

## THE CIRCUS FAMILIES OF PETERSBURG, ILLINOIS

By Janice Bonilla

For some 50 years, from about 1875 through the 1920s, Petersburg, in Menard County, Illinois, was a bustling center of activity for the world of the circus. It housed ring barns in which performers practiced and locals enjoyed exciting performances. Many well-known circus families and individuals made Petersburg their home. Descendants of these families can be found throughout Menard and Sangamon counties. This ongoing study seeks to trace the ancestry and descent of these circus performers.

In Part One of "The Circus Families of Petersburg," (see Illinois State Genealogical Society Quarterly, vol. 38, 3:6-10) I traced the roots of the Petersburg, Menard County, IL, circus to one woman, Parthena Jane (McHenry) Lamkin Shipp whose two sons, Harry Lamkin and Edward Shipp, are rightfully considered the founders of the Petersburg circus colony. Once the stage had been set in Petersburg – literally, the building of the ring barn – the circus came to life. As circus bands of old led the parades, heralding the arrival of the acts, just so this study is led by the story of a remarkable, talented Petersburg family who created the music that made the circus come alive.

### Part Two

#### The Feagans Family Circus Band

From the close of the 19th century until the 1930s—the great years of the traveling circuses—most circuses had their own bands. The circus band was as important to the circus as the horses and clowns! Not only did they provide the background music for the acts, but frequently presented pre-performance concerts to entertain visitors until the first act. Probably the most critical role of the circus band was to herald the arrival of the circus into a town, leading the parade seated aboard a brightly decorated, horse-drawn bandwagon, bumping along unpaved or brick roads in all kinds of weather, while playing cornet, tuba or trombone, almost non-stop for an hour or more. Surely the circus band members were as hearty a group of performers as the acrobats!

Feagans Family Band ~  
 Illinois State Journal  
Register  
 Photo provided by  
 Janice Bonilla



Joseph R. Feagans of Petersburg, music teacher, bandleader and composer, for many years led his Feagans Family Band, comprised of wife, Emma and eight children.

Joe Feagans was a son of Catharine (Laws) and Abner Feagans, Virginians who had migrated to central Illinois in the 1840s. Joseph, born in 1852 in Menard County, was one of five children: Martha, Manley, William, Joseph and Franklin. Joe's father, Abner, was killed in an accident involving his wagon and team of horses, in April of 1871 (Petersburg Democrat, 29 April 1871). Joe's mother, Catharine, died five years later, on May 12, 1876. Probate of her estate (Menard County, Probate box no. 418) reveals her only survivors were three children, Manley, Joseph and Martha, indicating that Franklin and William probably predeceased their mother. (Franklin was enumerated on the 1870 census as an "invalid;" William was not enumerated with family. Neither Franklin nor William have been located on later censuses.)

Joe joined Edward Shipp's circus band as a drummer at the age of eight. While still a teenager, he worked himself up to band leader. At the age of 17, Joe Feagans was a band director and music teacher. By 1883 he was also a composer and arranger. In 1898 he organized his family into a band, the Feagans Family Band, and with them traveled around the country.

In 1872, Joe married Emma Underwood, the only daughter of Lydia Kear and Emery Underwood of Ohio. Emma's father, a bugler in the Union Army, died at Murfreesboro, TN, 14 April 1863. Lydia married (2) Benjamin Franklin Baltzell, also a Civil War veteran, with whom she moved with her children Frank and Emma, from Van Wert, Ohio to central Illinois. Emma was about 12 years of age at the time. Emma's marriage to Feagans took place when she was still very young. An affidavit from Van Wert County, Ohio, Probate Court, dated 31 May 1864, notes "...the said Emma Kate May Underwood was born on the 14th day of December 1858." Emma and Joe's marriage record on file at the Menard County, IL court house indicates they married on 7 November 1872. Their application for a license stating Emma "has arrived at the age of eighteen years," was signed by Joseph Feagans (marriage affidavit, 7 November 1872, Menard County court house). Emma was actually not quite 14 years of age at the time of her marriage. Emma's brother, Frank Underwood married and settled first in Peoria, and then in Pekin, Tazewell county. He and his wife Effie had at least eight children before they divorced sometime between 1910 and 1920.

Joe and Emma Feagans were the parents of 11 children, three of whom died young (Ford, Burdette and Millie). The surviving eight children, Flora, Forest Wild, Frank, Flossie, Fern, Fredona, Floyd, and Joe Jr. all played instruments in the family band. As if keeping house for a large family was not enough, Emma, in her "spare" time, was the Feagans Family Band's bass drum player.

Although the Feagans Family Band played for Ed Shipp and the local ring barn performances in Petersburg, they were also a traveling circus band. In his long career, Joe Feagans worked as band leader on a number of traveling circuses, including the Buffalo Bill show and the Miles Orton Circus.

