

The Bliley, Wagner, and Dowd Families of Erie, Pa.

I. Wagner Family Settles in Erie, 1806

II. Bliley Family Immigrates From Germany to Erie, 1834

III. Marriage of Agnes Bliley and Charles Otis Wagner, 1879

IV. Charles and Agnes Wagner, Home and Business, 1880-1891

Death of Charles Wagner, 1891

V. Agnes Wagner and Children Live With Agnes's Parents Charles and Mary Jane Bliley, 1892-1907

Charles and Agnes's Children:

Inez Charlotte Wagner, 1880-1937

George Garfield Wagner, 1881-1896

Samuel Clare Wagner, 1886-1964

VI. Marriage of Sam Wagner and Ada Dowd, 1911

Sam and Ada Wagner and John Dowd: Home and Business, from Missouri to Erie, Pennsylvania, and Rochester, New York, 1911 to 1964.

VII. The Dowd Family

John Elon Dowd, Life and Family

Dowd and Norton Family History

I. Wagner Family Settles in Erie, 1806

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 "Nelson's Biographical and Historical Reference Book of Erie County" lists Abraham Wagner and S. B. Wagner as early Erie pioneers.

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



Samuel Brown Wagner: 1816-1896

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

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

the Wagners and since both families had come from Germany may have been friends.

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

II. Bliley Family Immigrates From Germany to Erie, 1834

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

Charles and Mary Jane Mead Bliley: Marriage and Children



Charles Bliley Farm, Station Road, Wesleyville, PA c. 1907

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

III. Marriage of Agnes Bliley and Charles Otis Wagner: 1879

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



Charles (Charlie) Otis Wagner



Mary Agnes (Aggie) Bliley

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

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

IV. Charles and Agnes Wagner: Home and Business, 1880-1891

Charles and Agnes Wagner's Children: In the 12 years of their marriage, Charles and Agnes had 4 children: Inez Charlotte Wagner, Oct 18 1880-Dec. 21, 1937, George Garfield Wagner, Nov 25 1881-1896, (George died from appendicitis,) Samuel Clare Wagner, Aug 21 1886-1964, and Mary Jane Wagner born and died in 1889.

1880 – 1886: Charles Otis Wagner and Mary Agnes Bliley Wagner (referred to in the Bliley family letters as Charlie and Ag) lived at Charlie's farm (it is not known if Charlie owned or rented this land) on East Mill Creek, 1 mile south and 3 miles west of Erie. There is a family Bible inscribed: Mr. And Mrs. CO Wagner, East Mill Creek Township, Pennsylvania, 1880. Charlie was a farmer, although he had other business interests including farm management for a neighbor, and later operating a restaurant and saloon business, and hotel management.

Home Life on the Charlie Wagner Mill Creek Farm, 1880-1886. (Reference: Letters written by Agnes Bliley Wagner's sisters, especially Rose and Nellie, during the 1880's describe details about Ag, Charlie, and their children Inez, George, and Sam.)

1881: Charlie was considering going into the dairy business with his brother Cash (Cassius) Wagner. Also in 1881, the Erie City Directory lists Mrs. Charles O. Wagner as boarding with her uncle Andrew Blila at his home in Erie. At that time, Inez was a year old and Ag may have been living in Erie awaiting the birth of her second child George Garfield, born in November. In Dec. 1881, Nellie wrote that Ag and the new baby George were doing fine.

1882: In October, Nellie, still living with her parents on the Station Road farm, wrote that Ag and Charlie had left Inez and George at the farm where the two children often spent a week at a time. In December, Nellie wrote that Wilfred Bliley, Ag's brother, was working for Charlie at 16 dollars a month cutting wood, although Wilfred went home to the Bliley farm on weekends.

1883: In February, Wilfred was still chopping wood for Charlie and was also cutting ice with Charlie. (presumably on Presque Isle Bay; ice was needed for ice houses at this time since there were no modern refrigerators.)

January, 1886: the snow was so deep it took Charlie 4 hours to drive his horse and buggy to Erie

Feb 26, 1884: Charlie's father Samuel Brown Wagner was in poor health.

1884: In April, Nellie wrote that Ag's sister Rose, who lived at the Station Road farm, was staying with Ag and Charlie, until Ag could hire a girl. Charlie and Ag had a sizable farm, and Ag may have provided boarding for the workers hired to help on the farm. This would explain Ag's need of a girl to help with work. Nellie also wrote that Inez was with her, on the Bliley farm, and they were training a rebellious four-year old Inez to mind.

