

# Today in History: The Northwest Ordinance of 1787



*States & Territories of the US  
1789-1790, via  
<http://www.thefederalistpapers.org>.  
(Click to enlarge.)*

[Benjamin and McMurray Families, Lee Family, Springsteen and Beerbower Families, Roberts Family](#) *(Click for Family Tree)*

OK, so is this a family history blog or is it boring history class???

Well, to fully understand our family's history, we need to know the history of the time and place in which they lived. It is the only way to get a feel for the pressures they faced in their daily lives- did they live in the city and have to worry about armed gangs roaming the streets, or out on the frontier where Indians were fighting to preserve their own lands from encroachment? Did they live on a farm and experience the seasonal calendar of crops and livestock? Or were they seafarers who worried about storms and the quality of wood used for the hull of their ship? How did our ancestors meet their daily needs for food, water, and shelter? How did they travel to new homesteads, new places to meet and marry? What

wars did they fight in, whether soldier or civilian? Where are they buried, and why there? Answering even some of these questions begins a story about those who came before, and those who have made us who we are. They take the 'boring' out of genealogy- who begat who and when is just not that interesting! But if you tell a story of how two parents met, their challenges as they raised their children, and the legacy of grandchildren left behind, THAT makes interesting genealogy, and interesting lessons to apply to our own lives.

Today, 13 July, is the 228th anniversary of the Northwest Ordinance, officially known as "An Ordinance for the Government of the Territory of the United States, North-West of the River Ohio." The Second Continental Congress passed this act in 1787, creating the first official territory of the new country. The territory comprised those lands west of the Appalachian Mountains with the upper Mississippi River becoming the westernmost boundary; the northern boundary was British Canada and the Great Lakes, down to the Ohio River as the southernmost boundary. Our Benjamin and Ford ancestors lived in this territory, so knowing a bit about it will enhance what we understand of their lives. Others of our families moved into these territories or early states, and may have been there even before: Aiken, Russell, Springsteen, Beerbower, McMurray, Roberts, Daniel, and Murrell.

What makes the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 so important is that it explained how the Federal Government would expand via public domain land, and create new states, rather than the previous method of the states just expanding ever westward with their competing claims for land. Note in the first image how Virginia and Georgia claimed property far to the west- in Georgia's case, even through much of what is now Alabama and Mississippi. When searching for very old records, one would need to look in records for those original states claiming property, even though the hometown might now be in Indiana!

The Congress approved a bill of rights for the citizens in the

Northwest Territory, and guaranteed that the new states would be equal to the original thirteen colonies in all respects. Slavery was outlawed in the new territory, and thus would be outlawed as the areas became states. (The NW Ordinance was therefore a contributing factor to the Civil War.)

Earlier ordinances (1784, 1785) for this territory, provided for self-governing districts and representation to Congress. In 1787, the ordinance required surveying and land grant units to be determined on a township basis, which was six miles square. A settler had to buy at least one square mile (640 acres) and pay at least one dollar per acre. (Land prices in the Midwest now range from about \$5,000-10,000 per acre, or even more.) Each township had one section set aside for a school, and the 1787 Ordinance mandated that education would be provided in the territory.



*Northwest Territory of USA- 1787  
via Wikipedia, Creative Commons  
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enlarge.)*

The 1787 NW Ordinance also outlined the steps that parts of the territory would need to take to become a state. Initially, Congress appointed a governor and judges; when a part of the territory reached 5,000 adult free males, it would become a

territory and govern with its own legislature, although the governor still had veto power. Attainment of a population of 60,000 allowed a territory to petition to be admitted to the Union as one of at least 3 but no more than 5 states carved from the Northwest Territory. Ohio was the first of the new states, in 1803, followed by Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota.

We will 'explore' the Northwest Territories and our ancestors who walked those lands in upcoming posts.

### **Notes, Sources, and References:**

1) Some resources used for this post:

<http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=true&doc=8>

<http://www.loc.gov/rr/program/bib/ourdocs/northwest.html>

<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/420076/Northwest-Ordinances>

<http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/congress-enacts-the-northwest-ordinance>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Northwest\\_Ordinance](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Northwest_Ordinance)

2) The first image is from The Federalist Papers Project: <http://www.thefederalistpapers.org/the-northwest-ordinance>.

