



Soldiers, Sailors and Scott  
City: The Deweese and  
Zimmerman Family Histories

By Ken Zimmerman Jr.

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## Dedication

This book is dedicated to Parker  
Lonzo Bator Zimmerman, the patriarch  
that I wish I had known.

## Table of Contents

Dedication .....	3
Introduction .....	5
Chapter 1 – The Simmerman Family.....	9
Chapter 2 – Elizabeth Northcutt and Her Children .....	21
Chapter 3 – The Deweese Family.....	33
Chapter 4 – Parker Zimmerman.....	50
Chapter 5 – Grandma and Grandpa Zimmerman .....	74
Chapter 6 – Grandma and Grandpa Move to St. Louis .....	93
Chapter 7 – Dad .....	116
Chapter 8 – Story Family.....	126
Bibliography .....	140
Author’s Page.....	141

## Introduction

The Deweese and Zimmerman family histories actually begin in Germany, France and England. Eventually, they would continue to Indiana and Virginia before the families settled in Southeast Missouri.

In Cape Girardeau, Missouri, Frank Otis Zimmerman would meet Eloise Valerie Swindell nee Deweese, a boarder in his Brother Oliver's house. Frank and Eloise would marry and raise a household of six children together.

Originally, the family lived in Cape Girardeau in the Red Star subdivision a few houses down from Frank's father Parker. On Saturday, May 21, 1949, the families were in their homes around 6:54 p.m., when a tornado struck the city.

The tornado destroyed the Red Star subdivision and made a direct hit on Parker's house. Parker Lonzo Bator Zimmerman died from head and internal injuries as a result of the tornado.

Frank moved his family to the town of Fornfelt, where his Uncle William Lee Zimmerman had been city marshal for almost 20 years and Parker was a town judge for one year.

You know some good justice was handed out in that courtroom. "Do you have anything to say, young man, before I pronounce you guilty of this crime?" Your only hope was that William and Parker had a disagreement over Sunday dinner which put Parker in the mood to get even.

Frank and Eloise would raise their children in the area, which became Scott City in 1960, when Fornfelt and Ancel merged. Later Scott City would also merge with the

old town of Illmo. Locals still call this area of town Illmo.

Scott City is the "country" that we used to visit from St. Louis and became "the ancestral homeland" for many in my generation. I could not tell the story of the family history without referencing Scott City.

The family history covers several generations of the Deweese and Zimmerman families. I hope you enjoy reading about our relatives, their dreams, hopes and sometimes failures but appreciating their efforts and contributions. Enjoy.





*Figure 1- Grandma Eloise and Grandpa Frank Zimmerman*

## Chapter 1 – The Simmerman Family

The Zimmerman family has alternated the spelling of its last name for all of its traceable history. The first settlers were known as Zimmerman but then the family name is spelled as Simmerman. My great-great grandfather used both Zimmerman and Simmerman.

One of my cousins from Samuel's second son Frederick's family heard from family legend that the Zimmerman family was originally Jewish. They changed the name to Simmerman to avoid persecution. However, we have not been able to confirm the reason for the name change or a Jewish heritage.

For a number of years, I could only trace the Zimmerman (Simmerman) line of the family to William D. Simmerman, who died in 1846. The only information that I had initially was

that Samuel's death certificate said his father was born in Virginia and his mother was born in Kentucky.

With the availability of records on the Internet and increasing number of genealogists, who are sharing their work, I believe that I have traced the Simmerman line back to the 1700s in Virginia. I am 85 percent certain that I have the correct family lineage.

I am going to start the Zimmerman family history with Johann Christopher Zimmerman, Christian Zimmerman, Sr., and Christopher "Stophel" Simmerman as well as Rev. William Arehart Simmerman, who was William D. Simmerman's grandfather.

Johann Christopher Zimmerman, III was born March 16, 1692 in Sulzfeld, Karlsruhue, Baden-Württemberg, Germany. He emigrated with his second wife and children from

both marriages in 1717. His first wife died in 1714. He and his second wife would have more children in America. They moved to the second Germanna colony in Virginia. Johann died in December 1748.

It would appear that Christian Zimmerman, Sr. was Johann's son from his first marriage but it is very difficult to tell.

The Zimmermans had big families and who you think is a child may be a cousin. I feel fairly certain that Christian is Johann's son. Christian would be a wealthy landowner. According to land records, he owned 400 acres in Augusta County, Virginia in 1745. When he died in 1803 in his early 90s, he left a sizable estate to his many children.

Christopher "Stophel" Simmerman, who is the first Zimmerman that seemed to alter the spelling, was born in

1729. He married Etna Margaret Rhinehardt in 1757. They had a large family. Christopher donated 90 of the 100 acres, which would become the town of Wytheville, Virginia. Originally, it was called Evansham.

Christopher owned the first public house (tavern) in the area, which he would later sell to a son-in-law and daughter. "Stophel" would leave a sizable estate for his heirs. "Stophel" died February 14, 1813.

Rev. William Arehart Simmerman was born in 1762. He married Mary Fugua in 1782. They had a large family, one of whom was John D. Simmerman, who appears to be the father of William D. Simmerman. Unfortunately, I do not know what church Arehart, which is the name he seemed to prefer, served as a minister.

Based on nationality, it may be the Lutheran church, which still stands in Wytheville today. However, most of the subsequent generations seem to have been Baptists.

Arehart died in 1827. Mary would follow him in 1834 only twelve years prior to the death of her grandson William in Missouri.

John A. Simmerman was the son of Rev. William Arehart Simmerman. He was born in Wytheville, Virginia on August 18, 1798. John A. married Margaret (unknown last name, 1802-1875) around 1819. William D. Simmerman was born in 1819. John A. appears to have owned property in both Virginia and Kentucky. He has residences in both states in the 1820, 1840 and 1850 censuses.

Some sources say that William D. was born in Green County, Kentucky but this fact could be a mix

up with his wife Elizabeth Northcutt, who was born in Green County, Kentucky. Samuel J. Simmerman, William's son, listed his father's place of birth as Virginia and his mother's birthplace as Kentucky.

John A. was an extremely wealthy Virginia land owner. He left a will after his death in June 1853, which left his property, much of which was purchased from his brothers, to his wife Margaret as long as she did not remarry. If she remarried or died, all the property was left to his daughter Mary Ann G. Simmerman, who was married to John P. M. Simmerman. William had already died in 1846. John A. did not make any provision for William's children.

After the Civil War, several of his slaves successfully sued for emancipation. You can find the complete case on the Internet. John

A. emancipated some slaves on his death. The remainder were to be emancipated after Margaret's death but the Civil War made these arrangements moot. Margaret died in 1875.

William D. married Elizabeth Northcutt on March 15, 1840. Their first child, Samuel J., was born in September 1838. It was not unusual in frontier areas, where a minister might not come through for a while, for the community to marry a couple. When the minister came through at a later time, he would make it official. I would guess that is what happened here. Their second child, Mary J., was born in 1845. William D. died on August 18, 1846 at 27 years of age. Elizabeth, Samuel and Mary appeared to live with her parents after William's untimely death.





*Figure 2- Samuel J. Zimmerman. This picture is a headshot of a picture of Samuel and his wife Sarah. I'm guessing he is in his 40s or early 50s.*

In 1862, Samuel joined the 30<sup>th</sup> Missouri Volunteer Regiment. Samuel joined in St. Clair, MO but the regiment was originally founded in St. Louis, MO. They were stationed at Cape Girardeau, MO, which may be how he came to know Southeast Missouri.

Samuel was a private during the war. He developed stomach problems after the Battle of Vicksburg. The stomach issues would plague him for the rest of his life.



*Figure 3-Sarah J. Fischer from the picture of her and Samuel.*

Samuel married Sarah Catherine Fischer on April 22, 1866. Samuel's three oldest children, William Lee, Frederick Booth and Parker Lonzo Bator Zimmerman, were all born in Franklin County. However, sometime prior to 1880, Samuel J. and Sarah Zimmerman decided to make a change. He settled the family in Dongola, an unincorporated area of the Liberty section of Bollinger County.

Samuel would spend the next twenty-five years of his life in Bollinger County. The 42 year-old Samuel J. Zimmerman employed his time primarily as a farmer.

According to the August 28, 1890 edition of *The Marble Hill Press*, Samuel J. Zimmerman was elected road overseer on the road commission board for Liberty 1st District during August 1890. Samuel served with Henry Bidewell, James Revelle and Jacob Zimmerman (no known relation).

Samuel's election indicates he developed a strong local reputation. Samuel could read but could not write. He normally signed his name with an "X." The 52 year-old Samuel served at least one term on the board.

*The Marble Hill Press* also reported Samuel came to town to conduct business in the October 5, 1899 edition. Samuel was in his sixties and nearing the end of his life.

On April 10, 1905, Samuel J. Zimmerman passed away at his home in

Dongola, Liberty, Bollinger County, Missouri. Samuel was 66 years old. Sarah Catherine Zimmerman nee Fisher passed away in Dongola in 1908. Sarah was 69 years of age.

Samuel and Sarah were the first generation of the Zimmerman Family to settle in Southeast Missouri but their family would call SEMO home for generations to come.



*Figure 4- The Ace, the Deuce and the "Trey": Three Generations of Ken Zimmerman*

## Chapter 2 – Elizabeth Northcutt and Her Children

William Simmerman married Elizabeth Northcutt, whose family tree went back to Virginia and England. After William's untimely death, Elizabeth spent most of the rest of her life with her parents and two children.

On the Zimmerman (Simmerman) side of the family, a number of the families, whose daughters married into the family, cannot be traced back very far.

A notable exception is my great-great-great grandmother, Elizabeth Northcutt. We can trace the Northcutts back to Virginia in the mid-1600s and the Etheridges back to Middlesex, London, England in the 1500s.

Elizabeth Northcutt was born in 1822 to Samuel Northcutt (1800 - 1850) and Nancy Sally (1806 - 1850). Nancy Sally was the daughter of John Sally (1745-1820) and Nancy Claunch (? - ?). I can find very little information about either John Sally or Nancy Claunch.

