

## The Older Descendants of Thomas French

(© 2014 by Robert A. Christiansen, Version 0, 14 Dec 2014)

Thomas French was an early settler in Boomer Township, Pottawattamie County, Iowa, north of Council Bluffs.

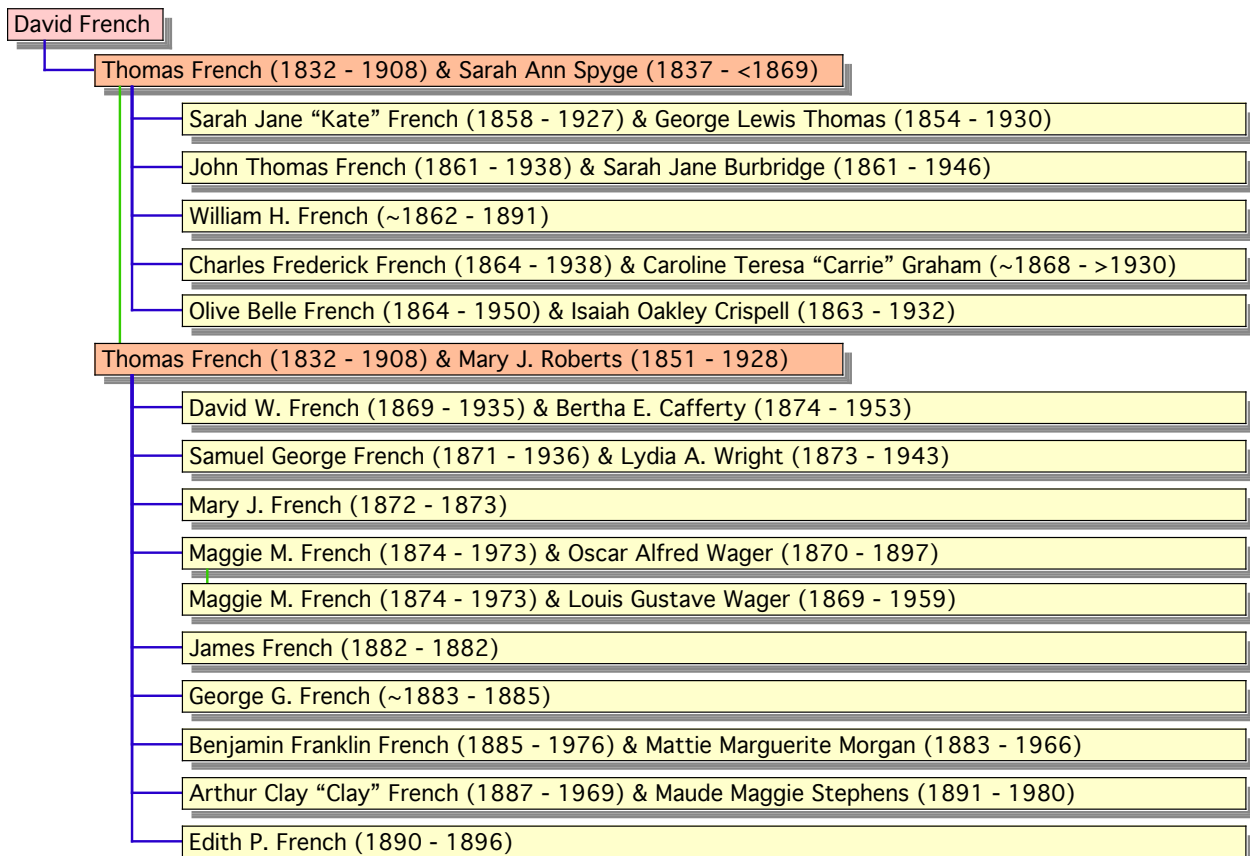
Thomas French was born in England to David French and as a young man was a framework knitter in Leicester, England. He immigrated with a Mormon company on the *Ellen Maria* early in 1853.