1885: In May, Bliley letters indicate that Charlie and Ag were living at Lakeside, near Erie, and that Charlie was managing the 235 acre Lake Side Stock and Dairy Farm for the Tracy family. The Tracys were a well-to-do Erie banking and railroad family. Ag's sister Nellie (who was a dressmaker) wrote from Lakeside that she was there sewing clothes for Inez and George, who wouldn't sit still for fittings, and that Ag was just putting the children to bed, and Charlie had to call the vet Dr. Bell for Bay Billy, a sick horse. Nellie also reported that Charles Bliley, her father, was on jury duty at Erie, and came to spend the night at Lakeside.

D. D. TRACY.

C. G. VARNER.



LAKE SIDE STOCK FARM AND DAIRY.

D. D. TRACY & CO.,
Dealers in**Thoroughbred Holstein and Jersey Stock,**

ALSO, GENERAL FARM PRODUCE.

Fresh Milk and Cream from Thoroughbred Holstein and Jersey Cows.

Crier, Pa., June 27 1886

Mr. F. A. Bliley
Edinboro Pa.

Brother Frank: you cannot think how disappointed I was to day when I learned of your defeat for a Mill-Creek School. It does not seem to me that you could be more disappointed than I was for after all the promises I had recd I was cut to the quick and you may bet your life it is a long road that has no turns. I saw two of the directors to day well I wont mention any names on paper but as soon as you come home I want to see you immediately and I will explain all to you. I will follow that heard to the bitter end for revenge is sweet to me. Frank at present I want you to send to me the address of State Superintendent Higbee, please send it by return mail. This is all till I see you
I am very respectfully

C. G. Wagner

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

1886: In January, Charlie and Ag were members of a Wesleyville Lodge, and took out life insurance, 700 and 2700 dollars respectively. Also in this month Inez and George were sick with a stomach disorder. They recovered and later Inez was described as cute, and talked all the time. Also in January, Rose wrote that Charlie had a new cutter (sleigh). Charlie liked to drive a fast horse, and Charlie, whose photographs show a very handsome man, was probably a man about town with his good looks, fast horses, fashionable cutter, and many business interests. Unfortunately, Charlie seems to have driven a horse too fast, and it sickened and died. By the end of January, Wilfred, Ag's brother, was drawing or cutting ice for Charlie, and drawing shingles (making roof shingles). By May, Inez and George were again staying at the Bliley farm on the Station Road in Wesleyville, while Charlie and Ag were building a house addition probably to their Mill Creek farm. Their second son, Samuel Clare Wagner, was born in August. and Ag's sister Rose Bliley went to Mill Creek help her sister Agnes.

At that time in 1886 Ag's brother Frank Bliley was working on his teaching degree at Edinboro University and there were discussions by letter about Charlie driving Mother (Mary Jane Bliley) to Edinboro. There were also discussions by Charles Bliley with Charlie Wagner and his brother Myron, who were connected with the local school board, about getting Frank a teaching job in local schools. A letter exists written by Charlie referring to Frank's not getting a teaching position and Charlie was angry. A May letter mentions that Charlie still had 40 acres to plow.

1886-1891:Charlie Wagner: Business in Erie, Pennsylvania., and Duluth, Minnesota

After 1886 Charlie Wagner ceased farming and moved to Erie. It is not known why Charlie abandoned farming. Farm prices may have been too low for him to make a living. Some of the Bliley letters also suggest Charlie was not an efficient farmer. Rose wrote that Charlie's three years of managing Lake Side Farm had been "wasted." Another letter expresses the Bliley's shock and disapproval of Charlie going into the restaurant business, and that he would have to work very late at night. Rose wrote that Charlie had to borrow money to go into business, but if the business prospered, the money could be paid back in a year.

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

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

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

1888: In August, Ag and Charlie were living at 122 E. 6th St. Erie. Ag's sister Nellie was there all summer and in one letter wrote that she was alone with Clare, (Samuel Clare Wagner was called Clare as a child) while Ag and Charlie had gone out. Rose and Inez were at a picnic.

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

1889: On September 30, Ag wrote to her brother Frank Bliley that Charlie was in Duluth, Minnesota and that while there he contracted typhoid fever and had received no care in the hotel he was managing. Charlie had therefore been taken to a hospital. Ag was very worried, and even worse Charlie was not getting many of the letters she wrote, although Charlie had written that he thought he was getting better.

Death of Charles Otis Wagner: 1891

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

1892: The Erie City Directory lists Wagner, Agnes, Mrs., widow, home 231 Short St. Short St. is on the bluffs overlooking Presque Isle Bay and is today a parking lot. Agnes probably lived there until her parents Charles and Mary Jane Bliley finished building their new home in Wesleyville. (The first house burned and had to be rebuilt.)

