

ROGUE VALLEY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

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www.rvgslibrary.org**

The Rogue Digger is a publication of the Rogue Valley Genealogical Society (a non-profit organization located in Medford, Oregon, which operates the Jackson County Genealogy Library). To submit an article, contact our editor caradavisjacobson@gmail.com and copy president@rvgslibrary.org. Cover images and design © RVGS, 2008.

Editor's Note:

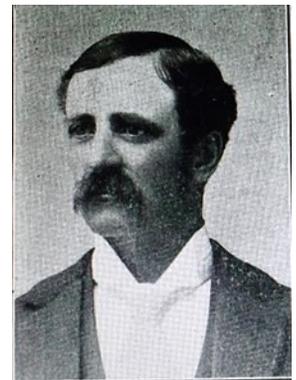
The unexpected. Sometimes the road ahead takes a bend and one bends with it, striking out in a new direction. Sometimes the answer you were seeking turns up in a place you hadn't thought it might. Sometimes things aren't as straight-forward as you thought they would be.

Our contributors in this issue all have written about something with the element of the unexpected in their research and their family stories. Perhaps, as author Alice James (sister to author Henry James) once put it, "Truly nothing is to be expected except for the unexpected."

IRA AND RED CLAY

by Sue Waldron

Ira and Mary Jones are my great-grandparents on my father's side of the family. They lived in Medford, Oregon for the last twenty years of their lives. This is my interpretation of what may have happened. I have tried to use what facts I have been able to find and put that information in a narrative format.



Ira C. Jones

Regardless of a person's position in the discussion of when a new century begins, January 1, 1901, was in the twentieth century! It was a time to evaluate your life and decide if there needed to be changes. Ira C. Jones wanted to make a change. His wife, Mary, was not quite as convinced, but she would go along.

Ira was comfortably situated at 717 16th Avenue SE in Minneapolis, Minnesota, having lived there since 1891. Located in the middle-class neighborhood of Ward 2, their nine room home was near the University of Minnesota and just one block east of the Van Cleve Park. The park was built in 1890 and included a 1.5 acre pond which became a popular skating rink in the winter.

Even after the loss of daughter Dulcie, Ira and Mary still had five healthy children: Rolland, almost 16 years old; Louise, who would be 11 in May; Ora Mae, 8 in July; Norris, 6 in November; and Ruth, who would be 3 years old in March. Ira and Mary had been married almost twenty years by 1901. Ira had been successful at Harts Store and done quite well as a salesman for Singer Sewing Machines. But now he was going to be 42 years old and wanted his own business.

In March 1900, Ira was the president of the Prohibition Party in Minneapolis. His secretary was Charles P. Berkey. He and Berkey were elected as delegates to the state Prohibition Party convention held that month at Century Hall in Minneapolis. Ira and Berkey had both grown up in Farmington, Minnesota. Though there was eight years of age difference between the two, they became friends when Berkey came to live in Minneapolis. Berkey earned his Ph.D. in Geology from the University of Minnesota. His thesis was on the geology of the St. Croix River, which just happened to include the area around Grantsburg, Wisconsin. The two friends probably talked of Berkey's field work and his location of an extensive stratified red clay deposit along the banks of the Wood River. Then Ira read Berkey's thesis. Here was a brand new adventure. Ira decided to look into becoming a brick maker.

When winter weather finally departed, Ira boarded the northbound Northern Pacific Railway's cars. After about 65 miles, Ira switched to the "Blueberry Special" at Rush City, where a branch of Northern Pacific crossed the St. Croix River and stopped in Grantsburg. In 1901, Grantsburg had a population of just over 500 people. The Wood River passes through the northern portion of the town on its tortuous 47-mile westward run. Back in 1875, a dam had been built across the river just west of town, forming Memory Lake. According to Berkey's thesis, it was at Grantsburg that over many years the Wood River had cut through the capping drift soils in the area, exposing stratified red clay deposits estimated to be 35 or more feet deep. (The clay pit would eventually be measured at 70 feet deep.)

Ira put a down payment on acreage along the river northwest of town. The property was immediately adjacent to the railroad tracks. Here he would build the Terra Cotta Brick Company. Over the next months he developed his clay pit and began construction of a plant and probably a house.

