possible Elizabeth’s birth date is a few years off.)
John and Mary ("Maria, nee Ferris") are buried in the Llewellyn cemetery (see notes) There is no death date on Mary, but John died in 1893. He outlived two of his adult children, including the eldest, John.

**Stephen and Mary Ferris**

The 1850 census shows Stephen Ferris, age 57 (born about 1793) living in Cass Township, which is just north of Branch. His wife was Mary, age 50.

John’s Mary was Mary Ferris, daughter of Stephen Ferris who had emigrated from Cornwall and was “an early settler in Branch”, according to the bio of Frederick. Stephen was a civil engineer… the first engineer I have uncovered in my line of descent. It would seem that Mary came over with her father as a child. It’s not certain where they came from, but there is a Stephen Ferris in Truro Cornwall (about 9 miles from Redruth) in the right time frame. I do not find the name in the 1840 census, so I presume he must have emigrated somewhere between 1840 and 1844.

**An Oddity**

I see a John Tyrell and Mary Anne Tyrell in Devon in the 1851 English census. The age ascribed to John is about right. Devon is not Cornwall… but it is the nearest neighbor to it. Closer inspection is in order. However, since John and
Mary Ann were married in Pottsville in 1844, these Devon folk can’t be the same... but maybe related? Or just an odd coincidence. The name seems to have a remarkable variation in spelling. (I’ve even seen it as Ferrell... script F and T can look a lot alike)

Except for dangling loose ends, this is the end of the Williams line unless you push back to the old country, which I don’t want to do right yet. But there is one more thing:
Grandpa Russel

George D. Russel was fat. He couldn’t always have been because he played semi pro ball when he was young. And I think rode those bikes with the enormous front wheels that look impossible to mount. He smoked cigars continuously, so being in their home was asphyxiating. What more did I know?

I guess I knew he had something to do with the coal company in town, but it wasn’t clear what. He probably was working when I was real little, but retired by the time I remember better. Of course what grownups do is always a mystery to kids.

They lived in Audenried, a tiny patch town between McAdoo and Hazleton. Basically one street, “Church St”, with a church on the main road to Hazleton (it’s still there) and a breaker at the far end (It’s not). It was a company town, with company houses and a company store. The houses were gray. The land was black, dotted with “Culm banks”, or piles of coal fines, and “strippings” or gaping holes where they had dug for shallow coal and left the scar. It was waste for as far as you could see. I thought it was eerily beautiful. As I imagined the moon. Later when I read the ring trilogy, it was my mental picture of the waste around the gates of Mordor. But not evil.
Auderied, about 1954

From left:  Donna Williams, Edith Russel, Marc Williams, David Williams, George Russel, Bonnie Williams, Nancy Williams, Lew Williams

Donna and Bonnie were Ray’s daughters.

This is in front of the Russel house looking west. The breaker George worked at (I assume) is just off view to the left.

Watercolor taped into one of the copies of “The Nameless”, by Lew Williams
All the houses on this side of the street were gone in 2012. The view out the end of "Church St" was not hugely changed, except the breaker was gone, replace with some construction equipment and sheds. It was still a waste... but it looked like some of it had been flattened a bit. You can see my playground in the aerial shot below.

Audenried Satellite View

Russel home in 40’s and 50’s

It seems Audenried used to be more substantial but got eaten away by the coal company from three sides. In the 1875 maps available at

http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~carbdat/beers/brs_idx.htm

there seems to be a lot more than I remember from the 50’s:
This is what it would have been when the Terrell’s lived around there (I presume), and when George was a boy.

Back to George. I knew he wasn’t related.. that message was clearly, but not meanly, transmitted to us kids. No mistake: “Grandpa” was an honorific. I knew, or learned, that he had had a family at some foregone time. Once, probably in the early 60’s we went to visit his son, Robert, I think, who had a place on a lake in Nuangola, north of Hazleton. Robert had the first VW bug I had ever seen. I knew nothing else about his former family or why or when or anything.

I know they had a TV before we did. It seems every time we visited in those days he was watching the Cisco Kid... “Hey Hey Seesco”. He had a recliner chair with a big brown glass ash tray on a pole beside it. He had a grotesquely deformed pinky, the result of some undescribed accident.