In addition to working with his own band, Joseph Feagans taught music. In an interview printed in the *State Journal Register*,<sup>1</sup> a grandson of Feagans noted that his grandfather "taught every instrument but the violin." (This isn't surprising since traditional circus bands contained no string instruments.) Joseph Feagans also acquired some fame as a composer of a considerable amount of circus music that was used by other circus bands. Following the success of "Washington Post," by John Phillip Sousa, many enterprising march band composers wrote "newspaper marches." Joe Feagans' contribution was "The Chicago Herald March."

Joseph Feagans died of a degenerative kidney disease (Bright's disease) on 3 August 1911 at the age of 59. He worked until a few days before his death when his wife and several of his children accompanied him home. According to his obituary, he "closed his musical career with the Bulger & Cheney show of Sparta, Wisconsin," (Petersburg Observer, Aug. 1911); it was, ironically, the close of the Bulger & Cheney circus as well, although for reasons not related to Feagans (Fred D. Pfening III, "William P. Hall," *The Bandwagon*, volume 10:6, [Nov-Dec] 1966)

When Joe Feagans died, his cornet was placed in his casket during the wake, and a military band from Oakford, Illinois played marches from the Feagans' home to Rose Hill cemetery. Lawrence Watkins and James Davis played instrumentals at his funeral.

Emma Feagans died of tuberculosis 13 years later on 24 August 1924 in Petersburg. She was buried beside her husband Joseph at Rose Hill Cemetery in Petersburg, appropriately in an area containing many of the circus performers' graves. Emma's mother and stepfather, Laura and Benjamin Baltzell, are buried beside them in unmarked graves.

### AND THE BAND PLAYED ON: The Feagans Children

Flora Feagans, who played tuba/sousaphone in the family band, married 25 July 1895, Henry Kern, a son of William and Melinda (Bauer) Kern.<sup>2</sup> William, a German immigrant, had arrived in Illinois by 1865, naturalized October of 1868 (Menard County, IL naturalizations, FHL microfilm 1311570). Henry, born in Petersburg in 1872, was the youngest son and fifth born child of William. After completing school, he didn't join his father and brother in the family bakery business, but worked as a cigar maker for a number of years. By 1910, however, Henry was already involved in music. A trombone player, he had been a member of the original circus band of Petersburg led by Joe Feagans. Known as "Professor Kern," Henry was a musician bandmaster with various circuses for many years.

After their marriage, Flora and Henry worked together, their only child Mildred joining with them as she became old enough. The family played with shows such as the Frank A. Robbins Circus and the Young Buffalo Bill Wild West Show. In the latter show, Flora had a Cowgirl Band which paraded on horseback. In 1913, Flora and Henry Kern and Henry's band of 12 played in Collinsville, Illinois for the Frank A. Robbins circus. In the band were Flora, playing sousaphone, and their daughter Mildred on baritone.

In addition to her musical talent, Mildred, as "Mademoiselle Mitzi," performed a mind-reading/second-sight act. It was during the 1913 season that Mildred met Milton Robbins, son of circus owner Frank A. Robbins, whom she later married (Robert Sabia, "Frank A. Robbins, A Most Successful Failure," *The Bandwagon*, volume 46:6 [Nov-Dec. 2002]). Milton and Mildred remained in the circus business. They had two children, Jane who died young, and Maxine who performed in the circus as a swordwalker. Mildred Kern Robbins died in 1943 at age 47.



Henry Kern's Frank A. Robbins Circus Big Show Band in 1913. Pfening Archives. Photo provided by Janice Bonilla

Throughout the census enumerations of 1900 through 1930, Flora and Henry listed their occupations as musicians, while making their permanent home in Petersburg.

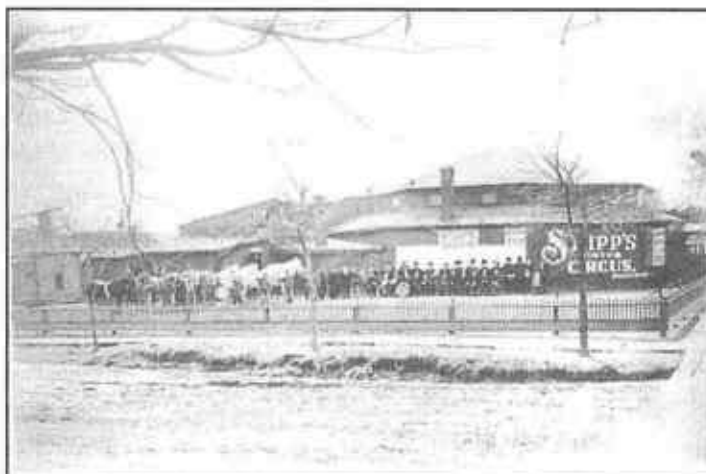
Forest Wild Feagans married Frank Fernandes of Springfield, son of one of the Madeira (Portuguese) families that had immigrated to Sangamon County, Illinois 1849-1855. Forest and Frank had seven children born in Illinois; they moved to California sometime between 1920 and 1930. Neither Forest nor her husband appears to have maintained a professional interest in music or the circus.