V. Agnes Wagner and Children Live with Agnes's Parents Charles and Mary Jane Bliley, 1892-1907

Charles and Mary Jane Bliley had retired from their farm on the Colt Station road, sold it to their son Wilfred Bliley, and in 1892 built their retirement home on South St. near Wesleyville, then a rural suburb west of Erie close to the Buffalo Rd, and near Four Mile Creek Agnes moved in with her parents Charles and Mary Jane Bliley and here Inez, George and Sam spent their youth.

1896: George Garfield Wagner died at age 16 from appendicitis.

George Garfield Wagner was living in the Wesleyville south St. home when he died. What is known of George Garfield Wagner is contained in a letter dated July 28, 1889, from Agnes's sister Barb Bliley Lambing who lived in Corry, Pennsylvania. At this date, Charles Otis was alive and Agnes had just had her 4th child, a daughter named Mary who did not survive. George, who was 9 at the time, was temporarily staying with his Aunt Barb in Cory.

To quote from Barb's letter: "Well Agg how are you getting along, I hope you and baby are well. Did you receive the little socks I sent her. Take good care of yourself. I thought perhaps you would like to hear about George. I will write you a few lines. He is staying with me at present. All of the Elliots have gone to Oil City; be gone until some time during the week. When George first came here to stay, he did not like it as well as with the Elliot's. He said I had no parlor or nice things to look at, but I fixed that up all right by telling him we would go down right after supper and get a watermelon although I did not let him have any last night. But I think he went down cellar and looked at it—ten times. He says all boys like watermelon. I gave him free access to the cookie crock. So he and I are getting along just splendid. When he woke up this morning, the first thing he said was "Aunt Barb I am having a better time at your house than I expected." He thinks Charles' (Barb's son) velocipede (early bicycle) is the neatest thing—rides it all the time. He has told me more about the baby sister. Says he named her Manny. George keeps me laughing all the time and I think he is a splendid boy. He went to Sunday school today with Mabel Alexander. He will have to have a new pair of shoes while here. I thought I would get material and make him two night dresses for winter."

And this is the snapshot--about that is known of him--of 9 year old George Garfield Wagner, and the role of a velocipede, a melon, and night dresses in a boy's tragically short life.

Bliley and Wagner Home On Center St. In Wesleyville

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



Inez, Mary Agnes and Samuel Wagner - 1907

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

Despite these changes, Sam Wagner, who was keenly interested in photography from a very early age, took many photos of the Bliley and Wagner family at their many get-togethers at the Wesleyville home. Photos exist of Mary Jane and Charles Bliley, Uncle Andrew Blila, and the Bliley children, and their children. There are also many photos from around Erie. Inez also took photos,

and she put together photo albums of the pictures she and Sam took. Inez labeled the photos with names, dates, and locations in beautiful script, and gave photo albums, often with identical photos, to family members. Many of these albums yet exist, giving a glimpse into their daily lives and identifying family members.

Mary Jane Bliley also kept a farm journal and day-book from about 1888 to 1907 and that also has relevant family information.

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

Sam and Inez were close as brother and sister. But Inez was 6 years older than Sam, and was starting on a career as an artist in Erie while Sam was beginning school at Erie High. (Sam's hand written records say he graduated from Erie High.)

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

INEZ CHARLOTTE WAGNER: Oct 10 1880-Dec 21 1937

1880-1889: Childhood and Early Youth:

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



Rose Bliley

Excerpts from the Bliley Letters concerning the early life of Inez Wagner at her parent's Mill Creek Farm, and the Bliley Farm on Station Road, give details on her youth:

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

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

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

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

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

March 24, 1885: Nellie wrote that mother (Mary Jane Bliley) just took Inez back to Ag's.

May 4, 1885: Nellie wrote from Lakeside, near Erie, that she was staying with Charlie and Ag sewing clothes for Inez and George, and how hard it was to pin patterns on squirming children. Nellie also

wrote that she went in the buggy with Charlie to Miles Grove, to Fairview, and to Gerard.

May 27, 1885: Rose wrote that her brother Wilfred was going to stop at Charlie's and bring Inez to the Bliley farm for a week.

April 19, 1886: Rose wrote that Inez was again staying at the farm, and that she Rose has just sent 6 year old Inez to the Wesleyville School. Rose wrote that Inez was anxious to leave for school, and left right after breakfast. At this time, Charlie and Ag were building a house addition and thus sent Inez to the Bliley farm. An addition was needed, as their second son Sam Wagner was born that August.

