

Joseph Josiah Robbins of New York, Pennsylvania, and Michigan



Joseph Josiah Robbins. Bef 1905. Original photograph privately held by Steve Robbins, [ADDRESS FOR PRIVATE USE,] Muskegon, Michigan. 2012.

JOSEPH JOSIAH ROBBINS (*George*^A) was born at Otsego County, New York on 4th December 1820.¹ He married before 1840, EMELINE C. [--?--].² He then married at Elkland Township, Tioga County, Pennsylvania on 15th January 1842, MARINDA

¹ *History of Manistee, Mason and Oceana Counties, Michigan, with Illustrations and Biographical Sketches of Some of Its Prominent Men and Pioneers* (Chicago, Illinois: H. R. Page & Co., 1882), 147.

² Joseph J. Robbins (Pvt., Co. E, 58th Penn. Inf., Civil War), pension no. S.C. 193,978, Case Files of Approved Pension Applications..., 1861-1934; Civil War and Later Pension Files; Department of Veterans Affairs, Record Group 15; National Archives, Washington, D.C.; Questionnaire, Bureau of Pensions, 7 August 1899. Information on Joseph's marriages and a list of surviving children and their birthdates are given.

ROBBINS,³ daughter of Uzza Robbins.⁴ He died at his home in Newfield Township, Oceana County, Michigan on 27th July 1905.⁵

The Early Years

George Robbins was Joseph's father.⁶ It has been suggested that this George was the George Washington Robbins, married to Abigail "Abbe" Hicks, of the Town of Westford, Otsego County and the Town of Carroll, Chautauqua County, New York.⁷ Thus far, no known documentary or DNA evidence has been uncovered to support this claim, although the parallels between the families are noteworthy.

By 1840, Joseph was married to Emeline C. [--?--] and they were probably the couple enumerated under his name in Elkland Township, Tioga County, Pennsylvania.⁸ Both were listed under the "20 and Under 30" age categories for free white males and females. There was one person in the household employed in agriculture, and also one in commerce; both were probably Joseph. Did he sell his farming surplus, or did he have a trade in addition to farming? It is unknown at this time. One person was illiterate, and that was likely Emeline, since every other

³ Ibid.

⁴ Michigan Division of Vital Statistics, death certificate 4 (1912), Marinda Robbins; digital image, *SeekingMichigan.org* (<http://www.seekingmichigan.org> : accessed 12 March 2009).

⁵ Michigan Division of Vital Statistics, death certificate 147 (1905), Joseph J. Robbins; digital image, *SeekingMichigan.org* (<http://www.seekingmichigan.org> : accessed 10 October 2010).

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Donna Mills, Chautauqua Co., New York [(E-ADDRESS FOR PRIVATE USE),] to Miriam Robbins Midkiff, e-mail, 1 February 2003, "Re: Joseph Josiah ROBBINS," privately held by Robbins, [(E-ADDRESS) & STREET ADDRESS FOR PRIVATE USE,] Spokane, Washington.

⁸ 1840 U.S. census, Tioga County, Pennsylvania, population schedule, Elkland Township, p. 204, Joseph Robbins household; digital image, *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 28 June 2014); citing FHL film 0,020,558.

census Joseph appears on states he can read and write.^{9,10,11,12,13,14} Emeline died 11th June 1841 in Chautauqua County, New York.¹⁵ No known children were born to her or Joseph,¹⁶ although given her young age, there always is a chance she may have died in childbirth.

In 1842, the 21-year-old Joseph married 14-year-old MARINDA ROBBINS. She was born 18 November 1827¹⁷ in Pennsylvania¹⁸ or New York¹⁹ to Uzza Robbins. Her mother may have been Jemima Huntly.²⁰ It has not been determined if Joseph and Marinda were related, and if so, how closely. Together, Joseph and Marinda had seven children: Charles H., Emeline Catherine, Joseph Uzza Benson, Benjamin “Lee” Leander, Evaline L., Ben “Frank” Franklin, and William “Willie” Wallace Robbins. It is interesting to note that three of his four sons were named a variation of “Ben.” Joseph’s first daughter by his second wife was likely named after his

⁹ 1850 U.S. census, McKean County, Pennsylvania, population schedule, Liberty Township, p. 54A, dwelling 813, family 813, Joseph Robbins household; digital image, *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 24 Mar 2012); citing NARA microfilm publication M432, roll 795.