Thomas French subsequently spent a number of years moving about the west between the Missouri River and Utah, perhaps working as teamster. He settled in Section 33 of south central Boomer Township in the late 1860s.

Thomas French was twice married and had fourteen known children, of whom four died in early childhood and one died without marrying.

Thomas French and his second wife are buried in the Grange Cemetery in Boomer Township. It is not known where his first wife is buried.

The children of Thomas French are listed in the following chart. Known grandchildren and great grandchildren appear in charts on subsequent pages.





***The French Family after Thomas French's Funeral***  
*photo and identifications courtesy of Peggy Johnston*

Thomas French died at home in Boomer Township on August 26, 1908 and was buried in the Grange Cemetery about two miles north of the French farm.

I received the photograph with the following identifications. See the next page for more information.

Five seated in front row:

Charles F. French, David French, Mary (Roberts) French, George Thomas, Sarah "Kate" (French) Thomas

Five ladies standing in middle row:

Maude (Stephens) French, Amy Darrington (Thomas), Olive (French) Criswell, Emma Thomas, Olive "Dollie" (Thomas) Ward

Eleven standing towards rear:

Maggie (French) Wager, Bertha (Cafferty) French, David Thomas, Leonard G. French, Charles Thomas, Fred Ward, A. C. "Clay" French, Mattie (Morgan) French, John French, Ben French, Sam French

The above photo was presumably taken in front of the French house, which was described thusly: "large brick, two stories and a basement. He built it in 1870. It is 36x44 feet." Few farm houses at that time were that large.

In the following partial family list, the twenty-one boldfaced individuals were identified on the previous photograph.

Thomas French\* & Sarah Ann Spyge

|        **Sarah Jane “Kate” French & George Lewis Thomas**  
|        |        **Olive Mae “Dolly” Thomas & Walter Frederick Ward**  
|        |        **Charles L. Thomas & Amy Elizabeth Darrington**  
|        |        **Emma Thomas & Paul J. Zimmerman**  
|        |        Edith G. Thomas & Samuel Delbert Hough  
|        |        George Henry Thomas & Nellie Marguerite Feller  
|        |        **David Franklin Thomas & Nellie May Smith**  
|        **John Thomas French & Sarah Jane Burbridge**  
|        **Charles Frederick French & Caroline Teresa “Carrie” Graham**  
|        **Olive Belle French & Isaiah Oakley Crispell**

Thomas French\* & Mary J. Roberts

|        **David W. French & Bertha E. Cafferty**  
|        |        Fred C. French & Ruth Sigler  
|        **Samuel George French & Lydia A. Wright**  
|        |        **Leonard Glenn French & Fay Winifred Hough**  
|        **Maggie M. French\* & Oscar Alfred Wager**  
|        **Benjamin Franklin French & Mattie Marguerite Morgan**  
|        **Arthur Clay “Clay” French & Maude Maggie Stephens**

These twenty-one identified on the photograph consist of:

- ◆ The widow.
- ◆ All nine surviving children, four with their spouses. The missing spouses:
  - Samuel French is divorced.
  - Maggie (French) Wager is widowed and has not yet remarried her late husband's older brother.
  - John and Charles French are living in Oklahoma and their wives likely did not travel to the funeral.
  - Olive (French) Crispell is living in New York and her husband likely did not attend.
- ◆ Five grandchildren, two with their spouses.

Thomas French was one of the more prosperous farmers in the area, sometimes loaning money to help new farmers become established. He also bought land in east central Boomer Township, where there was briefly, from 1896 to 1900, a post office named French.