Please note that these articles are submitted by various writers and many are op-ed type articles, some with an agenda and some not necessarily fact-checked. It is a great map, however, for the 1787 NW Ordinance, and we appreciate that they allow use of their graphics.

*Please contact us if you would like higher resolution images. Click to enlarge images.*

*We would love to read your thoughts and comments about this post (see form below), and thank you for your time! All comments are moderated, however, due to the high intelligence and persistence of spammers/hackers who really should be putting their smarts to use for the public good instead of spamming our little blog.*

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**Workday Wednesday continued on Thursday: Tilling the Soil, Part 2**



Edward A. McMurray and his mother, Edith Roberts Luck surveying the corn field on their family farm, circa 1980.

Here are just a few of our farming and gardening ancestors that I was thinking of as I worked with the soil and plants on the land we own, and that we can pass on to our descendants, just like our ancestors did:



*Frederick  
Asbury  
McMurray,*

*circa 1890?*

**Frederick Asbury "F.A." McMurray** (1850-1929) worked on the family farm as a child, with his occupation listed as "works on farm" on the 1870 US Federal Census when he was 19; he was living in the household of his parents, Henderson McMurray and Mary Ann Horn McMurray. Of their 11 children, the boys apparently stayed in school until 14 or 15, though they probably took time off – or school was closed- for planting and harvest. The four oldest boys worked on the farm full-time, and the family boarded a 20 yr old woman who also helped with the housework- a lot of hungry mouths to feed after that hard farm labor, and a lot of dirty laundry.

F. A. married and in 1880 was listed as a farmer in the census. He became an auctioneer about 1880; he cried over 128 sales in 1902 ('cried' is a term for what an auctioneer does as he offers lots for sale), with the very large average of \$2,100 per sale making him an auctioneer in demand- he was very good at getting the prices up for his sellers. (Since he probably took a percentage of the sales, there was good incentive to describe the goods in an enticing way, then encourage more bidders to make a higher offer.) By the 1885 Iowa State Census F. A. was listed as having a Second Hand Store- a good spin-off for an auctioneer, and a lot less physical work than being a farmer. ([McMurray Family Ancestor](#)-click for family tree)



Gerard William Helbling in  
his garden, August 1934.  
Family photo album.

**Gerard William Helbling** loved roses, and had a flower garden he loved. (He never seemed the sort...) He grew some veggies, such as tomatoes, too. ([Helbling Family Ancestor](#)— click for family tree.)





The garden and family dog  
of Gerard William  
Helbling, August 1934.  
Family photo album.

**William "Bill" Aiken** supposedly had a pecan farm in Tylertown, Walthall County, Mississippi in the 1930s. ([Lee Family Ancestor](#)– click for family tree.)

**Samuel T. Beerbower** showed livestock at the county fair, so likely grew some of his own hay for grazing. ([Helbling/Beerbower Family Ancestor](#)– click for family tree.)

Sam. Beerbower took the first premium on the largest collection of Poultry exhibited by owner. Also first premium on Jersey heifers.

Samuel T. Beerbower- County  
Fair Winner. 03 Oct 1879,

*The Marion Daily Star*, Vol.  
II, No. 305, (Whole No. 615),  
Page 4. Posted with  
permission.

### **Notes, Sources, and References:**

- 1) Frederick A. McMurray, auctioneer article from the *Daily Herald*, Newton, Iowa, 01 Jan 1903, page 9.
- 2) Samuel T. Beerbower article as cited above.
- 3) Family treasure chest of photos.

