The Steiner-Burgess Family History

All information provided by (our cousin) Jon F. Steiner

Our Burgess History - I

Our Steiner heritage has its roots with the Burgess family from Canada. If Harry Steiner (1890) had not been adopted into the Steiner family at Cataract Falls, IN, our surname today would be Burgess.

Many of our family members have the Burgess name as part of their formal name to honor our past. But it has always been a guessing game as to what the nationality Burgess represents. It is now known that Burgess is found to be an old English and Scottish name.

In England and Scotland, Burgess originally meant a freeman of a borough or burgh. It later came to mean an elected official of a municipality or the representative of a borough in the English House of Commons. This term was also used in the American Colonies; e.g. The House of Burgesses of Virginia in 1602.

Although our Burgess name is of English or Scottish descent, it is not perfectly clear whether our early ancestors were from England or Scotland and later immigrated to Ireland. After reading the following information, I will let you draw your own conclusion.

Perhaps the one person who indirectly influenced our family history in a significant way was King Henry VIII of England. Let me explain.

King Henry (1491–1547) was a very strong, devout supporter of the Catholic religion. It was the nation's religion, and he being king was its representative. King Henry was a Roman Catholic and the head of this church was the pope based in Rome. The Roman Catholic faith believed in marriage for life. If you divorced, then you would go to hell. This put Henry in a very difficult position. Although he was a devout Catholic, he wanted to divorce his wife because she could not bear him a son.

So, he asked the pope for an annulment. In this way he would not be divorced and thus not go to hell. For six years the pope put off his decision. Finally, the pope refused to grant Henry an annulment. This did not sit well with Henry.

His disagreement with the pope on the question of such an annulment led Henry to initiate the Protestant English Reformation, separating the Church of England from papal authority. He appointed himself the Supreme Head of the Church of England and dissolved convents and monasteries, for which he was excommunicated.

At this time, 1534, Ireland's population was nearly 100% Catholic. It was unofficially considered as a province of the Catholic church in Rome. When Henry started the Protestant Church of England there were very few Protestant believers in Ireland. In the past, Henry would not allow Protestant churches to be established. This all changed when he started his own church. He

encouraged Protestant churches to prosper in Ireland. He wanted to get rid of the Catholic religion in the British Empire. Later to diminish the influence of the Catholic Church, Catholic farmers were removed from their ancestral lands, replacing them with Protestants from Great Britain. There is a probability that the Burgesses came to Ireland at this time.

Also, at this same time, Scotland abandoned the Catholic religion and adopted the Protestant Presbyterian religion as its national religion for the country. So, there is a strong case to be made that the Burgess family has Scottish roots.

For centuries there has been hatred between the Protestants and Catholics of Ireland. It has only been about fifty years that these two factions have been able to live peacefully in Ireland.

All this historical background brings us to this important point that will have a definite impact on our Burgess family.

In the 1881 Canadian census Henry and Mary Burgess had been married for three years. At this time, the Canadian census lists Henry Burgess (1856) as being of Irish descent and Presbyterian. It lists Mary Scanlon (1860) as being of Irish descent and Roman Catholic. These differences in religions will have a profound impact in their future.

Our Burgess History – II

More than likely, the Burgesses and Scanlons came to Canada and the United States during the Irish Potato Famine of the 1840's.

When, what is known today as the Great Hunger, the main source of food in the winter was the potato for the peasant Irish family. For seven years, the famine took hold. It killed over 1,000,000 Irish and sent over 1,000,000 to Canada and the United States. The famine didn't discriminate between poor Protestants and poor Catholics.

The Burgess family settled in Brantford, Quebec, Canada. Quebec had the largest settlement of Irish in all of Canada. At this time, there were more opportunities for Irish Protestants than Irish Catholics in Canada because Canada was a province of England. Canada was under English rule and thus the official religion was Protestant. Only Protestants could hold government positions and had the greatest influence in the every-day life of its citizens.

With this in mind, it is no wonder that large groups of Catholic Irish settled in the United States. The major cities where they lived were Philadelphia, New York City, Boston, and Buffalo. Here, they could form their own communities and prosper. Here in Buffalo we find our first evidence of the Scanlon family.

From the New York State Census of 1875, the Scanlons on June 1, 1875 were living in Buffalo, New York at Buffalo Ward 08, Erie, New York. It states that Mary Scanlon was born about 1859

and at the time she was 16 years old. Her father James Scanlon age 40 and mother Harriett Scanlon age 40 had five children: Mary 16, Henry J 15, James 14, Thomas 12, and William 11.

Now, the bigger question is how in the world could a Protestant young man from Quebec meet a Catholic girl from Buffalo, New York and end up marrying on December 21, 1878?

Our Burgess History – III

In 1875 Mary Scanlon (1860) lived in Buffalo, NY and Henry Burgess (1856) lived in Ontario, Canada. At that time, the international border was very fluid. Travel between the two countries did not require passports. There was no checking of people and no identification needed. Citizens from Canada came effortlessly to the United States and vice – versa. This was not a time of "Big Brother" keeping tabs on every move and reason you wanted to cross the border. Today to cross the border into Canada a family in a car has to present passports for each member, tell the border guards where they are going in Canada, how long they will be there, what is the reason they are coming to Canada, and ask questions about what they are bringing into Canada. In the day, citizens from Canada and the United States moved in and out of the countries like there was no border separating the two countries.

Some time after 1875, the Scanlons moved back to the province of Ontario, Canada where Mary Scanlon was born. With Ontario and New York bordering each other, it was quite common to find family members on both sides of the divide visiting each other and often moving to be close to their relatives.

It was after this move that Henry Burgess and Mary Scanlon met. What brought them together and how this happened will never be known. The unlikely situation where an Irish Protestant and an Irish Catholic would cross paths on a social basis would be very rare in Ireland. But in the new world of North America where the Irish were hated in the United States and Canada, the Irish had to put aside such intense dislike of each other because of differing religions and bond together for survival. Although the Irish worked together and lived together in the ghettos, the two faiths would not perform inter-religious ceremonies. So how did an Irish Protestant boy end up marrying an Irish Catholic girl?

Our Burgess History – IV

The wedding of Henry Burgess (1856) and Mary Scanlon (1860) took place in Haldimand, Ontario, Canada at the Church of England and was married by the Protestant minister Henry L. Millish. Both the groom's and bride's parents were in attendance. The date of the wedding was December 21, 1878.

Now, based upon several facts, I am going to present my idea of how and why this marriage took place.

In the book Irish Customs, it states that most marriages were frequently arranged often by consenting parents. The average age for an Irish man to marry in the 1800's was 22 and for a woman it was 20 or younger. According to the book, it wasn't unusual for girls to be as young as 14 years old to be wed.

It states in the historical record of 1878 that Henry was a bachelor at 22 years of age and worked in manufacturing when married. An Irish man of 22 years and not married with a family was an indication that he was advancing beyond his prime to be a candidate as a husband. But the most outstanding description is that of Mary. It says that she was 18 years old and was a Spinster! Yes, she was officially considered a spinster at the ripe old age of 18!

(Spinster is a term referring to an unmarried woman who is older than what is perceived as the prime age range during which women usually marry. ... A synonymous but more. Pejorative term is old maid.)

It is my contention that the parents arranged this wedding since this was common practice in the old country. These were two very poor families with all their children living at home. Henry was the oldest and Mary was the oldest. It was time for them to leave and to start their own family. Since both sets of parents attended the wedding, they must have approved of the situation. The only way two people could have been married in the Church of England at this time would have been both were professed Protestants. It is my belief that Mary became a Protestant with the blessing of her parents so that she could be married.

Although she was married as a Protestant, her Catholic upbringing never left her. This was the beginning of the demise of the future Burgess family.

Our Burgess History – V

After Henry and Mary married in 1878, there is no official recorded history available concerning their lives and the lives of their family before the children were put up for adoption. It is known from family recollections that their last known whereabouts as a family was in 1894 in Buffalo, New York. At this time, they were parents of five children: Tom (?), Agnes (1885), Hazel (1887), John (1889), and Harry (1890). The family was living with Henry's parents.

From family member accounts, it is pretty conclusive that there was a great divide on how the children should have been raised religiously. Mary was of a Catholic background, and he was of a Protestant background. She wanted the children baptized in the Catholic church; he did not. I am sure this difference of preference went on for several years. In the end, while Mary was at work, Henry took the children from the house, boarded a train, and headed for Chicago.

Now, Chicago was not just a random city that he had picked. It was a city that he was very well familiar with. He had been to Chicago many times visiting relatives and knew Chicago well.

It is not known what orphanage he took the children to. In the 1800's there were many orphanages in every city. It was not uncommon for a family to put their children in an orphanage because they could not provide for them and wanted their children to be safe and taken care of.

Orphanages didn't ask questions about the history of the family. If a father would bring four young children to an orphanage and claim that their mother died, which was very common, and he could not provide for them, then the orphanages would take the children in without further questions.

Here is what we know of the children:

Tom: Henry kept the oldest son, Tom, with him. He was the oldest and perhaps too old to be assigned to an orphanage since there was a great need to house younger children. Later Tom worked at a restaurant in Kansas City, MO. He eventually traveled to CA where he died.

Agnes: She was married to a man named Strang. She had one child: Etta Jean. Her husband died when Etta Jean was two. Agnes settled in the Kansas City, MO area where her brothers Tom and John lived. She remarried a man named Stovel.

Hazel: She married a man by the name of Joe Hackett from Waukegan, IL. He was a bricklayer.

John: He was put on an orphan train. There were so many orphans that often hundreds of them would be put on a train to head out west. These trains would stop in small towns, farmers would come to the train station and pick out one or two children so that they could work on the farm. Many of these children were abused and used free labor on the farm. John was one of those children. He was raised by a couple who farmed in Gissel, KS. He had loving parents. He was not adopted and kept Burgess last name. He did not marry and lived in Kansas City, Kansas.

Harry: Our grandfather, Harry, the youngest, was four years of age when he was put the orphanage. Can you imagine what a traumatic moment this was for him? He was left alone among strangers not knowing why and not knowing what his next day would be like. This experience stayed with him his entire life and left a deep scar. He never again saw his father.

Although he was too young to resist his situation, within a year, 1895, the Steiner family took home Harry and a six-month baby girl. He had to forget the Burgess family because it was no more, and learn to adapt to his new loving parents from a small village in Southern Indiana.

John H. Steiner and Agnes Steiner were married in 1877 but had no children. He was a wealthy horse breeder with a 1,000-acre farm who was also the secretary of the National Horse Trotting Association. His office was in Chicago, IL.

Burgess History – VI

When I first became interested in the Burgess family, I made a family contact with Etta Jean Stovell. She was the niece of our grandfather, Harry Burgess. Her mother, Agnes, corresponded with Edith Steiner, our grandmother. We both shared information with each other back in the 90's when it was difficult to do research because of the lack of access to records and the internet. At that time it was practically impossible to do any research on your family although we tried. She was familiar with all the Burgess family members and had eye-witness accounts of their lives. So, I am going to pass along a letter that she sent to me describing some events.