There was a lot for Ira to learn. Building bricks are a mixture of clay and sand which is mixed with water to create the correct consistency. The clay mixture is then formed in molds to the desired specification ready to be dried then burnt in the kiln. Sometimes the bricks also have added lime, ash, or organic matter, which speeds up the process of burning the brick in a kiln (at up to 2,000° Fahrenheit). By going through a chemical-transforming vitrification process in the kiln, the minerals in the mixture fuse together and become a material that looks great, lasts an incredibly long time, and needs practically no maintenance. Fired clay brick has been used as a primary building material in North America since before what is now the United States became an independent nation.



The Terra Cotta Brick Company Brick Yard

The properties and quality of bricks depend on the type of clay used. The most common form of clay used for everyday bricks is one with a sandy consistency that includes silicate or alumina, which usually contains small quantities of lime or iron oxide. Silica, when added to pure clay in the form of sand, prevents cracking, shrinking and warping. If there is a large proportion of sand used in the mixture the brick will be more textured and shapely. An excess of sand, however, renders the bricks too brittle and destroys cohesion. Twenty-five percent silica is said to be advantageous. Iron oxide in the clay enables the silica and alumina to fuse and adds considerably to the hardness and strength of the bricks. The iron content of the brick is evident in the color of the brick and can be used to add more reddish color to the bricks. However, clay which burns to a red color will provide a stronger brick than clay which burns to a white or yellow color. The lime content in a brick has two different effects: it stops the raw brick from shrinking and drying out, and it also acts as a flux during burning, which causes the silica to melt, and creates the bond which binds all the components of the brick together. (Whew, aren't you glad you asked?)

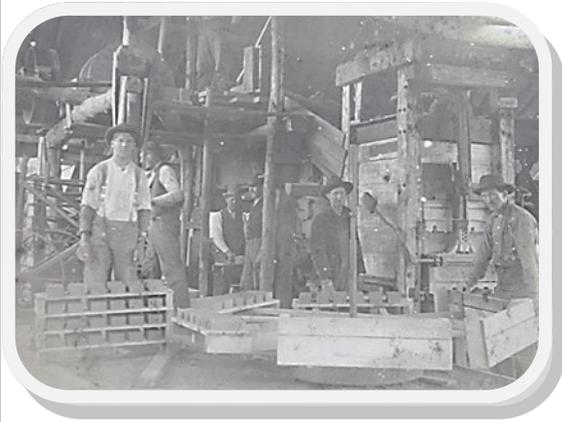
By 1902, the Terra Cotta Brick Company was in operation:

. . . they burned one kiln of brick which came out fully up to their expectations. They will turn out common brick, pressed brick, paving brick, drain tile, clay shingles, telephone conduits and a number of other products. The help required will add much to the population of the village and the development of the clay promises to do much for the county [Burnett]. [Mr. Jones] may be counted as one of the fixtures of Grantsburg. He has demonstrated that the clay of Burnett County is a valuable thing and when accessible can be profitably worked.¹

Starting in the summer of 1902, and for the next three years, Mary and the children came to Grantsburg and "camped out" as Mary said, when school closed each year. There was a house near the river for them, abundant berries to be picked, and the brick yard was close by, interesting and different.

Ira was soon working in partnership with the Sylvanus D. Morrison Building Materials Company of Minneapolis. Toward the end of December 1903, Morrison announced the planned construction of a big new warehouse at 29th and DuPont Avenue South in Minneapolis, and closed down his yard at 15th Avenue North and Washington. The new warehouse would be used to store building materials, including Ira's bricks. Back in October, Ira had filed articles of incorporation bringing in partners, Joseph H. Morton (a political party friend), and Bert E. and Jesse H. Morrison (brothers of Sylvanus), all of Minneapolis. Now Ira had some capital to make additions to the site in Grantsburg and to pay his workmen.

There was one building on site in Grantsburg with its own boiler for power. In the building the clay was mixed and molded into various products. There was a drying yard and, of course, a kiln; eventually there were four kilns. Ira was able to hire from the local area and employed fourteen men including foreman, Rudolph Peterson.



Brick Crew

In April 1904, the Terra Cotta Brick Company was absorbed by the new stock company known as the Minneapolis Brick and Tile Company. *The Minneapolis Journal* newspaper reported:

This concern has bought up the Higgins Brick company, the James R. Farnham Brick Company, both of Minneapolis, and the Terra Cotta Brick company of Grantsburg, and merged them under one general management. The Grantsburg branch will manufacture brick . . . and also ship raw clay to the Minneapolis yards to be manufactured into brick, tile and pottery.