¹⁰ 1860 U.S. census, McKean County, Pennsylvania, population schedule, Liberty Township, p. 752 (stamped) or 18 (penned), dwelling 122, family 123, Joseph J. Robbins household; digital image, *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 24 March 2012); citing NARA microfilm publication M653, roll 1138.

¹¹ 1870 U.S. census, Oceana County, Michigan, population schedule, Newfield Township, p. 6 (penned), dwelling 50, family 50, Joseph J. Robbins household; digital image, *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com> : 24 March 2012); citing NARA microfilm publication M593, roll 696.

¹² 1880 U.S. census, Oceana County, Michigan, population schedule, Newfield Township, p. 583A (stamped) or 16D (penned), dwelling 162, family 162, Joseph J. Robbins household; digital image, *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 24 March 2012); citing FHL film 1,254,599.

¹³ 1884 Michigan state census, Newaygo County population schedule, Denver Township, p. 50, dwelling 204, family 209, Joseph J. Robbins household; digital images, *SeekingMichigan.org* (<http://www.seekingmichigan.org> : accessed 6 June 2013).

¹⁴ 1900 U.S. census, Oceana County, Michigan, population schedule, Newfield Township, p. 134A (stamped) or 1 (penned), dwelling 8, family 8, Joseph J. Robbins household; digital image, *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 6 July 2014); citing FHL film 1,240,736.

¹⁵ Joseph J. Robbins Civil War pension no. S.C. 193978, RG 15, NA-Washington. Questionnaire, Bureau of Pensions, 7 August 1899. Information on Joseph’s marriages and a list of surviving children and their birthdates are given.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ Michigan death certificate 4 (1912), Marinda Robbins.

¹⁸ 1850 U.S. census, McKean Co., Pennsylvania, pop. sch., p. 54A, dwell. 813, fam. 813, Joseph Robbins household.

¹⁹ 1860 U.S. census, McKean Co., Pennsylvania, pop. sch., p. 752 (stamped) or 18 (penned), dwell. 122, fam. 123, Joseph J. Robbins household.

²⁰ Town of Springwater, New York, *Town Clerks' Registers of Men Who Served in the Civil War, ca. 1861-1865*, Ozias C. Robbins entry, p. 5; digital image, *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 26 January 2012); citing New York State Archives Collection Number: (N-Ar)13744; box 31, roll 18. Ozias C. Robbins, son of Uzza [Robbins] and Jemima Huntly.

first deceased wife; a typical naming tradition for this time period. More information about these children has been provided in the final section of this narrative.

The Father

In 28 August 1850, the Robbins family was enumerated in Liberty Township, McKean County, Pennsylvania.²¹ Joseph was farming, but was not an apparent landowner, as no amount is given for the "Value of Real Estate owned" category of the census. Besides Joseph and Marinda, the household consisted of Charles, Emeline, and Benson. Son Lee would have been born just 17 days earlier;²² however, the enumeration date for the 1850 census was June 1st, so anyone born after that date should not have been listed, as the procedures pertaining to the census were laid out by Congress.²³ It's not clear when the family moved to McKean County. Although Pennsylvania was given as the birthplace of all three children on the 1850 census, later records give New York as the two eldest children's birthplace,^{24,25,26} thus suggesting the Robbins family migrated from New York to Pennsylvania in the latter part of 1846 or early 1847. Marinda's father Uzza Robbins was also living in McKean County in 1850, in Keating Township with a couple presumed to be his daughter and son-in-law.²⁷ It's probable the Joseph Robbins family moved to McKean County to be close to Marinda's relatives.

²¹ 1850 U.S. census, McKean Co., Pennsylvania, pop. sch., p. 54A, dwell. 813, fam. 813, Joseph Robbins household.

²² Joseph J. Robbins Civil War pension no. S.C. 193978, RG 15, NA-Washington. Questionnaire, Bureau of Pensions, 7 August 1899.