“Uncle Tom Burgess I think he stayed with his father – never put up for adoption. He was the one who located all the brothers and sisters. Tom (oldest), Agnes (my mother), Hazil (I don't know her age), John, and Harry (youngest). Hazil never kept in touch, she was married to Joe Hackett, a bricklayer. Maybe at Waukegan, IL. Uncle Tom had worked at a circus (Ringling Bros.), was also a cartoonist at St. Louis newspaper. When I knew him he owned a restaurant on 12th St. Kansas City, MO. What brought him, my mother and Uncle John to Kansas City, MO. was their father's brother Tom Burgess 2741 Mersington Ave Kansas City, MO – his son E.B. Burgess (I knew him) was an electrician at a theatre in K.C. Late 20's early 30's. Mothers brother Tom left for California in early 30's and wanted mother and me to go with him but my aunt (my father's sister) didn't think it was a good idea. This half-brother Henry Burgess Jr. came to visit mother and Uncle John in the mid 30's. He was from Chicago and was an electrician (** I want to insert here that Henry Burgess married in 1905 and had one son Henry Burgess Jr. More details will come later) I heard them say he had a drinking problem. When Jack Dempsey had his fight in Chicago (about 1927) Uncle Tom drove mother, myself, Uncle John and Uncle Tom;s girlfriend to the fight in Chicago, and we visited relatives there. Then went to visit your grandparents in Indiana. My grandmother (Mary Scanlon Burgess) lived with Uncle Harry and Aunt Edith for a good many years. Uncle John didn't like his mother -Mother did. Uncle Tom and Uncle John, my mother had close ties with their dad.”

In the last chapter of Burgess history, we will learn what happened to Henry Burgess and Mary Scanlon Burgess.

Steiner History - VI

It is important that Mrs. Mary Steiner Shoemaker **(1817 – 1878)** and Mr. Robert Shoemaker be presented at this time. Mary Steiner Shoemaker was our great-grandfather's, John H. Steiner, aunt. She was the daughter of Captain Henry Steiner and sister to J.J. Steiner who was John H. Steiner's father. Through this family connection, John H. Steiner became one of the wealthiest railroad men in the Midwest.

In Tiffin, Ohio, in December, 1839, Mr. Shoemaker was united in marriage to Miss Mary Colegate Steiner, a daughter of Captain Henry Steiner and Rachel (Steiner) Colegate, formally of Frederic, Maryland.

Shoemaker was born in 1815 at German Flats, New York. He was closely identified with railroad construction his entire life. He started his career surveying the Erie Canal.

In 1836 he engaged in making the surveys and preliminary estimates for a railroad across Canada and successfully completed that task. Between 1837 and 1864 he was the chief engineer of several railroads throughout Ohio.

Between 1865 and 1868, he was the general contractor of the firm of R.M.Shoemaker and Miller Company and built 500 miles of the Kansas Pacific Railway. For the next 15 years Mr. Shoemaker was instrumental in constructing and managing railroads throughout Ohio.

In the book Cincinnati – The Queen City it praises R.M.Shoemaker in this way: "While his activities were of broad scope, they were never self-centered and what he accomplished benefited his fellowman as well as himself. He recognized how great an agency in the railroad was in opening up territory and bringing it in closer connection with other markets and centers of trade and his plans were always well formulated and carefully executed. His business interest brought him into contact with the most prominent residents of the state, who regarded him as a worthy colleague and honored him for the straightforward methods which were the motive forces in his work and which constitute an example of well worthy emulation."

Shoemaker was described by Civil War General W.T. Sherman as, " a power among railroad men of the country".

*** Key point: John H. Steiner got his start as a surveyor working for his uncle on the Kansas Pacific Railway when he was 20 years old. Keep this information as a reference point when John H. Steiner's life is presented.

Burgess History – VII

The lives of Henry and Mary Burgess and their family were a tragic affair. But in the end, the children persevered to live productive lives and to make loving relationships. If it had not happened the way it did, then there would not be our great Steiner family as we know it today.

Why did Henry Burgess take the children to Chicago and put them in an orphanage? I believe that there was a combination of three circumstances that triggered this event.

First, there was the difference in religions. Mary wanted the children baptized in the Catholic church while Henry did not.

The second is that Mary was very difficult to live with and harsh with the children. Two of her adult children did not like her. In a letter that Grandma Edith Steiner wrote Harry Steiner's sister, Agnes, on March 24, 1936, while Harry was in the hospital with life threatening injuries, she writes:

"Your mother has been here since October 15, 1935, over 5 months, and John sent $2 one time, $3 another and only $5 in all. That is why it makes me mad when she brags how nice she had things at the Hacketts. And she gets mad because I won't let her boss the kids and me around. She wants me to be beating and pounding the kids all the time because they won't do as she says."

The third reason is that Henry Burgess was planning to marry a woman from Chicago and wanted a fresh start. The children did not fit into his plans with a new wife. So he decided to put all the children, except Tom, in an orphanage where they could be adopted. In his thinking, he must have felt that the children would have a better life than living with him or his wife Mary. It is still difficult to fathom that giving up your children would be best for their lives.

In 1894, the children were dropped off at the orphanage. At the same time, Henry got married on December 6, 1894. This just shows you how loose record keeping was in the 1800's. He and Mary were married in Canada, but since there was no record that he had ever been married in the United States, he was issued a marriage license in Chicago, IL.

The license states that Henry was 35 years old (another record I have says that he was 39 years old. I believe that he was 39.) and he married Anna Templeton who was 26 years old. They had one son, Henry Burgess II.

In the 1900 census, Anna Templeton Burgess is listed, but Henry is missing. Again there is no indication that there was a divorce. It seems that people just came and went without any formal paperwork.

There was no sighting of Henry until 1927 when he and several family members met in Chicago at the time of the Dempsey fight.

Then in 1936, a shocking surprise took place. 1936 was the first year that the public could sign up for social security. Henry Burgess and Mary Scanlon Burgess both applied for social security. On their application forms it states that Henry and Mary are living together with their daughter Hazel Hackett! What brought them back together is anyone's guess. I am thinking that both Henry and Mary were destitute, and their daughter took them in.

The last information that we have on Henry is from Mary's death certificate. She is listed as a widow and her husband was Henry Burgess who was born March 10, 1866. The document says that Henry was 76 years, 6 months, and 13 days old when he died.

We know that on every document about Mary, she always listed herself as being married. Even though Henry left her and remarried, she did not seek a divorce. In the Catholic Church a person can not divorce and marry another And a divorced Catholic could not receive the sacraments if remarried. The Catholic Church taught that marriages were unbreakable unions. The Church supported couples living separate from each other, but in no way did or does the Church support divorce. Only through a time consuming and very expensive procedure called an annulment – a declaration from the church that a marriage was never valid – could a Catholic have their marriage dissolved and make it possible to remarry and continue the full benefits of being a Catholic. To receive an annulment in Mary's time, the Pope in Rome would have to grant it. Today, an annulment is easier to obtain since Pope Francis has loosened up the process and turned the annulment process over to the bishop of the diocese.

There is no record where Henry Burgess has been laid to rest. Mary Burgess, according to her death certificate, is at the Mt. Olivet Cemetery in Tonawanda, NY.

An interesting side bar is that the death certificate was signed by Miss Harriett Burgess Hackett. This person is believed to be Henry and Mary's granddaughter. The family's heritage came through this name. Harriett was Mary's mother's name. Burgess was the family name. Today many Steiners carry the Burgess namesake as a middle name to remind us of our beginnings.

Steiner History - VIII

After working for the Kansas Pacific Railway for several years as a surveyor, **John H. Steiner** was promoted to a very prestigious and influential position on the railroad. In 1867 the Kansas Pacific Railway built a station in Leavenworth, Kansas. The next year, John H was appointed as the superintendent of the railroad station. Considering he was 24 years old at the time, this was a huge responsibility for such a young man. He was in charge of supervising the movement of freight and passenger services and coordinating all the personal and equipment to make everything flow smoothly. At the time, it would be equivalent to being the superintendent of the Indianapolis airport. It is obvious that his work ethic and personality had shown through to the leadership of the Kansas Pacific Railway.

It cannot be over emphasized the importance of the Kansas Pacific Railway to the economy and growth of Kansas in 1869. In the Lawrence Tribune Newspaper it states:

“The number of cars in use on the road, adds up as follows: Thirty-two passenger coaches, six baggage cars, eight cabooses, one hundred stock cars, two hundred and fifteen box cars, four hundred flat cars, six boarding cars, and two derrick cars—about seven hundred and seventy in all.

Even with this number and the constant employment of all the trains, the road is overcrowded with business. The immense amount of Government stores for the post, and army of the plains, the thousands of immigrants seeking homes in the West, the large amount of goods destined for New Mexico and the Mountains, in addition to the heavy local freight business keep it constantly employed to its full capacity. From the West, trains from thirty to fifty cars, loaded with cattle, passed this point almost daily for the past six months.

In fact, it is one of the most important, if not the most important railroad of the continent, and with its completion to Colorado and New Mexico, there will scarcely be a limit to its business.”

John H. as a young man in Kansas was charming, intelligent, handsome, compassionate, and had a great interest, as most men in the time, in racing horses. At that time in history, horse racing and breeding was foremost in the lives of the majority of men in the USA. Just like the early

1900's when cars and motorcycles were introduced as transportation, and soon men became fascinated with racing vehicles with motors instead of horses.

1869 There are several accounts of John H. in The Leavenworth Times:

1. "Excursion Party –An excursion train will be on the Kansas Pacific Railway from this city to Lawrence, to enable our citizens to attend the State Fair, on Thursday, the 9th. The train will leave this city at the usual hour 8:40 a.m., and return to Lawrence at 8 p.m. Half fare tickets will be issued for the trip. So we are informed by Mr. J. H. Steiner, agent in this city."
2. "Personal. The smiling face of John H. Steiner, agent at this point of the Kansas Pacific Railway, was seen yesterday in Steiner's accustomed haunt. He has been surfing at the Long Branch during the high weather. The ladies say that he took to water like a duck."
3. "Bay filly, Kirmeyer, to Mr. Baker of the firm Brace & baker, for $25. Pacing pony, Dave, to J.H. Steiner at $250. Further sale is postponed until October."

John H. had two passions in Leavenworth, KS. They were hunting and racing horses. The paper chronicles an outing he had with friends shooting pigeons:

1. "On Monday last a party of gentlemen from town and the Fort gathered at the Fort track and enjoyed themselves hugely for two or three hours with pigeon shooting from a spring trap, twenty-one yards rise, eighty yards boundary. Mr Akers and Steiner choose sides, ten birds each."
2. "Mr. John H. Steiner yesterday purchased Fred Harvey's horse "Charley."
3. "John H. Steiner and others composed the Board of the Association, lending their countenance, pecuniary aid and influence to the encouragement of breeding fine horses, and the extraordinary speed which trotting horses have shown. The members of the association are men of high respectability, influence and moral worth; and it is to their efforts, liberality and enterprise that the citizens of Kansas will be indebted for an opportunity of witnessing the sine ring contest that is sure to occur."