May, 1886. Rose wrote that Inez is at the farm, and she is currently up the road with her grandparents Charles and Mary Jane Bliley.

August, 1886: Inez's brother Samuel Clare Wagner was born.

Sept 10, 1886: Nellie wrote that Inez was in school, near Charlie's farm

Inez: School Years in Erie: 1894-1899

1894-95: Villa Maria Academy: Unlike Sam, who went to Erie High, built in 1866, Inez attended Villa Maria Academy in Erie from 1894 to 1895. One of her schoolbooks was: "Bible History, Remarkable Events of the Old and New Testament," a Catholic Publication copyright 1894. This book has her signature in ink, as follows: Inez C. Wagner, Villa Maria Acad., Erie, Penna, Dec. 15, 1894. Her handwritten notes in pencil on the second page read: Began Bible History Dec. 15, 1894. Began Little Catechism February 19, 1895. Her penciled notes on the book's end-papers list: Father Casey, also Rector of St. Peters, died Feb 9, 1894. Buried Feb 13, 1894. A Father Casey is listed as marrying Inez's parents, Charles Otis and Agnes Bliley Wagner. Inez also listed the names of Sister Maria Joseph and Sister Bernadette.

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

Inez attended Villa Maria when she was 14 and 15. Yearbooks from Villa Maria don't go back as far as 1895 leaving no reference to Inez. However, Villa Maria, described in Nelson's Biography, was a "splendid edifice." It was bounded by Eighth, Ninth, Plum and Liberty Streets. Completed in 1891, the grounds were a gift from Father Casey (who married Inez's parents Agnes and Charlie Wagner). The building is now an apartment complex. Why Inez went to Villa Maria is unknown. Inez was perhaps Catholic—or perhaps she was Protestant, and attending Villa Maria because it offered the best education available to a woman in the 1880's, although she would have paid tuition.

1896-1899: The High School (Erie High)

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

1888-89: These dates are the first Erie City Directory listings for Inez, who was aged 18 and 19 on

those dates. Inez was listed as a student for both years and attended The Erie High School.

Career in Erie, As Multi-Media Artist, 1904-1909 (Inez did oil and watercolor paintings, interior design, and renderings of architectural drawings and blueprints)

Note: Inez boarded with Rose at the 149 w 20th st. address for the 12 years she studied and worked in Erie. In 1906 her Uncle Frank Bliley boarded there also. Rose Bliley Curtis and her husband Silas may have owned this house. Rose died in 1909, about the time Inez left Erie.

After her high school years it is not known where or what Inez studied. However, her nephew, born in Erie in 1920, had childhood memories of Inez and indicated that Inez trained as an architect. Perhaps Inez apprenticed in an architect's office. Perhaps she studied at a local art school.

1904-05: The Erie City Directory lists Inez as, Water Color Artist, (this is the first listing of her as an artist), with a business address of 25 S Park.

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

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

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

1906: The Erie City Directory lists Inez as, Artist, 406 Downing Building. The Downing Building, a professional office building, was located on the southwest corner of Peach Street. and West 9th Street. The Downing Building was where Inez's Uncle Attorney Frank A. Bliley had his law office from 1892-1901. Inez and her Uncle Frank worked in the same building. The Downing Building no longer stands.

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

In 1907 a photo shows that Inez visited Waldemeer park, on Presque Isle. Waldemeer was and is an amusement park. The photo shows a beach scene.

In Aug of 1907, Inez visited Sawley Farm, near Albion Farm, Pa.

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

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

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

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

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

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

At this time in her life, photos show Inez riding a bike, driving a horse and buggy, and sprawled on the roof of a house. The roof photo caption reads, “The Escaped Convict, A Dash for Liberty.”

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

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

Inez Leaves Erie for New Castle, Pennsylvania and Akron, Ohio, 1909 to About 1917

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

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

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

1917-1937: Career at Willoughby, Ohio, (Near Cleveland)



Inez Wagner – 1932

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

From the 1920 Census for Cleveland, Ohio Jan. 3, 1920: The listing is: 10510 Euclid Ave.

Smith, Ann B., head of household, 35 years old, born New Jersey,

parents born New Jersey. Ann was an advertising manager, dry goods, and received wages. Her boarder was Inez C. Wagner, 38, designer, contract work, and O.A. (self employed.) By this time Inez was well established enough to be self-employed doing a variety of contract work. Ann Smith as an advertising manager may have helped Inez secure contracts. The neighborhood they lived in was more affluent than the Akron Ohio address. The Euclid Ave address was a good neighborhood; others in 22 houses on the street included two professors, teachers, an oil company president, an auditor, physician, and dentist.