Samuel Northcutt was the son of William Northcutt (1773 - 1852) and Anna Moore (1776 - 1853). William Northcutt was the son of Richard Northcutt (1737 - 1781) and Sally Florence (1738 - 1781). Richard Northcutt was the son of John Northcutt (1669 - 1745) and Sara (?-?). John Northcutt was the son of Thomas Northcutt (1644 - 1709) and Ann Etheridge (1643 - 1711).

We can trace the Etheridges back quite a way. Ann Etheridge was the daughter of Thomas Etheridge (1604 - 1671) and Christian Marrington (1608-

1671). Thomas Etheridge was the son of Thomas Etheridge (1564 - 1612) and Ann Pate (1568 - 1613). Thomas Etheridge was the son of William Etheridge (1535 - 1577) and Sybell Page (1539 - 1577). William Etheridge was the son of John Etheridge (1500 - 1550) and Ann (1504 - 1564).

John Etheridge (1500 - 1550) was a town constable in Woodgrene, England. He is buried in Tottenham Parish. His son, William Etheridge, was also constable for Woodgrene. William was buried on June 5, 1577.

William's son Thomas was christened November 19, 1564. He owned the family estate and eight acres of land, which he left to his wife Ann Pate. His son Thomas arrived in Virginia in the 1640s. According to the Virginia customs at the time, you received fifty acres of land for



each person that you paid to transport to the colony. He brought four persons, so he received 200 acres. He eventually accumulated 1,000 acres and raised a large family.

Eventually, the family would move to Kentucky, which is where Elizabeth would meet William D. Simmerman.

William and Elizabeth had two children, Samuel J. Simmerman and Mary Simmerman. I have very limited information on Mary but Samuel is my great-great grandfather. I have much more information on him.

My great-great grandfather Samuel J. Zimmerman (Simmerman) was born in Missouri during September 1938 to William D. Simmerman and Elizabeth Northcutt. William died the year after Elizabeth gave birth to their second child Mary Simmerman at only 27 years of age.



I have seen Great-Great Grandpa's date of birth as September 1942 but this date is not correct. I think the confusion came because he was born two years before his parent's official marriage on March 15, 1940.

In the years before a minister was available in most rural areas of the United States, the town would marry couples until a traveling minister made it "official". If you believe in the priesthood of all believers, it should not be a gnat people choke on.

I recently found pictures of both my great-great grandparents on-line although the picture my aunt has is both of them together. I believe Samuel and Sarah must have made a diguerre type or lithograph of

themselves for all their children. My aunt has the picture that must have belonged to Parker or Effie at one time.

Samuel enlisted in the 30th Missouri Volunteer Infantry at St. Clair, Missouri in 1862. He served in both Companies D and E. It was while Samuel was a Private in the U.S. Army that he would discover Southeast Missouri. Samuel's unit was stationed at Cape Girardeau, MO, where they often camped between deployments.

Samuel took part in the Siege of Vicksburg from May 18 to July 4, 1863. It was during the battle that he received an injury that limited his participation in the rest of the battles fought by his unit. The injuries caused stomach problems which plagued him for the rest of his life. When Samuel died on April 10,

1905 at Dongola, Bollinger County, MO, his stomach issues were a contributing factor in his death at 66 years of age.



Sarah Catherine Fisher was born in 1939 to William (1806 - ) and Sarah Fisher (1815 - ). She was the third of five children. George was born around 1835, Joseph around 1837, Emeline around 1843 and William around 1845. Sarah's father was born in Kentucky but her mother was born in Missouri. Sarah was born and raised in Franklin County, where she lived until she and Samuel moved to Bollinger County prior to 1880.

Samuel was discharged from the army at St. Louis, Missouri on September 11, 1865. Whether he knew Sarah Catherine Fisher before he

joined the army or they had a short engagement, Samuel and Sarah wed in Richwoods, Franklin County, Missouri on April 22, 1866. They would welcome their first son William Lee (1869 - 1953) on Christmas Day 1869.

Their second son Fred Booth (1874 - 1937) was born on April 1, 1874. My great grandfather Parker Lonzo Bator Zimmerman (1875 - 1949) was born the following year on February 17, 1875.

The first three children were born in Franklin County, Missouri. Sometime between 1875 and the first four months of 1880, Samuel and Sarah Zimmerman moved their young family to Liberty, Bollinger County, Missouri. It was here that Sarah gave birth to their fifth child Effie Henrietta (1881 - 1956) on March 15, 1881.

William L. married Sophronia Jane Pierce. They had several

children including Theodore Roosevelt "Dobey" Zimmerman, who was my Uncle Lloyd's father. Uncle Lloyd married my dad's half-sister Aunt Willa, so she took the last name of Zimmerman. She was raised by my grandfather Frank Otis Zimmerman, who was Eloise's second husband. Aunt Willa is so awesome that we had to keep her in the family.

Frederick Booth married Rosa Brown, and they had two children. I don't know if Rosa died or left. Frederick then married Cora Lou Sample. They had nine children and were still in Franklin County in the early 1910s. They moved to Oklahoma eventually.

The rest of the family moved to Bollinger County. For some reason, the rest of the family decided to move to Bollinger County in the 1890s from Franklin County. Both Frederick and

Parker moved back to Franklin County as young adults before moving back out.

I believe Anna died in childhood because I cannot find any other reference to her other than in the 1880 census, when she is listed as 2 years old.

Unfortunately, child mortality rates were much higher in the Nineteenth Century. Many couples lost at least one child to illness prior to the medical advances of the modern era.

Effie Henrietta moved to Bollinger County with the rest of the family. She married Simon Tippy around 1900.

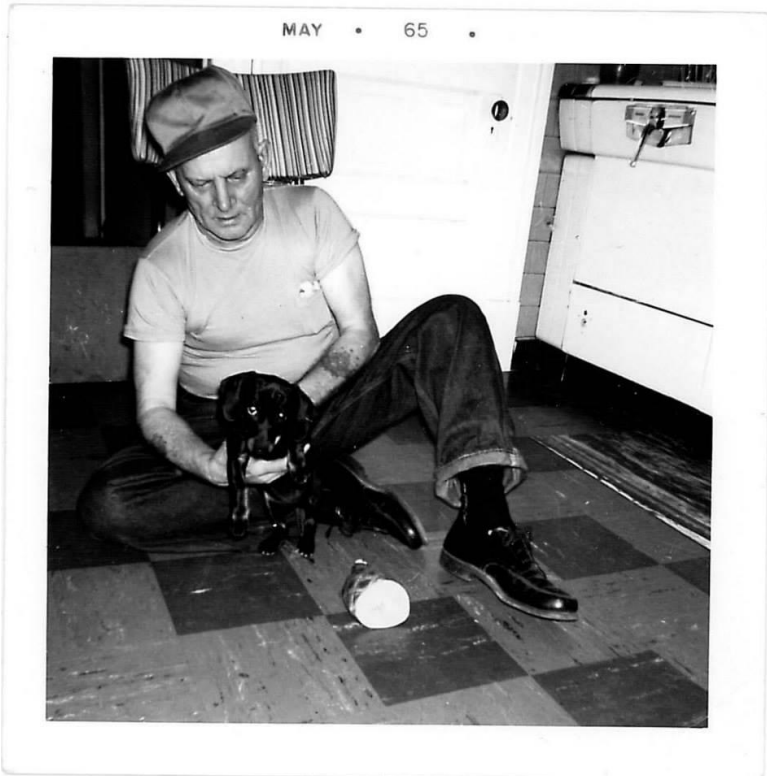
Simon and Effie had a son named Samuel, who was born on September 7, 1901. Samuel died of scarlet fever on April 13, 1917 at 15 years of age.

Simon Tippy was born in Kentucky on November 6, 1874. He passed away in Illmo, Scott County, Missouri on October 3, 1938 at 63 years of age.

Effie lived until July 22, 1956, when she passed away at 75 years of age.

Samuel and Sarah lived out the rest of their life in Bollinger County, where Samuel died in 1905. Sarah followed her beloved at Dongola, Missouri in 1908. As with her birth date, we do not know the exact date of Sarah's death.





*Figure 5- Samuel and Sarah's Grandson, Frank Otis Zimmerman, and Duchess*

## Chapter 3 – The Deweese Family

John Riley Deweese is my great-great grandfather. He was the father of Charles Deweese and grandfather of Eloise Deweese. Eloise Deweese married my grandfather Frank O. Zimmerman. They had my father in 1942. While doing newspaper research lately, I discovered that John R. Deweese was a well-known member of the Republican Party in Southeast Missouri around the turn of the last century.

John Riley Deweese was born in Indiana on June 16, 1851 to unknown parents. He married Malinda Davis. They lived in Indiana until at least 1886, when their son, John Lem Deweese was born. By 1896, they were living in Welch Township, Cape Girardeau, Missouri.

... delegates and 1 committeeman.  
Shawnee Township, in the town of  
Pocahontas, at 2 o'clock p. m., 8 dele-  
gates and 1 committeeman.  
Welch Township, at the residence  
of John R. Deweese, at 2 o'clock p.  
m., 1 delegate and one committeeman.  
White Water Township, at Miller-  
ville, at 2 o'clock p. m., 2 delegates  
and 1 committeeman.  
By order of the County Central  
Committee.  
WILLIAM REGENHART,  
Chairman.  
WILLIAM PAAR, Sect'y.  
Jackson, Mo., March 25th, 1896.

*Figure 6-Notice from the April 4, 1896 edition of the Cape Herald about a Republican Committee Meeting at John Riley Deweese's House*

John Riley, who was a farmer, performed the duties of the Republican Committeeman from Welch Township. He held the state convention caucus for Welch Township in his home. The Republican Party members presented voted on the delegates, candidates and issues to send to the state convention. Welch Township usually sent one or two delegates to the state convention.

The Cape County government also selected John Riley to be the road overseer for District 19 of the

county. The government allotted him \$450 dollars a year. According to newspaper accounts, he normally used \$100-150 a year for road repairs and maintenance.

One of the duties of the road commissioner was to collect a poll tax for the roads on election days. Poll taxes no longer exist because they are viewed as an impediment to voting. If the voter does not have money for the taxes, they will stay home. In 1918, poll taxes were still legal.

On November 5, 1918, John Riley Deweese collected the poll tax for District 19 in Welch Township. John Riley collected \$696 from residents

for the maintenance of county roads. Each voter paid \$4 poll tax.