1870 There are a couple of instances that shows John H. Steiner's compassionate side:

1. Now remember this took place five years after the Civil War and even though Kansas was declared as a free state, there was much pro slavery sentiment and much blooding, fighting took place within the state. Also John H. was raised as a pro Union supporter and believed in the abolishment of slavery. In this newspaper article a black man had been found riding in a boxcar and had not paid a fare. John H. had to remind a gentleman that a black man no longer has a master.

From: J. Burdeck, L.&G R.R. To John H. Steiner, “I have the honor (but no blanks) to report over in car 1,451, from Leavenworth, one Nigger. No marks with exception of small-pox. From the fact that such an over would accumulate charges, I would most respectfully suggest you trace back for the owner—and possibly there may be back charges on or against.”
From: John H. Steiner, Leavenworth, “From you, in car 1,451, August 12, 1870, why thusly? Our free African brethren, of American descent, must be treated with more respect.”

2. A prominent citizen was careless and was knocked down by a train at the station. He was lucky to have only a dislocation of his shoulder. “ This was set, and Mr. Steiner, the agent, sent for a conveyance, which was kindly furnished. Mr. Steiner, with his usual promptness, put in a mattress and some blankets, and sent the injured man home.”

1871 In this year it is recorded that John H. continued his interest in horses and hunting, but he added an additional interest. Following in his father's footsteps he started to get involved in politics. From the Leavenworth Times:

1. “The Hunters. Saturday morning, Messrs Gillett, Steiner, Fringer, went down the country on a hunting expedition. They dropped 207 birds Saturday afternoon, and returned well supplied with feathered game.”
2. “For the $800 race Steiner & Tough, of Leavenworth , entered St. Elmo.”
3. “The Primary Elections. Yesterday evening at the Second Ward the following gentlemen were elected delegates to the County Convention: R. Kihm, L.A. Collins, J.H. Steiner,M.H.Weed, Julius Haug, H.N. Coffin and C.W. Kiefer. All the primary meetings passed off pleasantly, and the greatest harmony pervades all sections of the party.”
4. “John Steiner, Judge Crozier and daughter, Miss Nellie Morris, Thos. P. Fenlon and family, Col. Abernathy and family, arrived home yesterday from Idaho Springs, Colorado.”

1872 John H. had established himself as a great manager of business and people plus had established an admired social presence in the Leavenworth community. In this year, John H. had two exciting events that came to him. Printed in in the Leavenworth Times:

1. “List of Patents. Issued from the United States Patent Office for the week ending May 14, 1872. Gas Generator and carburetor – J. H. Steiner.”
2. “John H. Steiner, of Kansas Pacific, in this city, has accepted a position with the C.C.&C.R.R., at Cincinnati, Ohio, and expects to leave Leavenworth in about two weeks. This change of base will not meet the approval of a long list of friends hereabouts, and he should be persuaded, if possible, to remain.”

After being in the West for several years, John H. at the age of 28 was headed back to the Midwest when his uncle bought the C.C.&C.R.R and appointed John H. the local agent. Later he would become the foremost expert in racing trotter horses and continue his career in the railroad industry.

Steiner History – IX

John H. Steiner was in Cincinnati for only a few years before he moved on to Indianapolis, IN to head up the White Line Railroad. While in Ohio, he continued his strong interest in racing trotting horses.

As a little background in how harness racing became such an important part of the American landscape of the 1800' s, and John H Steiner's life, it is necessary to understand its origins.

Harness racing is where a driver sits behind the horse in a sulky, holding the driving lines to control the horse. It got its start when horses and buggies were the primary mode of transportation – as is often the case with boys and wheels, buggy drivers would challenge each other to informal races to see who had the fastest horse.

It was a time in history where everyone on the farm and town had horses and wanted to race anything and everything. Racing had taken over the country and had become the number one sport and pastime. By the late 18th century, tracks and some regulations were in place.

The standardbred trotting horse is used in harness racing. When a trotting horse runs, he moves diagonally paired legs simultaneously. That means he is moving his back left leg at the same time he is moving his right front leg, and his front leg is in unison with the rear right leg. A trotting racehorse performs this gait at high speed.

Standardbred horses descended from the English thoroughbred Messenger. The standardbred horse originated in America. More than 90 percent of modern standardbreds trace their lineage back to Messenger's great- grandson Hambletonian, one of the fastest trotters of the mid nineteenth century and a prolific sire. The breed gets its name from a “standard” time for racing the one mile. The current standard for 2-year-olds is 2 minutes 20 seconds; the standard for the 3-year-olds is two minutes 15 seconds.

The horse racing business was huge in the 1800's throughout the United States. Men became wealthy racing their horses, breeding and selling horses, and wagering on horse races. And John H. Steiner was one of these men. He was one of the most influential men in the business. He eventually became the sole arbiter of deciding which horses had the highest ranking in the winning of race competitions and which horses had the pedigree for breeding winners. A

decision by John H. Steiner could make you or break you. He had an indisputable reputation for being highly honest and no one questioned his integrity.

The man credited with putting harness racing on a professional level was John H. Wallace.

In 1860, John H. Wallace, at that time a resident of Muscatine, Iowa, was busy preparing for publication of an American Stud Book . The book was completed in 1866 and published the following year.

As an afterthought was added an 80 page supplement containing all horses and mares that had trotted in public and geldings that had trotted in and many of their progenitors and descendants with all that is known of their blood from the earliest trotting races to the close of 1866 . This was the first step taken to trace and publish the pedigrees of trotters . In making it, John H. Wallace paved the way for his life's work .

******* The following is recorded in Wallace's 1874 edition -*Arthur Girl, gr. m., foaled 1865; got by Little Arthur, 4514; dam by Grey Eagle. Breeder not known. Owned by John Steiner, late of Lawrence Kansas; now of Cincinnati.*

From 1871,1872,1873 – pub. 1874 – Wallace's American Trotting Register:

In 1887 a group of horse breeders and racers became displeased with Wallace's arbitrary decisions and leadership in the horse trotting industry. So, including John H. Steiner, an alternative group was formed. It was called the American Trotting Association and headquartered in Detroit, MI. At the time of the formation John H. Steiner was elected as the first secretary. He held this position the rest of his life—for 16 years.

Under pressure, Wallace sold his publication to the American Trotting Association in 1891.

So, soon horse racing became more important to John H. Steiner than his railroad career. After a few years being the Superintendent of the White Line Railroad in Indianapolis, he quit the railroad business, bought 1,000 acres in Cataract Falls, IN, became a horse breeder, and was known as the most influential man in the horse trotting world.

Steiner History – X

White Line – Steiner of Cincinnati appointed

General Western Agent Indianapolis.

The Railroad Gazette

August 14, 1875

John H. Steiner's motive to leave his railroad job in Cincinnati and head up the White Star Line in Indianapolis might not have been what you would have thought. It was not simply to improve his status in the railway industry and collect a greater salary. So, before we go forward with his life in Indianapolis, there was some unfinished business that had to be taken care of in Cincinnati.

As a young 30 year old, charming, handsome man who was well connected in the railroad business and the horse racing business with a sizable yearly income, John H. was involved in the upper echelon social circles of Cincinnati. At one point, his improper decision making almost got him killed.

In the local newspaper and court account, it was known as "The Harbeson Sensation." The incident took place on April 30, 1875.

The Harbeson Sensation

Mrs. Julia Wood Harbeson *nee* Miss Wood, the grand-daughter and heiress of the late John Bates, of theatrical notoriety, some time ago filed an action for divorce from her husband, Matthew Harbeson, jr., on the grounds of extreme cruelty, gross neglect of duty and adultery.

The parties were married in 1869, and have three children.

They have lived together at their handsome residence, on the north side of Ninth Street, between Baymiller and Freeman, until the application for divorce. At this time Mr. Harbeson moved his home to Chicago. He came down the day before yesterday, and about half-past 7 o'clock yesterday morning, in company with Contestable Doyle, demanded admittance to his late residence. Without ceremony he rushed to his wife's room and broke down the door. Here he found Mr. John H. Steiner and his wife in bed awaiting breakfast. Mr. Harbeson had a revolver in his hand, and ordered the pair to get up. Steiner dressed and followed Harbeson out.

Yesterday Mr. Harbeson filed an answer to the plaintiff's petition for divorce, denying that the charges of his wife are true. To this answer was appended a cross-petition for divorce on the ground that his wife on the 30th of last month committed adultery with John H. Steiner. Steiner is an agent of the White Star Line at Indianapolis, and is said to be betrothed to a lady well known in social circles. ***(This lady was Agnes Wallace, the most sought after bachelorette in the city of Indianapolis)

Court Reports

Probate Court

Before Judge Matson

Answer in the Harbeson Divorce Case.

The following is a copy of the answer filed by Mathew L. Harbeson in the action for divorce brought against him by his wife, a statement of the contents of the petition filed in the case having been published at the time:

Julia Aarbeson vs. Mathew L. Harbeson, jr.---For answer to the plaintiffs petition heretofore filed in this case, the defendant admits the statements therein concerning the plaintiff's marriage, her residence, and the birth of children during said marriage, but he expressly denies that the plaintiff has conducted herself toward him as a faithful and obedient wife, and all and singular the allegations of the petition, charging upon him extreme cruelty, gross neglect of duty, and adultery, he hereby expressly denies, and says that each and all the charges are untrue.

"And by way of cross-petition against the plaintiff, this defendant says that on the 30th of April, 1876, and at previous times thereto, said plaintiff did commit adultery with one John H. Steiner, at the residence of said plaintiff in Cincinnati, and this defendant charges that the said plaintiff, since the filing of her petition and prior thereto, has been guilty of committing adultery, at her residence in Cincinnati and elsewhere in said city, with the John H. Steiner, and with sundry other parties to this defendant unknown".

So, with all this going on, John H. left town in a hurry and took up residence in the city of Indianapolis as the railroad agent for the White Star Line. Here he settled in and quickly started moving into the upper society of the city. Within a few months he met and became engaged to the most charming and beautiful woman in Indianapolis. She was known to all as Agnes Wallace, the Indiana governor's daughter.

Steiner History – XI

In 1875 when John H. Steiner left Cincinnati, Ohio for his new job in Indianapolis, IN as Superintendent of the White Line Railroad, the newspaper reported:

"Mr. Van C. Coonrod has been appointed to succeed Mr. J. H. Steiner, the recently resigned General Agent of the road at this point. Mr Steiner goes to Indianapolis, to take the position of Superintendent the the While Line. Mr. Steiner's departure from the city is universally regretted by his friends and acquaintances."

So, John H. left Cincinnati in good standing. Not only was his reputation untarnished but he also received a very impressive salary. In today's money, John H. was making over $450,000 per year. Now you may think that amount of money would not qualify someone to be considered wealthy. But there are two factors to consider: (1)the average annual wages of employees in industry, trade, and transportation in 1875 was $27,000 in today's money and (2) there was no such thing as federal and state income taxes, state sales taxes, social security taxes, medicare taxes, gas taxes, welfare taxes, unemployment taxes, health insurance and car insurance payments, etc. John's annual salary allowed him to travel frequently, live in the most prestigious neighborhoods, socialize with the affluent, and have a very expensive hobby: buying, selling, and racing horses.