The house was big. There was a huge bathroom on the second floor with a heating vent you could look through onto the first floor (which I thought ws weird because it meant somebody downstairs could see up into the bathroom) and an enormous bathtub you could swim in and a walk in storage area off to the side where you could hide. The kitchen had a big coal stove (of course). Out the back yard was a boardwalk going to the back gate. There was a grape arbor
(Concord) near the back and a dog kennel with a terrible stench and a hound named Tarzan you wouldn’t want to get close to.

Marc Williams in the back yard in Audenried, 1948.

The boardwalk I remember is there. The culm bank in the background is just across the main road going into Hazleton. It was still there in 2012, visible in the satellite view. The dog kennel and grape arbor I remember were either put in later or are just off view to the left.

One day, when I was old enough to know it hadn’t been there the last visit, a huge hole appeared a few feet beyond the back gate. The company had stripped it, leaving a narrow path between the fence and the pit. (That was the process of the coal company eating up the town.)

Eventually I was allowed to wander at will. Sidling along the fence, staying as far from the edge of the pit as I could, then out into the endless expanse of abandoned mine waste. I would be out there for hours... even venturing into (but not far into) old mine shafts.I didn’t tell the folks about that. It amazes me, today, that I was allowed to do this. My father and his father and his father had all grown up in this world, so they knew what it was.

In todays world kids aren’t allowed to do anything conceivably dangerous. They might hurt themselves, after all. I vastly prefer that world, risks and all.
Grandpa Russel did tell stories.

One time he (and some hooligan friends) stole dynamite from a company storage shed and blew up an outhouse. I think he got caught, but I don’t remember that part so much. I was impressed.

When he was around 12, he worked as a “breaker boy”. The long conveyor leading from the ground to the top of the breaker carried a mix of coal and rock. Young boys were stationed all along the way to pick the rock out of the coal (which was to be broken and sized in the breaker). To keep their hands from chapping they would pee on them.

![](image)

He told that story when we went to visit the movie set of the “Mollie Maguires” (with Sean Connery). The village of Eckley, not far from Audenried, had been reconstructed for the purpose. Today it is a kind of anthracite Williamsburg. A mix of original and faux and real residence and museum. We went there just after the movie wrapped... probably the last time I had with Grandpa Russel. When he died I wasn’t even told. That said something about how my parents felt about him. I never understood it. But I think I understand better now. 1933 to maybe 1938. People do what they have to do, whatever the chilluns might think.

So, what can be determined at this remove about George D. Russel? Where did he come from. Who were his parents? What was the family he had before he married my grandmother, and what happened to them? Some of these questions I’ve answered... but many not.
In the 1940 census, George and Edith are listed as living at 218 Church St in Audenried. (Banks, Carbon, Pennsylvania... it’s in ED13-2). That’s the house I remember.

Interesting highlights:

It says he is a machinist in the coal mines. I didn’t know that. It probably accounts for the mangled pinky.

It says both he and Edith had lived in Hazleton in 1935. I didn’t know that he had lived there too! They must have met in Hazleton.

It shows his son Robert living just a few houses away, 224 Church St. I had no idea.

In 1920 and 1930 he lived in Audenried with his wife Mary H. and three kids: Robert, Rebecca and Martha. In 1920 George and Mary were both 37, the kids were 16, 14 and 7 respectively and they had Mary’s 70 year old mother Susan Hitchins living with them. Mary and Susan were both born in Wales. George is listed as a machine shop foreman. In 1930 the boys and MIL are out and only Martha and Mary remain. George is still listed as a machinist.

They didn’t record street addresses, only visitation order. So it’s not evident if they were in the same house I remember or not.

My guess is Mary Russel died sometime between 1930 and 1935 and George moved to Hazleton, met Edith and moved back to Audenried.

Before that: In 1910 they lived in Hazle Twp, Luzerne Co. George is listed as a machinist in a machine shop. Hazle Twp is right next door to Banks, but that encompasses a broad area surrounding Hazleton, as shown in the map below.

In 1900, at age 18, he lives with his parents Robert and Rebecca in Hazle Twp. Robert is listed as a foreman, and was born in Maryland, though his father was born in Scotland.
In 1880, Georges parents live in Hazle Twp.