Although Frank Feagans, who had played the baritone sax with the family band, was a musician while in the Army during WWI, playing with the 331st Field Artillery Band, A.E.F. in Europe (World War One Honor Book, *An Honorary Roll of Those Who Took Part In the World War in Behalf of the Citizens of Menard County in Illinois*, p. 43. *DistantCousin.com* [database online]), he probably did not seriously pursue a career in music since the 1900, 1920 and 1930 census enumerations record respective occupations of laborer, cigar maker and "poormaster" at a Wisconsin county asylum for the poor. Frank was probably married twice. He had one child, a daughter, Josephine (by his second wife, Gladys Mephram) who was born in Baraboo, Wisconsin in 1915. Whether the family had some affiliation with the Ringling Brothers Circus that was headquartered at Baraboo at the time of her birth has not been determined. In 1920, Frank, Gladys and Josephine were residents of Benton Harbor, Michigan, but by 1930 they had settled back in Wisconsin where he remained until his death in 1937. He died of "a lingering illness" (obituary, *Illinois State Journal*, Springfield, 3 June 1937, p. 4) in Milton, Wisconsin on June 2nd, and was buried in Janesville. Gladys died in January of 1972, and buried in Janesville.

Flossie, who had played the trombone in the family band, became a circus performer. She was a slack wire artist and juggler, and performed on the rolling globe, often playing the vaudeville circuit. However, music remained an important part of her life as well as shown on the 1910 U.S. census enumeration where Flossie's occupation is listed as musician on the stage (William Voigt household, Detroit, Wayne, MI, T624-682, ED95). Floss's husband, Rudolph Voigt, had been cornet player with the Feagans Band. He was also a versatile circus performer, with an act on an aerial breakaway ladder, hanging by his teeth when the ladder broke away, and did lariat twirling, juggling and walking the slack wire with Floss. By 1930, however, both Rudolph and Floss had apparently given up circus life, and the census lists him as proprietor of a decorating business and her as a housewife (Rudolph Voigt household, Detroit, Wayne, MI, roll 1065, ED818). The couple had four children, Wesleyan, Moulin, Marjorie and Gail. Floss died in 1946.

Fern Feagans married Clyde Bennage in Paris, Illinois in 1907, and the couple had three children, Velda, Clyde Leroy, and Earl.

Petersburg Ring Barn.  
Circus World Museum  
Library, Baraboo,  
Wisconsin  
Photo provided by  
Janice Bonilla



According to their daughter Velda,<sup>3</sup> Fern met Clyde Bennage while they were both playing in the band in Buffalo Bill Cody's Wild West Show. Clyde played cornet, baritone and French horn, and Fern French horn and bass. The couple evidently left the world of the circus band after their marriage since the 1910 census lists Clyde as a railroad employee; they were living in Rock Island. By 1920 Fern and Clyde had left Rock Island for Chicago where they remained the rest of their lives. Tragedy struck the family when their ten year old son, Clyde Leroy, died of injuries from a schoolyard accident. Neither Fern nor her husband appears to have had any later professional interest in the music or circus business, although Clyde continued to play with his Masonic lodge band. Fern died of pneumonia in December of 1943. She is buried in Mt. Hope cemetery in the Chicago suburb of Worth, Illinois.

Fredona "Dona" Feagans, clarinet player with the Feagans Family Band, was 19 when she married Eulalie W. Holliday - called E.W. - of Kansas and the couple had four sons, all born in Kansas. Census enumerations reveal that E.W. worked as a garage mechanic and as a welder. In 1930 Dona was enumerated on the census as a music teacher. In 1937 Dona was still living in Wichita (brother Frank's obituary), but by 1943, Dona had moved to California ("of San Gabriel, CA," in her sister Fern's obituary). She died in Kansas, however, in September of 1964.