²³ Hinckley, Kathleen W., *Your Guide to the Federal Census for genealogists, researchers, and family historians* (Cincinnati, Ohio: Betterway Books, 2002), 24, 26.

²⁴ 1860 U.S. census, McKean Co., Pennsylvania, pop. sch., p. 752 (stamped) or 18 (penned), dwell. 122, fam. 123, Joseph J. Robbins household. Birthplaces of Chas. H. and Emeline C. Robbins: ditto marks indicating "N.Y."

²⁵ 1870 U.S. census, Oceana Co., Michigan, pop. sch., p. 6 (penned), dwell. 50, fam. 50, Joseph J. Robbins household.

²⁶ 1870 U.S. census, Newaygo County, Michigan, population schedule, Denver Township, p. 73A (stamped) or 15 (penned), dwelling 122, family 121, Chas. H. Robins household; digital image, *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 28 September 2013); citing NARA microfilm publication M593, roll 693. Birthplace for Chas. H. Robins: ditto marks indicating "New York."

²⁷ 1850 U.S. census, McKean County, Pennsylvania, population schedule, Keating Township, p. 1A, dwelling 5, family 5, Waterman J. Davis household; digital image, *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com> : 1 December 2010); citing NARA microfilm publication M432, roll 795.

Much of what we know about Joseph's personality was taken from an interview for a newspaper article which his eldest child Charles gave around 1930 or 1931. In it, Charles gives a description of his father and their relationship:

The elder Robbins was a good worker. He was also superstitious. Like many of the residents of the region he was a religious zealot and liked to have the local Methodist minister call on the family. Then the two men would imbibe religion and whiskey together. On such occasions the children kept out of sight. This was very typical of those times, says Mr. Robbins.

His father objected to Charles reading books excepting the Bible and was a stern man. He firmly believed the world was flat because the Good Book mentioned the four corners of the heaven. The son decided to run away from home at the age of 13.

Charles secured employment as a cabin boy on a canal packet boat where he earned \$5 a month regular salary. Tips from the gamblers on the boat amounted to much more than the wages, and in a short time he had saved \$100 which he gave his father on the condition that the son be allowed to choose a guardian more to his liking.²⁸

In the same interview, Charles stated that Joseph had come to Pennsylvania after starting to California during the big gold rush—possibly after a stint in the Mexican War—but had changed his mind and returned to his family.²⁹ There has been no other documentation found which could substantiate this oral history, including military records.^{30,31} Additionally, there are some significant errors throughout the interview regarding researchable facts which hint that either Charles' memory was rather faulty, or that he enjoyed taking liberties with the truth.

On 11th June 1860, Joseph Robbins was again enumerated as a farmer in Liberty Township.³² The nearest post office was located at Port Allegheny, where the family would have done their business and trade. This time, he was an owner of real estate worth \$40. Now, he and Marinda had six children; still, their son Lee, who would have been nearly 10 years old, is not listed with the family.

²⁸ "Charles Robbins One of First to Visit Hesperia," article from unknown newspaper, Hesperia, Michigan, c. 1930-1.

²⁹ "Charles Robbins One of First to Visit Hesperia."

³⁰ Joseph J. Robbins Civil War pension no. S.C. 193978, RG 15, NA-Washington. No mention is made of Andersonville or of any imprisonment of Joseph.

³¹ "Andersonville Prison," database, Jack and Carol Lundquist, *Civil War Prisons* (<http://www.civilwarprisoners.com> : accessed 6 July 2014). No Joseph Robbins found for the 58th or 84th Pennsylvania Regiments or the 7th Massachusetts Battery.

³² 1860 U.S. census, McKean Co., Pennsylvania, pop. sch., p. 752 (stamped) or 18 (penned), dwell. 122, fam. 123, Joseph J. Robbins household.

Life in the Joseph Robbins' household was probably "interesting," if anything. Besides the drinking binges on his part, it is known by 1860 that his daughter Emeline was a considered "idiotic";³³ the equivalent of today's terminology for mentally retarded or intellectually delayed. Also, by 1880, son Frank was insane,³⁴ although it is not known if his mental illness was apparent in his childhood or youth.