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

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

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

Death of Inez Wagner

Inez died from cancer in 1937. Sam Wagner paid her medical bills. Inez's gravestone is in the Erie Cemetery, W 19 St., section P. She is near her father Charles Otis Wagner and her grandfather, Samuel Brown Wagner, her brother George, and her mother Agnes.

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

Samuel Clare Wagner: Aug 21 1866-Sept 20, 1964.

Youth in Wesleyville, Pennsylvania, 1892-1907

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

1896 Presidential Election and Sam Wagner

Mary Jane Bliley kept a journal with newspaper clippings including this which read: "Sam Wagner raised a juvenile Republican banner at his mother's residence Thursday and displayed a McKinley and Hobart banner. While the juvenile celebration was going on several citizens came out to

witness the proceedings. Sammy wanted a speech made appropriate to the occasion and Mrs Knapp walked to the crowd in an interesting and patriotic way. Mr. Charles Bliley, grandfather of the youthful Republican and a life-long Democrat, was a quiet spectator of the proceedings. A neighbor jocosely remarked that "he expected to see Mr. Bliley getting into the Republican band wagon this fall." Note: McKinley and Hobart were campaigning for the Presidency in 1896, which sets the date for this article. Sam was age 10 at the time. The name of the newspaper is not cited.

Wilbur Lambing, (son of Barb Bliley Lambing), Sam's Bliley cousin,) at a 1947 Erie family reunion remembered that he and Sam used to climb out on the roof and from a near-by fruit tree swipe peaches: of course forbidden fruit. And how good those pilfered juicy peaches tasted!

Sam's handwritten notes say he graduated from Erie High, built in 1866. Yearbooks for Erie High don't go back that far so there is no way to check on his career at Erie High. . Sam lived in Wesleyville until age 21, indicating he did not leave for the University at age 18. He may have had to work to get money for school. During this time both he and Inez took many photos.

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

Education at Lehigh University, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, 1907-1910.

There is an August 6 1907 photo of Sam at his dorm at Lehigh University. He was in Prep school taking a required summer class. Other photos Sam took show: December 7, dorm room, showing a calculus quiz, with a listing of Wagner and Cespedes, roommates; # 66 Church St. Bethlehem, and the Ssigma Nu House, the Engineering Fraternity. Sam was a member of Sigma Nu until his death in 1964. He joined in May, 1908.

Sam attended Lehigh until graduation in 1910. He majored in electrical engineering. His son remembers driving Sam to his 50th reunion in 1960. After graduation from Lehigh Sam enrolled at Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, New York. (An Erie obituary from the Erie Morning News, Sept 22 1964, lists Sam as a graduate of Lehigh University and Pratt Institute.) Sam's later employment for the B and O Railroad from June 1910 to January 1912, for the Union Electric January 1912 to late 1913, and his work on substations involving the installation of high voltage electric wires in Missouri, (this information is based on Sam's handwritten notes), his employment with Burke Electric in Erie in the 1920's and Master Electric in Rochester, New York indicate his put his education to good use. Sam was highly educated for the times, when under 5 percent of Americans graduated from college.

VI. Marriage of Sam Wagner to Ada Dowd, 1911 (The Dowd Family of Erie is Described in Section VII, The Dowd Family)

Previous to her marriage, Sam's future wife Ada Dowd lived with her Dowd family, consisting of her parents John and Alice Northrop Dowd, and Ada's sister Ora. They had had been living in Philadelphia for at least a year, since U.S. Census records for Philadelphia for 1910 list: Ada Dowd, milliner (hats), her sister Ora, musician, and parents John E. Dowd, electrician, and Alice Dowd, dressmaker, as living on 46 Millick Street. The Dowds were all employed and renting their house. Just prior to her marriage, Ada was employed in millinery retail at Kresge's on 925 south Market Street. Ada was employed there from December 1910 to January 13, 1911. A letter of recommendation from Kresge's with her working dates is in the family files. Ada was also a member of West Hope Presbyterian Church, 4050 Aspen St as of February 1911. The Dowd family was Presbyterian. Sam's family, the Blileys, were Catholic. Sam was probably raised Catholic, and converted when he married Ada.

