

THE WAGNER, BLILEY & DOWD FAMILIES OF ERIE COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA



1860–1960

By Norma Jean Venable

Morgantown, West Virginia

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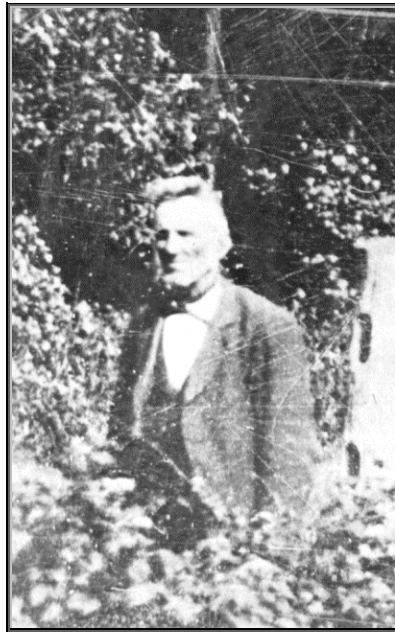
I. WAGNER FAMILY SETTLES IN ERIE, PENNSYLVANIA—1806

Abraham Wagner (1780–1849) immigrated to Erie in 1806. Abraham, also listed as Abram, came from Bucks County, Pennsylvania. (Abraham's father was Jost Wagner, born 1722 in Germany and he married Anna Maria Phillips, born about 1726.) Abraham married Susanna Brown (1787–1833). Their son was Samuel Brown Wagner. "Nelson's Biographical and Historical Reference Book of Erie County" lists Abraham Wagner and S. B. Wagner as early Erie pioneers.

For historical context, settlement in Erie began in 1794 with the arrival of Mr. Colt, the land agent, and the Dobbins and Hamot Families. By 1798, the Reed families were building lake boats that provided transportation for many immigrant families coming to America.

Samuel Brown Wagner: 1816–1896

Samuel Brown Wagner was born in Mill Creek Township, Pennsylvania. According to the "Erie Gazette" for March 7, 1844, Samuel married Hannah Leland (1819–1864) of McKean, Pennsylvania on February 29, 1844. Reverend Gifford married them. The Lelands trace their ancestors back to the Mayflower and John and Priscilla Alden. Hannah Leland Wagner died October 6 1884, aged 45.



Samuel Brown Wagner, C1890

Samuel Brown Wagner of Wesleyville is listed in several directories as a farmer, once with an assessed valuation of \$14,200. He was not a poor man and a photo of his home shows a substantial building. Samuel Brown Wagner owned a farm of 98 acres on 38th Street, which in those days was outside of Erie and rural, and also owned a home with 24 acres on the Buffalo Road. If they were driving to Erie the Blileys living on the Station Road would have gone by the Buffalo Road, and thus would have probably known the Wagners and since both families had come from Germany may have been friends.

One of Samuel and Hannah Wagner's sons was Charles Otis Wagner, (who

married Agnes Bliley). Samuel and Hannah's other children: Cassius S. Wagner, Abram L. Wagner, Myron L. Wagner, Harriet E. Wagner, Joseph A. Wagner, and Marian Wagner Cook. Myron (1835–1906) and Cash (1842–1906) were the only relatives listed in family records. Cash Wagner was Mill Creek township assessor and also township road commissioner. His obituary lists him as a well-to-do progressive farmer. Myron Wagner, at the time of his death at age 61, was living on the East Buffalo Road. Abraham Wagner, and Samuel Brown Wagner and his wife Hanna are buried in the Erie Cemetery, section P.

II. BLILEY FAMILY IMMIGRATES FROM GERMANY TO ERIE, PENNSYLVANIA—1834

The Bliley family, including parents Andrew, age 47, and his wife Catherine Eich Bliley, age 40, and their children Charles, age 12, Barbara, age 10, Maria, age 8, and Andrew, age 4, immigrated from Krozingen, Germany to America in 1834. They sailed on the ship *Charlemagne*, a small ship by today's standards at 124 feet long. The Blileys arrived in America, went through immigration at New York City, traveled up the Hudson River, took a canal boat on the Erie Canal, and a steam boat on Lake Erie to Erie, Pennsylvania. Then the family put their worldly goods in a lumbering cart drawn by oxen, and after 2 days and only 7 miles over rutted, muddy roads reached their new home in what was then the wilderness of Harbor Creek only a few miles from Erie. Catherine Eich Bliley's ailing husband Andrew soon died, and the family was left leaving Catherine and her young family to make a living from their farm. Other German families were in the neighborhood, and probably helped the Bliley family. Then young Charles, and Andrew (who started working on the Reed vessels at age 11) found jobs in the Great Lakes maritime trade and helped support the family back home. Later in their lives, Charles became a successful farmer and Andrew was a prominent merchant and builder and a co-founder of the Erie Historical society.



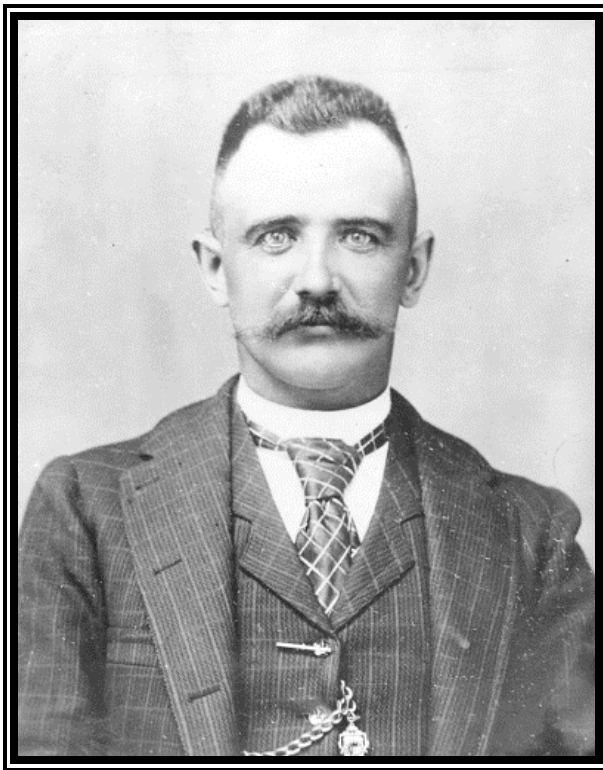
*Charles Bliley Farm, Station Road, Harbor Creek, PA C1907
Just one mile south of the village of Wesleyville.*

Charles and Mary Jane Mead Bliley: Marriage and Children

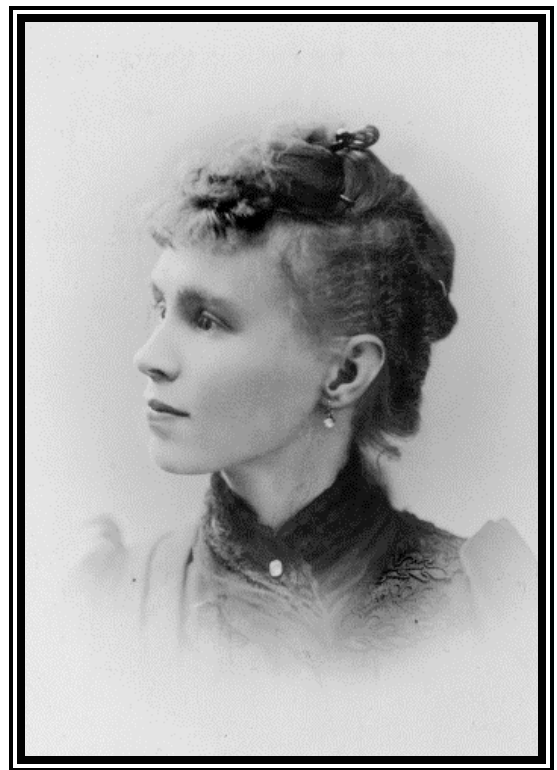
Charles Bliley married Mary Jane Mead in 1847 and of their 15 children 10 survived to adulthood: Alex, David, Wilfred, Frank, Rose, Josephine, Barb, Ellen (always called Nellie) and Ross. Letters written in the 1880's by Nellie, Rose, Barb, and Agnes survive, giving details of daily life concerning Bileys and Wagners. Information on the Bliley family can be found on Charles A. Bliley's website: www.Bliley.net.

III. MARRIAGE OF MARY AGNES BLILEY TO CHARLES OTIS WAGNER—1879

The Bliley family and the Wagner family were brought together by the marriage of Charles and Mary Jane Mead Bliley's daughter Agnes Bliley to Charles Otis Wagner:



Charles "Charlie" Otis Wagner



Mary Agnes "Aggie" Bliley

Agnes Bliley (1857–1931) married Charles Otis Wagner (1856–1891) Reference: The Cheney books: Marriage and Genealogy Series at Erie County Historical Society list the marriage: "Wagner-Bliley: Married December 31, 1879, C.O. Wagner of East Mill Creek and Miss Agnes Bliley of Harborcreek, by Father Casey." The marriage is also listed in the paper *Erie Morning Dispatch*, Jan 14, 1880.

The Wagner family, including Charles Otis and his father Samuel Brown Wagner, were neighbors of the Charles Bliley family. Their family farms were within walking distance of each other. Charlie and Agnes may have known each other a long time.

IV. CHARLES AND AGNES WAGNER— HOME AND BUSINESS, 1880–1891

Charles and Agnes Wagner's Children

In the 12 years of their marriage, Charles and Agnes had four children:

- Inez Charlotte Wagner, B: October 18, 1880, D: Dec. 21, 1937
- George Garfield Wagner, B: Nov. 25, 1881, D: 1896, (Appendicitis)
- Samuel Clare Wagner, B: Aug. 21, 1886, D: Sept. 1964
- Mary Jane Wagner, B: 1889, D: 1889.