When John H. became superintendent, he met a young railroad clerk named David Wallace. David had a sister named Agnes Wallace, who was the most sought after single maiden in Indianapolis. After courting Agnes for nearly two years, John H. and Agnes Wallace were married on November 21, 1877. He was 32 and she was 29. This is how the Cincinnati Commercial Tribune Newspaper presented the announcement:

“To-Morrow Mr. John H. Steiner, formerly of this city, is to be married to Miss Aggie Wallace, of Indianapolis. Miss Wallace is one of the most elegant and accomplished young ladies of Indianapolis society, and the many acquaintances of Mr Steiner will wish her joy. Miss Wallace is a sister of General Lew Wallace.”

To give an idea why Agnes was so popular and was held in such high esteem, we must present at this time the two tributes written about her when she passed away in 1928 to give a full view of what attracted John H. to such an outstanding young woman. The first by Henry D. Pierce and the second by the editor of the Indianapolis News Newspaper.

1. “ The daughter of Governor Wallace and of a mother Zerelda Wallace, Miss Wallace has the unique distinction of being invited to every social function, and every public entertainment many times over. She married late in life a very prominent railroad man, the well known John H. Steiner of racing fame. Her beauty was so remarkable that it endured throughout life. Even at seventy-eight, the time of her death, any one who had known her, or merely seen her in her teens, would have instantly recognized her , so remarkable were her good looks, and her shapely, graceful form, unchanged in sixty years. The old Wallace homestead was the the point of Massachusetts Avenue and New Jersey street, just opposite where the Murat theater is now. With her brother, the late David Wallace, almost as popular as she and always in demand as the “best man”, the Wallace homestead was easily the social rendezvous of Indianapolis. A notable feature of the place was an enormous bowl of luscious lemonade at all times, in the front hall of the stately mansion, during hot weather. No wonder, with her beauty and charm, the “boys” swarmed about there.”
2. “ Mrs. Agnes Wallace Steiner of Cataract, who was laid to rest in Crown Hill Sunday, the half sister of General Lew Wallace, and William Wallace, one of Indianapolis's famous lawyers of the last generation, had the distinction of being undoubtedly the complete realization of what is

known and recognized as a 'reigning belle'. As Miss Aggie Wallace she was for over a quarter of a century, the most sought for young lady ever known in the society of Indianapolis. Of remarkable beauty, exquisite grace, good family, noble heritage, agreeable and brilliant in conversation, always cheerful and happy, a graceful partner in the dance of the old-time waltz-quadrille, schottische and polka, she probably had more invitations than any young lady that ever reigned in the social sphere in this city, if not any where."

***** The platitudes that were given to Agnes Wallace were the greatest of any one person in the history of Indiana. No where will you read where one person was so genuinely admired for her beauty and manner. It wouldn't have been great to sit on the front porch, sip some lemonade, and socialize with Aggie.**

The Wallaces at the time lived very interesting lives. At one time all the Wallaces and family members (except General Lew Wallace) resided at the John H. Steiner estate in Cataract Falls, Indiana. At that time our grandfather, Harry Burgess Steiner, lived there with them as shown in the 1895 family picture. This was the year that Harry left the orphanage in Chicago and was brought to Cataract Falls to live with John H. Steiner. Harry was five years old.

I would urge you to go to Wikipedia and read about the following Wallaces.

1. Governor David Wallace
2. Zerelda Wallace – Agnes' mother and national temperance and suffrage leader (her sister was the wife of Dr. Richard Gatling-the inventor of the famous Gatling gun.)
3. General Lew Wallace – author Ben-Hur, hanged the Lincoln murders, and brought Billy The Kid to justice.
4. Zelda Wallace – famous opera singer

******* Check out Aggie Wallace's favorite dance – The schottische is a German dance that became very popular in 1850 and lasted in popularity until the early 1900's. Today, a variety of the dance is popular in TX. Check out Lawrence Welk dancing the schottische on Youtube.

When John H. arrived in Indianapolis Indiana he bought a home in the most prestigious section of the city. There he fit right in with the wealthiest and most influential families of the time. The home he acquired was at 278 North New Jersey.

John H. was a very busy bachelor. He was heavy in the horse racing business, he traveled extensively by rail throughout the Midwest and East for business and pleasure, and he was dating the most prominent single woman in Indianapolis. Also, he had become a well-known philanthropist among the elite circles of men and women.

On July 7, 1876, The Cincinnati Daily Times ran this article taken from the Indianapolis Journal entitled: “ John H. Steiner as a Philanthropist”;

“ A few weeks since J.H. Steiner, agent of the White line at this point, when in Chicago, came across a colored boy, twelve years of age, who was an orphan, and appeared to be so remarkably shrewd and bright that Mr. Steiner brought the lad home with him. He has been christened by the boys at the office “Ben.Butler.” His father was a cook on shipboard, prior to his death, and with him Ben. passed the most of his life, and has visited Liverpool, Constantinople, and a large number of foreign ports about which he talks quite freely and intelligently. They came west from New York to Chicago with imported horses, and not finding work promptly, jumped on a train and went out to Nebraska. Not liking the country, he returned in the same manner. On his return he was taken in and cared for by Mr. Steiner, who proposes to give him a good education. Already he writes a good hand. Ben. Is very fond of horses and full of horse talk, and takes good care of Mr. Steiner's fine grays as an experienced hostler would.”

When he married Agnes in October of 1877, they started their married life together at John's home in North New Jersey. They were there until 1879. Then in 1800 John H. and Agnes moved to a most glorious home in the first suburb of Indianapolis.

The Steiners bought the home that was the residence of James O. Woodruff, the developer of Woodruff Place. It was the first home that was built at Woodruff Place. From the Indiana Historical Society, here is the history of Woodruff Place. From this reading, you can image how wealthy they were and how high their social standing was in Indianapolis.

“The beginnings and endings of all human undertakings are untidy,” so wrote John Galsworthy, an early twentieth century English and Nobel laureate. And so was it true of Woodruff Place, an upscale nineteenth century residential area carved out of land on the near eastside of downtown Indianapolis, and which continues to this day. Founded in 1872 by James O. Woodruff, Woodruff Place, began as a stately and fashionable retreat for those with means to fit into the community. Lots cost as much as $5,000 (later $8,000), and builders were obliged to erect houses whose construction cost a minimum of $20,000. Bounded on the north by 10th Street, on the south by Michigan Street, on the west side by West Drive, on the east by East Drive, the whole was connected north and south by Middle Drive, and east and west by Cross Drive. Woodruff’s own house, the first to go up on the southeast corner of West and Cross drives, was a three-story house with a fourth floor tower room--with fine woodwork, tiled floors, a walnut staircase, a ballroom with inlaid oak, and the first porte-cochère in the city. Booth Tarkington, the Hoosier writer, thought the Woodruff home was the pride of the Hoosier capital. Unfortunately it was razed in 1936. Woodruff Place, “a town within a town,” was incorporated in 1876. Indianapolis provided much of the police and fire protection—a Town Marshall patrolled the streets and picked up trash—but reaped little of the tax benefits from the affluent community. The struggle against annexation began in 1913, but was not resolved for nearly a half-century. In 1961 the city tentatively attached The Place. The final gasps of independence for the private development were

heard the following year when the U.S. Supreme Court refused to hear an appeal, a bitter pill for the residents to accept. Later some admitted that in retrospect the annexation was not as bad as they had feared. In an effort to maintain something of the beauty and eminence of The Place a Board of Trustees, in a General Ordinance of 1937, set limits (with penalties) for the location of trades, general commercial enterprises, height of buildings, size of lawns and garages, advertising, and the like—all with the hope of improving appearances and maintaining some semblance of gentility. But inevitably when home owners are unable to maintain large homes they are sold and converted into apartments. So it happened in The Place where some homes accommodated three or four renter families. Alleged neglect of the community in 1968 led a local committee to plead with Indianapolis' Mayor Richard Lugar for better services. Four years later the name and location of Woodruff Place were placed in the National Register of Historic Places. About that same time it received several grants for major repairs for long neglected outdoor art, and the restoration of some homes to their earlier stately character. Meanwhile the City Parks Department planted trees and shrubs, restored ornamental pots, replenished flower beds, and repaired some of the fountains. Today (early 21st century) one can stroll through the streets, admire the splendor of yore, and enjoy (at least in memory) what Mr. Woodruff and his friends doubtless knew so well in the late 19th century, that Galsworthy was correct: both the beginnings and the endings of all undertakings are untidy. So has it been Woodruff Place. Nevertheless Woodruff Place lives on today, encouraged and financed by residents who will not let the dream die. James O. Woodruff was born in Auburn, New York, on 25 July 1840. The son of Harmon Woodruff, he was educated in the elementary schools of that west-central city of New York state. From there he matriculated in Philips Academy, in Andover, Massachusetts, where he finished his college preparatory work with highest honors. Following the attack on Fort Sumter in 1861, young Woodruff enlisted as a Second Lieutenant in the Union Army, but prior to going off to war married Elmina Adsit, daughter of a minister. His military service ended in 1863 when due to an illness he resigned his commission. He spent three years in Florida with his wife, regaining his health and strength. While there he devised a plan for a floating college with teachers/professors to instruct pupils while traveling around the world aboard ship. The program would draw from the upper class of society and would include U.S. Naval Academy cadets for academic instruction and for sailing the vessel. Unfortunately, the ship never left port, despite much planning and work. In the mid-nineteenth century Indianapolis, seeing the need for improved streets, public lights and city-wide water, invited (1872) Mr. Woodruff, an engineer with the Central Canal Company of Rochester, New York, to come to the Hoosier capital to design and establish a water works for the city. After arriving in the Indiana capital Woodruff bought 80 acres of land, subdivided it into 240 lots to be developed with houses of neo-Jacobean and Eastlake architecture, esplanades, lawns, statuary and fountains. Despite realistic plans for his residential area, the Panic of '73 hit Indianapolis—and James Woodruff—hard. By 1876 he lost his fortune and returned to the East. During the next few years he devoted himself to launching his floating university. Unfortunately, while in Boston he became ill, and eight days later died on 4 June 1879 in New York City, only weeks short of his 39th birthday. He left a wife and two boys. His obituary listed the cause of death as "congestion of the brain," a diagnosis not immediately confirmed."

To give you a flavor of what life was like living in Woodruff Place. Here is an article published in The Indianapolis News, June 10, 1880.

“ The denizens of Woodruff Place correct the statement: that the marshal of that corporation entices cows within its boundary so as to impound them for the fees. Since January 1st the marshal, who is also a laborer there, having the care of the place, has received $7.75 fees, and in all cases these fees have been much lower than customary. That the gates of the place are left open so that cows may wander in , is defended upon the ground that Woodruff Place is one out and of only two parks in this region into which carriages may be driven, and that the citizens appreciate this is attested by the hundreds of carriages that are weekly driven there. To keep such a place beautiful, which is the great desire, it is necessary to protect it against the ravages of animals. Nearly every family in the neighborhood keeps a cow, and surrounding dairies generally have no pasture land, but turn their herds loose. Some owners have employed boys at ten cents per week to keep their cows away from Woodruff Place. In no instance has injustice been done to any one.”