Floyd "Rex" Feagans played the trombone with the family band. He remained in the circus music business at least until 1912 when it was noted that he was a musical director in 1912 for the LaMont Brothers Show ("Complete Circus Roster Season 1912", *Billboard*, March 23, 1912.) The 1910 census (Joseph Feagans household, Petersburg, Menard, IL, T624-312, ED85, sheet 9B) lists occupation band musician; he is still living at home at that time and obviously playing with the family band. It is likely that he gave up his circus career when he married (ca.1915), Alice Warner. By 1920 he is enumerated on the U.S. census as a paper hanger (Springfield, Sangamon, IL Rex Feagans household, T625-406, ED134, sheet 8A) and in 1930 a decorating contractor (Floyd Feagans household, Detroit, Wayne, MI, roll 164, ED817, sheet 39B). Floyd and his wife had five children. Floyd died 9 July 1951 in Los Angeles, California where he had lived for some 17 years prior to his death. He is buried in Oak Ridge Cemetery, Springfield, IL.

Joseph Feagans, Jr., was the youngest surviving child of Joe and Emma. A snare drummer with the family band, when WWI broke out, he enlisted as a musician with the Army, went overseas in 1918 and was attached to Co. F, 328th Infantry, A.E.F. (*World War One Honor Book, An Honorary Roll of Those Who Took Part In the World War in Behalf of the Citizens of Menard County, Illinois*, p. 43. *DistantCousin.com* [database online]). There is some discrepancy as to his exact date of birth: The Social Security Death Index (SSDI) shows a birth year of 1893, as does the 1900 U.S. census. His obituary, however, gives a birth year of 1894, as does his headstone (Rose Hill Cemetery, Petersburg). On 28 November 1923, Joseph, Jr. married Faye Clary, a daughter of Bertha and John Hardin Clary.<sup>4</sup> By 1930, Joseph Jr. is enumerated on the U.S. census as a house painter (Petersburg, Menard, IL, roll 544, ED12, sheet 2A). He remained in the business for many years according to his obituary (*Petersburg Observer*, 9 May 1968). Joseph Jr. and his wife had three sons. They maintained their home in Petersburg throughout their entire marriage. Joseph died of a heart condition on 5 May 1968. His wife, Faye (who had married [2] James Etter [1902-1989]) died 26 October 1989. Faye is buried beside Joseph at Rose Hill Cemetery in Petersburg.



Frank A. Robbins in front of his ticket wagon, year unknown. Pfening Archives. Photo provided by Janice Bonilla

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*Descendants of Joseph Rufus Feagans and Emma Underwood*

*Generation No. 1*

1. **JOSEPH RUFUS<sup>2</sup> FEAGANS** (*ABNER*<sup>1</sup>) was born 25 January 1852 in Petersburg, Menard, Illinois and died 3 August 1911 in Petersburg, Menard, Illinois (Joseph R. & Emma M. Feagans joint headstone, Rose Hill Cemetery, Petersburg, Menard, IL, and Joseph R. Feagans obituary, Petersburg [IL] *Observer*, 4 Aug. 1911, p. 1, col. 7). He married, 7 November 1872, in Menard County, Illinois (Joseph Feagans/ Emma Underwood marriage certificate no. 2905, Menard County marriage register, vol. B, p. 9.), **EMMA KATE UNDERWOOD**, daughter of **EMERY UNDERWOOD** and **LYDIA KEAR**. She was born 14 December 1858 in Van Wert, Van Wert, Ohio, and died 24 August 1924 in Petersburg, Menard, Illinois (Emma Feagons [sic], death certificate no. 0650056, Menard County, 1924, Illinois Dept. of Health. IL State Archives, Springfield).

Children of JOSEPH FEAGANS and EMMA UNDERWOOD:

2. i. **FLORA M.<sup>3</sup> FEAGANS**, b. 22 Dec. 1873, Illinois
3. ii. **FOREST WILD FEAGANS**, b. 28 April 1877, Illinois
4. iii. **FRANK ARTHUR FEAGANS**, b. 22 Sep. 1879, Petersburg, Menard, IL
5. iv. **FLOSSIE INEZ FEAGANS**, b. 12 Oct. 1881, Petersburg, Menard, IL
6. v. **FERN MYRTLE FEAGANS**, b. 16 Feb. 1885, Petersburg, Menard, IL
7. vi. **FREDONA ELSIE FEAGANS**, b. 26 July 1887, Petersburg, Menard, IL
8. vii. **FLOYD WILEY FEAGANS**, b. 30 Sep. 1890, IL
- viii. **FORD LEWIS FEAGANS**, b. 31 Dec. 1892; d. 2 Feb. 1893
9. ix. **JOSEPH RUFUS FEAGANS, JR.**, b. 3 Sep. 1893 Illinois
- x. **MILLIE BERNICE FEAGANS**, b. 23 July 1900, Petersburg, Menard, IL, d. 24 July 1902, Petersburg, Menard, IL (death register, Menard Co., IL [1902], p. 114, no. 1378, notes death of Lernice Feagans, age two years one day, [IL. Regional Archives Depository, University of Illinois at Springfield, accession no. UIS 4/0316/04])
- xi. **BURDETTE UNDERWOOD FEAGANS**, b. 24 May 1903, Petersburg, Menard, IL; d. 14 June 1903, Petersburg, Menard, IL (Menard county death certificate no 1491, notes female infant, child of Joe Feagans)

