

Sisters Leila, Gwendolyn and Irma Ellis



This faded cabinet card, taken in Sheffield, Iowa, came to me together with the photos of the Goppinger sisters and Lorena Storck from my previous two blogposts. I've tried to enhance the faded image as best as I could so that the faces are somewhat more recognisable. The handwritten note that came with the photo says:

“Lela, Gwin and Irma Ellis – their mother was our schoolteacher”

I found the sisters in the 1900 census, living together with their parents William Ellis and Gertrude née Jones in Marion, Franklin, Iowa (Click [HERE](#)).

Their mother Gertrude “Gertie” A. née Jones had been born on November 20th, 1863, in Oregon, Dane County (Dane), Wisconsin, to Scottish parents John S. Jones and Abbie C. Streeman. In the census lists, mother Gertie is not listed as a teacher (as the handwritten note indicates), so perhaps she was helping children with home-schooling. Maybe it wasn't so much a profession but more like a side-job which is why it wasn't recorded in the census lists?

Their father William Ellis had been born in 1854 to English-Irish parents and he was a farmer. William and Gertie had gotten married in March 1887 in Franklin, Iowa. In 1930, mother Gertie was widowed and was living in Mason City, Iowa. Her husband William had died in 1925. Gertie herself followed her husband 15 years later in 1940. The couple is buried at Hampton Cemetery, Franklin, Iowa.

But now to the girls in the above photograph.

LELA ELLIS (in some records as Leila), the oldest, was born in November 1887. She married Floyd Meyers on March 12th, 1908, in Iowa. According to the 1920 census (Click [HERE](#)) they had 3 children: — Ouida Myers, born June 3rd, 1910, married Nolan Colglazier in January 1939 and had a daughter Linda Colglazier Miller Faye who seems to be living today. Ouida passed away in 1992.

— Frances Maurine Myers, born in 1912, married Martin Fredrick Heinrich Witte in September 1940 and they had a daughter Carol F Witte Schroeder in 1947 who also seems to be alive today. Frances passed away in 1996.

— Ellis Loren Myers was born in 1915 and was killed in a tragic accident in June 1948. He did not seem to have had any children.

Lela/Leila Myers née Ellis passed away in 1955 and was buried at the Hampton Cemetery, Franklin, Iowa. Lela and her husband Floyd had been married almost 50 years.



Source: FindAGrave.com

GWENDOLYN “Gwenie” O. ELLIS, the girl on the right in the above photograph, was the middle child of the Ellis family. She was born on May 27th, 1890, in Hampton, Franklin, Iowa. She became a teacher. She married Jeppe Lauritz Schonemann in November 1913, but divorced him sometime before 1920. The couple had a son Verald William Schonemann on June 3rd, 1915. Gwenie remarried and became the wife of Louis Charles Falk sometime before the 1930 census.

I might also know how the couple met. In the census 1925 for Ross, Iowa, (click [HERE](#)), Gwenie is listed as divorced and living with her son Verald Schonemann and her parents William and Gertie in Mason City, Iowa. On the same address, Louis C. Falk is listed as a servant. In the 1920 census, Gwenie is listed as widowed, but her ex-husband Jeppe Lauritz did not die until 1956. So the status widowed was probably to save face, as was done often back in the day. The divorced Gwenie married Louis Falk some time between 1925 and 1930.

Gwen Falk passed away on December 31st, 1980, and was buried at Hampton Cemetery in Iowa. She had lost her second husband Louis almost 40 years earlier, in 1947. Gwenie’s son Verald Schonemann passed away in October 1997 in Kern, California. I was not able to identify any children of his.



Source: FindAGrave.com

IRMA ELLIS, the youngest sister in the above photograph, was born on March 23rd, 1892. She married Kenneth Samuel McDowell in March 1912 in Franklin, Iowa. Irma passed away in May 1965 and is buried together with her husband in Hampton, Franklin County (Franklin), Iowa.



Source: FindaGrave.com

The couple and their three children can be found living in West Fork, Franklin, Iowa, in the 1930 census:

— Marjorie McDowell was born in December 1913. She married Raymond George Siegman in 1973. Marjorie passed away in December 1994. She had a daughter Marcia Morlan.

— Shirley McDowell was born in June 1917. She was a stenographer in the Treasury Department in Hampton, Iowa. She married Alfred Merle From in April 1942 in Petersburg, Virginia. The couple had a son Robert From in about 1955. He might still be alive today, I haven't found any indication that he isn't.

— Robert "Bob" Avery McDowell was born in August 1919. He married Grace Ethyl Bridge in February 1946. Looks like they had a son Bruce W. McDowell who might still be alive today. Robert passed away 2008.

The three sweet girls grew up to become mothers themselves. And they also had grandchildren. I have hope that some of the grandchildren or possibly great-grandchildren might be interested in this photograph of their grandmother and great-aunts. I hope this blogpost reaches them one day.