Inez (L), George (R), and Samuel Clare Wagner (F), April 1889

Home Life on Charlie Wagner's Mill Creek Farm, 1880–1886.

Note: Much of the following tidbits of information were derived from letters written by Mary Agnes' sisters, especially Rose and Nellie, during the 1880's. These provide details about Ag, Charlie, and their children Inez, George, and Sam.)

1880–1886: Charles Otis Wagner and Mary Agnes Bliley Wagner (referred to in the Bliley family letters as "Charlie" and "Ag") lived at Charlie's farm (it is not known if Charlie owned or rented this land) on East Mill Creek, one mile south and three miles west of Erie. There is a family Bible inscribed: "Mr. And Mrs. CO Wagner, East Mill Creek Township, Pennsylvania, 1880". Charlie was a farmer, although he had other business interests including farm management

for a neighbor, and later operating a restaurant and saloon business, and hotel management.

- 1881: Charlie was considering going into the dairy business with his brother Cash (Cassius) Wagner. Also in 1881, the Erie City Directory lists Mrs. Charles O. Wagner as boarding with her uncle Andrew Blila at his home in Erie. At that time, Inez was a year old and Ag may have been living in Erie awaiting the birth of her second child George Garfield, born in November. In Dec. 1881, Nellie wrote that Ag and the new baby George were doing fine.
- 1882: In October, Nellie, still living with her parents on the Station Road farm, wrote that Ag and Charlie had left Inez and George at the farm where the two children often spent a week at a time. In December, Nellie wrote that Wilfred Bliley, Ag's younger brother was working for Charlie at \$16 a month cutting wood, although Wilfred went home to the Bliley farm on weekends.
- 1883: In February, Wilfred was still chopping wood for Charlie and was also cutting ice with Charlie. (Presumably on Presque Isle Bay; ice was needed for icehouses at this time since there were no modern refrigerators.)
- 1884, Feb. 26: Charlie's father Samuel Brown Wagner was in poor health.
- 1884: In April, Nellie wrote that Ag's sister Rose, who lived at the Station Road farm, was staying with Ag and Charlie, until Ag could hire a girl. Charlie and Ag had a sizable farm, and Ag may have provided boarding for the workers hired to help on the farm. This would explain Ag's need of a girl to help with work. Nellie also wrote that Inez (age 4) was with her, on the Bliley farm, and they were training a rebellious four-year old Inez to mind.
- 1885: In May, Bliley letters indicate that Charlie and Ag were living at Lake Side farm, near Erie, and that Charlie was managing the 253-acre Lake Side Stock and Dairy Farm for the Tracy family.

The Tracys were a well-to-do Erie banking and railroad family. Ag's sister, Nellie (who was a dressmaker), wrote from Lake Side that she was there sewing clothes for Inez and George, who wouldn't sit still for fittings, and that Ag was just putting the children to bed, and Charlie had to call the veterinarian Dr. Bell for Bay Billy, a sick horse. Nellie also reported that Charles Bliley, her father, was on jury duty at Erie, and came to spend the night at Lake Side.

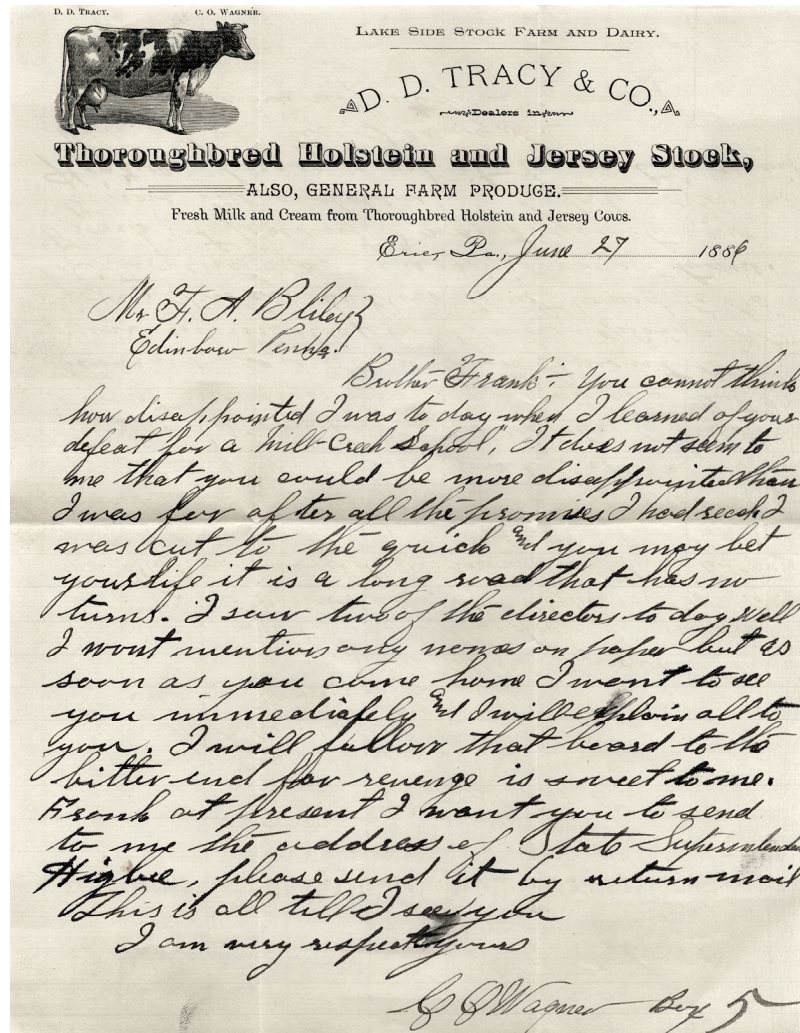
- 1886, January: The snow was so deep, it took Charlie four hours to drive his horse and buggy to Erie from Wesleyville—a distance at the most of five miles.
- 1886, January: Charlie and Ag were members of a Wesleyville lodge, and took out life insurance, \$700 and \$2,700 respectively. Also in this month Inez (age 6) and George were sick with a stomach disorder. They recovered, and later Inez was described as cute, and talked all the time.

Also in January, Rose wrote that Charlie had a new "cutter"—a two-passenger snow sleigh. Charlie liked to drive a fast horse, and Charlie, whose photographs show a very handsome man, was probably a man about town with his good looks, fast horses, fashionable cutter, and many business interests. Unfortunately, Charlie seems to have driven a horse too fast, and it sickened and died.

By the end of January, Wilfred (Ag's brother), was drawing or cutting ice

for Charlie, and “drawing shingles” (making roof shingles). By May, Inez and George were again staying at the Bliley farm on the Station Road in Wesleyville, while Charlie and Ag were building a house addition probably to their Mill Creek farm. Their second son, Samuel Clare Wagner, was born in August, and Ag’s sister Rose Bliley went to Mill Creek help her sister Agnes.

At that time in 1886, Ag’s brother Frank Anderson Bliley was working on his teaching degree at the Pennsylvania Normal School in Edinboro, Pennsylvania and there were discussions by letter about Charlie driving “Mother” (Mary Jane Bliley) to Edinboro—a distance of almost 30 miles one-way.



Letter from Charlie Wagner to his brother-in-law Frank Bliley

There were also discussions by Charles Bliley with Charlie Wagner and Charlie’s brother, Myron, who were connected with the local school board (Harbor Creek), about support in securing Frank a teaching job at one of their local schools. A letter exists written by Charlie referring to Frank not getting a teaching position and Charlie was disappointed. A May letter mentions that Charlie still had 40 acres to plow.

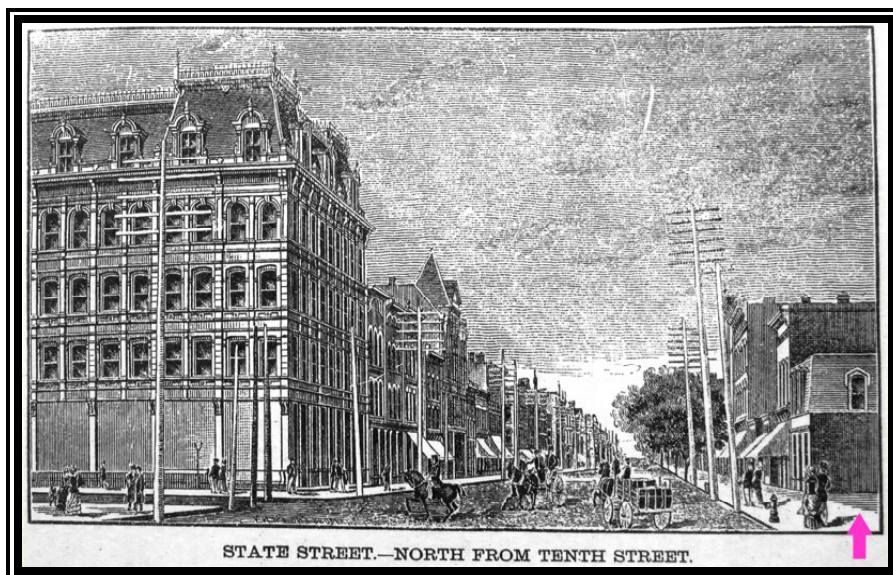
Later in the year 1886, Charlie Wagner ceased farming and moved to Erie. It is not known why Charlie abandoned farming. Farm prices may have been

too low for him to make a living. Some of the Bliley letters also suggest Charlie was not an efficient farmer. Rose wrote that Charlie's three years of managing Lake Side Farm had been "wasted". Another letter expresses the Bliley family's shock and disapproval of Charlie going into the restaurant business, and that he would have to work very late at night. Rose wrote that Charlie had to borrow money to go into business, but if the business prospered, the money could be paid back in a year.