John Riley noted in his ledger that several residents had gone to the Army during World War I. John Bovers, Carl Bick, Marion Evan, Clarence Hedge, Harry Hector, A. J. Maag, Isaac Myers, P. J. Pittman, Ray Penturf, Jacob Schultz and John Snider all left to serve their country.

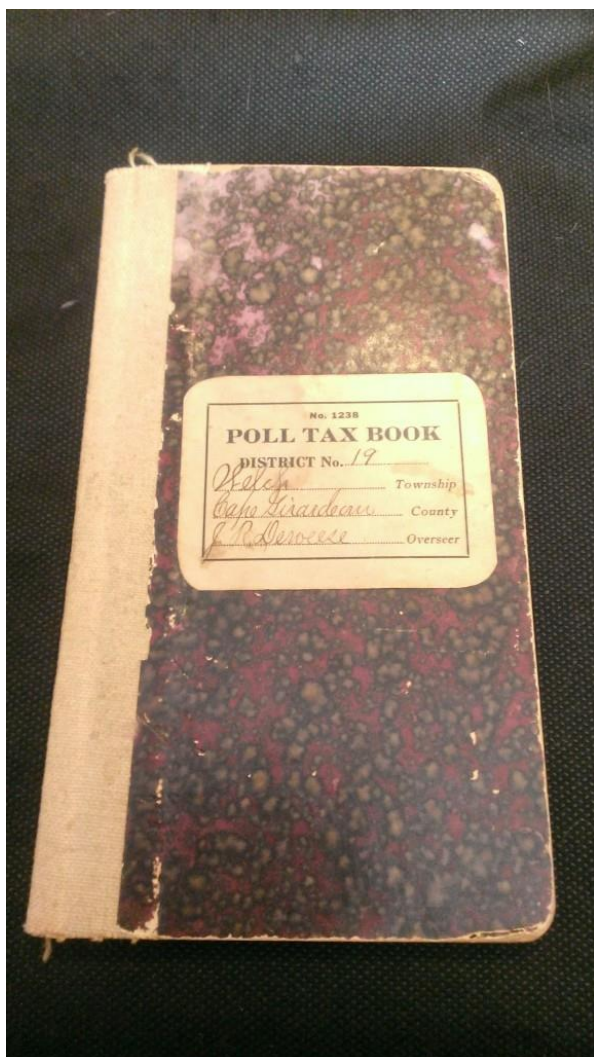


Figure 7-John Riley Deweese's Poll Tax Ledger

67-year-old John Riley Deweese would continue to serve as Road Commissioner until the early 1920s.

The *Cape County Herald* or the *Cape Girardeau Democrat* mentioned John Riley traveling to Jackson to conduct business. The Cape County government also paid him an outstanding bill of \$4.00.

The *Cape County Herald* had several blurbs about John Riley having jury duty in January twice. Having jury duty in Cape Girardeau during the winter months was not an inconsiderable hardship in the days of horse and buggy. John Riley was also in his late 40s or early 50s, when he was assigned to jury duty.

John Riley would pass away on February 23, 1928 from chronic bowel trouble. While his wife Malinda was

alive and would live until 1943, his son John Lem Deweese was the informant on the death certificate.

John Lem was the second husband of Neva Pryor Deweese. She had been married to John Lem's older brother Charles, who preceded John Riley in death. Charles passed away on November 1, 1927 in Arkansas.





*Figure 8- Great Grandma Neva Deweese nee Pryor*

Neva Pryor was born on New Year's Day, January 1, 1889 in Allenville, Cape Girardeau, Missouri. She lived until January 1972. We have a picture of her holding me as a baby. She also held my sister Sheri as an infant. She died the same year as my grandfather, 1972, which must have been a very rough year for my grandmother.

Grandma's Eloise father, Charles Deweese was born in Indiana during August 1881. He passed away in Arkansas in November 1927. Charles was the son of John Riley Deweese and Malinda Davis, who moved to Missouri sometime prior to 1910.

After Charles passed away, the Deweese family traveled to Arkansas to bring Neva and the children back to Missouri. John Lem Deweese had recently lost his wife, so Neva and the children moved in to his house.

Malinda Deweese became worried about what people would say about a widower and widow living under the same roof, so she told her son and daughter-in-law that they should marry. John Lem and Neva did marry in what seemed to be a happy union.

John Riley Deweese was a farmer. He died before his youngest grandson, Ray Odis Deweese was born.

Malinda Davis was born on December 28, 1853 and would live to be 89 years old. She passed away on January 22, 1943. The house that lived at 1110 N. Main Street in Cape Girardeau is now a vacant lot.

Charles Deweese and Neva Pryor would have seven children only three of whom would survive childhood. Linnie "Aunt Trinket" Deweese was born in 1910. She passed away in the late 1980s. Grandma used to take us to visit her at her home in

Cape Girardeau. I remember that the neighborhood kids would stop in and she would give them a little snack or something. She was an extremely sweet lady.

Inez Deweese was born on August 14, 1911. She would live only to see her 13th birthday. She died of sepsis on March 10, 1925. She was the second child that Charles and Neva had to bury.

During February 1925, Inez suffered a leg injury. It could have been a tibia fracture or a bone bruise but on February 18, 1925, Inez began to exhibit signs of blood poisoning.

Charles and Neva tried to nurse Inez back to health but a disease treated by antibiotics today began to ravage her small frame. On March 10, 1925, 13-year-old Inez passed away from the effects of blood poisoning.

Bernice "Aunt Bundt" Deweese was born on June 13, 1914. She was Grandma's closest sibling. They lived in the same retirement apartments during the late 1980s and 1990s. We saw "Aunt Bundt" almost every time we went down to see Grandma. Unfortunately, Grandma and her sisters were widowed and outlived their husbands by a couple decades.

Nettie Druceil Deweese was born on December 9, 1916. She would die at 14 months of age from pneumonia on March 9, 1918. Nettie was the first of two children that Charles and Neva would have to bury. Her twin sister Ettie passed away in 1925, while the family was in Arkansas.

My grandmother was their fifth child. She was born on February 9, 1919. Her brother Charles, Jr. was born in Arkansas in 1925. He passed

away around the same time as his father, Charles, Sr. in 1927.

After Neva married John Lem, Ray Odis Deweese was born to them on February 19, 1930, when John Lem was almost 44 and Neva over 40. At some point, Ray had a falling out with my grandma and her sisters. He moved to St. Louis and we never saw him even though we lived here also.



*Figure 9- Great Grandma Neva Deweese and Ray Odis Deweese*

When "Aunt Trinket" died, Grandma and "Aunt Bundt" called him to let him know and he said, "I don't have a sister." Tragically, they never spoke again. Even though he was much younger, he died before they did on October 19, 1995 at the age of 65.

Grandma used to like to tell a story about making sarsaparilla tea not long after the family came back from Arkansas.

Eloise Deweese was around 10 or 11 years old at the time of the story. Her grandmother Malinda Deweese nee Davis used to wear ankle length dresses and always wore an apron of the same length.

My grandmother Eloise decided that she was going to make sarsaparilla tea. She knew how to make it, so she put the water on the wood burning stove with a sarsaparilla root in the pot. It is not as easy to control the temperature on a wood burning stove. The pot became so hot that the sarsaparilla root blew the lid off.

Right as the pot blew, Malinda Deweese walked in the door. The sarsaparilla root struck her in the



forehead. Mistaking the pot pop and sarsaparilla root as gunfire, Malinda pulled her apron over her head and ran in a circle yelling, "Help, Help! I'm shot! I'm shot!" Eventually she realized that the wet material on her head was sarsaparilla.

I always got the feeling from Grandma and it was reinforced by Aunt Willa that they did not enjoy their grandmother Malinda that much, so this story must have been one of the highlights of their time together. Aunt Linnie was named after Malinda but refused to go by her name. She was known as Aunt Linnie or Aunt Trinket.

I wish that I had more stories like this one but cherish the ones that I do have. These stories make family history personal not just a bunch of birth and death dates.



*Figure 10- Great Grandma Neva, Aunt Lennie (Trinket) and Grandma Eloise Zimmerman*

## Chapter 4 – Parker Zimmerman

My great grandfather, Parker Lonzo Bator Zimmerman, was born to Samuel J. Zimmerman (Simmernan) and Sarah Catherine Fischer Zimmerman on February 17, 1875 in Washington, Franklin County, MO. Parker was the third of five children, four of whom survived to adulthood.

Parker married his first wife, Victoria Harris, on October 24, 1896. They separated after less than a year of marriage and Parker moved to Bollinger County. On September 26, 1900, a divorce "which had been prayed for" according to the Franklin County newspaper was granted. On March 31, 1902, Parker married his second wife, Mellie. I have found her last name listed as both Moore and Bollinger.

Parker and Mellie had five children. Twins Lonzo "Lonnie" Bator Zimmerman and William Reuben Zimmerman were born on August 4, 1905. Lonnie was a colorful character. He moved to Chicago and would come back to Scott County occasionally. He was famous for teaching my dad and his brothers inappropriate language. He was killed by a lady friend in Chicago during the 1950s.

William Reuben Zimmerman, who went by his middle name, was a barber and a professional wrestler, who died from tuberculosis at the age of 20 on September 18, 1925. Unfortunately, he gave it to his young wife, Cecilia, who followed him in death on April 4, 1927 at the age of 19 years old. For years, it was rumored that he died in the ring but his death certificate settled the legend.

Twins, Dollie and Ollie, were born in 1907. My grandfather, Frank Otis, would meet my grandmother, Eloise Swindell nee Deweese, at a boarding house Oliver would run in Cape Girardeau, MO.

Ida born in January 1909 died at age of nine months old in October 1909. Tragically, Mellie would only outlive her daughter Ida by two months as she died in a wash day accident on December 15, 1909. Her skirt caught fire and the dress material of those days being highly flammable. She lingered in for ten days before passing away on Christmas Day, 1909.



*Figure 11- Ida M. Zimmerman's Headstone*

1909 was probably the worst year  
of Parker Lonzo Bator Zimmerman's

life. He lost both his ten month old daughter Ida May Zimmerman and his second wife Mellie Bollinger Zimmerman. Before Parker's death in the Cape Girardeau Tornado of 1949, he would bury two more children but both of them were adults. I can only imagine how hard 1909 was for Great Grandpa.