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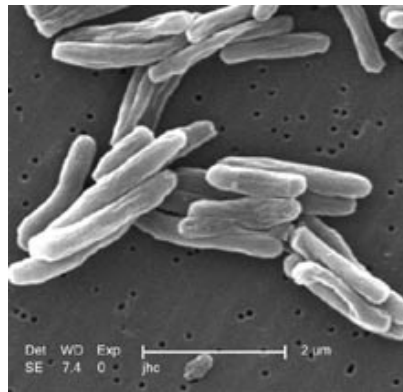
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# World Tuberculosis Day and Our Ancestors



*Mycobacterium tuberculosis - scanning electron micrograph. Centers for Disease Control, Public Domain.*

## [Beerbower Family](#), [Broida Family](#), [Payne Family](#)

Consumption. Phthisis. Scrofula. Pott's Disease. The White Plague.

These are all names that were used for tuberculosis (TB), the deadliest disease for many centuries- even for thousands of years. Tuberculosis was described and found in ancient Egypt, and Hippocrates wrote that it was the most prevalent cause of death in Greece. TB has even been found in Neolithic bone 9,000 years old! Closer in time, for 200 years in Europe it

was "The White Plague" and killed hundreds of thousands, and more than 30% of Europeans died of TB in the 1800s. Some think that in the industrialized cities, 100% of the poverty-stricken working class was infected with TB. It is estimated that at least 40% of deaths in this group were caused by tuberculosis.

Sanitation in the 1800s, or the lack thereof, was thought by some to be the cause. Sanatoriums were hoped to be a cure in the mid- and late-1800s, by getting patients out of the polluted, closely-packed, dirty cities. Fresh air, along with the prescribed good nutrition and exercise, did some good-consumptives (persons with TB, also called "TBs" or "Lungers") sometimes actually did improve, and some claimed, were cured. In the United States, moving west to the Rockies or California helped many, including some of our ancestors. Unfortunately, a 'better' climate did not help all, including some of our ancestors as well.

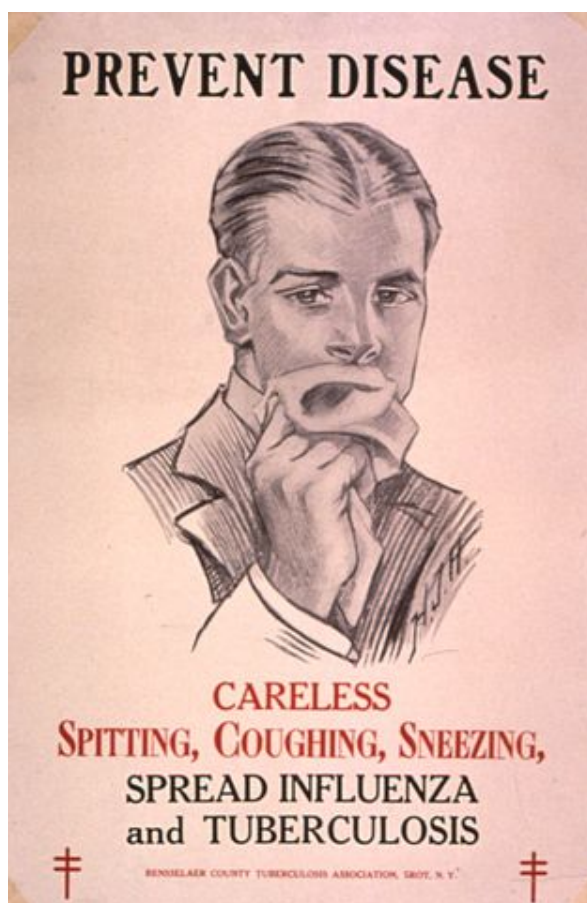
Tuberculosis (TB) is an airborne bacterial disease, but that fact was not common knowledge until Robert Koch delivered a paper on his discovery of the bacterium on 24 March 1882-hence, 'World Tuberculosis Day' today. The use of x-rays in the early 1900s helped with diagnosis of the disease, but until the discovery in the 1940s of antibiotics that could treat TB, there was no hope of a true cure, but only possible remission, which did sometimes occur.

The most common symptom of TB is a cough, often with bloody sputum; night sweats, a general malaise, fever, and exhaustion may also occur. It is a slow disease, eating away from the inside, and sometimes the outside too, even affecting parts of the body other than the lungs.