Robert is 36, a foreman. Born in Md. Father from Scotland, Mother from Md

Rebecca D. 30. Born in PA, Father from Germany, Mother from PA

William G. 12 Born in PA

John J, 7, Born in PA

Ella May 7, b in PA

Mary C 7 b in PA

They have a servant, 19 from Wales

And a 16 year old boarder.

In 1870, Robert G and Rebecca D Russel, along with William G, live in Lehigh County, just to the south of Carbon and north of Allentown in an area called Slatington, which today is right on the NE Extension.

1860... can’t find Robert or his parents

In 1850, in the Wilkes-Barre census, we find

James Russel 37, a shoemaker, born in Scotland

Janette, 32, b in Md

John 11 b in Md

James 9 b in Md

Robert G, 8 b in Md

Alex G 5  b in Md
There is enough commonality between the 1850 and 1880 entries that I think they are the same family, although an 8 year old in 1850 should be 37 or 38 in 1880, not 36.

If it is the same family, then they must have moved from Md to Pa somewhere between 1845 and 1850. Since the eldest in 1850 is 11, I would expect to find a James Russel in 1840 in Md. But I haven’t looked. I would expect he came into Baltimore, which was the major port of entry before Ellis Island. Anyway, as a 25 year old he may not have been head of household (which was all that was recorded then).

That’s what I can figure about pre-1930.

It may be pure coincidence, but in the Early History of Hazleton:

http://www.pagenweb.org/~luzerne/patk/hazleton.htm

You find:

“The following are named as serving as chief burgess and clerk of the council for the years named: 1857, Abraham Jones; 1858 & 1861, Ezra C. Vincent; 1859 & 1863, R.F. Russel..”

Could this possibly be Robert Russel, George’s father? 1863 was 20 years before George was born. Seems unlikely, but weird.. “Russel”? Not a common spelling. Anyway, George’s dad seems to have been R.G, not R.F. The Robert.F. Russel in Luzerne County in 1870 was born in 1820. So he’s in James’ generation. Perhaps it was James’ brother. People often seemed to name their children after their siblings.
Map of Hazle Twp ca 1873. Audenried is on the lower left (just across the county line). It’s hard to know where they might have lived in Hazle before moving to Audenried. There are Machine Shops marked on the map just east of Hazleton... but of course it’s a long time from when George was a machinist in Hazle Twp and when this map was drawn, so that’s probably not it.

The census evidence is that Robert and Rebecca moved from Lehigh Co to Hazle Twp sometime between 1870 and 1880. I would bet that they actually lived in Frenchtown/Beaver Brook/New Pottsville. It is where Frank Terrill probably grew up, though by 1880 Frank was in Gilberton and George wasn’t born until 1882. Still, it is conceivable that the Terrills knew the Russel’s. Anyway, it is an entertaining idea. They certainly lived in the same area... and quite likely at the same time.

Addendum: I found hard evidence that in fact they did move to Frenchtown sometime between 1870 and 1880. In the 1873 map of Hazle township above (in the Business Notices), one E L Bullock is listed as the superintendent of the Beaver Brook Colliery. In you look at the 1880 census logs both Robert G Russel (Foreman) and Edward L Bullock (Mine Supt) are listed in District 7 in homes 186 and 218 respectively. (That’s as good evidence as you are going to get, since apparently no records were kept of where the Enumeration Districts were in 1880. The recommended strategy is to find someone you know... in this case Bullock).
I have now convinced myself that Grandpa Russel actually did work at the Beaver Brook colliery before he retired. It is possible, even likely, that this is a (self) implanted memory, arising more from what I want to be true than what I remember for sure. I am pretty sure I remember
having Beaver Brook pointed out to me as, mysteriously, “over there behind that culm bank”. Why point it out if it had no significance?

Now what I really want is a firm date for Frank Terrill’s time in Frenchtown to overlap with the Russels. Again, I have no direct knowledge of their location between 1860 and 1880 (when John was definitely in Llewellyn and Frank was first in Llewellyn and then in St Nicholas). The closest thing to it is the photo in Tamaqua about 1875. Why aren’t they in the 1870 census?