Charlie Wagner: Business in Erie, Pennsylvania, and Duluth, Minnesota—1886–1891

1886–1887: Charlie and his partner, Louis S. Schumacher (who may have managed the Inn at Harbor Creek), established a restaurant and saloon business at 931 State Street—a central Erie location. The Erie City Directories for 1887, 1888, and 1889 list the business under the business section called "eating houses" in the second ward. The business is listed as "Schumacher and Wagner". The family has an old shoeshine box, about a foot high, that was supposedly used in Charlie's restaurant and saloon.

This same location was also where Andrew Blila, (brother of Charles A. Bliley) had his grocery store and provisioning business. An October 1886 letter says Uncle Andrew was expanding his store, possibly to accommodate a new business. A letter from Rose Bliley indicated that Uncle Andrew planned to close his store in March 1, 1887. It is possible that Uncle Andrew had remodeled his store and sold or leased his store to Charlie and Louis upon his retirement. At any rate, Uncle Andrew, who had been in business since the 1850's, retired in 1887 and the Erie Directory listed him as, "gentleman". Louis Schumacher is listed in the Erie City Directory as living at 931 State Street (As of 2012 this building is still standing.)



Two-story building used by Andrew Blila for his grocery business and later, for Schumacher and Wagner's Saloon and Restaurant.

1887: Charlie and Ag were living on Holland Street, Erie between 10th and 11th.

1888: In August, Ag and Charlie were living at 122 East 6th Street, Erie. Ag's sister Nellie was there all summer. In one letter, Nellie wrote that she was alone

with Clare, (Samuel Clare Wagner was called “Clare” as a child) while Ag and Charlie had gone out. Rose and Inez (age 8) were at a picnic.

For whatever reasons Charlie and Louis did not continue in the restaurant business, although a letter from Rose on July 3, 1887 indicated that the business was successful. There are no Erie City Directory listings for the business after 1889.

1889: On September 30, Ag wrote to her brother Frank Bliley, that Charlie was in Duluth, Minnesota and that while there he contracted typhoid fever and could not receive any care in the hotel he was managing. Charlie was therefore taken to a hospital. Ag was very worried, and even worse, Charlie was not getting many of the letters she wrote, although Charlie had written that he thought he was getting better.

1891: Death of Charles Otis Wagner: April 13, 1891

Charlie did return to Erie, and it is believed he managed the Inn at Harbor Creek. There are no details on his life until his untimely death at age 35 on April 13 at Harbor Creek. At the time of his death, his children, Inez was 11, George was 10, and Sam only 5. Charles Otis Wagner is buried in Erie Cemetery, on West 19th Street, in Section “P”. Cemetery records indicate he was born in East Mill Creek, and the cause of death was gastritis or gravel, and his last residence was Harbor Creek. Gastritis is inflammation of the stomach lining and this could be anything from ulcers to cancer.



Charles Otis Wagner Headstone, Erie Cemetery

1892: The Erie City Directory lists “Wagner, Agnes, Mrs., widow, home 231 Short St.”. The Short Street house still stands. The three-bedroom single-story house is a block from a bluff that overlooks Erie’s Presque Isle Bay. Agnes probably lived there until her parents Charles and Mary Jane Bliley finished rebuilding their home in Wesleyville. (See next section for details.)

V. MARY AGNES WAGNER AND CHILDREN LIVE WITH AGNES’ PARENTS: CHARLES AND MARY JANE BLILEY, 1892–1907

Agnes’ parents, Charles and Mary Jane Bliley, retired from their farm on Colt Station road, and sold it to their son Wilfred Bliley in 1891. In 1892, they built their retirement home on South Street near Wesleyville, then a rural suburb west of Erie close to the Buffalo Road, and near Four Mile Creek. Agnes moved in with her

parents Charles and Mary Jane Bliley and here Inez, George and Sam spent much of their youth.



From Sam and Inez Wagner Album

George Garfield Wagner dies at age 16 from appendicitis — 1896

George Garfield Wagner was living in the Wesleyville South Street home when he died. What is known of George is contained in a letter dated July 28, 1889, from Agnes's sister Barbara Bliley Lambing who lived in Corry, Pennsylvania. On this date, Charles Otis was alive and Agnes had just had her 4th child, a daughter named Mary who did not survive. George, who was nine at the time, was temporarily staying with his Aunt Barbara in Corry, Pennsylvania.

To quote from Barb's letter: "Well Agg how are you getting along, I hope you and baby are well. Did you receive the little socks I sent her. Take good care of yourself. I thought perhaps you would like to hear about George. I will write you a few lines. He is staying with me at present. All of the Elliotts have gone to Oil City; be gone until some time during the week. When George first came here to stay, he did not like it as well as with the Elliot's. He said I had no parlor or nice things to look at, but I fixed that up all right by telling him we would go down right after supper and get a watermelon although I did not let him have any last night. But I think he went down cellar and looked at it—ten times. He says all boys like watermelon. I gave him free access to the cookie crock. So he and I are getting along just splendid. When he woke up this morning, the first thing he said was "Aunt Barb I am having a better time at your house than I expected."

"He thinks Charles' (Barb's son) velocipede (an early bicycle) is the neatest thing—rides it all the time. He has told me more about the baby sister. Says he named her Manny. George keeps me laughing all the time and I think he is a splendid boy. He went to Sunday school today with Mabel Alexander. He will have to have a new pair of shoes while here. I

thought I would get material and make him two night dresses for winter."

And this is the snapshot—about all that is known of him—of nine-year-old George Garfield Wagner, and the role of a velocipede (a bicycle), a melon, and night dresses in a boy's tragically short life.

Bliley and Wagner Home—Center Street, Wesleyville, Pennsylvania

Charles and Mary Jane Bliley and their daughter Agnes and her children Inez, George, and Sam continued to live in the home in Wesleyville. During this time there were many changes. Inez attended high school in Erie from 1894 to 1899, and she boarded with her Aunt Rose Bliley Curtis in Erie. After high school, Inez continued to reside in Erie with Rose until about 1909. Charles Bliley died in 1906 and made provision in his will for his wife Mary Jane and for his widowed daughter Agnes. This provision may have involved leaving them lifetime use of the Wesleyville house.



Inez, Mary Agnes and Samuel Wagner, C1907

Sam left for college in 1907, Mary Jane Bliley died in 1913, and Agnes Wagner in 1931. However, while Agnes was living, the house was still busy. Ag's grandson remembers being taken to the house in the 1920's to be babysat. Her grandson remembers Agnes as full of energy, and despite her small frame, could outwork everybody else, but she didn't eat right. In this time period, the house was fitted with a commode, and the nearby Methodist Church was built. The house was still standing at the turn of the 21st Century, but in poor condition.

Despite these changes, Sam Wagner, who was keenly interested in photography from a very early age, took many photos of the Bliley and Wagner families at their many get-togethers at the Wesleyville home. Photos exist of Mary Jane and Charles

Bliley, Uncle Andrew Blila, and the Bliley children, and their children. There are also many photos from around Erie. Inez also took photos, and she put together photo albums of the pictures she and Sam took. Inez labeled the photos with names, dates, and locations in beautiful script, and gave photo albums, often with identical photos, to family members. Many of these albums yet exist, giving a glimpse into their daily lives and identifying family members. [Albums are available on www.Bliley.net]

Mary Jane Bliley also kept a farm journal and daybook from about 1888 to 1907. This book is filled with newspaper clippings, obituaries, and notes on her social life—all over the top of the book's original contents of a ledger for her egg and butter business back on the farm. [Available on www.Bliley.net]

Charles and Agnes Wagner's Children: Inez Wagner and Sam Wagner

Sam and Inez were close as brother and sister. But, Inez was six years older than Sam, and was starting on a career as an artist in Erie, while Sam was beginning school at Erie High. Sam's handwritten records say he graduated from Erie High School in downtown, Erie, about five miles away. A trolley service existed into Erie at the time.

Sam and Inez, due to age differences and the need to pursue a career and support themselves financially after their father's death, followed different career paths and lived in different cities. Their lives are outlined in the sections that follow.

VI. INEZ CHARLOTTE WAGNER—Oct. 10, 1880—Dec. 21, 1937

Early Years in Erie: 1880–1886 (Age: Birth–6)

Note: Letters from Bliley family are the source for the following material on the early life of Inez Wagner at her parent's Mill Creek Farm, and the Bliley Farm on Station Road, and other details on her youth.

1880–1889: Childhood and Early Youth—Inez lived with her parents, Charles Otis and Agnes Bliley Wagner, in East Mill Creek and at Erie, but the Bliley letters from her aunts Rose and Nellie indicate that from the late 1880's, Inez visited her grandparents Charles and Mary Jane Bliley at the Bliley farm on the Colt Station Road in Wesleyville. Inez spent much time with her grandparents, and also with her mother Agnes's Aunts Rose and Nellie.

1881, December 15: Rose Bliley wrote that Inez had the croup and had not been expected to live, but that she was all right now.

1883, February 9: Rose wrote that Inez had been staying on the Bliley farm all week.

1884, April 17: Nellie wrote that Rose had gone to Ag's home to help her out because her hired girl had gone.

1884, June 12: Inez was again at the farm, and Nellie wrote that Inez was crying in her sleep. Nellie added, "*Yesterday I told her to pick up a lounge pillow on the floor and she said, 'you pick it up. There is a bone in my back.'*" From a young age, Inez had strong opinions.