*Generation No. 2*

2. **FLORA M.<sup>3</sup> FEAGANS** (*JOSEPH RUFUS*<sup>2</sup>, *ABNER*<sup>1</sup>) was born 22 December 1873 in Illinois, and died 9 September 1943 in St. Petersburg, Pinellas, Florida (Flora Kern obituary, *Illinois State Journal*, Springfield, 10 September 1943, p. 9). She married 25 July 1895 in Menard County, Illinois (marriage certificate no. 6592, Menard County marriage register, vol. B, p. 9.), **HENRY KERN**, son of **WILLIAM KERN** and **MELINDA POWER**.

He was born March 1872 in Illinois (enumerated age 49, 1920 U.S. census, Menard County, Illinois, Henry Kern household, Petersburg, ED100, sheet 1A, dwelling 14, family 15; National Archives micropublication T625, roll 393). Henry died after September 1943 since he is named as a survivor in wife Flora's obituary.

Child of FLORA FEAGANS and HENRY KERN:

- i. **MILDRED MAY "MITZI"<sup>4</sup> KERN**, b. Aug. 1896, Illinois (enumerated age 3, 1900 U.S. census, Menard County, Illinois, Henry Kern household, Petersburg ward 3, ED 77, sheet 15B, dwelling 331, family 336; National Archives micropublication T623, roll 329.); d. 1943, Pinellas County, FL (Mildred May Robbins death registration, Ancestry.com. Florida Death Index, 1877-1998 [database online]. Provo, UT: The Generations Network, Inc., 2004. Orig. data: State of Florida Death Index, 1877-1998. Florida Dept. of Health, Office of Vital Records, 1998.); m. **MILTON ALGERNON ROBBINS**, son of **Frank A. Robbins** and **Matilda Bliss**, b. 14 Oct. 1895, Bridgeport, CT, d. 22 Sep. 1981 (Social Security Death Index [database online]. Provo, UT: The Generations Network, Inc., 2007. Orig. data: U.S. Social Security Administration Death Benefits Index, Master File)

3. **FOREST WILD<sup>3</sup> FEAGANS** (**JOSEPH RUFUS<sup>2</sup>, ABNER<sup>1</sup>**) was born 28 April 1877 in Illinois (California Death Index, 1940-1997 [database online]. Provo, UT: The Generations Network, Inc., 2000. Orig. data: California Dept. of Health Services, Center for Health Statistics, Sacramento, CA), and died 30 July 1947 in Los Angeles County, California (California Death Index). She married 25 June 1900 in Pontiac, Livingston, Illinois, **FRANK FERNANDES**, son of **MANUEL FERNANDES** and **CHARLOTTE NONES** (International Genealogical Index [IGI] Salt Lake City: Family History Library, 1994, citing batch no. M008316). He was born ca.1873 in Illinois (Frank enumerated age 7, 1880 U.S. census, Sangamon County, Illinois, Manuel Fernandes household, Springfield, ED228, sheet 205D; National Archives micropublication T9, roll 249), and died after April 1930, the time of the census enumeration, probably in Whittier, L.A. California.

Children of FOREST FEAGANS and FRANK FERNANDES:

- i. **FLOSSY BEATRICE<sup>4</sup> FERNANDES**, b. 22 Sep. 1901, Springfield, Sangamon, IL; d. 25 Nov. 1991, Los Angeles, L.A., CA; m. 12 Nov. 1923, Los Angeles, L.A., CA, **RALPH JAMES**, b. 18 July 1893, Bourne, England; d. 20 Feb. 1951, Los Angeles, L.A., Ca
- ii. **FRANK FERNANDES, JR.**, b. between 1903 and 1905, Illinois (Frank Jr. enumerated age 7, 1910 U.S. census, Christian County, Illinois, Frank Fernandes household, Taylorville ward 3, ED31, dwelling 159, family 164, sheet 7B. By the time of the 1930 U.S. census, San Gabriel, in Los Angeles County, CA, roll 173, sheet 14B, ED1441, Frank is enumerated age 25).
- iii. **EDWARD FERNANDES**, b. ca.1906, Illinois (Edward enumerated age 5 in the 1910 U.S. census, Christian County, IL); m. ca.1925, **EDWINA GRACE MONTGOMERY** (1930 U.S. census, Los Angeles County, California, Edward Fernandes household, San Gabriel, ED1441, sheet 14B, dwelling 358, family 358. National Archives micropublication roll 173); Edwina was b. 29 Oct. 1907, Nebraska; d. 15 Sep. 1985, Rosemead, L.A., California.



