

The children of Anna Wank née Schroeder



This lovely photo also came to me from [Chase Benjamin Antiques](#) as part of our Christmas gift swap. Look at all the names on the back of the photo! It says that these were the "children's ages at Anna's death". It also says that "Anna died on March 13th, 1909".



But did you notice that the surname of the children is missing? So which Anna's children were they and from where?

Luckily there is a clue on the very bottom of the text. It says "for Sarah Schroeder".



Could this have been Anna's relative, perhaps even her sister? Could Schroeder have been Anna's maiden name? I decided to give it a try. And luck was on my side!

Anna Schroeder, the mother of these beautiful children, married their father **James C. Wank** in Defiance, Ohio, on November 12th, 1895. Anna Schroeder had been born on March 2nd, 1872. And indeed, her death record confirms the information on the photo - she died on March 13th, 1909, of "pulmonary consumption" which translates to TB today. According to the death certificate, she had had it for 5 years (Click [HERE](#) to view the death certificate). This diagnosis was still a death sentence in the early 1900s since the vaccine had not been developed yet. It was known that TB was an infectious disease and the sufferers would have to be separated from the healthy. I'm afraid to think about this, but I think after her last child birth with Mable in 1905, Anna was probably separated from her family. Her death certificate was issued in Hereford, Texas, where she was staying at the time of her death. Perhaps in a pulmonary sanatorium, away from her husband and children? She was buried on the Riverside Cemetery in Defiance, Ohio.




Source: www.findagrave.com

Anna and James had 5 children, all of them you can see in the above photograph:

-- **Elmer Lawrence Wank** was born on September 22nd, 1896, in Defiance, Ohio. He married Mildred Bernice née Pollock in 1930 and they had a son Charles Jay Wank in 1942 in Chicago, Illinois. Unfortunately Charles already passed away in 1994 at just 52, 4 years after his father Elmer had died in 1990. Elmer's obituary mentions 3 grandchildren and 5 great-grandchildren (Click [HERE](#) to view the obituary on www.findagrave.com). They must still be out there!

Elmer L. Wank
Elmer L. Wank, 93, formerly of 603 S. Beech St., Bryan, died early Sunday, Jan. 14, 1990, in Community Hospitals of Williams County-Bryan. He had resided at the Park View Nursing Center, Edgerton, since May 1989.



Elmer Wank

The son of Anna (Schroder) and James Wank, he was born in Ney on Sept. 22, 1896.

He retired from the United States Government Air Mail Service in Chicago and the Aro Corporation in Bryan, and had been an employee of the Pepsi-Cola Bottling Co. of Bryan.

A veteran of World War I, Mr. Wank had served in the Marines.

Mr. Wank was the oldest charter member of the Eastland Baptist Church, Bryan, where he was a deacon, a former treasurer and a Sunday school teacher. Also, he was a former member of the Charles E. Arnold Post No. 284 in Bryan and the former Bryan Service Club.

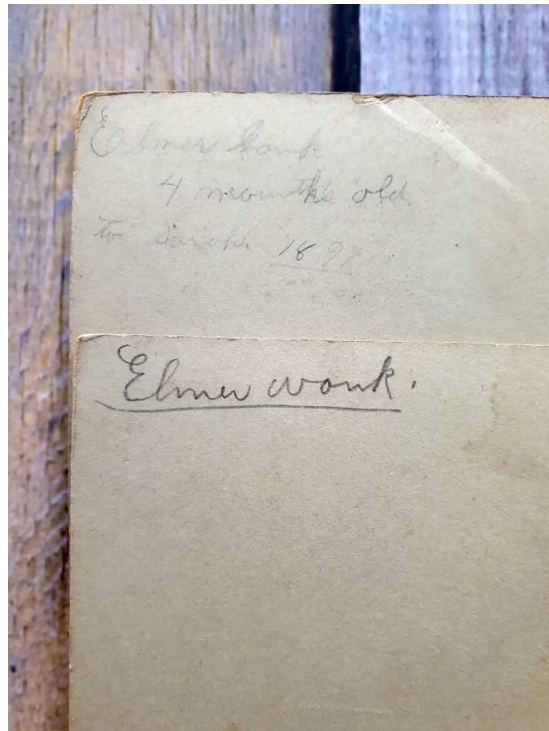
Surviving are a son, Charles of Edgerton; three grandchildren; and five great-grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Mildred, in 1972; a brother, Richard; and three sisters, Evelyn Wank, Donelda Wank and Mabel Boone.