A century or two ago, some felt that consumptives were more sensitive, artistic, etc.- Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Robert Louis Stevenson, Anton Checkov, Thoreau, the Bronte sisters, Chopin, Stephen Crane, Robert Heinlein, Franz Kafka, D.H.

Lawrence, George Orwell, Sarah Bernhardt, Edvard Munch, and many more died of TB. It became fashionable for women to paint their faces almost white to get that pale, delicate complexion seen in consumptives after wasting away for many years.

Tuberculosis is spread when persons carrying the bacterium cough, sneeze, speak, or sing; the bacterium can stay in the air for many hours and infect someone else when that air is breathed in. A carrier may have the bacterium for many years and not know it, but something, such as immune suppression or pregnancy, can trigger the disease into an active state. For some, it may take 15 years or more to waste away with the disease.



*"TB poster" by Rensselaer County Tuberculosis Association. – U.S. National Library of Medicine Transferred from en.wikipedia. Licensed under*

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[http://commons.wikimedia.org  
/wiki/File:TB\\_poster.jpg#/me  
dia/File:TB\\_poster.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:TB_poster.jpg#/media/File:TB_poster.jpg)

Spittoons have a place in this discussion- men spit tobacco everywhere back in the day, and that actually spread TB. Using spittoons helped to corral the infection into those brass vessels instead of all over where it could travel via shoes, long dresses, etc. Wonder if the people who cleaned spittoons had a higher rate of the disease?

Pasteurization of milk also helped decrease the disease in developed countries, as the bovine (cow) form of tuberculosis can be spread to humans. This is a real problem today in India and Africa.

TB is not just a disease of the third world these days- with antibiotic resistance increasing and the number of persons immigrating to western countries carrying *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*, plus illnesses like HIV and drugs that suppress the immune system (such as some of the new anti-inflammatories), TB is on the rise, even in the US.

Our ancestors would be disappointed to see this trend, as TB would have been something terrible they coped with throughout their lifetime, or with family or friends. They most probably would have thought that it would be curable and then eradicated by the year 2015.

We have had at least 3 ancestors appear unexpectedly out west- two were very puzzling, as the reason for their move was not evident, until one sees the cause of death on the death certificate: tuberculosis. They had gone west in pursuit of golden health, not the gold in the ground.

**Robert Warson Beerbower**, son of Edgar Peter Beerbower and Anna

Missouri Springsteen, was enumerated in the 01 Jun 1900 US Federal Census in Indianapolis, Marion, Indiana, with his wife of just two years, Josephine Reiffel Beerbower. He was working as a railroad clerk, and they were living with his wife's parents. The couple was expecting their first child. Robert's job was probably not very strenuous as a clerk, however he was sick. Robert traveled to Denver, Colorado, likely alone, and likely leaving his pregnant wife in Indianapolis. They would have known he had TB, but there were no antibiotics to cure it at that time. He died of tuberculosis on 12 Sep 1900 in Denver, and his body was returned to Indianapolis, Indiana for burial. Robert was only 26 years old. "Rob's little baby," Roberta Pearl Beerbower, was born just a month later and named after her father.

**Sarah Gitel Frank Broida** was born in Lithuania and immigrated to the United States about 1881. She was the mother of nine children, with seven surviving childhood. The family were poor immigrants, living in industrial, polluted Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, working as 'rag pickers' initially. Their son Harold Broida was born 25 Dec 1897, and the 1899 City Directory places the family living at 1102 Fifth Avenue in Pittsburgh. By 07 June 1900, Gitel, her husband John (or Zelig) Broida, oldest son Joseph, and youngest son Harold were living in Denver, Colorado; the other sons were staying with scattered family back east. This was *very* puzzling- the Broidas were city folk, and it was hard to imagine them in the still somewhat wild west of 1900. Family oral history, however, stated that Gitel had died of tuberculosis, so their move to the sanitariums there or just the more favorable climate and cleaner air made sense, especially since antibiotics to cure TB would not be available for another 40 years. Perhaps one of Gitel's many pregnancies had triggered the infection possibly picked up years before, maybe from contaminated rags from their early days in the US, or the disease could have been newly acquired. Gitel died in Denver on 14 April 1901 at the age of 41. Her mortuary record

verifies that she died of tuberculosis. (Unfortunately the state of Colorado won't share her 114 year old death certificate- but they took the money paid for it. Apparently a great-grandchild is not closely related enough to view it, despite the certificate previously being online.)