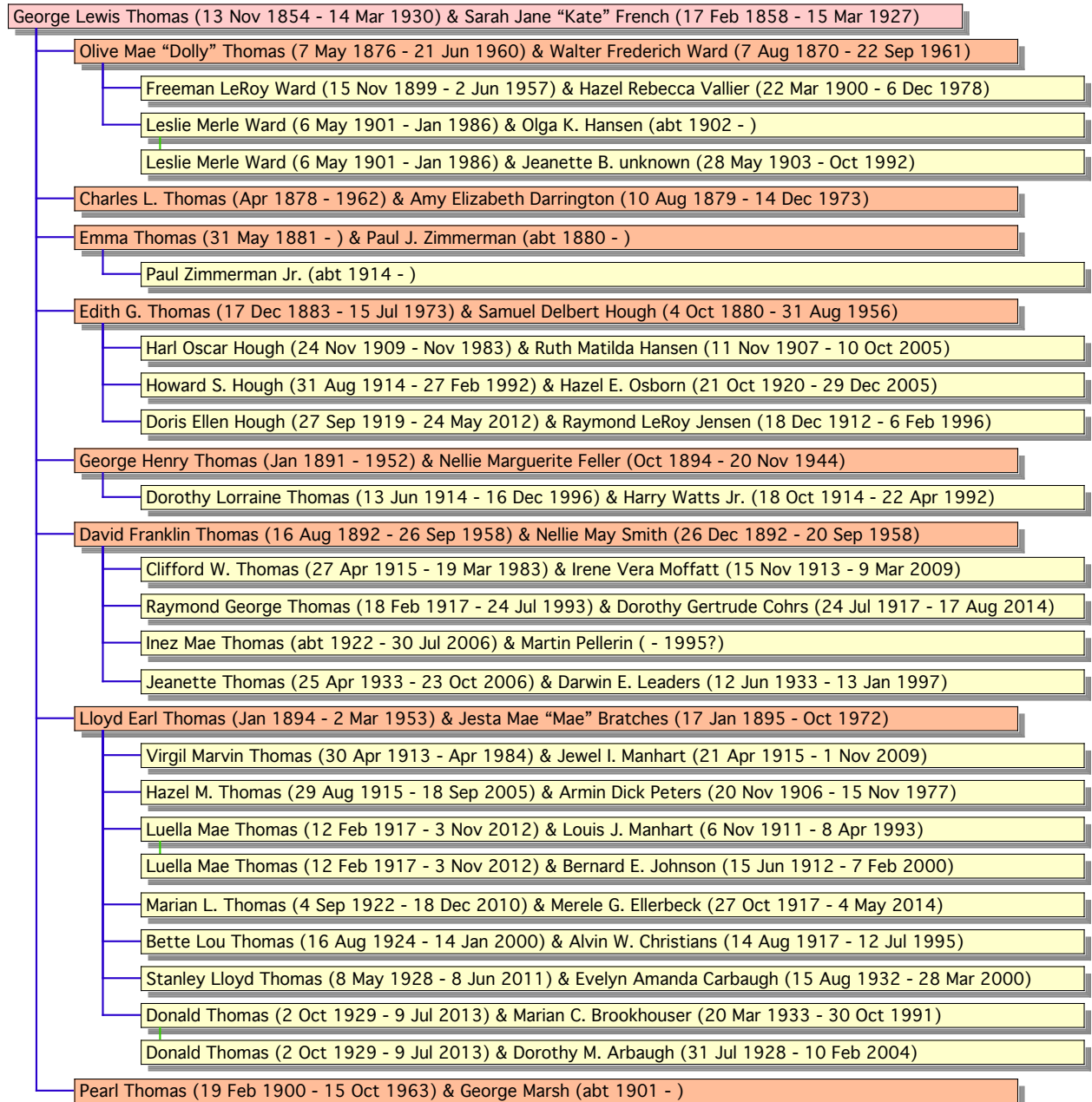
## ■ Sarah Jane "Kate" French & George Lewis Thomas

George Lewis Thomas was born in Utah to David Thomas and Elizabeth Ann Lewis and backtrailed with the extended Thomas family to Pottawattamie in \_\_\_\_.

George and Kate Thomas married in 1875 and farmed in east central Boomer Township. They retired to Council Bluffs in 1914.