Interesting Woodruff Place facts:

1. Woodruff Place was one mile from downtown Indianapolis.
2. The interurban train line from Indianapolis ended at Woodruff Place.
3. A selling point for living in Woodruff Place was that it was a self-incorporated area and the property owners did not have to pay personal property taxes to the city.
4. It had city water and gas.
5. It was not annexed by Indianapolis until the 1960's.
   The Steiners lived here until 1885. In the next paper, we will explore their lives while living in this community.



Steiner History – XIII

The Steiners lived in Woodruff Place from 1880 until 1885. John was 35 years old and Agnes was 30 in 1880. There they entertained the most social, financial, and powerful elite of Indianapolis. The famous Indiana poet, James Witcomb Riley, was a frequent visitor of Woodruff Place and wrote a published poem describing the tranquility of the area.

June at Woodruff

James Whitcomb Riley

Out at Woodruff Place - afar
From the city's glare and jar,
With the leafy trees, instead
Of the awnings, overhead;
With the shadows cool and sweet,
For the fever of the street;
With the silence, like a prayer,
Breathing round us everywhere.

Gracious anchorage, at last,
From the billows of the vast
Tide of life that comes and goes,
Whence and where nobody knows -
Moving, like a skeptic's thought,
Out of nowhere into naught.
Touch and tame us with thy grace,
Placid calm of Woodruff Place!

Weave a wreath of beechen leaves
For the brow that throbs and grieves
O'er the ledger, bloody-lined,
'Neath the sun-struck window-blind!
Send the breath of woodland bloom
Through the sick man's prison room,
Till his old farm-home shall swim
Sweet in mind to hearten him!

Out at Woodruff Place the Muse
Dips her sandal in the dews,
Sacredly as night and dawn
Baptize lilied grove and lawn:
Woody path, or paven way -
She doth haunt them night and day, -

Sun or moonlight through the trees,
To her eyes, are melodies.

Swinging lanterns, twinkling clear
Through night-scenes, are songs to her -
Tinted lilts and choiring hues,
Blent with children's glad halloos;
Then belated lays that fade
Into midnight's serenade -
Vine-like words and zithern-strings
Twined through ali her slumberings.

Blesséd be each hearthstone set
Neighboring the violet!
Blessed every rooftree prayed
Over by the beech's shadel
Blessed doorway, opening where
We may look on Nature - there
Hand to hand and face to face -
Storied realm, or Woodruff Place

It is without any exaggeration that Woodruff Place was the premier place to reside. According to the 1880 U.S. Census, four people were residents of the Steiner house. Besides John H. and Agnes, there was Joe Steiner and George Stevenson.

Joe was John's youngest brother. He was a clerk at the railroad where John H was the superintendent. From this time forward, Joe lived with John H. When John H bought the 1,000 acres to create a horse ranch, Joe joined him and worked on the farm. In the 1900 census, Joe is listed as a farm hand. In the census of 1910 after John's death, it shows that Joe and Agnes were living on the farm. Then in the 1930 census it shows Joe, Agnes, Agnes Stucky (John's adopted daughter), and John Stucky were on the farm. This is the last record of Joe Steiner.

George Stevenson was listed as a servant/laborer. He mainly took care of the stable behind the house. In the day it was quite a chore to leave the house and go any place. It was not simply a matter of turning on the key and stepping on the gas. It would take nearly an half hour by the time the horses were rounded up and properly hitched to the carriage before you were ready to go. Then when you returned, you would have to complete the reverse process. Much time and energy was spent daily in taking care of the horses. Horses at the time had the highest priority. That is why there was a servant whose duties were to feed, water, clean the stalls, attend to the health of the horses, shoe, brush, wash, etc. With the Steiner's social and business life, I am sure he was quite busy.

The Steiners entertained the elite of Indianapolis. Also, they housed some of the most famous personalities of the time. Remember travel was not like it is today. Today you would think nothing of driving 100 miles to someone's house on a Sunday for a visit and then drive 100 miles back home the same day. Since there were no paved roads, horse and carriage would take you at least four days or more. After you got to your destination, then you would have to make the same trip back. It would be very difficult to make the 100 mile trip by train within one day between major cities, let alone having to make connections if you lived in a small community. If you did travel by train, you would have to have someone meet you at the station with a carriage to further your journey. You definitely would not be able to make the return trip on the same day. So, if you traveled to visit a relative, you planned to stay several days, weeks, or months before you returned home. Two of the nationally known guest at the Steiners were General Lew Wallace and Zelda Harrison Seguin Wallace..

General Lew Wallace was Agnes' brother. The General bravely fought in the Civil War under General Ulysses S Grant and later served the government in many capacities. He is best known today as the author of Ben-Hur. The General stayed with the Steiners in 1880 for several weeks preparing his manuscript of Ben-Hur for publication in the winter of 1880. To fully appreciate this man, read his biography from Wikipedia:

Lew Wallace - Wikipedia

Zelda was a most famous opera singer in the United States and internationally. She was known for her ability to sing Italian and French operas in English. Ten months after her first husband's death, she married David Wallace, Agnes' brother, in 1880.

The Indianapolis News published this October 14, 1880.

“ A telegram from Kansas City to the Cincinnati Enquirer, printed to-day, says a rumor is current there that Mrs. Sequin (Mrs. David Wallace), who is now visiting her sister-in-law, Mrs J.H. Steiner, of Woodruff Place, contemplates withdrawing from the Abbott opera company, that Mr. Wallace will organize a company of his own with Mr. Castle, also of the Abbott, and Mrs. Sequin as a nucleus. This is not at all in accordance with what Mr. Wallace has stated to friends since returning home: to them he has explained that his wife is merely taking rest of a month or so, and no reliance is placed in the story by them.”

This is the fascinating life story of Zelda and David. She gave up wealth to marry the man she loved.

Zelda Harrison Seguin Wallace

Lew Wallace and his brother William each married women from prominent families. These marriages brought prestige, money, and important Hoosier connections to the Wallace family.

They were not, however, the only sons of David Wallace to marry well. David had six children with his second wife, Zerelda. Three of these children died in childhood. David Jr., their only surviving son, was born in 1852. He married a woman of prestige with connections far beyond Indiana.

David Wallace, Jr.

Historical research sources generally contain more records on men than women. In the case of David Wallace, Jr. however, his wife who is much better recorded. In 1870, census records list eighteen year old David, Jr. as a baggage master for a railroad in Indianapolis. Ten years later, he lived in the home of his sister Mary Wallace Leathers with his mother, Zerelda. At that time, he worked as a transfer agent for an Indianapolis railroad.

Zelda Harrison Seguin

Zelda was one of the most famous opera singers of her day. She made her stage debut at a concert in Saratoga in 1865 at seventeen years of age. She sang popular songs of the day for the performance. A contralto, Zelda became known as the Gypsy Queen because of her tremendous success in the opera "The Bohemian Girl." Among her accomplishments on stage, she introduced the role of Bizet's "Carmen" in English to the opera world in a performance in New Orleans and in her last New York appearances in 1886 she performed in "The Mikado."

Zelda's Early Career

Born in 1848, and a native of New York City, Zelda Harrison possessed a remarkable voice. Her parents placed her under the tutelage of Mrs. Anne Seguin, one of the most important opera teachers of the late 19th century. During her time studying with Anne Seguin, she met Anne's son Edward Seguin, Jr. Edward, an opera singer, trained at the Conservatoire in Paris and the Royal Academy in London. Edward toured in America after his return from Europe in 1860.

Despite a ten year age difference, Zelda and Edward fell in love and married in 1867. Together Edward, Jr. and Zelda performed throughout the county. In the 1870s, they had a son they named Edward S.R. Seguin.

Edward Seguin

Zelda's husband, Edward, emulated his father, one of the most popular performers of his day. Edward taught Zelda about makeup, stage presence, and acting. In 1877, Zelda performed at a New York Press Club entertainment held in Steinway Hall. Guest speakers at the event included Mark Twain. The papers singled out Zelda in coverage of the evening with the following:

Mrs. Zelda Seguin, a favorite among favorites, not only with the journalistic fraternity, who have always expressed good wishes for her success, but with everybody else possessed of taste and feeling, raised a whirlwind of applause by her singing of Hullah's "Storm." The excitement could not be stayed by anything less than a ballad, and the lady sang a pretty little Irish song–"I wrote my love a letter."

Edward also helped manage Zelda's career by selecting parts she would and, just as importantly, would not sing. For instance, he would not let her perform in Wagnerian operas because he felt Wagner's work did not suit the range of her voice. Under his tutelage, Zelda Seguin became internationally famous and, like her in-laws, was especially known for performing operas in English that were traditionally performed in Italian or French.

Edward's Death

In early October of 1879, Edward died suddenly of heart disease in Rochester, New York at the age of about 42. Stricken three weeks earlier in Jersey City, he didn't consider the illness serious as he thought he was having an asthma attack and continued to travel with his wife and other performers. Zelda did not perform the evening of his death and accompanied her husband's body back to New York. However, the show had to go on. In spite of their grief, the rest of the cast and crew performed as scheduled at the Grand Opera House in Rochester.

Zelda Harrison Seguin Meets David Wallace, Jr.


The beautiful widow and famed performer met David Wallace, Jr. in February of 1880, at the home of a mutual friend in Indianapolis. At the time, David worked as Master of Transportation for the Indianapolis-Terre Haute railway. After a "season of bouquets and correspondence," David went to New York to propose. Within ten months of her husband's death, Zelda and David married at St. Luke's Church in Baltimore.

Agnes Wallace Steiner, David's sister, joined him. In a detailed description of the ceremony, the news account made note that "Diamonds were the jewels" worn by the bride.

The quiet service received wide discussion as it was a distinct surprise to many of her friends. This marriage cost Zelda a small fortune because her mother-in-law, Anne Seguin had revised

her will just weeks after her son's death. The will left Zelda $20,000 ($621,000 in today's money}in cash to be held for her benefit provided she not remarry. With her marriage to David, she forfeited the money.

Records indicate that Zelda and David, Jr. had a son in October of 1881, who was also named David, but it appears this child died within a year. Census records in 1900 indicate that David and Zelda may have had one more son born in 1891, but the name and fate of this child is unknown. In these records from 1900, David and Zelda are living in Indianapolis adjacent to the prominent Claypool family.

Married Life

After her marriage to David, it appears that Zelda left New York behind and Indianapolis, where David had his railway jobs, became home. Zelda became a part of the social scene in Indianapolis in the early 1880s. She also provided musical performances for receptions and events sponsored by her mother-in-law, Zerelda Wallace, in support of suffrage. At her first meeting with Zerelda, Zelda confirmed that she believed firmly in women's rights. She had been a working woman all of her life. While she did not speak widely on the issue, when questioned, she " . . . she expressed her opinion with an effective eloquence as charming as her marvelous voice. To hear her sing you would think she was made for that alone; to hear her talk you would wonder at the naturalness of manner and clear, unsullied, mind."