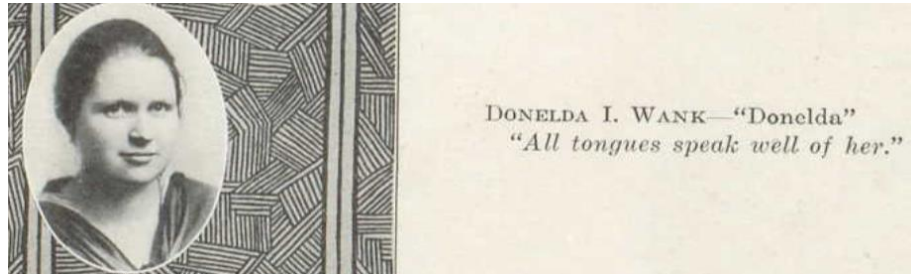
Services will be at 1 p.m. Wednesday in the Eastland Baptist Church with the Rev. A. Jack Smith officiating. Burial will be in Ney Cemetery, where the Charles E. Arnold post of the American Legion will be in charge of graveside military rites.

Visitation will be at the Oberlin & Ford Memorial Funeral Home after 2 p.m. Tuesday, when the family will receive friends from 2 to 4 p.m. and 7 to 9 p.m. Preferred memorials are to the Eastland Baptist Church.

So when my source of the original photo mentioned that he had more photos from Defiance, Ohio, and the surname marked on a couple of the photos was Wank, I had him send those to me as well, so that the photographs would stay together (see those below). Here's a photo of little Elmer at just 4 months old. The original photo is very faded, so I've used some AI to bring out his features.

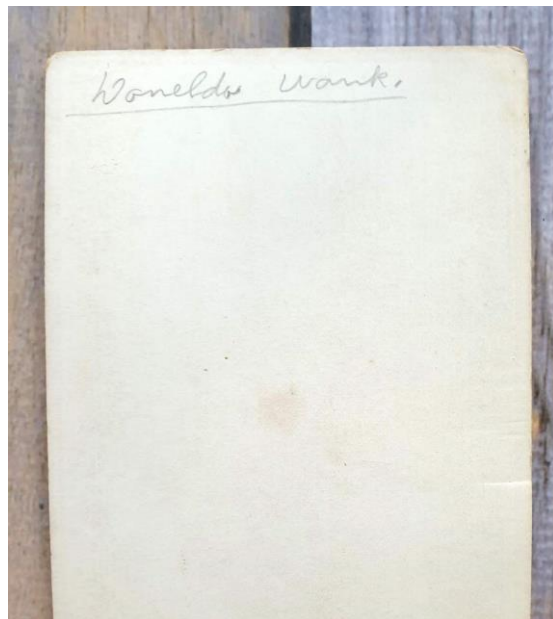


-- **Donelda** (in some sources **Donalda**) **Irene Wank** was born on November 17th, 1897 also in Defiance, Ohio. It looks like Donelda never married. She is found to be living with her father James and sister Evelyn in 1930 and 1940 in Montgomery, Illinois. In 1940, she worked as a stenographer at a lawyer's office. I find her working as an office secretary up until 1960. She passed away in 1976. I found a yearbook photo of Donelda from West Aurora High School from 1920 on Ancestry (Click [HERE](#) to view):

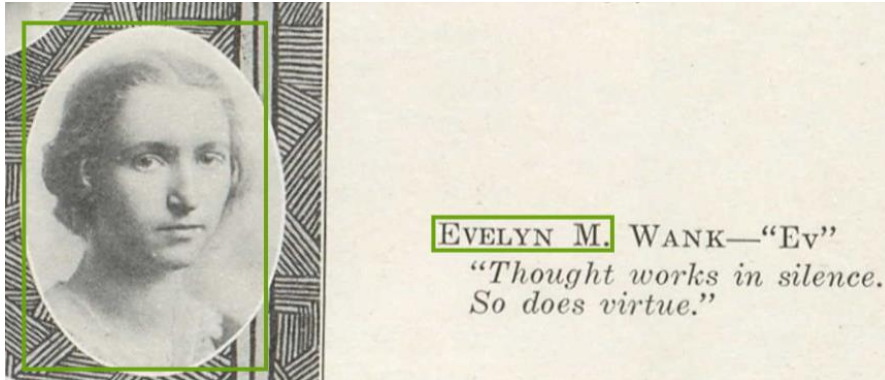


West Aurora High School, Illinois, yearbook 1920

My source of the original photo also had a baby photo of Donelda which I had him send to me as well. Like Elmer's photo, this photo has seen much love, it is very faded, so here's my attempt at photoshopping its quality:



-- **Evelyn M. Wank** was born on September 2nd, 1899. She seemed to have shared her sister Donald's fate - she didn't marry, doesn't seem to have had any children and in 1940 was working as a stenographer at a lawyer's office, perhaps even the same one as her sister. I find her working as an office secretary in Aurora, Illinois, up until 1960. She passed away in September 1970. I also found a yearbook photo of Evelyn from the West Aurora High School yearbook from 1920 (Click [HERE](#) to view):