Sam Wagner and Ada Dowd May Have Met In Erie

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

Sam and Ada Wagner and John Dowd: Home and Business from Webster Groves, Missouri to Erie, Pennsylvania, and Rochester, New York 1911-1964

After their 1911 marriage in New Jersey Sam and Ada Wagner moved to Webster Groves, Missouri, where their first two children were born in 1912 and 1913. The family then moved to St. Charles, Missouri, near St. Lewis, where two more children were born in 1915 and 1916. Sam worked for the Union Electric Light and Power Company as a construction supervisor, probably at the St. Charles substation. Sam took many photos at this time, many associated with his work as his photos show high power transmission lines. There is a photo of the Wagners in St. Charles at 1022 Houston Street.

About 1919, or earlier, the Wagners moved to Erie, Pennsylvania, where Sam was employed with Burke Electric. A picture of Burke Electric is located in: "Erie: A Guide to the City and County." In the early 1920's Burke Electric, a sizable facility, was located on west 12th at the corner of Cranberry. Burke Electric was listed as having offices in principal cities. The company repaired electric motors and generators.

The last of the Wagner's six children were born in Erie, in 1919 and 1920.

When the Wagners first moved to Erie, they lived from 1919-1820 at 3122 Holland and the Erie Directory lists Sam as a salesman for Burke Electric.

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

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

Wagner Life in Erie

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

Cottage on Lake Erie: The Wagner family spent summers at a cottage, or possibly different cottages. One was located 2 miles north of Northeast, and 10 minutes from the lake. One of the Wagner children remembers a stony beach, and a water pump, and how hard it was for a little boy to carry even a half bucket of water. Sam also built a tennis court with a clay base for the children. Ada also cooked on a kerosene stove, and the children remember the fragrances associated with kerosene cooking. The older children got into trouble by helping themselves to the neighbors tomatoes, and by breaking into a fishing house. Near one of the cottages, there was a pulp mill or wood cutting plant on the shore and the lake was full of wood and pulp.

Wagner Family and John Dowd in Rochester, New York

In August of 1929, the Wagner family moved to Rochester, New York. (John Dowd did not move with the Wagners until about 1931.) The Wagner family drove to Rochester in a 1927 big, boxy Oldsmobile, or possibly a Buick, which they called a Turnip. The family slept in the car. The Wagner's first Rochester address may have been on Richard Street. They then moved to Harvard Street. A serious fire in the Harvard Street home almost killed two family members. The Wagners moved out of that home to a nearby house while theirs was repaired.

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

In the late 1930's or very early 40's the Wagners moved to their home on Castlebar Road. This was a very nice home, and here Sam had his darkroom where he could develop pictures. He was still keenly interested in photography, and took film into his dark room, developed the photographs, and hung them up to dry on a line over the dining room table. The dark room was in the cellar, which had been set up with a room with a Murphy bed and other amenities; John Dowd lived there. By this time all three sons were in the military during world war II, and two of the daughters were married.



Sam and Ada Wagner - 1943

In the early 1950's all the children had married and left home, and Ada wanted a smaller house, so the Wagners moved to a smaller house on Brockley Road. Ada died there in 1955; she had been in ill health for a number of years. Sam went to live with a son who had built a home in Powder Mill Park near Pittsford. There Sam also had a darkroom. This son and his family moved so Sam moved in with one of his daughters. At this time, Sam was still very active in the Rochester community and worked at the Brighton Presbyterian Church, and had lunch every day the the Chamber of Commerce. He was also a Mason, with all 32 degrees. He was a member the Rochester Engineering Society and the Damascus Temple.

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

VII. The Dowd Family

Note: the Dowd family Immigrated From England to America in 1639, and settled in Erie in 1880. The Norton family married into the Dowd family; Elon Norton served in the American Revolution.

Ada Mary Dowd's Father: John Elon Dowd (1865-1950)

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

John Elon Dowd: Life and Family

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

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

Only one event is known about John's early life. He was a little boy, and pulled a pot of boiling liquid from the stove and in consequence lost an eye. He wore an eyepatch all his life and is recognized in family photos by his eyepatch.



John Dowd, motorman, Asylum trolley, Binghamton, NY

Sometime around 1888, John Dowd went to Binghamton, New York. The family is certain of this, because there is a photo of him as a motorman on a Binghamton Trolley on the downtown Asylum Line. A check of the Binghamton Street Directory for 1890 lists a John Dowd, electrician, living at 40 Griswold Street in downtown Binghamton. This is the only year he is listed. A check of reference material in the Binghamton Library suggested why John was working on the trolley. The publication "Trolleys of the Triple Cities" indicated that the Park and

Asylum Lines were electrified in 1890. Given John's electrical expertise, it is possible John went to

Binghamton for this technical work Binghamton trolleys were begun in 1888 and were horse-drawn.