The year actually began with great promise. On January 11, 1909, Ida May Zimmerman was born to Parker and his second wife Mellie. Parker's first marriage to Victoria Harris did not last but a few months and produced no children. Parker married Mellie on March 31, 1902. They had twins Lonzo Bator Zimmerman and William Reuben Zimmerman in 1905 and twins Ollie and Dolly in 1907. Ida joined the growing family in 1909.

Great Grandpa, who was a farmer, must have felt like he was on top of

the world. However, Parker Zimmerman would suffer the first of dual tragedies on October 14, 1909. Barely ten months old, Ida May Zimmerman passed away. I have not found a cause of death yet. For years, I had the wrong date of birth for Ida. I thought she was born in 1900 instead of 1909, which did not make much sense. However, Ida's head stone cleared up my confusion.

Tragically, Great Grandpa Parker was due a second devastating personal loss. In December 1909, Mellie Bollinger Zimmerman's skirt caught fire when she was washing clothes in a tub. Mellie died from her injuries on either December 15 or December 25, 1909. Many sources have her date of birth listed as June 27, 1879. They also list her date of death as December 15, 1909.





*Figure 12- Mellie Zimmerman nee Bollinger's Headstone*

However, her head stone, which must have been very expensive, lists the date of birth as July 27, 1879. It also lists her date of death as December 25, 1909. I am using these two dates for her date of birth and date of death. I don't think Great Grandpa would allow such a mistake on her head stone.

If Mellie actually died on December 25, 1909, her death must have been brutal for Parker. I believe the accident must have occurred on December 15, 1909. I can't see Christmas Day being a laundry day. If Mellie lingered in that kind of pain for ten days, it would have been excruciating with the medicine of the day. To imagine Parker sitting by her bedside, while she was in constant pain without the benefit of today's anesthesia, is too cruel to contemplate.

Great Grandpa laid his beloved wife to rest in Collin's Cemetery next to their daughter Ida May. Parker's parents, Samuel S. Zimmerman and Sarah Catherine Fisher Zimmerman, were also laid to rest in the same cemetery.

In time, Parker would marry his third wife, my great grandmother Dolly. They would have seven more children including my grandfather, Frank Otis Zimmerman. Before he could regain some of his happiness, he had to walk through 1909 in circumstances that would break many other men but Parker persevered.

My great-grandmother Dollie Margarete Zimmerman was born Lydia Margarete Story in Whittington, Illinois on June 23, 1885. Her father was George W. Story. Great Grandma's mother was named Malinda. I do not have much information on either of them.

Great Grandma found employment as a school teacher at Schrum School in Bollinger County, Missouri

indicating she must have received some schooling beyond elementary school. In her job as a school teacher, she met Mellie Bollinger Zimmerman. Dolly and Mellie became good friends.

After Mellie passed away in the wash day fire, Parker and his four children were trying to cope but the oldest child Lonnie was only five years old and the twins Oliver and Dolly were 2 years old. Four-year-old William Reuben, known as Reuben to the family, completed the family.

Dollie Story moved in to the home to help with her friends' children. Within a few months, Parker had fallen for Dollie and proposed. They were married in late 1910. In 1911, their oldest son Harry was born. My grandfather Frank O. would be born in 1913.

In all, they would have seven children. Norman, who moved to Indianapolis was born in 1915. Charles was born in 1917. Frances was born in 1918. Juanita was born in 1920. The baby of the family, Uncle Jimmy, was born in 1924.

Shortly after James was born, Parker suffered the second loss of one of his children. 20 year-old Reuben would pass away from tuberculosis.

William Reuben Zimmerman is a bit of a legend in the Zimmerman family. The second oldest child of Parker L. Zimmerman and Mellie Zimmerman nee Bollinger was born on August 4, 1905. William went by his middle name of Reuben. William was legendary because he died at a young age reportedly from injuries sustained in a professional wrestling match.

Aunt Effie Tippy, Parker's sister and William's Aunt, told my Aunt Willa the story when Aunt Willa was compiling the family history. Aunt Effie stated that Reuben was 23 years old. She stated that he cut hair when he wasn't wrestling. Over the last several

years, Missouri Death Certificates issued between 1910 and 1962 have been released on-line. With the release of his death certificate, the mystery of Reuben's death has been cleared up a little bit more.

Aunt Effie's memory was pretty accurate. Reuben actually died at 20 years of age on September 18, 1925. He died from tuberculosis but it could have been the result of his pro wrestling career.

During the early Twentieth Century, professional wrestling often occurred at carnivals and other traveling performances. Rings were notoriously dirty.

Ed "Strangler" Lewis began his career around during the 1910s. Lewis is often considered the greatest professional wrestler who ever lived. Lewis went blind in his forties because of a bacterial eye

infection that Lewis picked up from a dirty mat. Reuben may have contracted tuberculosis by wrestling with someone who was already infected with the disease.

Reuben was married to Celia Zimmerman nee Madden, who would also succumb to tuberculosis. It is also possible but unlikely that Reuben caught tuberculosis from Celia. Celia outlived Reuben by eighteen months, so Reuben most likely infected her. Celia Madden was born on March 3, 1908. She was 17 years old or younger when she married Reuben. Celia passed away on April 4, 1927. She was only 19 years old.

Reuben was the second child that Parker buried. He buried his infant daughter Ida in 1909. He buried two adult children, Reuben and Harry, who both passed away in their twenties.

My grandfather Frank O. Zimmerman's oldest brother was Robert Harold "Harry" Zimmerman. They had a four older half-brothers and sisters and a deceased half-sister but Harry was the first child of Parker L. Zimmerman and his third wife Dolly. Grandpa would be born May 28, 1913. Harry is a bit of a mystery as he died around the age of 25 by drowning in the Mississippi River on August 12, 1936. I don't have his date of birth yet.

At the time of his death, Harry was the supervisor or foreman on a boat or barge that traversed the Mississippi River. It was unusual for such a young man but Harry had an outstanding quality going for him. He was said to stand 6'06" in his stocking feet. Such a large man in the early Twentieth Century must have been an imposing sight.



My uncle believes that Harry was probably promoted because of his size and ability "to throw his weight around". In the days before strict workplace rules, workmen could be quite tough and difficult to manage. Fist fights to settle disputes between workers or workers and supervisors were much more common place. A tough man of Harry's size could keep things under control and exert control if he needed to. My uncle feels that could have also led to his untimely death.

While he said Harry could have fallen into the river, he believes that a disgruntled worker or workers pushed Harry into the water. Whether they did or didn't, we will never know but it is certainly possible. It is unusual that so young a man with extensive river experience for his young age would fall into the river.

Harry was the only child that Parker and Dolly would have to bury. Death would eventually come to Parker himself in one of the biggest natural disasters in Cape Girardeau, Missouri history.

The Cape Girardeau Tornado of 1949 hit the city on Saturday, May 21, 1949 at 06:54 p.m. By 7:00 p.m., Parker Zimmerman was dead at 74 years of age.

I always found my great grandfather interesting because he led such a varied life and overcame so much. He was married at 21 and divorced. He remarried at 25 and is widowed at 35. He married my great grandmother at 36. They would be married for the next 38 years until death did them part. He had 12 children and buried three of them. Parker and Mellie buried little Ida, when she was only a few months

old and two months before her mother's untimely death

Parker was primarily a farmer but he also served a four-year term as a judge, while his brother was the town marshal.

On May 21, 1949, a tornado struck Cape Girardeau, Missouri. By the time it the tornado was over, 16 people were killed and 115 people injured. One of the areas most devastated was the eastern side of the Red Star subdivision. 8 people lost their lives including my Great Grandfather Parker Zimmerman. His son, Frank O. Zimmerman, found him dead.

My grandfather Frank O. Zimmerman lived a few houses away in the same subdivision. Grandpa and his family were spared any injury. Parker's house was at the top of a hill and suffered a direct

hit. The only thing left of the home was the foundation that it was built on.

After the tornado passed, Frank O. went out to check on his parents. His mother Lydia Margaret "Dolly" Zimmerman was injured but survived. She would live another 18 months until November 1950 but would never recover from her injuries. Parker was not so lucky.



*Figure 13- Parker Holding Harry, Dolly Holding Frank O.*

Frank O. found his father lying on a box springs in a field down the hill from his home. 74-year-old Parker Zimmerman was killed by one of the deadliest natural disasters in Cape Girardeau history. Frank O. was heart-broken over finding his father in this state.



*Figure 14- Parker holding a cat in front of the Red Star House*

After Frank O. arranged for his father's funeral, he moved his family to Ancel and Fornfelt in Scott County. Ancel and Fornfelt would become Scott City, Missouri in

1960. His mother Dolly would move in with the family also.

Dollie lived with my grandparents in Illmo, Scott County, Missouri, where they moved after the tornado. She lived with them from May 1949 until November 22, 1951, when she checked into Southeast Missouri Hospital. Besides the injuries from tornado, she also suffered from heart disease.

On Thanksgiving Day, November 22, 1951, she entered the hospital. She suffered a head injury after falling either right before or the day after entering the hospital.

On November 27, 1951, Dollie Margarete Zimmerman passed away at 12:10 a.m. Dollie was 66 years old and lived two years after Parker's passing. Her death certificate listed her name as Dolly Margarete Hampton and her date of birth was listed as June 23, 1886. However, all the family records and census records show her year of birth as 1885.

Her last name was Hampton because she married a man from the Red Star Division, who lost his wife in the

tornado. The marriage was not happy and didn't last two months. Great Grandma moved in with Grandpa and Grandma.

Uncle Jimmy, James Zimmerman, signed as informant on the death certificate. My uncle James Ray Zimmerman was named after Uncle Jimmy and James Dean.

Dollie was laid to rest with Parker in Lorimer Cemetery on November 29, 1951. Great Grandma was gone but not forgotten.

My favorite picture of Parker is of Parker and his third wife and my grandmother Dolly sitting with Uncle Harry on Parker's lap and infant Frank O. on Dolly's lap. The picture from 1913 was taken in Commerce, MO, where Parker had a store. He owned a store in Advance, MO originally before moving the business to Commerce.