Zelda's Career Ends

After Edward's death and her marriage to David, Zelda resumed performing throughout the country. Her last operatic performance in New York was in 1886. After that, she continued to sing in important venues across the country. In 1895, Zelda was badly injured in a train accident when a train she was on jumped the tracks as it rounded a curve near Coatesville, Indiana. Two people died. Although among the most seriously injured, Zelda recovered. As her professional career ended she still supported favored charities with small programs.

David's Death

The 1910 census listed David's occupation as manager of a motor company in Indianapolis. At the time, the couple lived on prestigious North Delaware Street—although perhaps in an apartment rather than a detached home. Zelda experienced great tragedy in 1911. A storage fire destroyed all of the costumes and memorabilia from her storied career. To add to her burden, David died in May of 1911 at the age of 59.

Shortly after David's death, Zelda made a much-publicized return trip to New York to visit her son, Edward, and two grandsons. In newspaper interviews, she reminisced about famous people

she had worked with, productions she had performed in, and trends she had seen in opera during her career. These interviews describe the 63-year-old Zelda as still a young woman in thought, action, and manner of speech. Friends who came to call on her found her very much like the Zelda Seguin of old.

Zelda Harrison Seguin Wallace Dies

Just three years later, Zelda passed away at her home in Indianapolis in February of 1914. The press remembered her great stage career with small mentions. However, Mrs. Robert Louis Stevenson's death on the same day eclipsed Zelda's mentions. David and Zelda are buried together very near his father and adjacent to his uncle, Richard Gatling, in Crown Hill Cemetery. Zelda Harrison Seguin Wallace stood out in a family of accomplished men and women.

*** As a side note. Although Harry Burgess Steiner, our grandfather, did not become part of the Steiner family until 1895, you can vividly see what kind of environment he was exposed to.

Steiner History – XIII

From 1880 through 1885, John H. Steiner led a very active life. He was very well respected and successful in the horse racing world, in the railroad world, and the civic world.

In the newspaper The Richmond Item of August, 1884 John H. Steiner was interviewed about a horse he once owned. This article is interesting because for the first and only time do we hear in John's own words where he expresses himself. Through this direct quotation we learn much about the horse racing business. Although this article is quite long, it gives you a flavor of life with the Steiners.

Westmont in Wayne

J.H. Steiner, of Indianapolis, who once owned Westmont, the famous pacer, gives a reporter an account of the horse, while he owned it. He says:

" In the spring of 1880, in company with Captain Tough, who brought out Smuggler, and afterwards sold him to Colonel Russel, of Boston, I went to Georgetown, Ky. and visited Colonel West, and while there bought the chestnut gelding now celebrated as Westmont, and two other horses. I paid for Westmont $250 thinking he possessed the breeding and action essential to a fast horse, at either a trotting or pacing gait, as he might be worked.

In April, 1881, I sent him to Cambridge City, to be worked over a mile track by Captain Boyce, who worked him for about forty days and gave him a mile in 2:30. Captain Boyce then determined to move his stable to Cleveland, Ohio, and was very desirous of taking Westmont

along: but I telegraphed him to send the horse home at once. Having no use for the horse, and being well satisfied with his improvement, I turned him out at nights and kept him stabled during the day, until the first day of September, 1881, when I sent him to the exposition track at Indianapolis, to be put in shape for the races there during the latter part of the month. He started in a races but was unfortunately cut down by a competing horse, and did not obtain any record. I then took him home and used him as a business horse during the following winter and spring. About the first of May 1882, I again sent him to the exposition track to be handled by J.J. Richardson. I started him at the July meeting in a three minute class in a field of fourteen horses. Upon getting the word “GO " he immediately shot to the front, opening up a lively gap on the whole field of horses. His driver, D.P. Bissell, not having driven him before, did not realize the rate of speed at which he was going, and drove him to a very bad break. At the half-mile post he was the last horse in the race and more than a distance out. He finally caught and closed the gap, and finished the mile in 2:24; but the timers of this race, thinking to do me a favor, thought unsolicited, announced the time as 2:26, thereby rendering him eligible to the 2:27 class. He also won another heat in this race about the same time, the race being finally won by the bay gelding Limber Jack. Two days after this I started him in the free-for-all pace in which he won second money. About the 26th of July, 1882, I sold him and the trotting mare, Little Gipsey, to Mr. B.B. Johnson, of Preston, Iowa for $2,500. Westmont bringing me of this amount $1,500. He was one of the kindest and gentlest horses I ever saw.

“ My wife while driving him one evening was obliged to stop and wait for a train of cars to pass. When she started the horse up she felt the left line coming toward her and at once thought the bit had broken in his mouth, but the billet of the line caught on the suspender of the breast collar, and on pulling on it with all her force she could only succeed in getting the horse around in a small circle in the road at a slow pace. Being unable to stop him she jumped over the wheel thinking to catch him by the head, but in doing this unluckily sprained her ankle and fell to the ground. The horse, being entirely free from control, immediately started and went a mile and a half down town with numerous boys running out and shouting and trying to have him stop, and never once breaking into a run.”

*** Side Notes:

1. This interview took place nearly 20 years after the Civil War , and it wasn't unusual that military men were often referred to their army rank instead of using Mr.
2. The reference to Aggie Steiner illustrates the hazards that women of the 1800's had to deal with daily.
3. Westmont was one of the fastest trotters ever. His fastest clocked race was 2:01. Dan Patch of Oxford, Indiana was even faster. He set a world record in 1915 and traveled the mile in 1:55.

Twenty years after the War Between the States, northern states began placing monuments at prominent battle sites where their state soldiers fought during the battle of Gettysburg, PA. A group of men from Indiana in October, 1885, met in the Gettysburg courthouse to dedicate monuments for the different Indiana brigades that served in the Union Army. John H. Steiner was chosen to represent the State of Indiana to make a presentation for the Nineteenth Infantry Iron Brigade monument. This was a great honor for John H. considering that his father was the Provost Marshal of the 9th Congressional District of Ohio during the Civil War and that his wife's brother was General Lew Wallace.

Jon F. Steiner

March 1, 2024

If you want the full picture of the Indiana Nineteenth Brigade, check out these sites.

Iron Brigade's 19th Indiana Monument | Gettysburg Daily

19th Indiana Infantry Regiment - Wikipedia

Iron Brigade - Wikipedia



Steiner History – XIX

Life was good when John H and Agnes Steiner were living at Woodruff Place from 1880 until 1885. Agnes had a very active social life and John H seriously engaged in his strong interest and his passion—horse breeding and racing.

It cannot be overemphasized to how encompassing horse racing had become during this time period. For ten years it was at its zenith from 1880 until 1890. This rich man's sport was sweeping the nation and your grandfather was one of the major contributors for its success.

During this period, the major centers for racing were New York and California. One of the main Midwest markets was Terre Haute and Indianapolis, IN. John H spent much time traveling back and forth between these venues. Horses were constantly being shipped by the railroads for breeding purposes, buying and selling, and races. The horse business was greater than today's NFL, NBA, and the NBA combined in respect to spectators, profit, and worth. It was a phenomenal time in history that will never be repeated.

Then in 1883, John H made a dramatic move to enhance his involvement in the horse business. He bought a 1,000 acre resort called the Cataract. The Indianapolis News, May 22, 1883 reported:

"John Steiner, of the White Line, has purchased of John D. Campell, for $19,000, a thousand acre tract of land in Owen county, on the proposed route of the Indianapolis, Eel River & Southwestern road, and proposes to work it both for profit and pleasure. Prof. Collett pronounces the stone found there to be of superior quality, and cement equal to the Portland variety is found in abundance. The farm is known as the "Cataract," and is a well known resort for fishers and pleasure seekers in that section of the state."

John H was a very astute businessman. He bought a 1,000 acre farm with a resort home for $19,000. In today's money it comes out to $651,108. Looking at undeveloped land value only in Owen county now, you won't find anything for less than $10,000 an acre. So, 1,000 acres without a hotel lodge would cost at least $10,000,000. The lodge was very large. The Steiner family lived down stairs and rooms for guests were on the second floor upstairs. The lodge was three stories tall. The third floor was so large that it was a dedicated dance floor where musicians would play tunes for guests to dance their favorite dances. The lodge alone would be worth another $5,000,000 in today's money. Cataract Falls was 50 miles from Indianapolis. Guests would take a train from Indianapolis to Cloverdale, IN and a carriage would meet them and take them the remaining 8 miles to Cataract.

To John's good business sense, he was aware that in the near future there would be a new railroad line that would connect Indianapolis with Cataract. This would make the future horse ranch an easy trip for anyone to enjoy on a pleasant weekend or vacation.

Not only was the property rich in limestone to make cement, but as a horseman more important was the fact that limestone provides the best foundation to grow great grasses to feed horses. Kentucky is known for its Kentucky bluegrass. It is a world known fact that what makes the blue grass so favorable is that it is grown on land that is rich in limestone. The limestone provides the best nutrients for growing the best grass to feed horses.

After buying the property, John H. began building stables for the horses and a one half mile race track. This was an extraordinary endeavor and a showplace known throughout the United States.

Once he moved to the property with his extended family, people on a regular basis came to Cataract to enjoy the outdoors and watch the horse races.

Here is an article published in 1901 (two years before John H. Steiner's death) describing life at the Cataract home from The Indianapolis Newspaper.

The Cataract Home

Cataract, the place where Mrs. Wallace spent the last days of her life, takes its name from two cataracts in the broad river which dashes over a rocky bed through the Steiner farm. Both falls are within the boundaries of this farm, and the scenery is beautiful and romantic. Overlooking the upper falls, where this water plunges over a hang rock, forty-eight feet high, if the knoll upon which stands the handsome three-story house in which affords a wide survey of the country.

The third floor of the house is at times turned into a great dancing hall. Cataract is as noted for its "house parties" as for its picturesque landscapes. Scarcely a month passes in pleasant weather that Mr. and Mrs. Steiner do not entertain parties of young persons from Chicago, Indianapolis or from the East, enjoying a generous invitation to spend a week hunting, fishing, hill climbing and driving.

*** Side Note;

1. Hill climbing was the latest fad of the early 1900's. People would race their cars to the top of a designated hill on a dusty road to see who could get their car to the top the fastest. The oldest hill climbing event in the USA is still being held every year in Newport, IN.
2. This was the environment that our grandfather, Harry Burgess Steiner, lived in since he was brought to Cataract from Chicago in 1895. It must have been a very stimulating place for a young boy.

A great change came to John H Steiner's life in 1885. It was unexpected, but he was fully prepared.

XX - Steiner History

1885 was a year that the Steiners found major changes taking place in their lives. The idyllic days of living at Woodruff Place and entertaining at the 1,000 acre resort/horse ranch in Cataract Falls was coming to an end.

There were changes coming to the railroad industry. To compete, smaller rail lines were consolidating to form larger companies.

In an article from The Indianapolis News, October 30, 1885, it reads: “ Official notice was given to-day that, beginning with November 1, the Red, White and Midland fast freight lines will be consolidated under one management, with headquarters at Buffalo. It is not known what changes will result locally from this consolidation, but some are pending. Mr. John H. Steiner, of the White Line, has been supposed to be the coming representative of the consolidated lines, but after returning from the East he declares he does not expect to be appointed”.