- iv. **CHARLOTTE FERNANDES**, b. ca.1908, Illinois (Lottie M. enumerated age 3 in the 1910 U.S. census, Christian County, Illinois).
- v. **MARION BURNETT FERNANDES**, b. 15 July 1909, Illinois, and d. 2 Feb. 1990, Los Angeles, L.A., CA (Social Security Death Index [database online]).
- vi. **FOREST WILD FERNANDES**, b. ca.1910, Illinois (Forest W. enumerated age 0/12 on the 1910 U.S. census, Christian County, IL); m. (-?-) PORTER.
- vii. **MILDRED LIDIA FERNANDES**, b. 12 Dec. 1914, Illinois, and d. 4 March 1996, Glendora, L.A., CA (Social Security Death Index [database online]); m. (-?-) FLETCHER.

4. **FRANK ARTHUR<sup>3</sup> FEAGANS** (*JOSEPH RUFUS<sup>2</sup>, ABNER<sup>1</sup>*) was born 22 September 1879 in Petersburg, Menard, Illinois (Musician Frank Arthur Feagans cited in Menard County, IL Roll of Honor book (WWI servicemen), p. 43, online <http://www.distantcousin.com/Military/wwi/states/IL/MenardCounty/Image/043.jpg>), and died 2 June 1937 in Milton, Rock, Wisconsin (Frank Feagans obituary, *Illinois State Journal*, Springfield, 3 June 1937, p. 4, col. 3). He married (1) 19 March 1899 in Sangamon County, Illinois, **BESSIE E. HOUGHTON** (Jordan Dodd and Liahona Research, comp., Illinois Marriages, 1851-1900 [database online]. Provo, UT: the Generations Network, Inc., 2005. Orig. data: index compiled from Menard county marriage records on microfilm located at the Family History Library, Salt Lake City, UT.). He married (2) ca.1914, **GLADYS J. MEPHAM** (marriage date estimated from ages at marriage given on 1930 U.S. census). She was born 24 December 1886 in Sauk County, Wisconsin (Gladys J. Mephram birth record, Sauk County, WI record no. 000358, reel 0264. Wisconsin Births, 1820-1907. Ancestry.com [online database], Provo, UT: The Generations Network, Inc., 2000. Original data: WI Dept. of Health and Family Services, WI Vital Record Index, pre-1907, Madison, Wisconsin.), and died January 1972 in Milton, Rock, Wisconsin (Social Security Death Index.).

Child of FRANK FEAGANS and GLADYS MEPHAM:

- i. **JOSEPHINE GRACE<sup>4</sup> FEAGANS**, b. 1 July 1915, Baraboo, Sauk, WI (Josephine Grace Ochs obituary, Milton [WI] *Courier*, 29 May 1986, p. 24), and d. 27 May 1986, Milton, Rock, WI (Social Security Death Index, [database online]); m., 16 Feb. 1940, Janesville, Rock, WI, **KENNETH OCHS** (Josephine Grace Ochs obituary); Kenneth d. after May 1986 since he was listed as survivor in wife's obituary.

5. **FLOSSIE INEZ<sup>3</sup> FEAGANS** (*JOSEPH RUFUS<sup>2</sup>, ABNER<sup>1</sup>*) was born 12 October 1881 in Petersburg, Menard, Illinois (Female infant Feagans entry, certificate no. 1011 (1881), Menard County Birth Records, Nov. 1878-Dec. 1887. <[http://www.rootsweb.com/~ilmaga/menard/births/births\\_f.html](http://www.rootsweb.com/~ilmaga/menard/births/births_f.html)>. MAGA c2000-2004.), and died 2 June 1946 in Detroit, Wayne, Michigan (Flossie Voigt obituary, *Illinois State Journal*, Springfield, 5 June 1946, p.18, col. 2.). She married, between 1906 and 1907 (dates estimated from data on 1930 U.S. census) **RUDOLPH VOIGT**, son of **WILLIAM VOIGT** and **ANNA [nee -?-]**.