The picture also had a sense of sadness because Frank O. stood over all three of their graves by the time



he was 37 years old. His older brother Harry died in 1936. While this death was painful, finding his father in a field was much harder.

Parker left behind a large family and quite a legacy. He was on the wrong side of a historical incident but his life story was one of overcoming tragedy and continuing to move forward. We could all learn from his example.



*Figure 15- Great Grandpa Parker and Great Grandma Dolly Zimmerman in front of what I believe is the Red Star subdivision house destroyed in the tornado.*

## Chapter 5 – Grandma and Grandpa Zimmerman

My grandfather, Frank Otis Zimmerman, known as "Frank O." or "Otis" in the family was born to Parker L. Zimmerman and Dolly Story Zimmerman on May 28, 1913. He was their second child and Parker's seventh child.

Frank O. grew up between Cape Girardeau and Scott County. They lived in towns called Ancel and Fornfelt, which would eventually become Scott City. Grandpa raised his family in Scott City after the Tornado of 1949 killed his father and wiped out most of the neighborhood, the Red Star Subdivision, that they lived in.

Grandpa may have married a woman called Dorothy Gosnell in Benton in the mid-1930s but I have not been able

to completely verify this information. Regardless, by the time he met my grandmother in the late 1930s, he was single.

Grandma had been married at sixteen to Freeman Swindell, Aunt Willa's natural father, who abandoned the family and moved to Oklahoma. Grandma was living at Oliver Zimmerman's rooming house on Spanish Street in Cape Girardeau, when Grandpa met her. Oliver was his older brother. Grandpa would marry Grandma and raise Aunt Willa as his own daughter along with Aunt Sondra, my dad, Uncle Jimmy, Uncle John and Uncle Mark.



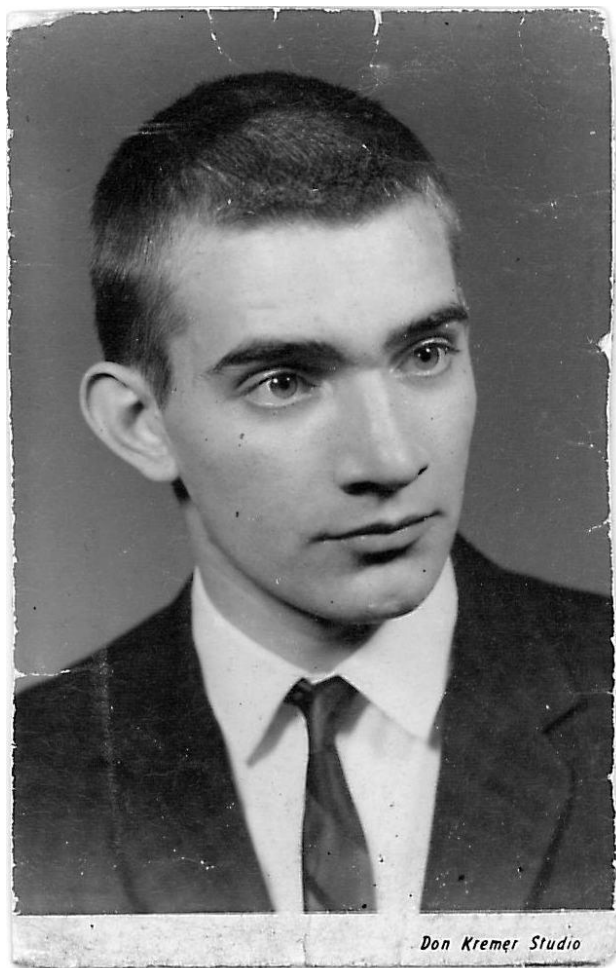
*Figure 16- A young and dashing Frank O. Zimmerman*

Grandpa worked on the river as a  
cook, when he was  
younger. Eventually, he would work

for the Corps of Engineers. Several of my uncles also went to work for the Corps of Engineers. Grandpa was a fantastic cook but he said it was hard work. One time, he had made jello for all the men on the barge and was fixing something else. He went into the cooler, stepped back and stepped in the pan of jello. He took one look down, picked up the pan and smoothed it all over. He wasn't going to remake the whole pan. He said everyone thought it was so good. They could not believe he was not eating it.

Grandpa would let boys be boys. Uncle Mark took his lawn mower apart, so he could have a motor for his go-cart. When Grandma got upset, he told her it was okay. However, when he realized Uncle Mark cut his favorite leather belt for the seat

belt on the cart, Uncle Mark had to run for his life.



*Figure 17- The late James Ray Zimmerman - "Jimmy Ray"*

In 1967, Grandpa and Grandma would have to do the hardest thing for any parent. They buried their 21 year old son, James Ray, who was killed in an automobile accident. Grandpa did not know it but he only had five years left himself.

Grandpa like my dad was a heavy smoker. He also told my mom that alcoholism ran in our family. He put a little beer in my baby bottle, when I was a little over one years old. He said it would make me hate the taste of beer. I don't drink but on the few times that I tried it when I was younger, I could not stand the taste of the stuff. He did not want me to grow up and be an alcoholic.

Mom and Dad both said that I could do no wrong, when it came to Grandpa. When we would go to visit, he would take me everywhere and teach me things. If I got into stuff, no



one was allowed to correct me because he did not want my "natural curiosity" messed with. Based on everything that I heard about him and how my dad talked about him, I think Dad would have been different if Grandpa had lived longer.

In early 1972, Grandpa went in for open heart surgery at Barnes Hospital in St. Louis. As soon as they started to do the surgery, they saw that he had stage four lung cancer and sewed him right back up. He died on November 12, 1972 at age 59. My mom and dad were in the room with him, when he took his last breath. My mom said he was like a second father to her. She and Dad had considered moving down to Scott City after they got married to be closer to him. I often wonder what might have been had cancer not taken him from us so young.



*Figure 18- Grandpa and me when he was battling cancer*

Despite the fact that William Zimmerman and his brother Parker, who was my great grandfather, were the first two Zimmermans to call what is now Scott City, MO their hometown, it has become the ancestral home land for my generation of Zimmermans. It was

"the country" that we often visited from the big city of St. Louis, MO and its suburbs.

When the Thebes Railroad Bridge was completed in 1904, Fornfelt and Illmo were founded. Fornfelt was originally Edna because it was named after Edna Fornfelt. Another Missouri town was already named Edna, so the name was changed to Fornfelt. They were mainly railroad towns. Eventually, the railroad would become less important for local businesses.



*Figure 19- Frank O. Zimmerman's Headstone*

Ancel was formed a couple years later in 1906. On March 7, 1960, Scott City was formed with the annexation of both Ancel and Fornfelt. In 1980, Illmo was also incorporated into Scott City. You can tell locals and longtime visitors by the number of people, who still refer to the area across the overpass as Illmo.

One of the interesting things I found was an article about William's and Parker's wives along with their sister Effie Tippy visiting Mathilda Arnold from the September 4, 1915 issue of the *Scott County Kicker*.

Like Grandpa Zimmerman, Grandma Zimmerman grew up in Southeast Missouri although she lived in Cape Girardeau County, Missouri.



*Figure 20- A Young Eloise Zimmerman nee Deweese*

My grandmother, Eloise V. Deweese, was born on February 9, 1919 to Charles Deweese and Neva Pryor

Deweese in Allenville, Hubble Township, Cape Girardeau, MO. She was the fifth of seven children but she was the youngest to survive to adulthood. She was eleven years older than the baby of the family, her half-brother Ray O. Deweese.

Grandpa used to tell Grandma that she had the Chaffee mud so thick between her toes that she would never get out of the country but she did not live in Chaffee until she got older. I believe that she lived in Chaffee after her first marriage to Freeman Swindell at 16 years of age. He would abandon her after she got pregnant with Aunt Willa. After she married Grandpa Zimmerman, he raised Aunt Willa as his own daughter.

Grandma met Grandpa at his brother's boarding house in Cape Girardeau, where she lived. Grandpa married her. They lived in Cape

Girardeau for a while but moved to Scott City after the Cape Tornado of 1949.

They lived in a house on West Cherry Street in Scott City. Eventually, they moved to a house on Mary Street, where they lived when I was born. Grandma later bought the house on West Cherry Street and lived there until her passing in 1998.

Grandma and Dad had a falling out after Grandpa's death, so we did not see Grandma very often for several years. In the early 1980s, they made up and we started to see Grandma more often. I often spent as much time at Grandma's as I did Dad's house. She would normally take me out to eat and to the book store. She would watch her television shows and I would read.



*Figure 21- Grandma Eloise Zimmerman nee Deweese. Probably my favorite picture of her. It captures her joy and strength.*



When I got older and started working, I would take her out to dinner. She would call everyone and let them know that I was coming down for a visit and that we were going to have dinner. We had a lot of good times together. One of our lunches turned into a harrowing adventure.

I came down for vacation in May 1995 and took her to her favorite restaurant in Chaffee. It was bright and sunny but as we were close to Chaffee, we saw a wall cloud moving towards the city. On the road between Chaffee and Scott City, there is no place to shelter. Grandma was in her 70s, so sheltering in a ditch was not a good option.

I broke the land speed record for getting into Chaffee, got her into the restaurant in a booth, while the cook and I flipped some table to make a barrier from the windows. We then

went back to the kitchen to look at the wall cloud. It lifted and went over the city. It touched down over the river in Illinois. The city got very lucky that day.

Grandma could hold a grudge, so people stepped lightly around her. I was one of the few people, who could disagree with her and she would not get mad. Other people would say the same thing and she would not talk to them for weeks. I don't know why she gave me that much leeway but she was always very good to me.

My father struggled with alcoholism. One time during a visit, when he was living in Scott City, he decided he was going to keep us for a week instead of taking us home. He had been drinking at the time. Within an hour or so, the Scott City police came by and gathered up us three kids and took us to a police car in the

driveway. I was the oldest at 12 and we were scared. The back door to the police car opened and there was Grandma. She scooped us up into the car and told the officer to take us to her home.

Grandma did not like my mother but always said she was a good mother. When Dad called Mom, she called Grandma and told her what was going on. Grandma told her to be at her house, which was a 2-hour drive from St. Louis, and she would have us. She then called the Chief of Police, who got a couple of officers together and came and got us.