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

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

Alice Marvin Northrop Dowd was born in German, New York, some 20 miles from Binghamton. (The Northrop name is also spelled Northrup, and Northrupt.) Alice's father was Willie Julius Northrop who married Laura Ulyssa Eggleston (1842-1905) at German, New York in 1865. Willie Northrop's parents were Oliver Northrop and Clarissa Marvin (1828-??)

John and Alice Dowd and Family

An 1892 entry in the Erie City Directory lists John E. Dowd, electrician. There is no mention of Alice or the family.

However, the 1900 U.S. Federal Census for Erie lists:

John E. Dowd, born Kansas 1868, electrician, wife Alice, born 1869 in New York, daughters Ada M. born in 1888, at school, Ora L. born March 1891 in Pennsylvania, at school, and Rhoda W., born 1894, at school. In June of 1900, the Dowds were living in Erie at 919 W. 18th Street. John Dowd's background included photography, and electric motors. This background matched Sam Wagner's interests. The two men may have met and known each other. At this time, Ada was 11, Ora was 9, and Rhoda was 5. Photos of Ada and Ora as babies are in the family collection; the photos were taken by an Erie photographic firm.



Alice, Ada, John and Ora Dowd - 1908

The next census record for the Dowd family comes from the 1910 Philadelphia Census:

As of April 19 the Dowds, living at 46 Millick Street, included: John E. Dowd, 42, electrical engineer, working as electrical contractor, his wife Alice, 42, working as a dressmaker and self-employed, daughter Ada, aged 20, working in millinery at Kresge's, and daughter Ora, 19, employed as musician-theater.

Children of John and Alice Dowd:

Ada Dowd Wagner: (1889-1955) She may have been named in honor of John's sister Ada Dowd. Ada grew up in Erie. By about 1907, when Sam Wagner was at Lehigh, the Dowd family had moved to Cementon, Pennsylvania which is near Lehigh. There are family photos showing Jonn Dowd with a motorbike, and a picture of his house, a large edifice on a hill. 1907 photos of Sam and Ada frolicking at fraternity parties and rowing on the Lehigh River show Ada as an attractive and fun-loving girl. Later photos show her when she was a milliner, modeling fashionable hats probably in Philadelphia where the Dowd family lived in 1910. After her marriage and her time in Missouri to her return to Erie, Ada was busy raising a large family. After she moved to Rochester, and her children were grown, her daughter said Ada liked to entertain and she had an elegant home to do that. Through the 1940's until her death in 1955, Ada was in increasingly poor health.

Ora Dowd Henderson: (1891-??) Ora was a professional musician, and listed as such in the US 1910 Philadelphia Census. Ora married Harry Henderson and they moved to Huntington, New York, where she spent her life. About 1925, Ora and Harry were living at 58 W 83rd Street. Harry was about 47, born about 1883, and was an automobile salesman. Ora kept in touch with the family and in a 1969 letter written from 174 Vineyard Road in Huntington, New York, encouraged her niece to pursue her career in music.

Rhoda Dowd: (1894-about 1906) Rhoda was perhaps named for her great grandmother, Rhoda Norton Dowd who lived until 1904. There is no mention of young Rhoda Dowd in the 1910 census. Sometime between the 1900 and 1910 census, she died. A later letter from Sam Wagner to a Cleveland destination inquired about locating a death certificate for about 1906 for Rhoda, but it wasn't found. It would appear that Rhoda died in the Cleveland vicinity.

John Elon Dowd: 1910-1950

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

The next census record for John Dowd comes from Nazareth, Pennsylvania. There is no mention of his wife Alice, so she must have died during this time. The family has no further records of her.

Nazareth is in the Allentown area. In the US Census for 1920, John Dowd is listed as 51 years, and boarding at a hotel and employed as electrical engineer at a cement mill. John's daughter Ada and her husband Sam and their family moved back to Erie about 1919, and John Dowd moved in with them about 1920. John lived with the Wagners throughout the years the Wagners lived in Erie. The Wagners moved to Rochester, New York in 1929, and John stayed in Erie for about a year, working as an electrician for the Watson Company, a paper manufacturer. John's grandson reported a family source that during the 1929 stock market crash, John lost everything he had. About 1930, John moved to Rochester and lived with the Wagner family first on Harvard Street then later at Castlebar Road. He was well-known to his great grandchildren, who affectionately called him Grampse. He was a quiet and gentle man. He worked at the Presbyterian Church on Thurston Road. He died in 1950 and is buried in the cemetery behind the Brighton Church, at the highest spot in the cemetery.