George and Kate Thomas are buried in the Grange Cemetery in Boomer Township.

The known children and grandchildren of George and Kate Thomas are listed in the following chart.



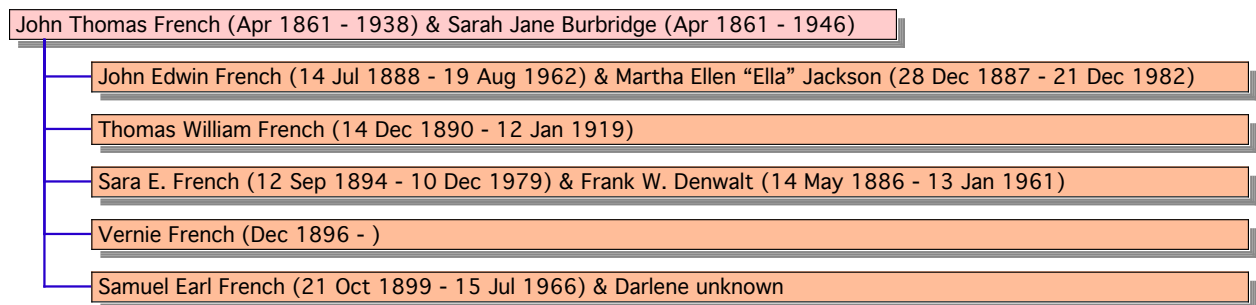
## ■ John Thomas French & Sarah Jane Burbridge

Sarah Ann Burbridge was born in Dubuque County, Iowa to Edwin Burbridge and Elizabeth Downs. In 1865 the Edwin Burbridge family moved to east central Boomer Township.

After marrying in 1887, John and Sarah French first farmed in Hazel Dell and Boomer Townships. Between 1900 and 1910 they moved to Canadian County, Oklahoma.

John Thomas and Sarah Jane French are buried in the Hinton Cemetery in Caddo County, Oklahoma.

The known children and grandchildren of John Thomas and Sarah Jane French are listed in the following chart.



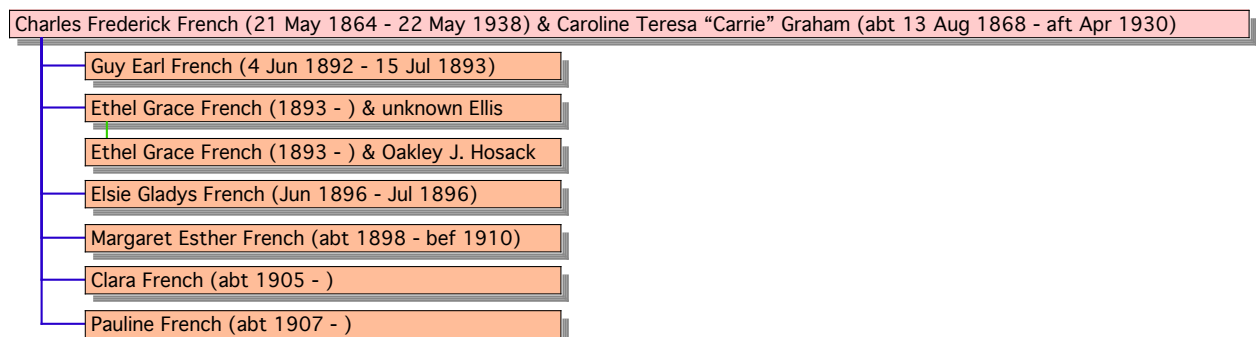
## ■ Charles Frederick French & Caroline Teresa "Carrie" Graham

Caroline Teresa "Carrie" Graham was the daughter of Edward Alvin Graham and Hannah Mary Hayes who lived in southwestern Iowa.

After Charles and Carrie French married in 1888, they farmed in Harrison and Pottawattamie County before moving to Oklahoma before 1905. By 1910 they had moved to Omaha, Nebraska, where they remained until their deaths.