1884, Sept 17: Nellie wrote that Inez was at the farm, and "*we now have her trained—we make her mind.*"

- 1885, March 24: Nellie wrote that mother, Mary Jane Bliley, just took Inez back to Ag's.
- 1885, May 4: Nellie wrote from Lake Side Farm, near Erie, that she was staying with Charlie and Ag sewing clothes for Inez and George, and how hard it was to pin patterns on squirming children. Nellie also wrote that she went in the buggy with Charlie to Miles Grove [p/o Lake City], to Fairview, and to Girard, all in the western part of Erie County, Pennsylvania. This is a round-trip distance of approximately 20 miles.
- 1885, May 27: Rose wrote that her brother Wilfred was going to stop at Charlie's and bring Inez to the Bliley farm for a week.
- 1886, April 19: Rose wrote that Inez was again staying at the farm, and that she Rose has just sent six-year-old Inez to the Wesleyville School. Rose wrote that Inez was eager to leave for school, and left right after breakfast. At this time, Charlie and Ag were building an addition to their house and thus sent Inez to the Bliley farm. An addition was needed, as their second son Sam Wagner was born that August.
- 1886, May: Rose wrote that Inez is at the farm, and she is currently up the road with her grandparents Charles and Mary Jane Bliley.
- 1886, August: Inez's brother Samuel Clare Wagner was born.
- 1886, Sept. 10: Nellie wrote that Inez was in school, near Charlie's farm.

School Years in Erie: 1894–1899 (Age: 13–18)

1894–95: Villa Maria Academy: Unlike Sam, who went to Erie High School, built in 1866, Inez attended Villa Maria Academy in Erie from 1894 to 1895. The academy, just two years earlier, was a private all-girls school established and operated by the Sisters of Saint Joseph.

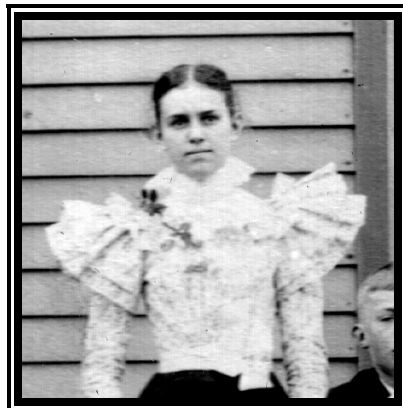


Villa Maria Academy, C 1890s

One of her schoolbooks was: "Bible History, Remarkable Events of the Old and New Testament", a Catholic Publication copyright 1894. This book has her signature in ink, as follows: "Inez C. Wagner, Villa Maria Acad., Erie, Penna, Dec. 15, 1894". Her handwritten notes in pencil on the second page read: "Began Bible History Dec. 15, 1894. Began Little Catechism February 19, 1895". Her penciled notes on the book's end-papers list: Father Casey, also Rector of Saint Peters, died Feb 9, 1894. Buried Feb 13, 1894. A Father Casey is listed as

marrying Inez's parents, Charles Otis and Mary Agnes Bliley Wagner. Inez also listed the names of Sister Maria Joseph and Sister Bernadette.

While attending school, Inez did not live with her parents in Wesleyville. From 1894 and throughout all of the years Inez lived in Erie, she boarded with her aunt Rose Bliley Curtis (Agnes' sister) and husband Silas Curtis. Erie Street Directories list Inez as boarding with Rose and Silas Curtis.



Inez Wagner, 1897, Age 17

Inez attended Villa Maria when she was 14 and 15. Yearbooks from Villa Maria don't go back as far as 1895 leaving no reference to Inez. However, Villa Maria, described in Nelson's Biography, was a "splendid edifice". It was bounded by Eighth, Ninth, Plum and Liberty Streets. Completed in 1891, the grounds were a gift from Father Casey, the priest who married Inez's parents Agnes and Charlie Wagner. The building is an apartment complex in 2012. Why Inez went to Villa Maria is unknown. Inez was raised in a family of practicing Catholics, however, her religious affiliation is unknown, however, attending Villa Maria offered the best education available to a woman in the 1880's, although she would have paid tuition.

1888–1889: These dates are the first Erie City Directory listings for Inez, who was aged 18 and 19 on those dates. Inez was listed as a student for both years and attended The Erie High School.

1896–1899: The High School (Erie High School)

A letter to Ag written by her sister Barbara Bliley Lambing of Corry, Pennsylvania mentioned that Inez was boarding with Rose and that Inez was attending "*The High School*". The High School—as it is listed in Nelson's Biographical Dictionary—was established in 1866, and was located at 7th and Holland Streets.

Career in Erie As Multi-Media Artist—1904–1909 (Age: 24–29)

Inez is known in the family for her oil and watercolor paintings, interior design, and renderings of architectural drawings and blueprints. She boarded with aunt Rose at the 149 West 20th Street address (Built: 1882) for the 12 years she studied and worked in Erie. In 1906, her uncle Frank Anderson Bliley boarded there also. Rose Bliley Curtis and her husband Silas may have owned this house. Rose died in 1909, about the time Inez left Erie.

After her high school years it is not known where or what Inez studied.

However, her nephew, born in Erie in 1920, had childhood memories of Inez and indicated that Inez trained as an architect. Perhaps Inez apprenticed in an architect's office. Perhaps she studied at a local art school.

1904–05: The Erie City Directory lists Inez as, Water Color Artist, (this is the first listing of her as an artist), with a business address of “25 S Park” Row adjacent to the city squares.

1904: Photos from family albums show Inez outside, sketching.

A photo dated winter, 1904, is listed, “The Bohemians!” Sketching are: Inez Wagner, Minnie Zessinger, Mrs. Carlotta Moser, and Ruth Weidler. Another photo of the ladies is listed as “The Bohemian Art Club.”

1904: Inez took drawing lessons with Mrs. George Moser. Lessons were held in the old Erie Academy after it was converted to a Home Talent Art School, under the auspices of Mrs. Geo. B. Moser.

1906: The Erie City Directory lists Inez as, Artist, 406 Downing Building. The Downing Building, a professional office building, was located on the southwest corner of Peach and West 9th Streets. The Downing Building was where Inez’s uncle attorney Frank Anderson Bliley had his law office from 1892–1901. Inez and her uncle Frank worked in the same building. The Downing Building no longer stands in 2012.

1906: Inez wrote in her photo album: These pictures were taken during my “summer vacation” at Rockwood, Pennsylvania, June 24 to July 5th, 1906, while visiting my cousin Ms. Henry McConnell. Rockwood is near Oil City, Pennsylvania.

In 1907 a photo shows that Inez visited Waldemeer Park, at the neck of 12-mile peninsula named “Presque Isle”. Waldemeer was, and still is a very popular local and regional amusement park. The photo shows a beach scene.

1907: August: Inez visited the Sawdey Farm, near Albion, Pa.

Note: In the summer of 1907, Sam Wagner had left Wesleyville and was attending Lehigh University at Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

1908: The Erie City Directory lists Inez as, “Artist”, working for the C.P. Cody. The business section of the same Directory lists: C. Paxton Cody, Architect, 406-407 Downing Building. This reference is taken from the Erie County Historical Society, The C. Paxton Cody Architectural Collection: Charles Paxton Cody was a significant regional architect who produced residential homes in Erie, Pittsburgh, and Cleveland from 1893–1936.

What Inez probably produced for the architectural firm was watercolor renderings of homes, and possibly drawing and lettering on tracings for blueprints.

A photo of Inez for June, 1907, shows her working in the office of C. Paxton Cody, Architect. Another photo shows “The Office Force”: Frank Shucks, Inez Wagner, Winifred Suesser.



Inez Wagner, Architect's Office, Downing Building, June 1907

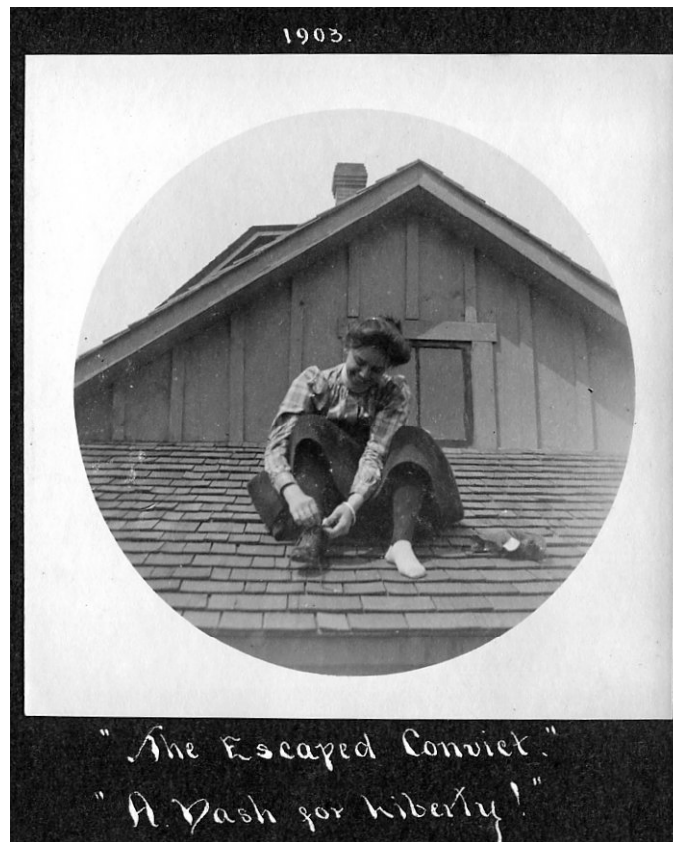
1908: A photo lists "Erie Academy Studios, Mrs. George Moser, Mar 12, 1908." Inez is posed as if decorating a ceramic pot.