West Aurora High School, Illinois, yearbook 1920

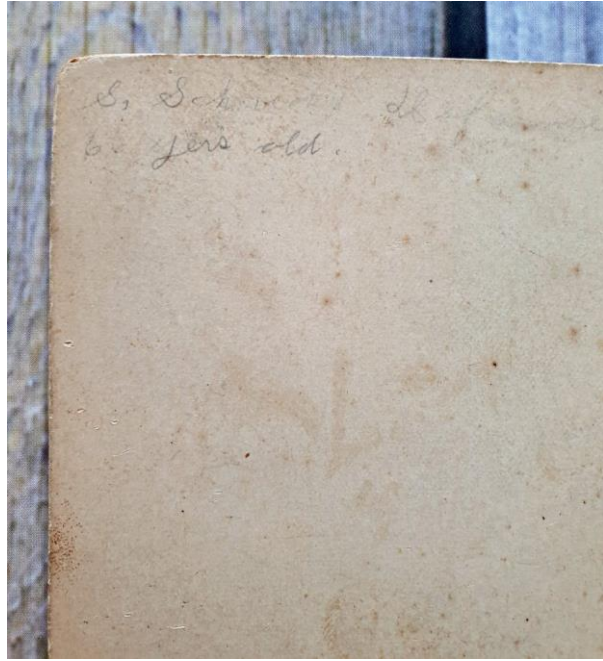
-- **Richard Charles Wank** was born on March 5th, 1902, in Defiance, Ohio. He had married Alma Wank some time before the 1930 census and in 1930, his son Robert F. Wank had just been born (Click [HERE](#) to view the 1930 census). At the time, Richard worked as a sheep shearer. There is a WWII draft card for him on Ancestry, but I don't know if he actively served. He was 42 years old at the time of being drafted. The draft card says he was 5 11 tall, weighed 180, had a ruddy complexion, blue eyes and brown hair and at the time he was working for Lyon Metal Products (Click [HERE](#) to view). Richard passed away in December 1977. I don't find any record of his son Robert's death, maybe he is still alive today and has children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren of his own?

-- **Mable Wank** was born on February 7th, 1905. She attended East Aurora High School in the 1920s. She married Ernest Boone from Belgium in 1930/31. On November 8th, 1931, they had a son Raymond Boone. They were living in Aurora, Illinois, in 1940 (Click [HERE](#)). She passed away in 1965 at just 60 years of age. Mable's son Raymond passed away in 1989. Raymond had lost his prematurely born newborn son Steven Douglas Boone in January 1956. I can't find him having any other children.

It looks like the children's father James Wank never re-married after Anna's death. He is found to be living in Montgomery, Kane in Illinois, in 1930, in a rented house and working as a labourer. And who do I find living together with him - his sister-in-law **Sarah Rahlig née Schroeder**, his late wife's sister and her husband Joseph Rahrig (Click [HERE](#) for the 1930 census). Sarah was 6 years younger than her sister Anna, born on May 17th, 1878. She and Joseph had got married in May 1908. Their marriage record (Click [HERE](#)) also provides me with the name of Anna's parents - **Sebastian Schroeder and Elizabeth née Steinschauer** (?). Anna's father Sebastian had emigrated to the United States from Germany in 1855 at the age of 27 (Click [HERE](#) to view passenger list). He had married Anna's mother Elizabeth in 1865 in Wisconsin. I wonder if the grandmother in the photo with all the children is Elizabeth Schroeder, Anna's mother? She passed away in 1916, so only after this photo was taken. The children's paternal grandmother Wank had passed away years earlier.



This photo of an elderly man is identified as "**S. Schroeder, Defiance, 66 years old**". This must be the children's grandfather **Sebastian Schroeder** and the photo must have been taken in 1894, just before he passed away. Some of the children didn't even get to know their German grandpa Sebastian, who had been born in 1828 in Hessen, Germany.



The next photo is not identified. Could one of the girls be Anna, and/or her sisters as children? Unfortunately I don't know for sure. The Wank children had other aunts and uncles, too. Besides Sarah, Anna's siblings included Joseph H. Schroeder, John Schroeder, Mary Elizabeth Tripp and Ellen Cornelia Graves. So perhaps these girls dressed in white on their confirmation day are Anna's sisters Sarah and Ellen?



The children's father James Wank passed away in 1950, 41 years after he had lost his wife and the mother of his children, Anna, to tuberculosis. Of the children in the photograph, it looks like the eldest Elmer and the second youngest Richard's descendants might still be out there. Perhaps any of them might be missing these family treasures!