Charles and Carrie French are buried in Forest Lawn Cemetery in Omaha.

The known children and grandchildren of Charles and Carrie French are listed in the following chart.



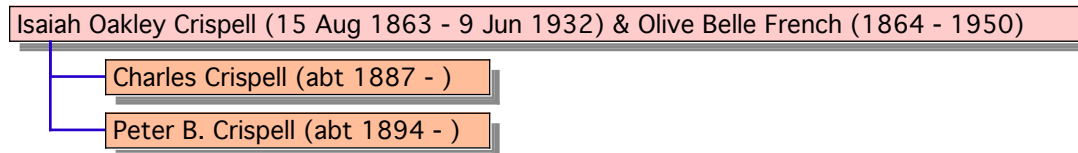
## ■ Olive Belle French & Isaiah Oakley Crispell

Isaiah Oakley Crispell was born in New York to Peter J. Crispell and Mary C. Oakley.

Isaiah Crispell and Olive French married in 1884 and lived in Iowa for some years. By 1900 they were living in Ulster County, New York where I believe they remained until their deaths.

Isaiah and Olive Crispell are buried in Fairview Cemetery in Stone Ridge, Ulster County, New York.

The known children and grandchildren of Isaiah and Olive Crispell are listed in the following chart.



## ■ David W. French & Bertha E. Cafferty

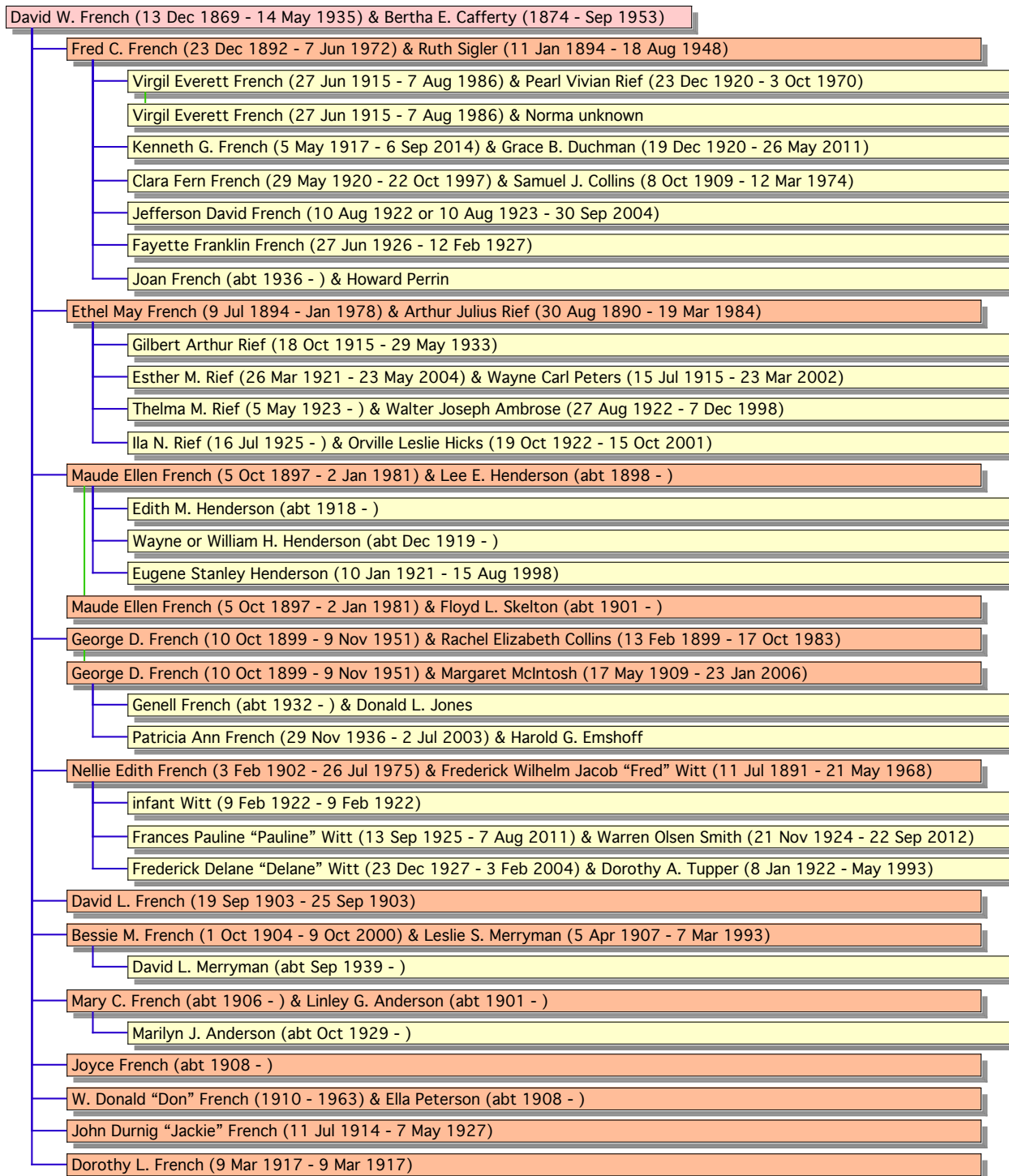
Bertha E. Cafferty was the daughter of Thomas Henry Cafferty and Laura Ella Hough of northwestern Hazel Dell Township.