**Edward B. Payne** had worked in the tenements of Chicago around 1872, and in the mill towns of Massachusetts and New Hampshire with the poor during the 1880s. He had been called to a position in Berkeley, California, between those years, but had returned to visit family and decided to stay in New England. Edward apparently acquired tuberculosis sometime in the 1880s, if not before; it may possibly have worsened by 1890 or so. In 1892 the family chose to go back to California, in hope that it would improve his health, plus provide him more of what he wished for in his professional and spiritual life. (He was a minister.) The climate must have helped, as Edward lived another 31 years, to age 76, without the cure of antibiotics. He did spend a lot of time outdoors as was recommended for those with tuberculosis, and became a convert to some of the 'newest' healthy foods, like whole grain breads, so those treatments may have helped him survive the disease.

Other family members, like the Lees and Aikens, traveled frequently to Colorado. We do know that for the Lees it was due to respiratory problems- plus they loved the mountains- but know of no one that definitely had tuberculosis.

### **Notes, Sources, and References:**

1) Tuberculosis References :

<http://www.cdc.gov/tb/publications/factsheets/general/tb.htm>



<http://ocp.hul.harvard.edu/contagion/tuberculosis.html>

[http://www.merckmanuals.com/home/infections/tuberculosis\\_and\\_leprosy/tuberculosis.html](http://www.merckmanuals.com/home/infections/tuberculosis_and_leprosy/tuberculosis.html)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History\\_of\\_tuberculosis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_tuberculosis)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_tuberculosis\\_cases](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_tuberculosis_cases)

2) Robert Warson Beerbower- see other posts:

<http://heritageramblings.net/2015/01/04/beerbower-family-bible-deaths/>

(Robert's death and "Rob's little baby" entry for Roberta's birth.)

<http://heritageramblings.net/2015/02/12/treasure-chest-thursday-roberta-p-beerbower-wertz/>

<http://heritageramblings.net/2015/03/01/sentimental-sunday-at-home-with-robert-warson-beerbower-and-his-wife-josephine-reiffel-beerbower/>

3) Sarah Gitel Frank Broida- see the following posts:

<http://heritageramblings.net/2013/11/25/mystery-monday-gitelgertrude-frank-broida/>

<http://heritageramblings.net/2015/01/27/tuesdays-tip-broida-family-research-in-denver-colorado-repositories/>

<http://heritageramblings.net/2015/01/29/those-places-thursday-denver-colorado-and-the-broida-family/>

<http://heritageramblings.net/2015/02/06/friday-follow-up-death-record-of-sarah-gitel-frank-broida/>

<http://heritageramblings.net/2015/02/11/wordless-wednesday-mortuary-record-for-sarah-gitel-frank-broida/>

4) There are no posts yet about this time period in Edward B. Payne's life- those are in the works.

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**[Wordless Wednesday: Unknown Lee? on a Boat](#)**





*Unknown girl /woman at a lake or the beach with boat in background. In with Lee-Alexander-Aiken-Brandenburger papers and photos.*

→ [Lee Family?](#)

### **Notes, Sources, and References:**

1) Image in with Lee family photos and papers, in a photo album. This woman could also be an Aiken, Russell, Alexander, Schoor, or Brandenburger. If you know who this woman is, please let us know!

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**[Friday's Faces From the Past:  
Tilla Brouy and Ollie and](#)**

# Ella Griffin

These photos were found in with the papers and photos of the Lee family of St. Louis, Missouri. We are not sure how these women are related or if they were just close friends. Any information about them would be greatly appreciated!



Tilla Brouy and Ollie  
and Ella Griffin

## **Notes, Sources, and References:**

1) Lee Family Treasure Chest, reviewed with Gene and Vada Lee in the 1980s.

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