He was born 1 August 1881 in Detroit, Wayne, Michigan (1930 U.S. census, Wayne County, Michigan, Rudolph Voigt household, Detroit ward 21, dwelling 328, family 13, ED818, sheets 22A-B; National Archives micropublication roll 1065; and Rudolph Voigt entry, International Genealogical Index [IGI], Salt Lake City: Family History Library, citing batch no. C033386.), and died sometime between 1930 and 1946 (Rudolph was alive at time of 1930 census, but predeceased his wife according to her obituary)

Children of FLOSSIE FEAGANS and RUDOLPH VOIGT are:

- i. **WESLEYAN<sup>4</sup> VOIGT**, b. 8 May 1909, Illinois (1930 U.S. census, Wayne County, MI, Rudolph Voigt household) and d. 12 Nov. 1991, Troy, Oakland, MI (Wesleyan F. Voight entry, Michigan Deaths, 1971-1996 [database online], Provo, UT: MyFamily.com, Inc., 1998. Original data: Michigan Death Index, MI Dept. of Vital & Health Records, Lansing).
- ii. **MOULIN K. VOIGT**, b. 13 Oct. 1913, Ohio (1930 U.S. census, Wayne County, Michigan, Rudolph Voigt household.); d. 4 Nov. 1971, Detroit, Wayne, MI (Moulin K. Voigt death, Michigan Deaths, 1971-1996 [online database]. Provo, UT: The Generations Network, Inc., 1998. Orig. data: Michigan Dept. of Vital and Health Records, Michigan Death Index, Lansing, MI).
- iii. **MARJORIE VOIGT**, b. ca.1916, Michigan (enumerated age 14 on 1930 U.S. census, Wayne County, Michigan, Rudolph Voigt household). Possibly the Marguerite Voigt, b. 30 Oct. 1916, who d. in January of 1974 (SSDI).
- iv. **GAIL VOIGT**, b. ca.1924, Michigan (1930 U.S. census, Wayne County, Michigan, Rudolph Voigt household.); d. after June 1946 since she is named as survivor in her mother's obituary.

6. **FERNE MYRTLE<sup>3</sup> FEAGANS** (*JOSEPH RUFUS<sup>2</sup>, ABNER<sup>1</sup>*) was born 16 February 1885 in Petersburg, Menard, Illinois (female infant Figgans [sic] birth registration no. 1813, Menard County, Illinois, p. 144. Family History Library microfilm no. 1311615; 5<sup>th</sup>-born child of parents); died 16 December 1943 in Chicago, Cook, IL (Ferne Bennage death certificate no. 0035984 [1943], Illinois Dept. of Public Health, Div. of Vital Statistics. Illinois State Archives, roll no. 1027). She married, 1907 in Paris, Edgar, Illinois, **CLYDE WILMER BENNAGE**, son of **FRANK BENNAGE**. He was born 9 October 1883 in White Hall, Greene, Illinois, and died after December of 1943 since he was named as a survivor in wife Fern's obituary.

Children of FERNE FEAGANS and CLYDE BENNAGE:

- i. **VELDA<sup>4</sup> BENNAGE**, b. 25 July 1909, Illinois, and d. 10 Oct. 1988, Burbank, Cook, IL (Social Security Death Index [database online]); m. before December 1943, **WILLIAM HENRY HUNT II**, (Mrs. Velda Hunt named as survivor in mother's obituary, Dec. 1943); William was b. 6 Sep. 1912; d. 28 Oct. 1988.
- ii. **CLYDE LEROY BENNAGE**, b. 25 Jan. 1914, Rock Island, R.I., IL, and d. 16 Mar. 1924, Chicago, Cook, IL (Clyde Leroy Bennage death certificate no. 0009013, Cook County, IL, Illinois Dept. of Public Health, Div. of Vital Statistics. IL. State Archives, Springfield, microfilm roll 721.).

- iii. **EARL FEAGANS BENNAGE**, b. 27 May 1923, Illinois, and d. Dec. 1983, Oak Lawn, Cook, IL (Social Security Death Index [database online]).

7. **FREDONA ELSIE<sup>3</sup> FEAGANS** (*JOSEPH RUFUS<sup>2</sup>, ABNER<sup>1</sup>*) was born 26 July 1887 in Petersburg, Menard, Illinois (female Infant Fegans [sic], birth registration no. 2209, Menard County, Illinois, p. 174. Family History Library microfilm no. 1311615; 6<sup>th</sup>-born child of parents); and died September 1964 in Kansas (Social Security Death Index, [database online]). She married sometime between 1906 and 1907 (1930 U.S. census, Sedgwick county, Kansas, E.W. Holiday household, Wichita, ED60, dwelling 482, family 336, sheet 24A; National Archives micropublication roll 720), **EULALIE W. "E.W." HOLLIDAY**, son of **ADAM HOLIDAY** and **CATHARINE [nee?-]**. He was born ca.1880 in Kansas (1930 U.S. census).