Inez Wagner (R), 1908, Painting a Portrait of Mrs. Moser

1908, Aug. 6: Inez Wagner and cousin Gertrude Bliley visited Chautauqua Lake and saw a passenger boat sink; they took pictures.

At this time in her life, photos show Inez riding a bike, driving a horse and buggy, and sprawled on the roof of a house.



The 1910 Erie City Directory has no listing for Inez and it is probable Inez left Erie. (Aunt Rose died in 1909.)

[At this point it is necessary to rely on census data, a few photos, and her nephew's memories to trace Inez's life.]

1909: Inez Leaves Erie for New Castle, Pennsylvania and Akron, Ohio; resides there between 1909 to about 1917.

There is a photo of Inez listed as: New Castle, Pa, 1910. Inez was dressed in a professional looking outfit with a long coat.

Another address for Inez is 345 Park St, Akron, Ohio, 1910. An August 27, 1910 photo shows Inez, Sam, and their mother Agnes.

From the 1910 Census for Akron, Ohio, 20 April, 1910: Inez Wagner was boarding at 69 Straw Alley. Inez was listed as 25 years old [actually 30], and was an art designer, of wall paper and other media. She was boarding with Monty L. Gounley, a 30-year-old salesman, and his wife Resa L., 35 years old; they had been married for 10 years. The Gounleys were renting the house and this was a blue-collar neighborhood; residents' occupations included rubber worker, steel worker, teamster, sales lady, and two physicians.

1917–1937: Career at Willoughby (Near Cleveland), Ohio (Age: 37–57)

About 1917, Inez's brother Sam Wagner and his wife Ada and their children returned from living in Saint Charles, Missouri. Sam was returning to Erie, where he

had accepted a job with Burke Electric. Sam and his family made the trip back east by train, and stopped on the way to see Inez in Willoughby. There is a photo showing Sam and Ada and their children standing in front of Inez's house. The occasion must have been a family reunion, as there are several photos of Sam, his mother Agnes, and Agnes's siblings. One photo is labeled, "*The home of Inez Wagner and Ann Smith, Willoughby, Ohio, Sept. 23, 1917*".

From the 1920 Census for Cleveland, Ohio January 3, 1920: The listing is: 10510 Euclid Avenue, Willoughby, Ohio: Smith, Ann B., head of household, 35 years old, born New Jersey, parents born New Jersey. Ann was an advertising manager, dry goods, and received wages. Her boarder was Inez C. Wagner, 38, designer, contract work, and "O.A." (self-employed.)

By this time Inez was well established enough to be self-employed doing a variety of contract work. Ann Smith as an advertising manager may have helped Inez secure contracts. The neighborhood they lived in was more affluent than the Akron Ohio address. The Euclid Ave address was a good neighborhood; others in 22 houses on the street included two professors, teachers, an oil company president, an auditor, physician, and dentist. In 2012, 10510 Euclid Avenue is now part of the Cleveland Clinic hospital campus at the intersection of Euclid Avenue/Route 20 and Stokes Boulevard.

Sometime after they moved to Erie and probably in the 1920's, the Sam Wagner family again visited Inez in Willoughby. Sam's son, Robert "Bob", said he was only a boy, but he remembered the visit. He described Inez as a handsome and gentle woman who was a very talented multi-media artist. Bob said that Inez was creative, and her family ostracized her for being creative and that she "didn't fit the mold". Who in the family ostracized Inez is unclear. It certainly was not her grandmother Mary Jane Bliley, who put together a book of newspaper clippings and information for Inez. Bob also said Inez lived with a maiden lady, now identified as Ann B. Smith.

What Bob Wagner really remembered about his visit to Wagner-Smith home was playing in the barn, and sliding down stacks of hay. There is a photo of Inez, dressed in bloomers, standing on a ladder propped against the barn.

The last photo in the family files of Inez is dated January 1932, taken at Willoughby, Ohio.

Death of Inez Wagner

Inez died from cancer in 1937. Sam Wagner paid her medical bills. Inez's gravestone is in the Erie Cemetery, West 19th Street, Section "P". She is near her father Charles Otis Wagner, her grandfather, Samuel Brown Wagner, her brother George, and her mother Mary Agnes Bliley Wagner.

Inez was a remarkable woman. In an age when women did not even have the right to vote, Inez had the resolution to leave home at an early age, secure an education, and pursue a career at a time when women were generally expected to follow domestic pursuits. The few paintings she left show her to have been a gifted artist.



Inez Wagner, January 1932, Willoughby, Ohio

VII. SAMUEL CLARE WAGNER
August 21, 1886–Sept 20, 1964

Youth in Wesleyville, Pennsylvania, 1892–1907 (Age: 6–21)

Sam Wagner was born in Millcreek Township. After the death of his father Charles Otis in 1891, Sam, his sister and brother George, along with his mother Agnes moved in with Agnes' parents Charles and Mary Jane Bliley at their home on South Street in the village of Wesleyville. Sam spent his youth in Wesleyville from about 1892 to the summer of 1907, from the age of 6 until 21. Many photos exist from this time, taken by both Sam and Inez that depict daily activities of Sam's youth: Sam standing on his head with Inez's caption "Six Ages of a Boy". Other photos show Sam cleaning out the barn, and his grandmother Mary Jane feeding the chickens. The South Street home was still the scene of rural America with the Bliley and Wagner families engaged in some farming activities, and the family apparently kept a horse and buggy, as there are photos of Inez driving a horse and buggy.



*Sam Doing Chores at the Bliley
Retirement Home
on South Street, Wesleyville, PA*

1896 Presidential Election and Sam Wagner

Mary Jane Bliley, Sam's grandmother, kept a journal with newspaper clippings including an entry which reads: "Sam Wagner raised a juvenile Republican banner at his mother's residence Thursday and displayed a McKinley and Hobart banner. While the juvenile celebration was going on several citizens came out to witness the proceedings. Sammy wanted a speech made appropriate to the occasion and Mrs Knapp walked to the crowd in an interesting and patriotic way. Mr. Charles Bliley, grandfather of the youthful Republican and a life-long Democrat, was a quiet spectator of the proceedings. A neighbor jocosely remarked that "he expected to see Mr. Bliley getting into the Republican band wagon this fall."

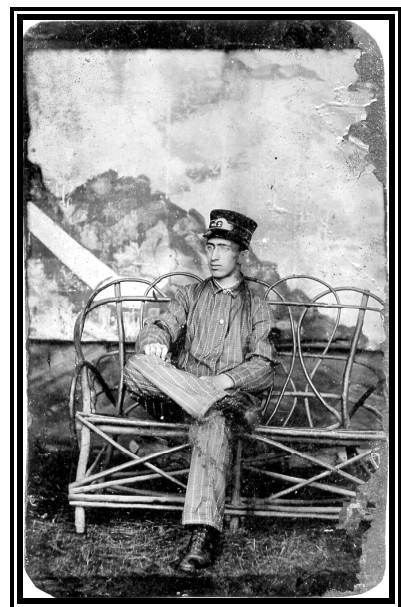
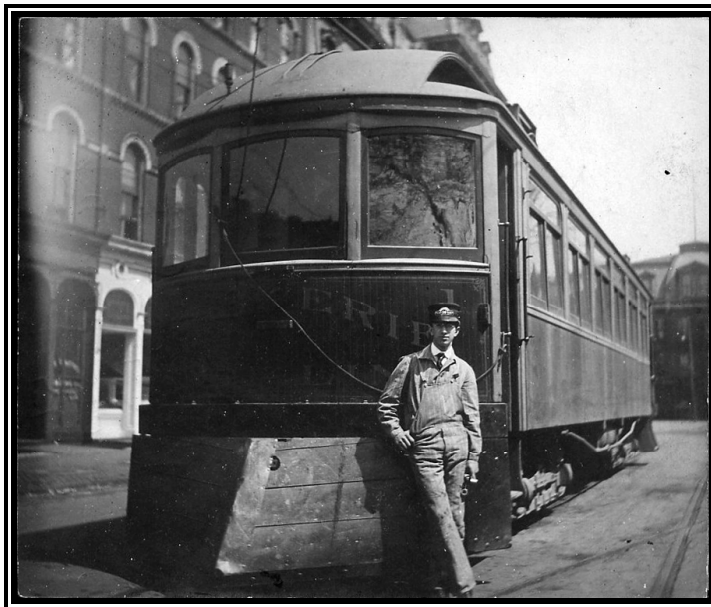
Note: McKinley and Hobart were campaigning for the Presidency in 1896, which sets the date for this article. Sam was age 10 at the time. The name of the newspaper is not cited.

Wilbur Lambing, the son of Barbara Bliley Lambing and Sam's Bliley cousin, recollected in an audio record recording for a 1947 Erie family reunion, that he remembered that he and Sam used to climb out on the roof and from a near-by fruit tree swipe peaches: of course forbidden fruit. And how good those pilfered juicy peaches tasted!

Sam graduated from Erie High School, and according the school's Yearbook "The High School Annual", graduated with the class of 1906. According to the 1907 Yearbook, Sam took additional college preparatory work at the school through 1907.

Sam lived in Wesleyville until age 21, indicating he did not leave for the college at customary age of 18. He may have had to work to get money for school. During this time, both he and Inez took many photos.

In May of 1906, there is a picture of Sam as a motorman for the Erie Rapid Transit Trolley Line. The Erie Trolley photos date from 1906 to July 1907. Sam then left to attend Lehigh University in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.



Samuel Wagner, Motorman, North East Trolley Line, Erie, Pennsylvania, 1905

Education at Lehigh University, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, 1907–1910 (Age: 21–24)

There is an August 8, 1907 photo of Sam at his dorm at Lehigh University. He was in the preparatory school taking a required summer class at the university. Other photos Sam took include: December 7—dorm room, showing a calculus quiz, with a listing of Wagner and Cespedes as roommates in a row house at 66 Church Street, Bethlehem, and the Sigma Nu House, the Engineering Fraternity. Sam was a member of Sigma Nu until his death in 1964. He joined in May, 1908.