Grandma moved from Mary Street to a senior living community for a number of years. She then moved to Chaffee. In the mid-1990s, she bought the house on W. Cherry Street in the Illmo section of Scott City, where she and Grandpa first lived.



*Figure 22- Grandma Eloise in 1992*

In early 1998, Grandma's sister Burnice, Aunt Bundt, got ill and was in a hospice facility. Grandma and the family would visit her often. After a visit in March 1998, Grandma came home after a visit, ate dinner with the family, watched some television and went to bed. She never woke up. Grandma passed away on March 24, 1998 at 79 years of age. She had outlived Grandpa by 25 years.

I miss Grandma. She was strong-willed, stubborn and had a temper but she was also caring, kind and had good intentions most of the time. She overcame a very difficult start in her teenage years to raise six children, have a career later in life and see so many of her great grandchildren. She left a lasting legacy.

## Chapter 6 – Grandma and Grandpa Move to St. Louis

I recently received some letters that my dad, Kenneth Zimmerman, Sr. wrote to his mother between 1964 and 1966. Dad was stationed in Germany. What I didn't know was that Grandma and Grandpa Zimmerman had moved to St. Louis from 1964 to 1967, when they moved back to Scott City.

Grandpa, Frank O. Zimmerman, worked for the Corps of Engineers. I surmise that he moved to St. Louis for a few years to be closer to his work. They lived at 3838A S. Broadway for the longest time. They lived above the store front here.

In Dad's letter, he tells Grandma that he is glad she likes the new place referring to 3838 S. Broadway. It had a fireplace, which

Grandma seemed to be pretty excited about.



*Figure 23- Dad, Debe Eifert and Mike Zimmerman in the backyard of Grandma and Grandpa's St. Louis Apartment*

I actually have a picture of Dad in the backyard of this building, which I thought was where one of my aunts lived. It is actually his parents' apartment. It must have been taken, when he was home on leave.



*Figure 24- Great Grandma Neva Deweese, my younger sister and me*

Great Grandma Neva Deweese also lived with them, while they were in St. Louis. It must have been a big shock for the family, who had only known life in Southeast Missouri. It is telling that they only spent three to four years in St. Louis.



They moved back to Scott City in 1967 to the house on Mary Street. Grandpa would die in 1972 but Grandma lived in the house on Mary Street until the late 1980s.

Dad wrote several letters to Grandma Zimmerman while she lived in St. Louis. I have transcribed the four letters for the family.



*Figure 25- Ken Zimmerman, Sr. in the U.S. Army*

This letter was written to his  
mother, Eloise Zimmerman, from New

York on June 25, 1964. It does not contain any thing to personal, so I am going to record them in the family history.

*Dear Mom & All,*

*I got your letter the other day and just now got time to write. I would have written this letter yesterday but I had KP and I was pretty tired. Ha. Well things are about the same around here, dull. Ha. I am fine and keep pretty busy. And the way it sounds you all was pretty busy last time you wrote. I would like to have some pictures of the new place to see what it looks like. By your letter, sounds like it a real nice place. I bet it is really pretty, with a fire place. And all new stuff. I would like to see it. I have been going to*

classes all this week and I guess the rest of this month and half of July.

We go to Graff, Germany the 17th of July for gunnery. We fire the tanks. It is about two hundred miles from here. So we put the tanks on flat cars and we ride in coach's there. It sounds like it will be fun and it will kill some of the dullness for a while. But all and all, I have it pretty good here. My sergeant and I get along real good, so that helps a lot. We are always taking coffee breaks and sitting around talking. He is from Kansas City, Missouri. He's been in eight years. He said I would re-up. But I told him he was nuts.

I guess I told you I am a driver of my tank. That is the best position for rank. Just about all the guys I came over with are loaders. So I am pretty lucky getting driver.

I wrote Jim (James Ray Zimmerman) a letter today and can't hardly wait to hear from him. What week in basic is he? I got a letter from Willa. Boy, I was sure glad to hear from her. I didn't think she remembered me. Ha Ha. She wrote and me all about the news she knew. She told me about taking Mike, Mark and John to the zoo. I would hate to take them guys to the zoo. I bet they could walk me to death and that is all I do. Ha.

I really do miss those little guys. Sure would like to see them. I bet they will be pretty good size, when I get home don't you. About the only thing that keeps me from hating the army is that I have a job I can do and I am needed to do it. They trained me and feed me and some one's got to do it. So I am giving them the

best I have on everything. And when I get out I can say truthfully I served my country and my part of duty.

(Portion omitted)

By the way, how is my grandma (Neva Deweese) getting along? I hope she is feeling okay. Tell her to take care. I'm glad she likes St. Louis. I didn't think she would. But she can see all her kids now. So she has her own room. I bet she likes that.

I think I will live in St. Louis, when I get out of the army. I don't think I will have any trouble getting a job now.

Have you seen Soundra's and Bob's kids? I bet they are. Getting big are they? I bet it feels funny to have only two kids at home (John and Mark Zimmerman) now don't it. I have

to get two letters from Carol already. I got a letter from Sonny. Boy, he is a good friend. He is the only guy who writes me. Paul Thorpe wants me to write him. So I think I will drop him a line later on and see how he is doing. About those bonds. You cash just as many as it takes to pay my debts and pay you back which will probably take just about all of them as many as I owe. Ha.

Well payday is this coming Tuesday. I am looking forward to that. Ha. I bet Jim Ray is too. That is the best part of being in the army. Ha.

How is Dad getting along? Tell him hi for me. And I am looking forward for some fishing trips when I get home. We can back down to the country or somewhere. Well can't think of anything else to say. Write soon. Love, Ken



*Figure 26- Ken Zimmerman, Sr. in Germany*

Dad wrote this letter shortly before his 24th birthday on April 27, 1965. He was still stationed in Germany at the time.

*Dear Mom,*

*Well here I am getting behind on my writing again. So I guess I had*



better shape up. Ha. Well how is everyone at home? Fine I hope. For myself, I am doing just fine and working for my bread. Ha. Well there is not too much happening around here. Just the usual thing, KP and guard. Ha.

I am on guard now, so this gives me a chance to write a few letters. Well, how is the weather around St. Louis? It has been raining quite a bit this month here. But that is April showers I guess. Ha. You can't tell about Germany. What the weather will be like next. Ha. But we had a pretty mild winter. I just hope this one is as mild coming up.

Well how is all the kin-folk getting along? Fine, I hope. I got a letter from Willa the other day and they seem to be doing just fine. She said Digger (Lloyd Zimmerman) was putting an engine in his peach. Ha.

Well we are getting ready to paint our hallway. Just finished getting the old paint off. So we should start in a few days. There is talk going around that we are moving in July or August. I don't know for sure quite yet. They say down by Munich or up by Frankfurt but that remains to be seen I guess. Ha.

I could care less myself. I have 19 months left and it would kill time moving. By the way, I was in a wedding last week. My platoon sergeant had four of use in the old 14th Armored Calvary uniforms. I was one. Ha. We had horses and buggies for the newlyweds. We took them for a ride around town.

The German people really liked it. They would smile and wave as we went by. Ha. They took a lot of pictures, so when I get some of them or get some made, I will send them

home. It was Lt. Shea, my platoon leader, who got married.

Well how is everyone down around home? Have you hear from anyone? I hope Anna Lee is feeling better. I guess she will be sick the rest of her life. I know she was sick a lot when I was still home and that has been over a year and a half.

Yes, I got the pictures and sure was glad to get them. You still look your young self. Ha. And the boys are sure growing alright. That John I can tell has grown. Quite a bit and Mark, too. And Kay has too. Both the girls are little dolls and Mark & John are going to be girl killers when they get older. Ha.

Well Dad still looks the same too, beer stomach and all. Ha. I got a beer stomach myself. I'm looking forward to going out with Dad and drinking a few beers, when I get home

on leave. I will come in July or August, if we don't move. If we move, I might wait until December. I should make SP 4 (Specialist 4 or Corporal) around then too and I can't make it if I am on leave so I hope to make it May or June.

Well can't think of much more to say at this time so will close for now. Write soon. Love, Ken

My father, Ken Zimmerman, Sr. wrote his mom, Eloise Zimmerman, four letters, while he was stationed in Germany with the U.S. Army from 1964 to 1965. This letter was the third of four letters. He wrote it from Bad Hersfeld, Germany

Dear Mom,

Well, I guess it is about time I write you to let you know I am still alive and kicking and being a good boy. Ha. Well, how is everyone at home doing? Fine, I hope. For

myself, I am doing fine here in old Bad Hersfeld. Ha. We are still having tanker training getting ready for Graff. And we go down to Wild Flecken on the Fourth of next month.

(We are) fixing the machine guns and the 105mm gun, so I will be pretty busy most of next month. We go to Graff the last part of next month and come back about the 15th of November. And this should be my last Graff. I will be too short here to go next year.

Well how is every one at home doing? I guess the boys are back in school now aren't they? So John is a freshman. It doesn't sound possible does it? An I guess Mark is in seventh isn't he? John will be starting his junior year, when I get out next year. Boy, don't seem possible. He will just about be through high school to me. Ha. Guess

*I have been away too long. Ha. I guess I will see lots of changes when I get home won't I? I bet even little Illmo-Scott City will have changed in two years.*

*Well, how has Grandma (Neva Deweese) been doing? Fine, I hope. I was glad to hear that she did not need the operation. I think that would have been too hard on her, don't you? Tell her I said, "Hi" and took take care of herself. And that I would like to see her.*

*Well, how is Dad (Frank Otis Zimmerman) doing? I guess he still likes to cook. Boy, could we use him over here in the mess hall. Ha. Has Dad been fishing this year or not?*

*How is Lloyd, Willa and Mike doing? I got a letter from Willa so I guess I better answer it. Jim is at Vilsback at Track School til the 15th, so I guess he is back now. I think I*

will write him a few lines to see how he is doing.

Well Mom, my leave for December has been approved, so your boy will be home the 15th of December until the 14th of January, so I am looking forward to December. Bob Lindenbusch is coming home too. He lives in St. Louis too.

One thing I need is four of my bonds before the 30th of this month because I want to get my plane ticket before I go to Wild Flecken, where we can get the same flight coming home and back, OK. There is about five of my friends are taking leave the 15th of December. We want to come home on the same flight, so please send the four bonds before the 30th of this month, OK.