Then the following day, this appeared in The Indianapolis News: “ The office of western superintendent of the White Line, held by John H. Steiner, of this city for five years, has been abolished. Mr. Steiner thinks he may take up farming.”

So, the Steiners sold their home at Woodruff Place and moved all the family members to Cataract Falls to take up residence at the resort hotel that John had bought in 1883. The resort hotel remained the family's residence until 1928 when a fire destroyed the building.

As you probably know, horse racing is an expensive sport. Thus, John H. needed to find another job to support his family and hobby. He did this within a very short time. He became superintendent of the Erie Railroad. This was one of the largest railroads in the United States. Since this railroad was much larger than the White Line, the salary was also much larger. The only downside was that the headquarters of the Erie RR was in Philadelphia, PA. This meant that a lot of time was away from his home in Cataract Falls.

XXI – Steiner History

1887 brought about a huge change in John H Steiner's life. Instead of just being a horse breeder and horse racer, he now joined other influential horsemen and formed a new horse racing association. In that time in history, horse racing was the number one sport that people participated in and watched. It was like forming the National Football League today.

From the Trenton Evening Times, 1887-03-04, the headlines read: The New Trotting Association

“ The directors of the newly organized American Trotting Association elected John H. Steiner, of Philadelphia, secretary, and M.T. Williams, of Detroit, treasurer. The vice-presidents will be selected at the May meeting of the board. Mr. Steiner, who is now commercial agent of the Erie road at Philadelphia, will resign his present position and remove to Detroit. Telegrams have been received indicating that most of the New Jersey trotting associations will join the new organization, and W.B. Fasig, secretary of the Cleveland Driving association, thinks that his association will also come over.”

As secretary, it was John H. Steiner' duty to settle disputes among members of the association. Just like any professional sport event where large amounts of money is involved, there is also a

large amount of cheating going on. It was his responsibility to look at all the facts in a dispute and decide who was right and who was wrong. Through the many years as secretary, the integrity of his decisions was never disputed. Everyone held him in the highest regard.

An example of the type of cases he ruled on is published in The Inter Ocean (Chicago, Illinois) Thu. Dec. 4, 1890:

“ The first protest considered was that against Benjamin C. Stanley and Samuel Hewey, of the Minnesota Association. They were charged with violating Rule 25 of the association which is as follows: 'As many horses may be entered by one party, or as many horses trained in the same stable as desired, but, only one that has been owned or controlled wholly or partly by the same person or persons, or trained in the same stable within ten days preceding the race, can start in any race of heats.'

The protest was made by Secretary Steiner that these men had controlled and stabled horses known as Harry Belmont, Jim Lane, Aga, Caesar, Sir Arthur, and Pilot War, and specifically charged them with entering two of these horses in races on the association's tracks. It was claimed by the defense that the stables had been divided, and the control of the objectionable animals given up twenty-one days prior to the race. Notwithstanding the evidence offered in affidavits to the contrary by the defendants, it was shown conclusively that the rule had been violated.”

John H. was a very Integral part in the national sport of horse racing in the United states.

XXIII – Steiner History

1895 was a very special year for the Steiners. Although they had wealth, success, and strong social standing, they were missing one thing. They had no children. John H. was 48 years old and Aggie Steiner was 45 years old. So, with the abundant number of orphanages in Chicago at the time and with John's office being in Chicago, he set out to find a baby to adopt.

In the spring of the year, two children were brought from Chicago to Cataract to join the Steiner family. A baby whom the Steiners named Agnes was officially adopted. The five year old boy with the name Harry Burgess was given the Steiner name but was not adopted.

There were a slew of orphanages throughout Chicago and every metropolitan city. These were desperate times and families had little or no means to take care of their children because of the Panic of 1893.

The **Panic of 1893** was an economic depression in the United States that began in 1893 and ended in 1897. It deeply affected every sector of the economy.

The Panic of 1893 has been traced to many causes.

As concern for the state of the economy deepened, people rushed to withdraw their money from the banks which caused bank runs. The credit crunch rippled through the economy. A financial panic in London combined with a drop in continental European trade caused foreign investors to sell American stocks to obtain American funds backed by gold. They started a run on gold in the U.S. Treasury. Specie (U.S. Gold minted coins) was considered more valuable than paper money; when people were uncertain about the future, they hoarded specie and rejected paper notes.

A series of bank failures followed, and the Northern Pacific Railway, the Union Pacific Railroad and the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad failed. This was followed by the bankruptcy of many other companies; in total over 15,000 companies and 500 banks, many of them in the West, failed. According to high estimates, about 17%–19% of the workforce was unemployed at the panic's peak. The huge spike in unemployment, combined with the loss of life savings kept in failed banks, meant that a once-secure middle-class could not meet their mortgage obligations. Many walked away from recently built homes as a result.

As a result of the panic, stock prices declined. Five hundred banks closed,15,000 businesses failed, and numerous farms ceased operation. The unemployment rate hit 25% in Pennsylvania, 35% in New York, and 43% in Michigan. Soup kitchens were opened to help feed the destitute.

Facing starvation, people chopped wood, broke rocks, and sewed by hand with needle and thread in exchange for food. In some cases, women resorted to prostitution to feed their families.

This forced President Cleveland to borrow $65 million in gold from Wall Street banker J.P. Morgan and the Rothschild banking family of England, through what was known as the Morgan-Belmont Syndicate. His party suffered enormous losses in the 1894 elections, largely being blamed for the downward spiral in the economy and the brutal crushing of the Pullman Strike. After their defeat in 1896, the Democrats did not regain control of any branch of the Federal Government until 1910.

This is the backdrop that Harry Burgess found himself in 1895 at the age of 5 years old in a Chicago Orphanage. Harry's older brothers and sisters were in the orphanage also. His one brother, John, was sent on an orphan train out west. These trains would load up many of the older children and head out West. At every town the children would depart the train and local citizens would look them over and decide whether they wanted to adopt them. John was adopted by a kind farmer and his wife in Kansas. Many of these children who were adopted lived abusive lives on the farm.

It is obvious that the Steiners had given a great deal of thought about adopting children. The most difficult problem would be to be able to find a baby to adopt. There were a multitude of

children available but very few babies. So, as a common practice at the time was that to get a baby to adopt you had to take an older child. Harry surely had been interviewed by the Steiners and they had access to his records revealing his background and his characteristics. Out of all the children at the orphanage that the Steiners could have had, they chose Harry.

John H. and Agnes raised Harry as their son and provided a loving home and all the benefits of being a Steiner. Harry was sent to a private school in Indianapolis as was Agnes Steiner. The question remains: Why wasn't Harry adopted by the Steiners?

There could have been many reasons. I am sure the Steiners only wanted a baby and did not want a five year old boy. So in some ways Harry was forced upon them.

Another consideration could have been that if he was adopted, he would be entitled to an inheritance later on in life and since they only wanted a baby, the Steiners desired to leave everything to the girl.

And it could have been for legal reasons. The Steiners could have felt that if Harry was adopted, then his parents at some time in future could contest the adoption and sue the Steiners and/or become a benefactor of the Steiner wealth. Whatever the reason, we today are the benefactors of the Steiner name.

*** Here is the only surviving picture of the Steiners and their extended family sitting on the porch of the Cataract resort. This was taken in the spring of 1895. Aggie is holding the baby and Harry is sitting in front of John H.



Steiner History – XXIV

Tragedy strikes the Steiners in Cataract. From the time that Harry Burgess joined the Steiner family in 1895 until 1902 life was quite joyous. John H. was at his height in the world of horse racing and breeding. Agnes ran the resort, took care of the children and the other members of the family, and she had her great social life. The Steiners were among the well known elite of the Indianapolis social society world. Life was good.

In 1891 an article entitled, " Complimenting John H. Steiner" was published in the Jackson Citizen paper. It reads as follows:

" The selection of John H. Steiner as register of the Trotting Register Association, has been most favorably received. The Breeders' Gazette speaks highly of Mr. Steiner in the following language: It was announced in these columns last week that at a meeting of the directors of the American Register Association Mr. J. H. Steiner had been elected registrar. Mr. Steiner, as is well known, has been secretary of the American Trotting Association ever since the organization was formed several years ago, and the efficient manner in which he has performed the duties of that

office and helped to build up the American Association to its present position is evidence enough of his executive ability. It is this quality that is needed in a registrar, and Mr. Steiner is otherwise fully equipped for the work of the new place; there is no doubt that he will fill it in a manner entirely satisfactory to those who have the interest of the American light harness horse at heart. The Wallace publications have now passed out of existence as such, and the Trotter Register Association starts out under the most favorable auspices. Mr. Steiner, in his position as secretary of the American Trotting Association, has shown himself to be an entirely competent man for that place, and that he will conduct the affairs of the new office with credit to himself and those he serves is not to be doubted."

In January of 1902 John H. attended a conference in New York. In May of 1902, he was reelected secretary-registrar of the American Trotting Register Association for two more years. About this time John H. started to have health issues all of a sudden that dramatically affected his life.

At the beginning of 1903, it was obvious that he could not fully perform his duties as secretary-registrar. An article appeared in The Inter Ocean newspaper April 1903. It was devastating in describing his inability to carry on. It reads, " The appointment of Frank E. Best as registrar of the American Trotting Association is one of the few moves made by that association that will meet with universal commendation. It has been known for some time that the incumbency of Mr. J. H. Steiner in the office of secretary-registrar of the American Trotting Register Association could not endure much longer, his health having failed him entirely some months ago."

John H. Steiner developed one of the most hideous brain disorders known to mankind. Even today, there is no cure. Once diagnosed the patient has a life expectancy of living from six months to three years. As time passes, the symptoms become worse and more difficult to deal with.

The disease that John H. suffered through is called Progressive Bulbar Palsy.

Here is what is known about the disease:

1. Progressive bulbar palsy (PBP) is a form of motor neuron disease (MND). When people develop the condition, the neurons that communicate between the brain stem, spinal cord, and brain become damaged, causing symptoms like loss of speech and muscle twitching. PBP is considered a phenotype of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS)
2. Progressive Bulbar Palsy Symptoms

The motor neurons affected by PBP are lower motor neurons. These cells send signals from upper motor neurons to the brain to control muscle movements. When PBP damages them, symptoms can include:

- Difficulty with swallowing due to pharyngeal muscle weakness
- Weak jaw and facial muscles
- Muscle twitching in the tongue and face
- Loss of speech that worsens over time
- Atrophy of the tongue
- Excessive drooling due to a lack of control over the mouth and facial muscles
- Limb weakness
- Emotional lability, which is abnormal crying or laughing fits
- Weight loss

People with PBP may be at an increased risk of choking. They also have a higher chance of developing a specific type of lung infection known as aspiration pneumonia, which occurs when food, liquids, and bacteria enter the lower airways and lungs.

John H. spent time in Wisconsin at a sanitarium for treatment but soon returned to Dr. Sterne's sanatorium in Indianapolis, IN where he died April 28, 1903.