David French and Bertha Cafferty married in Omaha, Nebraska in 1892. Subsequently they lived in northwestern Hazel Dell Township, in Section 5. However, in 1930 they were living in Rockford Township. By 1940 Bertha was living at 244 Benton St. in Council Bluffs.

David and Bertha French are buried in the Grange Cemetery in Boomer Township.

The known children and grandchildren of David and Bertha French are listed in the chart on the following page.





## ■ Samuel George French & Lydia A. Wright

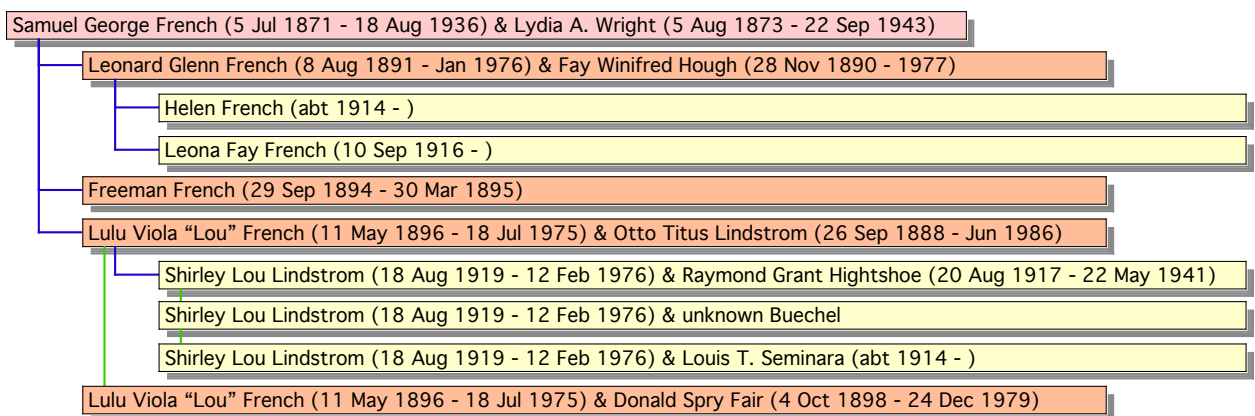
Lydia A. Wright was the daughter of George Wright Jr. and Alice Emma Gilson of north central Hazel Dell Township.