Sam attended Lehigh until graduation in 1910 at the age of 23. He majored in electrical engineering. His son, Bob, remembers driving Sam to his 50th reunion in 1960.

Advanced Education at Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, New York

After graduation from Lehigh Sam enrolled at Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, New York—the same institution that his younger cousin, Frank D. Bliley, would attend for electrical engineering 18 years later. (An Erie obituary from the Erie Morning News, Sept 22 1964, lists Sam as a graduate of Lehigh University and Pratt Institute.)

Professional Career

After graduation, Sam was employed by the B and O Railroad from June 1910 to January 1912, and for the Union Electric Company of Missouri from January 1912 to late 1913. His work on substations involved the installation of high voltage electric wires in Missouri, (this information is based on Sam's handwritten notes). Later, he worked for Burke Electric in Erie, PA in the 1920's, and subsequently, Master Electric in Rochester, New York. The consistency of his work areas indicates his put his education to good use. Sam was highly educated for the times, as fewer than five-percent of Americans graduated from college in this period.

Marriage to Ada Dowd—1911

About Ada Dowd

Prior to her marriage, Sam's future wife Ada Dowd lived with her Dowd family, consisting of her parents John and Alice Northrop Dowd, and Ada's sister Ora. They had been living in Philadelphia for at least a year, since U.S. Census records for Philadelphia for 1910 list: Ada Dowd, milliner (hats), her sister Ora, musician, and parents John E. Dowd, electrician, and Alice Dowd, dressmaker, as living on 46 North Millick Street. The Dowds were all employed and renting their house.

Just prior to her marriage, Ada was employed in millinery retail at Kresge's on 925 South Market Street, Philadelphia from December 1910 to January 13, 1911. A letter of recommendation from Kresge's with her working dates is in the family files. Ada was also a member of West Hope Presbyterian Church, 4050 Aspen Street as of February 1911. The Dowd family was Presbyterian. Sam's family and his grandparents', the Blileys, were Catholic. Sam was probably raised Catholic, and converted when he married Ada.



Ada Dowd (Undated)

Sam Wagner and Ada Dowd May Have Met In Erie

Family photos indicate that Sam and Ada Dowd, and Ada's father John Dowd, were friends from the time Sam entered Lehigh University, Bethlehem, PA in 1907. The Dowd family lived in the nearby town of Cementon. Family tradition suggests Sam and Ada met while Sam was in Lehigh. Perhaps they did. However, Sam had lived near Erie from 1886 to 1907. U.S. Census records indicate that the John Dowd family, including his daughter Ada, was living in Erie in 1900. Sam and his future father-in-law, John Dowd, shared common interests in photography, electric motors, and, incidentally, both had been trolley motormen. Sam worked for a trolley line in Erie and John on a line in Binghamton, New York. Sam and John may have known

each other in Erie because of their shared interests, and Sam may have met Ada before he entered Lehigh University.



Sam and Ada Frolicking at Lehigh University

Life in Webster Groves and Saint Charles, Missouri, 1911–1918

After their 1911 marriage in New Jersey, Sam and Ada Wagner moved to Webster Groves, Missouri, where their first child, Don, was born. The family then moved to Saint Charles, Missouri, where Jean, Richard “Dick” and Lois were born. Sam worked for the Union Electric Light and Power Company as a construction supervisor, probably at the Saint Charles substation. Sam took many photos at this time, many associated with his work as his photos show high power transmission lines. There is a photo of the Wagners in Saint Charles at 221 Houston Street.



Ada Dowd Wagner, 1912, in St. Louis Missouri (Sam Wagner photo)

Life in Erie, Pennsylvania, 1918–1929

About 1919, or earlier, the Wagners moved to Erie, Pennsylvania, and lived in a house at 3122 Holland Street, in Erie's south central area.

Sam's Employment

In Erie, Sam found employment with Burke Electric Company, a company that repaired electric motors and generators, and sold arc-welding equipment. (A picture of Burke Electric is located in: "Erie: A Guide to the City and County.") In the early 1920's, Burke Electric, a sizable facility, was located on West 12th at the corner of Cranberry Street and served as their corporate headquarters and principal manufacturing facility. Burke Electric was listed as having offices in major cities from Kansas City to New York City. Sam served as a salesman for the company as indicated in an Erie City Directory of the day.

Wagner Life in Erie

Life for the Wagner family in Erie in 1925 would have been bustling with six children ranging in age from 5 to 12 years old. One of Sam's sons remembers staying in the car while Sam went into the Burke office. The same son remembered being sent to Sam's mother, Agnes, while the rest of the family went shopping to give Ada a rest from the demands of raising a large family.

John Dowd, Ada's Father Moves In

About 1921, Ada's father John Dowd came to live with the Wagners. John Dowd's wife, Alice Northrop, had died—or at least disappeared from the family and census records between 1910 and 1920. Alice was listed in the 1910 Census in Philadelphia, with the Dowd family, but the 1920 census lists John Dowd as living in a hotel near Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, working as an electrical engineer in a cement mill.

By 1921, John Dowd had moved to Erie, and Erie directories show him as living with the Wagners. The Wagners changed addresses frequently. From 1922 to 1924 they lived at 1908 West 11th. From 1924 to 1927, they lived in a government house on West 11th. In 1927, they lived at 423 Vermont, in 1928 at 513 West 28th, and in 1929 at 1311 West 10th. Why they moved so often is not clear. However the family was a large one with Sam and Ada Wagner, their six children and Ada's father John Dowd.



Ada Dowd Wagner and Father, John Dowd (C1930's)

Cottage on Lake Erie

The Wagner family spent summers at a cottage, or possibly different cottages. One was located two miles north of Northeast, Pennsylvania, and 10 minutes from the lake. One of the Wagner children remembers a stony beach, and a water pump, and how hard it was for a little boy to carry even a half-bucket of water. Sam also built a tennis court with a clay base for the children. Ada cooked on a kerosene stove, and the children remember the fragrances associated with kerosene cooking. The older children got into trouble by helping themselves to the neighbors' tomatoes, and by breaking into a fishing house. Near one of the cottages, there was a pulp mill or wood-cutting plant on the shore, and the lake was consequently full of wood and pulp.

Life in Rochester, New York

In August of 1929, the Wagner family moved to Rochester, New York. John Dowd stayed in Erie for while and moved in with the Wagners about 1931.

The Wagner family drove to Rochester in a 1927 big, boxy Oldsmobile, or possibly a Buick, which they called "a turnip". Son Bob said in 2000 the family slept in the car for some unknown reason, perhaps to avoid paying for a hotel upon their arrival. The Wagner's first Rochester address may have been on Richard Street in the south central part of the city. They then moved to Harvard Street.

A serious fire in the Harvard Street home almost killed two family members when Alice rushed in to save Bob from the wrath of the fire. The Wagners moved out of that home to a nearby house while theirs was repaired.

Although the 1930's economic depression was still underway, Sam Wagner was employed as a District Sales Manager for the Master Electric Company headquartered in Dayton, Ohio. The Rochester office was located in the Case Building on Saint Paul Boulevard. Sam had an excellent job; life was good for the Wagner family. A series of late 1930's and early 1940's photos show the older children, now young adults, sailing on the Genesee River, ice skating, and enjoying a swim in Lake Ontario. The family took advantage of Rochester's many recreational opportunities. In the 1940's, several of the Wagners were now working at Eastman Kodak, "the place to work" in Rochester at the time. They included: Don (technical

area), Lois (clerical), and Alice (Clerical).



Sam and Ada Wagner, C1936 Ada Dowd Wagner, C 1940

In the late 1930's or very early 40's, the Wagners moved to their home at 310 Castlebar Road in the southeast part of the city.



Sam and Ada Wagner's Home, 311 Castlebar Road, Rochester, NY

This was a very nice home, and here Sam had his darkroom where he could develop and print photographs as he had since his childhood. He was still keenly interested in photography, and took film into his darkroom, developed the photographs, and hung them up to dry on a line over the dining room table. The cellar had unusual furniture—a Murphy bed and other amenities—as his father-in-

law, John Dowd lived in the remodeled basement. By this time all three sons were in the military during World War II, and two of the daughters were married.



Part of Sam's Darkroom at the Castlebar House

Life for Sam and Ada Wagner in the 1950s

In the early 1950's, all the children had married and left home, and Ada wanted a smaller house, so the Wagners moved to a smaller Cap Cod house at 43 Brockley Road, in the Irondequoit suburb of Rochester. Ada died there in 1955; she had been in ill health for a number of years.

Sam Moves in with Family

Sam went to live with his son, Robert ("Bob"), who had built a home on Park Road in the Powder Mill Park area of Pittsford, NY southeast of Rochester. Sam also had a darkroom in this home. Later, Bob later got a job near Philadelphia and moved his family there. Sam then moved in with his daughter, Lois Wagner, back into Rochester.

Sam, now in his mid-sixties and retired, was still very active in the Rochester community, and worked at the Brighton Presbyterian Church on East Avenue near Winton Road. He had lunch every day at the Brighton Chamber of Commerce. He was a Mason who achieved all 32 degrees, a member the Rochester Engineering Society, and the Damascus Shrine Temple.

Samuel "Sam" Clare Wagner died in 1964, a man loved and respected by his children and grandchildren, and many Bliley relations and the Rochester community.



Ada and Sam Wagner, C1946

VIII. THE DOWD FAMILY

The Dowd family emigrated from England to America in 1639, and settled in Erie, Pennsylvania in 1880. The Norton family married into the Dowd family; Elon Norton served in the American Revolution.