By 1908, Ira's foreman, Rudolph Peterson was doing most of the day-to-day work at the plant. Ira spent his time in Minneapolis at the building materials warehouse. In the 1910 United States Federal Census for Minneapolis, Ira is shown as the manager of a brick yard. Shortly

thereafter, he went to work as a salesman for the Way Sagless Spring Company; Charles Way was one of the officers of the Minneapolis Brick and Tile Company.

There is little mention of any connection between Ira and clay over the next thirty years. A few stories are told of Ira taking his granddaughter Verlee to scout for clay deposits while he was living in Minot, North Dakota.

In 1937, when he was 78 years old, Ira and Mary moved to Medford, Oregon, and took up residence with their daughter Louise. Several years earlier, Ira had overseen an addition to their daughter's farmhouse at 2325 Stewart Avenue. Fairly soon after taking up their new residence, Ira went scouting for a source of clay.

A 4,000-foot thick Hornbrook formation underlay much of the west side of the Bear Creek Valley and probably provided the raw material for Ira's new pastime. You see, Ira had decided to work with clay once again. Only this time he was really going to get his hands dirty. This time he was going to make figures of clay, fire them in his own kiln on the back porch, and then paint the figures as he saw fit, probably with oil paints. And so he did for at least the next ten years.

So far, over 120 figures have been identified. Ira liked to make clay figures of dogs, all types of dogs. He made many other figures of animals and then he made figures of people. Granddaughters Marella and Barbara Mae appeared several times, usually on horseback. When Walt Disney's animated movie, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* was released in February 1938, Ira found a new source of inspiration in the drawings of the dwarfs and Snow White. Eventually he made sets in several sizes. (The one at right is over 15 inches tall.)





Above: World War II soldiers with Red Cross Dogs and clay tent

Below: Details from the group



In July 2015, I decided to attempt to locate as many of those clay sculptures as I could find. To date I know the location and have photographs of 37 of Ira's statues. Late in his life he gave statues to family and friends. The statues tend to be brittle and most that have survived have repairs, so it is probable that many are now lost.

Mary lived to be 94, dying in 1955. Ira was 98 when he passed away in 1957. They were both laid to rest in the Mausoleum of the IOOF Eastwood Cemetery in Medford.

Footnotes:

¹Thus stated, page 144, *Burnett County, Wisconsin: A Pamphlet Description of North Wisconsin in General and of Burnett County in Detail*, printed in 1902.

²The group photograph of Ira's military collection was taken around 1948. I have two of the soldiers and know the location of two others. (The tent was also made of clay.)

Ira sculpted identifiable clay busts and figurines of national politicians. During World War II he made a statue of General Dwight Eisenhower, whom he admired. He had several grandsons in the military during the war; to honor their commitment, he constructed figurines of everyday soldiers, doing everyday things. We believe that some of those figurines were molded, using illustrations and photographs appearing in popular magazines like the *Saturday Evening Post* as inspiration².

He developed a good eye for sculpturing detail. Fur and teeth are clear on his many dogs, and his soldier is smiling and has five toes on each bare foot. The name of his camp is inscribed on the barrel with a 1940s date.



Ira and Mary Jones, circa 1948



MARRIAGE WITNESSES MIGHT BE A CLUE

by Anne Billeter

GOAL

Who was Geraldine Anderson? It is known that she married George P. Kessner on 7 Nov 1949 at the U.S. Naval Air Station Chapel in Seattle, King County, Washington state.

DISCOVERIES

As Geraldine M. Kessner, on 29 Mar 1954 she married Robert M. Oswald at Phinney Ridge Lutheran Church, Seattle, King County, Washington. This marriage record was more informative, stating that Geraldine was 23 and born in Careywood, Idaho.

After researching a likely Anderson family in the 1930 census in Careywood, Bonner, Idaho, and determining that they did not have a daughter named Geraldine, I noticed that the same surname—Palmer—appeared among the witnesses of both of Geraldine's marriages: In 1949, Dolores Palmer was a witness. In both 1949 and 1954, Harold R. Palmer was a witness. Could the Palmers be Geraldine's relatives?