Children of FREDONA FEAGANS and EULALIE HOLLIDAY:

- i. **JOSEPH WILBURWESTON<sup>4</sup> HOLLIDAY**, b. 16 Jan. 1908, Kansas (1915 Kansas State census, E. Holiday household, Dodge City, p. 17, dwelling 4, family 4, Kansas State Archives micropublication K1915, roll 88; and Social Security Death Index [database online]); he d. 1 Sep. 1986, Yuba county, California (California Death Index [online database], and Social Security Death Index [online database]).
- ii. **GORDON HOLLIDAY**, b. 20 Sep. 1916 (Social Security Death Index [database online]); d. 19 Jan. 2004, Lincoln, Lancaster, NE (Social Security Death Index [database online]); m. ca.1944 (marriage date estimated from 1920 and 1930 census data) **COURTNEY J. [nee -?-]**, b. 6 Nov. 1916, Grand Saline, Van Zandt, TX, and d. 24 May 2006 (Courtney Holliday obituary, Hays (Kansas) *Daily News*, 4 June 2006).
- iii. **ARTHUR HOLLIDAY**, b. ca.1919 (Arthur enumerated age 11 on 1930 U.S. census, Sedgwick county, KS, E. W. Holiday household); probably died before 2004 since he is not named as a survivor in brother Gordon's obituary, January 2004.
- iv. **ROBERT HOLLIDAY**, b. ca.1923 (Robert enumerated age 7 on 1930 U.S. census, Sedgwick county, Kansas, E. W. Holiday household).

8. **FLOYD WILEY<sup>3</sup> FEAGANS** (*JOSEPH RUFUS<sup>2</sup>, ABNER<sup>1</sup>*) was born 30 September 1890 in Illinois ("Rex" Feagans is enumerated age 9, born Sep.1891 [and no child named Floyd enumerated] on the *1900 U.S. census, Menard County, Illinois*, Joseph R. Feagans household, Petersburg ward 1, ED76, sheet 8B, dwelling 178, family 191; National Archives micropublication T623, roll 329. On the *1910 U.S. census, Menard County, Illinois*, Joe Feagans household, population schedule, Petersburg ward 1, ED85, SD11, sheet 9B, dwelling 210, family 219; National Archives micropublication T624, roll 312, Floyd Feagans is enumerated, age 19; no Rex enumerated). Floyd d. 9 July 1951, Los Angeles County, California (Floyd Wiley Feagans entry, California Death Index, 1940-1997 [database online], Provo, UT: The Generations Network, Inc., 2000;

Orig. data: California Death Index, 1940-1997. Sacramento, CA: CA. Dept. of Health Services, Center for Health Statistics); he married ca.1915, **ALICE WARNER**, daughter of **WILLIAM WARNER** and **ANNIE O'NEILL** (marriage date estimated from eldest child's birthdate and 1930 census data.) Alice was born January 1895 in Illinois (1900 U.S. census, Sangamon county, Illinois, William Warner household, Ridgely Village, Springfield twp., ED123, sheet 1A, dwelling 5, family 5; National Archives micropublication T623, roll 344.). Floyd and Alice had at least five children, all born in Illinois.

9. **JOSEPH RUFUS<sup>3</sup> FEAGANS, JR.** (*JOSEPH RUFUS<sup>2</sup>, ABNER<sup>1</sup>*) was born 3 September 1893 in Illinois (1920 U.S. census, Menard County, Illinois, Emma Feagins [sic] household, Petersburg ward 1, ED100, sheet 1A, dwelling 9, family 10. National Archives micropublication T625, roll 393), and died 5 May 1968, Springfield, Sangamon, IL (Social Security Death Index [database online]). He married, 28 November 1923, in Petersburg, Menard, Illinois (Joseph R. Feagans obituary, Petersburg *Observer*), **FAYE CHARLOTTE CLARY**, daughter of **JOHN CLARY** and **BERTHA ANGEL**. She was born 27 August 1904 in Illinois (Social Security Death Index [database online]) and died 26 October 1989 in Illinois (headstone inscription, Rose Hill Cemetery, Petersburg; and Social Security Death Index). Joseph Feagans and Faye Clary had at least three children, all born in Illinois.

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#### ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Carmelita Banks. "Petersburg, Ill. A Circus Haven." *Weekend Journal/The State Journal-Register*, Springfield, Illinois, 9 Nov. 1984, pages 8A-11A.

<sup>2</sup>Henry Kern and Flora M. Feagans marriage license no. 6592 and certificate, on file at the Menard County Court House, Petersburg, indicates the couple were married by a Catholic priest in Petersburg. A witness to the event was Mary Kern, probably Henry's younger sister.

<sup>3</sup>Hunt Family Tree, interview with Velda (Bennage) Hunt. In addition to the interesting interview with Velda, this site has many photographs of Velda and her family <<http://www.kiphunt.com/huntfamilytree/hunt/velda/index.html>>

<sup>4</sup>Faye was first cousin 1x removed to Ella Clary who m. Harry Smith, as well as to Zella Jane Clary who m. Frank Kobiela; both Smith and Kobiela were members of the Petersburg circus community.

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