Well I can't think of much more to say at this time, so will close for now. I am sending this picture of my

tank and I in the field. Ha. Well  
write soon. Your son, Ken



*Figure 27- Dad, third from the left, out with his Army buddies*

This letter is the fourth of four that my father, Ken Zimmerman, Sr. wrote to his mother, when he was stationed in Germany with the U.S. Army between 1964 and 1966. He wrote this letter a few months before he was to be discharged. You can clearly see his excitement about his impending discharge and return home from Bad Hersfeld.



Hi Mom and All,

Well, I got your letter and sure was glad to hear from you. Things around here are sorry and they are getting ready here for a big inspection. I think I will get out of it because I think it is sometime next month or later than that. I have 39 days left and I should be getting my orders any day now. Can't wait either.

We have a bunch of new sergeants and first sergeant and they are all a bunch of horses' asses. But I will just go along with the game until I leave. But I hope they don't try to shake my hand when I get ready to come home. I might just punch one of them upside the head. Ha.

Have you got your own clock yet? It should be there before you get this letter. Yes, I got Dad (Frank Otis Zimmerman) a set of beer

glasses. With different beer companies on them. I thought he might like them.

Well here I am sitting on guard. Just posted all my men. Well I get my clearance paper's Monday and I have to have all my equipment turned in by the First of November but my plane don't leave until 11:59 on the 30th of November. So I will be home either the night of the First of the morning of the Second of December. My E.T.S. isn't until the Eighteenth of December, so I will be getting out about seventeen days early. That is good I think. I have been waiting a long time for this, so guess a few more days here won't hurt me. Ha.

Sounds like you had a real good time on your trip. (Portion omitted) How is Dad making it? Guess he can't wait until this winter is over where he can garden

again. Ha. Hope Grandma is feeling pretty good. Tell her when I get home we may just go out and dance. Ha. That is if she don't mind going dancing with an ex-GI. Ha.

Guess the boys are keeping pretty busy with school aren't they? Guess that John is getting to be a Romeo. Guess Mark will in another year or so. Ha.

I went up to Frankfurt the other day messing around and walked in the snack bar and there sat Sam Snider. We talked for a long time. He sure has changed. He is a real nice guy now. Seems to be happy. Married too. He told me about Dee's baby dying from eating poison. I couldn't remember her having a baby.

Well can't think of much more to say so I will close for now. Tell all

hello for me and write when you can. Your short timer son, Ken.

Letters like these are a treasure for genealogists. If it is not recorded or saved, it is lost, which makes it so hard to reconstruct the genealogy after several generations.

JUN • 66



Figure 28- Dad, Debe Eifert and John Zimmerman

## Chapter 7 – Dad

Kenneth W. Zimmerman, Sr. was born on Monday, April 27, 1942, to Frank Otis Zimmerman and Eloise Zimmerman nee Deweese. Dad's birth was mentioned in the Southeast Missourian. He was the third of six children and the oldest son.



*Figure 29- Aunt Willa, Aunt Sounny and Dad as a baby*

Dad was very close to his younger brother James Ray, who was born on February 6, 1946. All the pictures

that I saw from Dad's childhood have him and Uncle Jimmy in them. Uncle Jimmy followed my dad into the army and was going to live with him in St. Louis, when he was tragically killed with three friends in a car accident on July 17, 1967. Dad said Uncle Jimmy would have doted on us kids.

Dad married my mom, Patricia L. Ellis, in 1968. They would have three children, me and my two sisters. Early in their marriage, Dad would have to deal with his second family tragedy, when my grandfather, Frank Otis Zimmerman, died from lung cancer on November 12, 1972 at 59 years of age. Lung cancer would take a terrible toll on our family.

Dad was promoted at work to foreman and things seemed to be going very well but dark clouds were on the horizon. When I was born, Dad would occasionally drink but Mom told him

that he could not hold us when he had been drinking. Dad quit drinking.



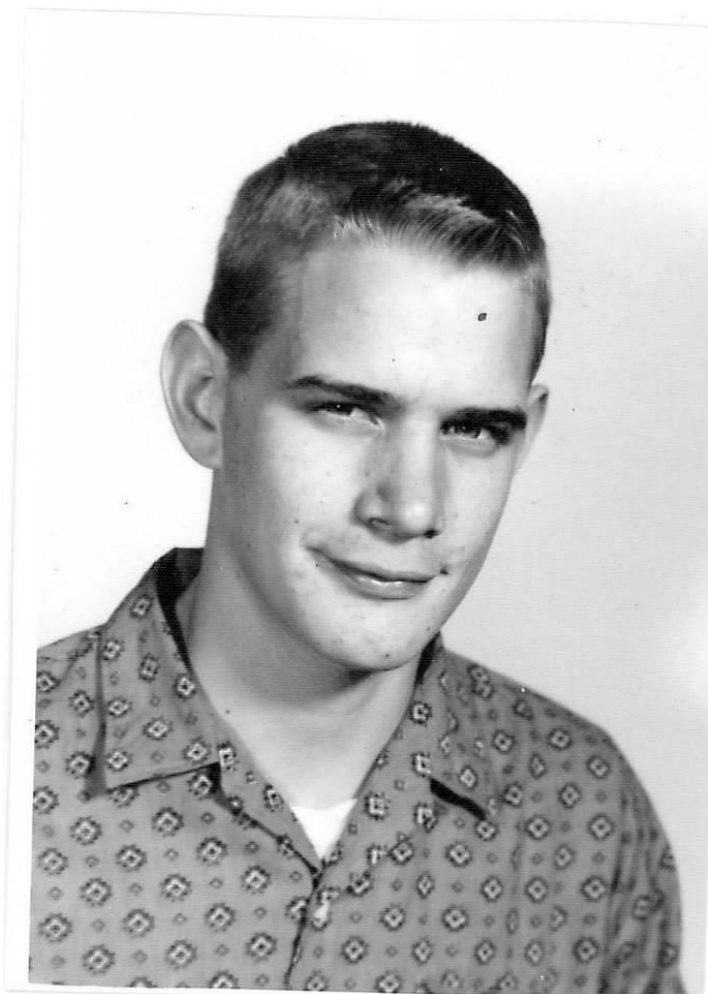
*Figure 30- Ken Zimmerman, Sr. at 3 years, 8 months*



I have always felt that the dual loss of his brother and father in that short time was a blow he could never recover from. I don't remember Dad having any close friendships after the death of Uncle Jimmy and Grandpa.

As the years went on, Dad began to drink more. He worked second shift at Valley Heat Treat in Valley Park and would stay at the bar until it closed at 01:30 a.m. He often worked Saturday, so the only time we saw him was on Sunday. Before we knew it, Dad was battling alcoholism and losing.

Before I continue the story, let me make it clear that I have no bitterness towards my dad. At the time, I did not understand but he was sick. Ken Zimmerman, Sr. sober was completely different from Ken Zimmerman, Sr. drunk. And no matter how bad his alcoholism, he could not raise his hands to his kids.



*Figure 31- Dad at 17 years of age*

Mom tried to make it work but eventually they divorced in 1980. In 1980, divorce was not all that common

particularly in the Catholic Church, so besides the emotional turmoil of the divorce, my sisters and I felt like we carried the scarlet letter for a number of years. Today, no one would give it a second thought, which I think is even sadder.

Dad remarried at the end of 1980 to my stepmother Theresa. After my dad dried out in 1989, they had a very happy marriage. Mom married my stepfather, Ernie, who provided a father figure for us. They were happily married for 27 years.

After Dad dried out in 1989, it was my turn to be bitter. I had stood by him all those years, when he was fighting alcoholism. After he dried out, I became angry about all the time we had lost and what he put everyone through. I would go see him once or twice a year but I spent as much if

not more time at Grandma Zimmerman's and Aunt Willa's houses.

When I wanted to feel real sorry for myself, I would listen to the song "Cats in the Cradle". The Holy Spirit convicted me of something for the first time during one of my pity parties. My son "Trey" and our namesake was born a few months before. I had entered a saving relationship with Christ a couple months prior to "Trey's" birth.

I was coming down Highway 30 in Jefferson County, MO and "my song" came on. I started belting out my tune and in my mind I heard, "What if 'Trey' felt about you the way you feel about your dad?" Instead of finishing my song, tears started coming down my face. It was time to bury the hatchet.

I am so grateful God corrected me that day because unknown to us, Dad

had less than two years left. Besides drinking, he started smoking again a few months after Grandpa died. He smoked four packs a day. In early June 1999, he would find out he had stage four lung cancer. He passed away on Wednesday, July 7, 1999.

Dad could have done and been so much more but we need to be grateful for what time we did have with him. None of his kids are drinkers. We are all very involved in our kids' lives. We wanted to end the generational curse of alcohol and tobacco.

One of our relatives, Marshall, witnessed to my dad in his last couple of weeks and I believe that he sincerely took Christ as his Savior. So til we meet again Dad, keep a spot warm for us in heaven. I hope you are smiling down on your kids today.

For everyone else, stay away from alcohol and tobacco. They are thieves, who will steal your life.



*Figure 32- Dad on his 50th Birthday*

## Chapter 8 – Story Family

After publishing the original book in 2013 for anyone in the family, who wanted a copy in book form. I wrote several additional posts primarily about the Story Family. I have included several of the posts here.

### **Amanda Isabelle "Mandy" Story**

Many Zimmermans always believed my great-grandfather Parker L. Zimmerman was married five times. However, Parker was married three times to Victoria Harris, Mellie Bollinger and Lydia Margaret "Dollie" Story. It was actually Parker's sister-in-law Amanda Isabelle "Mandy" Story, who was married five times.

Mandy was born in Illinois on July 16, 1877 to George Washington Story and Malinda Davis although her death certificate names her father as James Story. I believe George Washington Story is the correct name.

When Mandy was 15-years-old, she marries James Andrew Loucks in Illinois. James was either a divorced or widowed 29-year-old farmer with two daughters, Lulu and Clara. James and Amanda were married on December 31,

1892. Three months later, their oldest son Fred Raymond Loucks (1893 - 1985) was born. In 1895, a second son named John Henry Loucks (1895 - 1938) was born. John Henry was working on a train in St. Genevieve County, when he had a heart attack and died on May 11, 1938 at 42 years of age.