Dowd and Norton Family History

John Dowd's Parents: William Edwin Dowd and Julia Wheeler Dowd and Family

John Dowd's father was William E. Dowd (1843-1896) and he married Julia Tanner (or Wheeler) (may not be her last name; records are confused) about 1865. William Dowd's father was Benjamin Dowd, carpenter, living in Chester, New York and he married Rhoda Norton, (about 1812 -1904.) Elon Norton's parents were Eli Norton (1785-1848) who married Thirzah Jane Jones (1787-1823) in 1805. Eli Norton's parents were Martha Page, born 1758, and Elon Norton, 1758-1850. There is a picture of his gravestone and the back of the picture indicates that Elon Norton was born in Connecticut and served in the Revolutionary War from 1777 to June 1782. He was in the Battle of Lake Champlain, with Arnold.

William and Julia Dowd: Civil War Connections

William and Julia are buried in the Erie Cemetery. Records there indicate that William died of poison and Julia of gangrene of the foot (diabetes?). On their gravestones are carved elaborate symbols for the Union Veteran Legion. This was an elite group of veterans who had served during the entire Civil War. William served honorably in the Civil War and Julia was in the Ladies Auxiliary.

William Dowd's Brothers

William Dowd's brothers included Dr. John Chester Dowd, 1852-1931, a dentist, and Dr. Franklin Dowd, 1847-1923, a dentist. There was a sister, Thirzah Dowd, 1834-1915. They were children of Benjamin and Rhoda Norton Dowd.

The 1880 US Federal Census for Erie, Pa., has the following listing for the William and Julia Dowd family: (No Dowds are listed in the Erie City Directory prior to 1880)

Dowd, William, head of household, age 37, carpenter, born NY, parents born VT and NY -- Julia, wife, age 35, born about 1845-46 in Pa. --Edwin, son, age 14, born 1865-66, at school, born NY --John, son, age 11, (born 1868 or 9), at school, born Kansas --Ada, daughter, age 7, born 1873-74, Pa, All lived at 532 Peach St.

William Dowd Family in Erie, Late 1800's: These listings from the Atkinson Erie City Directories indicate that one or more generations were often living in the same household.

1881: Mrs. Rhoda Dowd (born 1812 or 1815)- 1904,) widow, (she married Benjamin Dowd) boarding 1806 Peach St. Her son William Dowd had his home at 1806 Peach. This is the first and only AECD listing for Rhoda Dowd. It is probably the Norton-Dowd ancestor Rhoda Norton Dowd who lived for almost a century.

1882: and 1883: Edwin B. Dowd, machinist, boards sw corner 10th and Plum, and William E. Dowd, laborer, home sw corner 10th and Plum.

1884: Edwin B. Dowd, machinist, (William's son) and William E. Dowd, stereoptician exhibitor, both living at sw corner 10th and Plum. Edwin is boarding. No John Dowd listed.

1887: John E. Dowd, photographer, and Edwin B. Dowd, dental student, (brothers) both boarding at 207 w 4th St. at the home of their father William E. Dowd, also 207 w 4th St. No Julia Dowd is listed. John is about 20 years old. Note he is listed as a photographer. This is probably my great grandfather John Dowd.

1888: William E. Dowd, (served in the Civil War), mail carrier, home rear 17 w 7th st, (William's son Edwin and William's wife Julia are not listed), and John Dowd, painter, boards rear 17 w 7th. This is

father and son. (At this time, Charlie Wagner operated his restaurant on State Street.)

1891: William E. Dowd, mail carrier, home 8 w 5th, and Ada T. Dowd, (his daughter), boards 8 w 5th.

John E. Dowd, photographer, home, 1808 Peach, 2nd floor.

Edwin B. Dowd, (John's brother) carpenter, home 525 w 18th, second floor.

1892: Ada T. Dowd, dressmaker, boards 158 w Third, (William's daughter,) and William E. Dowd, also at 158 w third.

1892: John Dowd, electrician, boards 1140 w 12th. This is the first listing of John as an electrician. He remains such through the 1920's.

Benjamin Dowd Family 1600's to 1800's

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

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

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

Sources: Photograph albums by Sam and Inez Wagner, letters and documents in the Wagner-Bliley-Dowd family collection; material from Charles A. Bliley; communications from the family, Adkinson's Erie City Directories and other references from the Erie Library and Erie Historical Society; Binghamton, New York City Directories and reference material in the Binghamton City Library, and U.S. Census Records.

Posted March, 2013, by Norma and Wallace Venable, Dowd Bliley-Wagner Family. Corrections and additions welcomed.