Samuel George French and Lydia A. Wright married in Pottawattamie County in 1891. They were farming in Boomer Township in 1895 and 1900. Subsequently they divorced.

By 1920 Samuel French was living in Council Bluffs and working as a carpenter.

Samuel French and his former wife, Lydia, are both buried in the Grange Cemetery in Boomer Township.

The known children and grandchildren of Samuel and Lydia French are listed in the following chart.



## ■ Maggie M. French & Oscar Alfred Wager/Louis Gustave Wager

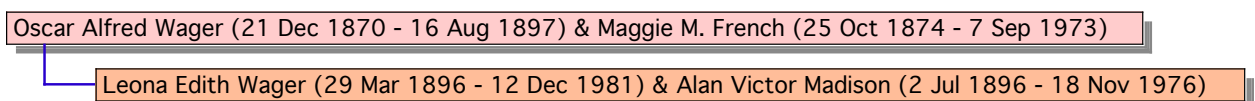
Oscar and Louis Wager were both sons of Gustave Wager and Mary Catherine Panning of northwestern Hazel Dell Township. The Wager family at one time ran the Reels mill on Pigeon Creek.

Oscar Wager and Maggie French married in 1896 in Pottawattamie County and Oscar died the following year. Maggie and her child then lived in the Gustave Wager household until remarrying.

In 1909 Maggie (French) Wager married her late husband's older brother, Louis Gustave Wager (15 May 1869 – 23 Jan 1959). The Louis Wager family moved to Council Bluffs, where Louis worked as a railroad engineer.

Oscar Wager is buried in the Reels Cemetery in Boomer Township. Louis and Maggie Wager are buried in the Grange Cemetery in Boomer Township.

The known children and grandchildren of Maggie French are listed in the following chart.





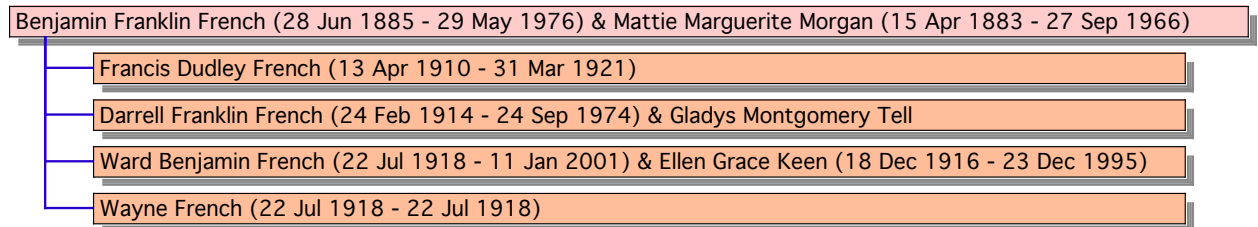
## ■ Benjamin Franklin French & Mattie Marguerite Morgan

Mattie Marguerite Morgan was born in Missouri Valley, Iowa to Seth Harrison Morgan and Martha Jane Roland.

Benjamin Franklin French and Mattie Marguerite Morgan married around 1905. They initially lived in the Honey Creek area in southeastern Rockford Township. By 1920 they were living in the Crescent area.

Benjamin and Mattie French are buried in the Grange Cemetery in Boomer Township.

The known children and grandchildren of Benjamin and Mattie French are listed below.



## ■ Arthur Clay French & Maude Maggie Stephens

Maude Maggie Stephens was born in Crescent Township to Silas Liona Stephens and Alice Gideon.

Arthur Clay French and Maude Maggie Stephens married about 1906. They were living in the Honey Creek area of Rockford Township in 1910 and on the Thomas French farm in 1920. By 1925 they had moved to Council Bluffs where Arthur French first worked as a carpenter and later as a bartender at the Oak Tavern.

Arthur Clay and Maude Maggie French are buried in the Grange Cemetery in Boomer Township.

The known children and grandchildren of Arthur Clay and Maude Maggie French are listed below.