John Elon Dowd (1865–1950)—Ada Mary Dowd’s Father

Preface: Ada Dowd’s handwritten notes say her father’s middle name was “Elon”; it is also a family name. Ada wrote down her ancestry, tracing it back to Elon Norton; some family information in this chapter is based on Ada’s notes and extensive handwritten records of her ancestor’s names. Ada was eligible for, and joined, the DAR (Daughters of the American Revolution) based on Elon Norton’s service.



John Elon Dowd, C1895?

Life and Family

John Elon Dowd (October 2, 1865?/68?–1950) was, according to his daughter Ada's handwritten notes, born in Chautauqua County, New York. Census records state he was born in Kansas. However, by 1880, the Dowd family, including 11-year-old John, lived on Peach Street in Erie, Pennsylvania. The Federal Census lists John Dowd's father William Dowd and his wife Julia, and three children: Edwin, John, and Ada. By 1881, the Erie City Directory listed Mrs. Rhoda Dowd (1812 or 1815–1904) as also living on Peach Street. Rhoda Dowd was Rhoda Norton Dowd, Benjamin Dowd's widow and her son was William Dowd, John Dowd's father.

Only one event is known about John's early life. When he was a little boy, he pulled a pot of boiling liquid from the stove and spilled it on his himself; as a consequence, lost vision in his left eye. He wore an eye patch all his life and is recognized easily in family photos by his eye patch, or frosted left eyeglass lens.

By 1887, John E. Dowd (20) is listed in the Erie Directory as a photographer—which might explain his later connection with Sam Wagner, who was also an amateur photographer. Later directory entries for John, list him as an electrician, a vocation he pursued throughout his life.

Sometime around 1888, John Dowd went to Binghamton, New York. The family is certain of this, because there is a photo of him as a motorman on a Binghamton Trolley on the downtown Asylum Line. A check of the Binghamton Street Directory for 1890 lists a John Dowd, electrician, living at 40 Griswold Street in downtown Binghamton. 1890 is the only year he is listed as living in Binghamton.



*John Dowd (L) on the Washington Street & State Asylum,
R.R. Co. Trolley Line, Binghamton, NY, C1890*

A check of reference material in the Binghamton Library suggested why John was working on the trolley. The publication "*Trolleys of the Triple Cities*" indicated

that the Park and Asylum Lines were electrified in 1890. Given John's electrical expertise, it is possible John went to Binghamton for this technical work on the Binghamton trolleys as the electrification began in 1888 as an upgrade to the older horse-drawn cars.

During this time John had married Alice Northrop, a dressmaker, possibly in 1888. He may have met her in Binghamton. A check of the street directories for Binghamton shows many Northrops, while in the Erie Directories Northrop is a very uncommon name. To confuse matters, The Erie City Directory of 1888 lists Alice Northrop, dressmaker, as boarding in Erie in a location near Edwin Dowd, John's brother. How John Dowd and Alice Northrop met is not known. Family photos of the couple exist. Alice was a very attractive woman. What we do know for certain is, their first child, Ada Mary Dowd, was born in Erie, Pennsylvania in 1889.

*Alice Northrop—John Dowd's wife and Ada Dowd's Mother
December 19, 1867 to?? (prior to 1920)*

Alice Marvin Northrop Dowd was born in German Township, Chenango County, New York, 20 miles north of Binghamton. (The Northrop name is alternately spelled "Northrup", and "Northrupt".) Alice's father was Willie Julius Northrop, who, in 1865, married Laura Ulyssa Eggleston (1842–1905) in German, New York. Willie Northrop's parents were Oliver Northrop and Clarissa Marvin (1828–??)

John and Alice Dowd and Family

An 1892 entry in the Erie (PA) City Directory, lists John E. Dowd as an "electrician". There is no mention of Alice or the family. However, the 1900 U.S. Federal Census for Erie lists: John E. Dowd, born Kansas 1868, electrician; wife Alice, born 1869 in New York; daughters Ada M. born in 1888, at school; Ora L. born March 1891 a school student in Pennsylvania; Rhoda W., born 1894, also a school student.



John & Alice Northrop Dowd – C1888 (Tintype)

In June of 1900, the Dowds were living in Erie at 919 W. 18th Street. John Dowd's background included photography, and electric motors. This background matched Sam Wagner's interests. The two men may have met and known each other. At this time, Ada was 11, Ora was 9, and Rhoda was 5. Photos of Ada and Ora as babies are in the family collection; an Erie professional photographer took the photos.



Alice, Ada, John and Ora Dowd – 1908 (L/R)

The next census record for the Dowd family comes from the 1910 Philadelphia Census, where on April 19 the Dowds were living at 46 Millick Street, Philadelphia, PA. Household members included: John E. Dowd, 42, electrical engineer, working as electrical contractor; wife Alice, 42, working as a dressmaker; a self-employed daughter, Ada, aged 20, working in millinery at Kresge's; daughter, Ora, 19, employed as musician in a theater.

By 1911, Sam Wagner had graduated from Lehigh University and was employed with the B and O Railroad and was preparing to marry Ada Dowd. Possibly the Dowds were living in Philadelphia so they could be near to Sam Wagner. Sam and Ada were married in 1911 in New Jersey. Sam and Ada moved to Missouri, and began their life together.

Life After Alice

In the US Census for 1920, John Dowd is listed as 51 years, boarding at a hotel in Nazareth, Pennsylvania near Allentown, and employed as electrical engineer at a cement mill. In May 1912, Alice Northrop Dowd died in Philadelphia following surgery for an infection.

John's daughter Ada and her husband Sam Wagner moved back to Erie with their family about 1919, and John Dowd moved in with them about 1920. John lived with the Wagners throughout the years the Wagners lived in Erie.

The Wagners moved to Rochester, New York in 1929, and John stayed in Erie for about a year, working as an electrician for the Watson Company, a paper manufacturer. John appears to have lost everything he had during the 1929 stock market crash, according to his grandson.

About 1930, John moved to Rochester and lived with the Wagner family first on Harvard Street and later followed them to their new home on Castlebar Road. John was well known to his great grandchildren, who affectionately called him “*Grampse*”. He was a quiet and gentle man. He worked at a local church in Rochester. He died in 1950 and was buried in the cemetery behind the Brighton Church, at the highest spot in the cemetery.

Children of John and Alice Dowd

Child 1: Ora Dowd Henderson (B: 1891–D: 1980)

Ora was a professional musician, and listed as such in Philadelphia’s 1910 U.S. Census. Ora married Harry Henderson (B: C1883) and they moved to Huntington, New York, on Long Island, where she spent the rest of her life.

About 1925, Ora and Harry were living at 58 W 83rd Street in Huntington. Harry was about 47, and was an automobile salesman. Ora kept in touch with the family and in a 1969 letter written from 174 Vineyard Road in Huntington, New York, she encouraged her niece to pursue a career in music.

Child 2: Ada Dowd Wagner (B: 1889 – D: 1955)

Ada may have been named in honor of John’s sister by the same name. Ada grew up in Erie, Pennsylvania. By about 1907, when Sam Wagner began attending Lehigh University in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, the Dowd family had moved to Cementon, Pennsylvania in Whitehall Township, near Bethlehem. There are family photos showing John Dowd with a motorbike, and a picture of his house—a large edifice on a hill.

1907 photos show Sam and Ada frolicking at Lehigh fraternity parties and rowing on the Lehigh River. Ada is an attractive and fun-loving girl. Later photos show her when she was a milliner, modeling fashionable hats probably in Philadelphia where the Dowd family lived in 1910. After Ada’s marriage to Sam Wagner and their early married life in Missouri, she returned with Sam to Erie where she began to get busy raising a large family.

Later they moved to Rochester, New York, where their children grew up and naturally left home for lives of their own. One of her daughters said Ada enjoyed entertaining in their elegant home. Throughout the 1940’s, and until her death in 1955, Ada was in increasingly poor health.

Child 3: Rhoda Dowd (B: 1894 – D: C1906)

Rhoda was perhaps named for her great grandmother, Rhoda Norton Dowd who lived until 1904. Young Rhoda Dowd died in November, 1906, at age 12, of kidney disease. Rhoda was born in Erie but at the time of death lived with her Dowd family near Lehigh, Pennsylvania.

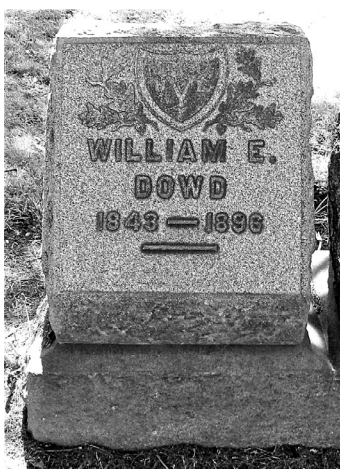
IX. DOWD AND NORTON FAMILY HISTORY

William Edwin Dowd and Julia M. Wheeler Dowd and Family—John Dowd's Parents

John Dowd's father was William E. Dowd (1843–1896) and he married Julia M. Tanner (1845–1906) about 1865. Tanner may not be her last name and it could be Wheeler; the records are inconsistent.) William Dowd's father was Benjamin Dowd, carpenter, living in Chester, New York; he married Rhoda Norton (C1812–1904). Elon Norton's parents were Eli Norton (1785–1848) who married Thirzah Jane Jones (1787–1823) in 1805. Eli Norton's parents were Martha Page (B: 1758), and Elon Norton (1758–1850). A note on the rear of a picture of his gravestone indicates that Elon Norton was born in Connecticut and served in the Revolutionary War from 1777 to June 1782. He was in the Battle of Lake Champlain, New York with Major General Benedict Arnold.