Harold R. Palmer married Dolores Lucero on 16 Nov 1944 in Seattle, King County, Washington. Their witnesses were Joe or Jos P. Lucero and Marguerite Anderson.

In the 1940 United States Federal Census, Joe J. Lucero, 44, is the head of household in Novelty Election Pct, King County, Washington. His household includes wife Norine, 36; daughter Dolores, 14, and daughter Geraldine, 10, born Idaho.

Geraldine Marie Lucero married Roland V. Anderson on 3 Aug 1948 at the courthouse in Seattle, King County, Washington.

Further confirmation (1): Vera N. Lucero's 6 Sep 1962 obituary (*Seattle Daily Times*, p. 35, Newspapers.com) states "Mother of Mrs. Geraldine Oswald, Mrs. Dolores McMurray..." Vera's gravestone gives her name as Vera Norene Lucero (Find-a-Grave memorial # 40113605).

Further confirmation (2): Joseph P. Lucero's 28 Nov 1964 obituary (*Seattle Daily Times*, p. 22, Newspapers.com) states "Survivors are two daughters, Mrs. Robert Oswald and Mrs. Dolores McMurray..."

Dolores' marriage to Mr. McMurray was not located, but her later marriage, as Dolores McMurray, to Gary Edward Hall on 27 Jan 1968 in Seattle, was witnessed by "Mrs. R. Oswald." Dolores' Hall's 11 Sep 2013 obituary (*Daily Herald*, Everett, Washington, GenealogyBank.com) states she was survived by her sister "Jerry Oswald."

CONCLUSION

Geraldine Marie Lucero was born in Careywood, Bonner, Idaho, about 1931, to Vera Norene and Joseph P. Lucero.
She married (1) Roland V. Anderson in 1948
She married (2) George P. Kessner in 1949
She married (3) Robert M. Oswald in 1954



THE QUAKERS AND THE ISSUE OF SLAVERY

by Barbara Grimes

My paternal great grandmother, Susan Dora Johnson, was born May 10, 1856, in Newton County, Indiana, into a Quaker family. As I researched this family, I was surprised to find my 3xgreat grandmother, Anna Way Johnson, buried in the anti-slavery portion of the Quaker Salem South Cemetery in Salem, Henry County, Iowa. Why would this distinction have been made?

The slavery issue caused a great divide in those practicing the Quaker faith. A book has been written by Jean R. Soderlund called *Quakers and Slavery: A Divided Spirit*. Having come to America to escape the sufferings of religious persecution in England and seeking religious liberty, this may have been the impetus to involve themselves so strongly in the slavery issue and to seek freedom for those who were being persecuted in slavery. Also, **a primary Quaker belief is that all human beings are equal and worthy of respect**. As early as 1790 they petitioned Congress for the abolition of slavery. With no action from Congress, "The Friends came to regard the freeing of slaves as their own peculiar mission." (Quotation from the *History of Guilford County, North Carolina*). They even went so far as to charter a ship, The Sally Ann, buying slaves and sending them to freedom in Haiti. Of course, they could not do that for all slaves, and so they developed the Underground Railroad to aid the slaves in their escape to freedom. By doing this however, they were violating the law. Not all Quakers became so radical over the slavery issue, many defending slavery benevolently practiced!

It seems the final straw was the passage of the 1850 Fugitive Slave Act. It required that all escaped slaves were, upon capture, to be returned to their owners. To refuse made one not only a lawbreaker, but also liable for imprisonment and fines. Quakers claimed to be law-abiding people and were opposed to lawless acts. Most stood by their convictions but some refused to break the law.

My people left North Carolina to settle in Ohio and Indiana and eventually in Iowa. When I visited Salem, Iowa, I met with a Quaker woman who gave me a tour of the Llewelling house, now a museum, that was a station on the Underground Railroad. I saw the hidey-hole where the slaves were hidden. Quaker records show that Anna (my 3xgreat grandmother) and 2 of her sons, Reuben (who married Jane Llewelling), and Elijah and his wife Ann (my 2xgreat grandparents) had all joined in the anti-slavery meeting. It makes me proud to know that I come from a people so dedicated to freedom and the rights of all.



Dear Ancestor

"Your tombstone stands among the rest
Neglected and alone.