There were many tributes to John H. in the newspapers. They all recalled his history with the railroads and the horse racing world. At the end of a newspaper article entitled, “Funeral of J. H. Steiner”, the last two sentences have the most significance to us. It reads, “ He was reserved in manner, but was noted for exceeding loyalty to his friends. He leaves a widow and an adopted daughter ten years old.”

If Harry had not known before that he was not adopted by the Steiners, this 13 year old boy was aware of it now.

Steiner History – XXV

After John's death, the Steiner family never regained its financial and social status. Agnes Wallace Steiner was left to raise two children, run a resort, take care of her aging mother ,horse breeding, which she had no knowledge about, and run the farm business. The following is somewhat of a historical sequence of events that eventually ended in 1977.

--- Harry Burgess left the Steiners in 1908 at the age of 18 years old while attending DePauw University in Greencastle, IN. According to handwritten notes from Edith Steiner (your grandmother and Harry's wife), “ He left at eighteen to go on the railroad. His boyhood friends William and Everette Ceanord had gone on the railroad and the Steiners sent him to college when he graduated from high school. He ran away from college and went on the railroad, from

there he came to Lafayette, where we met." After leaving Cataract, Harry never made any future effort to keep in touch with the Steiner family.

---1905 – Agnes Wallace Steiner's mother, Zerelda Wallace, passed away.

---1910 – The census states that only two people were living at the resort. They were Agnes Steiner and Joe Steiner (John's brother) and they were both 60 years old. The daughter was attending the private high school in Indianapolis called Miss Lander's School for Girls. She was 15 years old at the time. **The residence is listed as being owned and free of mortgage.**

---1911 – On December 7, 1911, Agnes Steiner wrote a worried letter to:

My Dear Mrs. Strang

Yours of Dec 1st received. I want help from you in finding Harry's address. I have not heard from him for two years. I think he had left Lafayette. I am afraid he is not doing good. He had every opportunity in Lafayette for promotions. I do not know why he left or where he is now.

Agnes Wallace Steiner

This was a heartfelt letter from a caring mother who was searching for her son. Mrs. Strang was Harry's sister who was living in Detroit.

--- 1911-- David Wallace passed away at age 59. He was Agnes's brother. He became widely known over Indiana through his long service as a member of the State Board of Agriculture and in connection with a stock yards business, which he conducted for some years and later was assistant manager of the Indianapolis Speedway. It was said that to know him was to like him. Genial, uniformly good tempered and kindly, he made friends everywhere, and his sunny presence will be missed by a host of men and women to an extent of which he never would have dreamed. Agnes Wallace Steiner became the last of the Wallaces.

--- 1912 – Zelda Sequin Wallace, David's widow came to live in the home of Agnes Wallace Steiner. The daughter Agnes graduated from high school and enrolled in DePauw University.

---1914 – Zelda Sequin Wallace passed away at the age of 63.

--- 1916 --Agnes graduated and married fellow student William Stuckey. William Stuckey was from Stockwell, IN. It was also the same year that Harry Burgess and Edith Nelson were wed.

---1918 --DePauw University printed a follow up of the class of 1916 to see what its graduates were doing. It noted that William and Agnes Stuckey were residing in Cataract. It stated that William was running the resort/hotel, breeding cattle, and draining land.

---1920 – The census cites a concerning note. **It says that the Steiner property had a mortgage on it.** This is very telling. Within a 10 year period the property went from no mortgage to a mortgage. It is evident that without John H. Steiner's massive salary, times were getting difficult.

---1922 – A catastrophe took place. A chimney fire started the roof of the resort on fire. Thus being miles from the nearest town, the resort burnt to the ground. There was nothing saved. The newspaper article cited that the home was under insured and that there would not be enough insurance money to rebuild and to refurnish. Agnes Wallace Steiner had to move and live in a small cabin where the hired help used to live. Agnes was so distraught that she swore that she would not build another home in which fire could destroy it. She ended up building a cinder block ranch house that still stands and is occupied to this day.

---1928 – A most beautiful and gracious woman passed away. Agnes Wallace Steiner was 78 years old. Her grave site is at the Crown Hill Cemetery in Indianapolis, IN next to John H. and in the family Wallace section. The great John H. Steiner era had ended.

1977 – The Indianapolis Star newspaper ran a historical piece entitled, " Cataracts's First Lady: Aggie Wallace Steiner" It gives us a good idea of what happened to the Steiner farm.

In 1952 the State started buying property to build a dam to control flooding in the Cataract area. At the time it was feared that the falls would be destroyed for the new project. In 1953 Cataract Lake was created by building a dam. But the falls were spared.

At this time, Agnes Stuckey donated 32 acres on each side of the river to the State of Indiana which included the upper and lower falls and dedicated this property to her mother, Agnes Wallace Steiner. Today there is a plaque at the state park at Cataract, IN that denotes this. With this donation to the State, she signed an agreement that the falls would be owned by the Steiners until her death, and then it would be turned over to the State. Agnes Stuckey died in 1977 in her home in Cloverdale, IN. Much of the Steiner estate had been sold off over the years. What was left was part of her estate when she died and given to her son John.

From the little I know of Agnes Stuckey, I don't believe that she was a very nice person. My parents when they got married in 1939 went to Cataract, IN as part of their honeymoon trip. My dad wanted to make a connection with the Steiners to learn some family history since his father Harry Burgess Steiner had passed away in 1936. Harry never talked about his growing up with the Steiners. When my parents arrived in Cataract and met Agnes Stuckey, she totally rejected them. They left Cataract and never again did they or any Lafayette Steiner try to reach out to Agnes Stuckey.

Another aspect of Agnes Stuckey was that she dedicated the falls to her mother, but nowhere is there any mention of her father, John H. Steiner. It seems that she was totally ungrateful for the life that her father provided for her and saving her from an unknown fate at the orphanage.

Edith Steiner wrote that the Stuckeys were divorced. That could very well be true. William Stuckey died in 1960. There is a single grave marker with his name only in Cloverdale Cemetery. Agnes Stucky died in 1977. At her grave marker in the Cloverdale Cemetery, it shows that she is buried with her son, John, who died in 2003. This very unusual situation would leave me to believe that at some time they did divorce.

In the 1950's and 1960's, it has been reported that she would sit at the entrance of the falls and charge cars 25 cents to enter the falls area dedicated to her mother. Was this because she needed the money or was it because she was rather strange and very eccentric?

It is obvious that there was a strong bond between Agnes Stuckey and her mother Agnes Steiner. According to Edith Steiner notes, Harry felt that Agnes Steiner favored the daughter over him. This could have been true since the girl was raised since she was adopted and Harry was not adopted. It could be that Harry felt emotionally neglected after John H. passed away and felt that there was no future for him in the Steiner household. So, he left at the age of 18 to never return.

As a final point, the last paragraph of the Indianapolis Star article states a somber tone that wraps up one of the greatest families of Indiana historical presence. It the reads:

“ Aggie Wallace Steiner died at her Cataract home in 1928. Time has practically erased her reputation and associations.”

It is now time to move on to the Harry Burgess Steiner's era and his legacy.

*** I found this extraordinary picture of the Steiner estate on the internet for sale. This was taken from the lower waterfall. It clearly shows the resort/residence/hotel, the horse stables that John H. built, logs from cleared trees on the property, the old grist mill (which was washed away in the 1913 floods), and standing at the lower waterfalls is a gentleman (I want to believe that the man is John H. Steiner).



The Harry Burgess Steiner Era

After the death of John H. Steiner in 1903, life at the horse farm and resort hotel slowly started to change. For over a year, John H. suffered from the dreaded brain disease that eventually took his life. During this time, no longer was John H. receiving the huge salary that the family had been accustomed to. Instead there were huge expenses in providing care for him in several different sanatoriums. Breeding race horses had stopped, and that income was gone. The guests who use to fill the hotel on the weekends no longer showed. There was no such thing as Medicaid, Medicare, food stamps, Social Security survivor benefits, long term hospital insurance, etc. The surviving Steiner family was on there own to make the best of a bad situation.

Family members in 1903 were Aggie Steiner, Joe Steiner (John H.'s brother), Harry (age 18), and Agnes (age 13). The farm shifted from raising race horses to raising cattle and cash crops. Agnes continued to attend a private school in Indianapolis and eventually went on to graduate from De Pauw University where she met her husband. After their marriage, they both lived at the farm where he supervised all the farming activity.

Harry, while living on the farm, participated with the many farming activities required. He gained a great deal of knowledge about farming and enjoyed it. But he was always looking to the time that he could leave and find a life of his own. He knew that he had no future on the farm. He knew that he was not adopted by the Steiners and that, in the future, all the property would be owned by Agnes. The death of John H. was the opportune time to set out on his own.

So at age 18, Harry left the farm and the Steiner family forever and to never return. He did not ever talk about the Steiners of Cataract Falls, he did not ever visit Cataract Falls again, and he never saw Aggie Steiner again. He was completely done with that part of his life. Leaving Cataract Falls, Aggie helped him get a job on the Monon Railroad in Lafayette, IN.

This was the beginning of the Steiner family as we know it today. If Harry had never left Cataract Falls, relocated to Lafayette, and met Edith Nelson our great families would not exist. How Harry and Edith lived their lives and raised their family is both endearing and at the same time tragic.

*** Here is what I have learned about Harry Burgess and the Steiner family in Cataract Falls.

1. Harry was never adopted by the Steiners.
2. Harry knew he was not adopted even though he was given the Steiner surname.
3. Harry let everyone assume that he was the adopted son of the Steiners.
4. Harry's wife, Edith, stated in her written memories that Harry had told her that he was adopted by the Steiners.
5. Harry's sister, Agnes Burgess, knew he lived with the Steiners and corresponded with Aggie Steiner, John H.'s wife.
6. Once Harry left the Steiner's farm, he never returned or had any contact with Aggie, or the adopted girl, Agnes Steiner.
7. Aggie Steiner passed away in the 1920's. Harry had a large family and was very poor. He definitely could have used an inheritance from the Steiner estate. He did not receive one, and he did not seek one because he knew that he was never officially a Steiner.
8. Harry was smart to let everyone believe that he was adopted by the Steiners. In this way, he started a new life in Lafayette as Harry Burgess Steiner with no drama or questions about his past. It was his secret and there was no need to share it with anyone else; not even his wife, Edith. She always believed Harry was adopted.
9. The story that has been passed down over the years and repeated by many as to the reason Harry left Cataract Falls was that the Steiners wanted him to marry his sister Agnes Steiner so that all the wealth of the family could be kept under the Steiner name. Although this account always sounded far-fetched, family members accepted it as the real reason he left Cataract Falls. That is when Harry ran away from home and landed in Lafayette, IN because he refused to marry his sister. Today we know that Harry was not adopted but given the Steiner name and that the baby Agnes was adopted and inherited the Steiner inheritance.

10. It is my belief that Harry made up this story when people asked him why he left Cataract Falls and settled in Lafayette, IN. This story was fabricated to give him an excuse as to why he ran away from home to Lafayette, why he never returned to Cataract Falls, and why he never pursued his inheritance. Everyone believed the story, and Harry was never questioned about his past.