William and Julia Dowd—Civil War Connections

William and Julia are buried in the Erie Cemetery, Erie, Pennsylvania. Records there indicate that William died of poison and Julia of gangrene of the foot (diabetes?). On their gravestones are carved elaborate symbols for the Union Veteran Legion. This was an elite group of veterans who had served a minimum of two years or were wounded during the American Civil War. William served honorably in the Civil War, and Julia was in the UVL's Ladies Auxiliary.



*William E. Dowd Headstone,
Erie Cemetery, Erie, PA*



*Julia M. Dowd
Headstone,
Erie Cemetery, Erie, PA*

William Dowd's Brothers

William Dowd's brothers included two dentists: Dr. John Chester Dowd, 1852–1931, and Dr. Franklin Dowd, 1847–1923. Their sister was Thirzah Dowd, 1834–1915. They were children of Benjamin and Rhoda Norton Dowd.

William and Julia Dowd Family—Census Records

*The 1880 US Federal Census for Erie, Pennsylvania
(No Dowds are listed in the Erie City Directory prior to 1880)*

Occupants of 532 Peach Street, Erie, Pennsylvania:

- Dowd, William: Head of household, age 37, carpenter, born NY, parents born VT and N.Y.
- Julia: Wife, age 35, born about 1845–46 in Pennsylvania; Edwin, son, age 14, born 1865–66, at school, born N.Y.
- John: Son, age 11, born 1868 or 69, at school, born Kansas.
- Ada: Daughter, age 7, born 1873–74, Pennsylvania.

Atkinson Erie City Directories (AECD) In the late 1800's —

Indicate that one or more generations were often living in the same household.

- 1881: Mrs. Rhoda Dowd (Born 1812 or 1815–1904.): Widow, (she married Benjamin Dowd) boarding at 1806 Peach Street. Her son, William Dowd, had his home at 1806 Peach. This is the first and only AECD listing for Rhoda Dowd. It is probably the Norton-Dowd ancestor Rhoda Norton Dowd who lived for almost a century.
- 1882–1883: Edwin B. Dowd: Machinist, boards southwest corner 10th and Plum; and William E. Dowd, laborer, home southwest corner 10th and Plum Streets.
- 1884: Edwin B. Dowd: Machinist, (William's son) and William E. Dowd, stereoptician exhibitor, both living at southwest corner 10th and Plum Streets as a boarder. No John Dowd listed.
- 1887: John E. Dowd: Photographer, and Edwin B. Dowd, dental student, (brothers) both boarding at 207 West 4th Street at the home of their father William E. Dowd, also 207 West 4th Street. No Julia Dowd is listed. John is about 20 years old. Note: He is listed as a photographer. This is probably my great grandfather John Dowd.
- 1888: William E. Dowd, (served in the Civil War): Mail carrier, home rear 17 West 7th Street, (William's son Edwin and William's wife Julia are not listed), and John Dowd, painter, boards rear 17 West 7th Street. This is father and son. (At this time, Charlie Wagner operated his restaurant on State Street.)
- 1891: William E. Dowd: Mail carrier, home 8 West 5th, and Ada T. Dowd, (his daughter), boards 8 West 5th Street.
- John E. Dowd: Photographer, home, 1808 Peach Street, 2nd floor.
- Edwin B. Dowd, (John's brother): Carpenter, home 525 West 18th Street, second floor.
- 1892: Ada T. Dowd: Dressmaker, boards 158 West Third Street, (William's daughter,) and William E. Dowd, at the same address.
- 1892: John Dowd: Electrician, boards 1140 West 12th Street. This is the first listing of John as an electrician. He remains such through the 1920's.

Benjamin Dowd Family—1600's–1800's

William Dowd's father was Benjamin Dowd, a carpenter and joiner. He was born December 1808 in Vermont. He died 1879 in Harmony, New York. He was married to Rhoda Norton, 1812 (or 1815) to 1904. The Erie City Directory for 1881 lists Mrs. Rhoda Dowd, widow, as boarding in Erie at 1806 Peach Street. Also listed as his

home, 1806 Peach Street, is William Dowd, her son.

Benjamin's Dowd's parents were Zina (??) Dowd and Sally Hamlin. Zina Doud's parents were Peleg Doud 1733–1806 and Merab Ward, 1735–??. Rhoda Norton's parents were Eli Norton, 1785–1848, and Thirzah Jane Jones, 1787–1823. Thirzah's father was David Jones. Eli's father was Elon Norton. Elon, a carpenter, was in the American Revolution. He married Martha Page.

Henry Doude, (an older spelling of Dowd), the Doude ancestor, was on board a ship bound for America in May 1639. When the ship was 10 days out of Bedfordshire, England, he and others signed the Guilford Covenant. This information is in the family records.

X. MISCELLANY

AUTHORS OF LETTERS REFERENCED IN THIS HISTORY

The content of this history would not be possible if Frank Anderson Bliley had not collected and saved so many items that would become part of his extensive family archives. We believe he had a sense of history and was very proud of his family. Below are photos of some of the writers of some of the letters found in 2010 in the family archives in Boulder, Colorado.



Mary Agnes Bliley Wagner, C1916



Barbara Bliley Lambing, C1908



**Rosanna Jane Bliley, 1885, Age 25
Daughter of Charles and
Mary Jane Bliley**



**Ellen "Nellie" Lousina Bliley
Circa 1880s**



*Sea Chest of Charles A. Bliley (C1850s)
and its contents of letters, documents
and photos. (Boulder, Colorado 2010)*

*The depository for many of the letters
referenced within this document.*

RESOURCES

This work may not be a scholarly work, but every effort has been made to make it as accurate as possible through careful research.

Sources include:

- Photograph albums by Sam and Inez Wagner
- Material and editing services from Charles A. Bliley
- Written and verbal communications from living family members
- Atkinson's Erie City Directories and other references from the Erie Library and Erie Historical Society
- Binghamton, New York city directories and reference material in the Binghamton City Library
- United States Census Records
- Letters and documents in the Wagner-Bliley-Dowd family collection (Below)
- Death Certificates

MEET THE AUTHOR



Norma Kennedy Venable and husband, Wallace Venable, C2004

Norma Venable has been a myriad of things over her lifetime, both professionally and personally. Norma has a bachelor's degree in philosophy from the University of Toledo. She married Wallace Starr Venable in 1962 in Ithaca, NY. She is an avid bird watcher, environmentalist, general nature lover, and family historian. She has collaborated with her husband of 51 years, Wallace "Wally" Venable on several projects.

Norma enjoyed a career as author and lecturer with West Virginia University (WVU) and wrote many publications on West Virginia's birds, wildlife and plants, and cultural history. Norma is retired from WVU.

Wally and Norma enjoy seeing the sights (and adding to them) and have traveled in Central America, Mexico, Great Britain, Spain, France, Holland, Austria, and Greece. They owned a canal boat in England for many years and now owned a sailboat in Erie, Pennsylvania.

While this project was the dream of Norma. She is the principal author with Wally has working hard at assisting in the research, development early drafts and scanning thousands of family photos of which a mere handful appear in this work.

Norma and Wally have lived in Morgantown, West Virginia since 1964.

CORRECTIONS, CONTRIBUTIONS AND COMMENTS

Charles A. Bliley, of Rochester, New York, contributed to this project by providing content editing, layout and refinement of photo resources for the printed/PDF version, and the Web page version that resides on his family history Web site www.Bliley.net. Thank you Chuck.

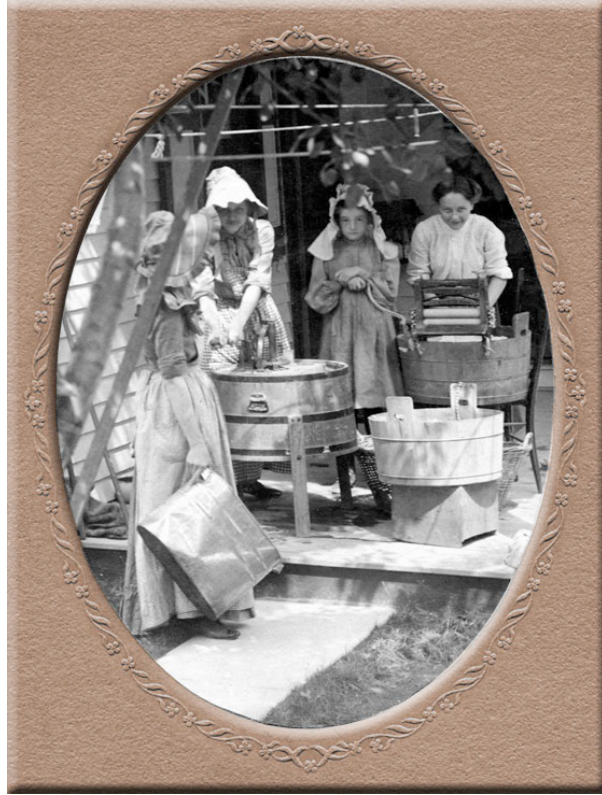
And, a special thanks to all of my ancestors who have enriched the lives of those of us who are now their descendents. They were good, industrious and creative people, which make us proud to be a part of this family today.

I welcome your comments and corrections. If perhaps, you can make a contribution to my research, I would be pleased to hear from you. Feel free to contact me through my husband, Wally's, e-mail (Wallace.Venable@mail.WVU.edu) or through Charles Bliley, host of www.Bliley.net, at K3NAU@AOL.com.

Sincerely,

Norma Kennedy Venable

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Children washing at Charles and Mary Jane Bliley's retirement home on South Street, Wesleyville, PA.
Photo by Sam Wagner. Circa 1900