The name and date are chiseled out
On polished marble stone.
It reaches out to all who care
It is too late to mourn.

You did not know that I exist
You died and I was born.
Yet each of us are cells of you
In flesh and blood and bone.
Our blood contracts and beats a pulse
Entirely not our own.

Dear Ancestor, the place you filled
One hundred years ago.
Spreads out among the ones you left
Who would have loved you so.
I wonder how you lived and loved
I wonder if you knew.
That someday I would find this spot
And come to visit you."

-Walter Butler Palmer

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Walter Butler Palmer was born on 22 June 1868 in Prairie Center, LaSalle County, Illinois, the son of Ephraim Milo Palmer and Sarah Henderson. He was the family historian, a breeder of trotting and show horses, and an accomplished poet. He wrote this poem in 1906 while he was visiting the grave of his great-grandfather, Ephraim Palmer. Walter Butler Palmer died in Ottawa, LaSalle County, Illinois, on 6 June 1932.

WHO WE ARE

The mission of the Rogue Valley Genealogical Society, Inc. is to inspire interest in genealogy, inform and educate the public, and maintain a growing sustainable library with a strong online presence.

The Rogue Valley Genealogical Society (RVGS) is located in Medford, Oregon, in the Rogue River Valley of Southern Oregon. RVGS was founded in 1966 and now owns and operates the Jackson County Genealogy Library (JCGL), which houses the largest collection of genealogical materials in Southern Oregon. Initial settlement in the valley was spurred by a gold strike in Jacksonville, thus accounting for our logo, the happy miner, who represents the activity of digging for gold in genealogy records.

The objectives of the society are as follows:

- to secure information of a genealogical nature from public and private records by way of historical research as well as indexing and abstracting
- to provide for the preservation and publication of results
- to preserve and protect the collection for future generations
- to acquire by gift, purchase or other means, genealogical materials including books, maps, films, fiche, electronic media, documents, records and artifacts of genealogical and historical interest, and to preserve and protect these for future use
- to acquire funds from membership dues, donations, and fees, and to acquire by gift, purchase or other means, personal and real property in order to support the Society's purposes
- to cooperate and/or affiliate with other nonprofit entities/organizations with like purposes

To accomplish these objectives, RVGS promotes the following activities:

- presentation of programs containing historical and/or genealogical information at general meetings and seminars
- provision of genealogy classes on a range of topics designed for beginners to experts
- publication of an electronic newsletter, the eNews, that outlines society activities and contains genealogical information
- expansion of the JCGL collection through volunteer activities such as the Jackson County Cemetery project
- maintenance of the Pioneer and Early Settler Certificate program for descendants of Jackson County Oregon pioneers

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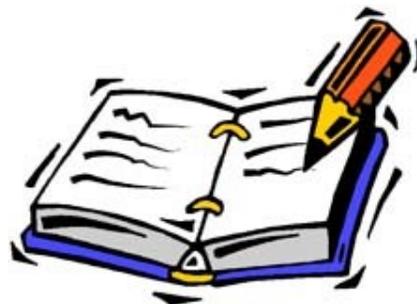
Hours: Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday: 10AM to 4PM

Tuesday: 10AM - 9PM

Please note: At the time of this issue's publication, the library is CLOSED due to COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. At this time, only members can use our library subscription websites. Both members and non-members can use the following link on our website to explore a robust set of alternative web resources. We look forward to opening our doors again in the near future.

<https://rvgslibrary.org/links.asp>

Help Keep The Rogue Digger Publishing!



Do you have an interesting story about researching your ancestors? Unexpected DNA results that changed your research goals? The story of an object (e.g., a quilt, a ring, a photo) that led you on a search or shed light on your family or local history? Have you found a technique or resource that has helped you in your research or that might help others? Have you discovered something interesting in local history or genealogy that you would be willing to write about and share with our membership?

If so, our publication, *The Rogue Digger*, needs you! *The Rogue Digger* is a genealogical periodical that reports information helpful to members and researchers by sharing the results of genealogical investigations, especially those related to the Rogue Valley or to our membership. Submissions can be a mere page long or up to 10 pages long, with or without photos or illustrations. If you have an idea but don't quite know how to pull it together, our editor can advise and help; contact her at caradavisjacobson@gmail.com.

RVGS Board

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