Tragedy struck Mandy for the first time in 1896, when James A. Loucks died at 32 years of age. In the late 19th and early 20th Century, losing a spouse could leave a family helpless as few social safety nets such as welfare and food stamps existed. Whether out of necessity or a speedy love affair, Mandy married Phillip Fritz from St. Louis. Fritz was 47-years-old, a full 28 years older than Mandy.

Mandy's second marriage was a short one as Phillip Fritz died in 1898. Phillip and Mandy had one daughter Dina, who died prior to 1910. Mandy had eleven children but only four lived to adulthood. Mandy buried 8 of her children in her lifetime.

Mandy moved back to her father's house in Stoddard County. Her mother Malinda had passed away and Mandy helped run the household. On



September 22, 1900, 23-year-old Mandy married for the third time to 41-year-old widower Andrew Jackson Delay. Andrew had eight living children at the time. He and Mandy had two more children, Roosevelt Delay (1901-1917) and Kelley Delay (1902-1904). Roosevelt died of tuberculosis, the same disease which would kill his mother thirty years later.

If Mandy and her family lived in the era of modern medicine, she probably would not have lived through so much tragedy. Unfortunately, high infant mortality and shorter life spans were often the byproduct of the hard life of a subsistence farmer at the turn of the century. Andrew Jackson Delay died at 44 years of age on February 23, 1904.

On November 20, 1905, Mandy married for the fourth time to Owen Lewis McKnight. Owen was also a widower but only seven years older than Mandy. Owen and Mandy had two children, Pearl Essie McKnight (1905 - 1978) and Owen Lewis McKnight II (1909 - 1918). The younger Owen, who the family called Lewis, died of pneumonia.

It appears Mandy's fourth marriage ended in divorce and Owen

McKnight died in Illinois during 1921. Mandy was single again, when she met George Steen in 1910.



*Figure 33-Amanda Story and her fifth husband George Steen*

George Steen was a 55-year-old laborer, who was living with Mandy's sister "Dollie" and her new husband Parker Zimmerman. George may have

worked on Parker's farm or at his general store.

Mandy was only 33 years old but she had been widowed three times and buried several of her children. However, something about George Steen attracted her and they married on November 23, 1910. George and Mandy had a daughter Madge Steen born on October 9, 1912.

Mandy would be married to George longer than any of her five husbands. They remained married until June 2, 1929, when 74-year-old George Washington Steen passed away due to chronic intestinal illness after 18 years of marriage.

51-year-old Mandy would survive her husband by 18 years, the same amount of years they were married. Fifteen days after her 70th birthday on July 31, 1947, Amanda Isabelle "Mandy" Steen nee Story died from tuberculosis at State Hospital No. 4 in Farmington, Missouri. Mandy had been at the hospital for 3 years and 5 months. Her three surviving children Fred Loucks, Pearl McKnight and Madge Steen had their mother buried in Mandy's hometown Chaffee, Missouri.

## **Gilford Dudley Story (1797 - 1870)**

Gilford Dudley Story (1797 - 1870) is my third great-grandfather. There are six generations between the two of us. I've just recently been able to find information on the Story family, one of the branches of the family my research had not turned up as much information on.

For years, I could not find my great-grandmother Dollie Zimmerman nee Story's death certificate. I recently found it, which led to more discoveries on her side of the family. Gilford was Great Grandma Dollie's grandfather, although she never met him because he died eleven years before she was born.

Gilford Dudley Story was born in South Carolina during 1797 to John Story and Elizabeth Mallard. Sometime after his birth, the Story family moved to Illinois. Gilford seems to have gone by his middle name Dudley for most of his life.

By the age of 21, Dudley married a Native American woman named Rebecca with whom he had six children. It appears Dudley and Rebecca were married prior to 1819. Most of the

other genealogies on the family agree on this point.

Dudley and his Rebecca welcomed Irena Story in 1819, Joseph Story in 1824, another son, who did not survive, in 1825, Martha Ann Story in 1827, Sarah Ann Story in 1828 and Ephraim Story on June 11, 1830. Rebecca passed away around 1835 at only 35 years of age.

On December 6, 1836, 39-year-old Gilford Dudley Story married 20-year-old Nancy Jane Womack in Pope, Illinois. Dudley and Nancy Jane would have nine children. James Story, John Story, William Riley Story, George Washington Story, Margaret Story, Green Emery Story, Lewis Story and Columbus Monroe Story were born between 1837 and 1854. George Washington Story (1843 - ) was my 2nd great-grandfather and Dollie's and Mandy Story's father.

When his youngest son was born, Dudley was 57-years-old and Nancy was 38-years-old. Due to high child mortality rates, parents in rural America during the Nineteenth Century tended to have very large families. Dudley was fortunate in that so far I've only found one of his children to have died in childhood.

Gilford Dudley Story lived a relatively long time for a farmer in the Nineteenth Century. During 1870, when he was 72 or 73 years old, Dudley passed away in Alexander, Illinois. An only child himself, Dudley left a large family as his enduring legacy. I wish I could go back in time and get some stories from him about his full life.

### **George Washington Story (1843 - 1900)**

My second great-grandfather George Washington Story was born in August 1843 to Gilford Dudley Story and his second wife Nancy Jane Story nee Womack. George was born in Shawneetown, Gallatin County, Illinois, USA. He was the fourth of Dudley's and Nancy's nine children.

George Washington Story married his first wife and my second great-grandmother Malinda Davis on November 26, 1863 in Franklin, Illinois. George was 20 and Malinda was 13 years old. They would not have their first child until 1868, when son James Story was born. Six more children would follow. William Robert was born in 1870. Mary Elizabeth Story was born in 1876. Amanda Isabelle "Mandy" Story was born in July 1877.

George B. "Jerry" Story was born in 1833. My great-grandmother Lydia Margarete "Dollie" Story was born on June 23, 1885. George and Malinda's baby Thomas Monroe Story was born in 1886.

Like so many Americans living in Nineteenth Century rural America, the Story family always had to be worried about diseases. In early 1891, Malinda would die at the young age of 41. With only one adult child and eight little ones, George Washington Story had a large family to try to raise, while maintaining a full farming schedule.

Before 1891 was over, 48-year-old George found some relief from this burden by marrying 22-year-old Margaret Sweat on August 20, 1891. George would have two more children with Margaret. Riley Story was born in 1893. Hattie May was born in 1894.

Heartache would visit George again. In 1894 possibly during Hattie's birth, Margaret also died. The task of helping with the children fell primarily to my great-grandmother, who would eventually be assisted by her widowed sister Mandy, who moved back in with their father.

On either September 19, 1900 or in 1903, George Washington Story would die himself leaving two young children for their siblings to care for. Fortunately, Riley and Hattie Mae had several older siblings to take care of them.

### **Hattie May Story (1896 - 1917)**

My great grandmother Lydia Margaret "Dollie" Story Zimmerman's youngest sister Hattie May Story was born on August 20, 1896. Hattie was Dollie's half-sister as she was the daughter of George Washington Story and his second wife Margaret Sweat. Dollie's mother was George Story's first wife Malinda Davis.

Hattie's mother Margaret either died in giving birth to Hattie or passed away not long after her birth. In 1900, Hattie's and Dollie's older sister Amanda Isabelle "Mandy" Story, a widow, was living with her father and helping to care for her younger siblings, Riley (1893 -1949) and Hattie.

Hattie was born on her parent's fifth anniversary. 22-year-old Margaret Sweat married 48-year-old widower George Washington Story in Franklin, Illinois. George's first



wife Malinda Davis passed away earlier in 1891. Dying young was often a way of life in rural America before modern medicine cured many formerly fatal diseases. Hattie would see plenty of family members pass away during her short life.

After losing her mother at such a young age, Hattie lost her father on either September 19, 1900 or September 19, 1903. Hattie and older brother Riley probably lived with one of their older half-siblings, most likely Mandy Story until they came of age.

On September 7, 1913, 17-year-old Hattie May Story married 20-year-old Leo Kincade in Scott County, Missouri. Both Mandy and Dollie lived in this area at the time. On June 29, 1914, Leo and Hattie welcomed Opal Jewel Kincade into the world in Malden, Dunklin County, Missouri.

The future looked bright for Leo and Hattie but tragedy struck on May 23, 1917. Three months shy of her 21st birthday, pulmonary tuberculosis took Hattie in the prime of her life. Tuberculosis ravaged Southeast Missouri in the 1910s and 1920s. Dollie's stepson William Rueben Zimmerman and his wife Cecilia

died from tuberculosis in 1925 and 1926 respectively.

Leo and young Opal buried Hattie May Story Kincade on May 24, 1917 in St. Gilead Cemetary. Leo would marry again to Ethel Vaughn in 1918. However, tuberculosis would strike again on August 18, 1923, when 22-year-old Ethel also died from the disease. Leo proved fortunate not have caught the disease himself.

Opal Jewel Kincade lived a nice, long life and passed away at 90 years old on October 20, 2004 in Moscow Mills, Missouri. Opal broke the tragic pattern of early deaths in the family.

## Conclusion

The work of gathering the family history never really ends. At some point, you have to declare your history materially finished. With the publication of this book, the major part of the Deweese and Zimmerman family histories is complete.

While I may find more information in the future, the project is completed for me.

However, my hope is one day that another member of the family will complete a follow-up volume on the next generations. I have striven to leave living persons out of this narrative because of identity theft concerns in today's world.

This generation has interesting stories to tell also and hopefully a future member of the family will tell those stories.



*Figure 34- Frank O. brings home some ducks for the boys*

## Bibliography

Most of the records that were used to compile this family history were found in Missouri government databases, death records and newspaper accounts in newspapers from Cape Girardeau County, Franklin County and Scott County in Missouri.

## Author's Page

**About the Author:** Ken Zimmerman Jr. is a married father of three, grandfather of two, who lives outside St. Louis, MO. Besides holding a Bachelor Degree from Washington University in St. Louis, he holds rank in several martial arts including a 4<sup>th</sup> Degree black belt in Taekwondo and a 2<sup>nd</sup> Degree brown belt in Judo.

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