The Soldier

On 12th April 1861, federal troops in Fort Sumter in the harbor of Charleston, South Carolina were fired upon by Confederate soldiers. The American Civil War had officially begun. In communities across the Union and the Confederacy, men young and old signed up to fight. The Robbins family was no exception. Charles was the first to enlist, on 30th May 1861 at Smethport, in Company I, 42nd Pennsylvania Infantry (later the 1st Pennsylvania Rifles).³⁵ Not to be outdone, Joseph enlisted at the ripe old age of 40 on 26th September 1861 at McKean County in Company E of the 84th Pennsylvania Infantry—which was later consolidated with the 58th Pennsylvania Volunteers—for three years or the duration of the war.³⁶ Later, on 5th September 1864, Benson enlisted in Company C of the 211th Pennsylvania Infantry.³⁷

After being mustered into service as a private on 7th December 1861,³⁸ Joseph served for about a year with the 58th Pennsylvania Volunteers. From some point during the month of September 1862 to 2nd October 1863, he was detached with the 7th Massachusetts Battery.³⁹ On 23rd June 1863, he was hospitalized at

³³ 1880 U.S. census, Oceana County, Michigan, "Defective, Dependent, and Delinquent Classes" schedule, Newfield Township, image 2, Emiline C. Robbins; digital image, *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 24 November 2012); citing NARA microfilm publication NARA T1164, roll 72.

³⁴ 1880 U.S. census, Newaygo County, Michigan, "Defective, Dependent, and Delinquent Classes" schedule, Dayton Township, image 12, B. F. Robbins; digital image, *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 24 November 2012); citing NARA microfilm publication NARA T1164, roll 71.

³⁵ "13th Pennsylvania Reserves/42d Regiment Pennsylvania Volunteers, Company I, McKean County Rifles," database, Alice J. Gayley, *PA Roots* (<http://www.pa-roots.com/pacw/reserves/13thres/13threscoi.html> : accessed 6 July 2014), Charles H. Robbins entry.

³⁶ Joseph J. Robbins Civil War pension no. S.C. 193978, RG 15, NA-Washington. Letter dated 31 May 1889 from Adjutant General's Office to Commissioner of Pensions.

³⁷ "Civil War and Later Veterans Pension Index," database, *Fold3* (<http://www.fold3.com> : accessed 24 May 2008), Benson Robbins (Co. C, 211th Penn. Inf.) index card; imaged from *Organization Index to Pension Files of Veterans Who Served Between 1861 and 1900*, T289 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives [1949]), roll 499.

³⁸ Joseph J. Robbins Civil War pension no. S.C. 193978, RG 15, NA-Washington. Letter dated 21 July 1880 from Adjutant General's Office to the Commissioner of Pensions.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

On 2nd June 1864, Joseph was reported to have had fainting and nosebleeds while at Cliffburne Barracks in Washington, D.C. He also contracted chronic inflammation of both his eyes.⁴⁶ The next month, he was hospitalized for this condition at Satterlee Hospital in Philadelphia. Again he was seen at the 16th and Filbert Streets Hospital on 12th September 1864.⁴⁷ Four days later, he was hospitalized again at Satterlee for chronic eye inflammation.⁴⁸ He dropped off the rolls and was reported as a deserter, but was shown as being present in November and December.⁴⁹ It's likely he was in hospital, rather than deserted, and the military lost track of him, as he was not given a court martial.

On 9th December 1864, Joseph returned to his unit.⁵⁰ One month later, he was discharged from the military at Chapin's Farm near Richmond, Virginia.⁵¹ On his way home, he stopped in Philadelphia to hire an attorney to help him fill out a pension application;⁵² his eyesight had already been claimed.

The Pioneer

In 1865, the Civil War ended. The country had changed and so had its people. The Robbins family made a decision to move to Western Michigan, which at that time was a wild land with plenty of timber, few settlers, and some scattered groups of Ottawa.⁵³ Perhaps they waited to start their move until after Benson arrived home from his discharge of 2nd June 1865.⁵⁴

Probably traveling west by road to Erie, Erie County, Pennsylvania, the Robbins family boarded a water vessel on which they traveled through the Great Lakes, around the peninsula, arriving at Pentwater, Oceana County, Michigan.⁵⁵ Here, at least some of the family lived for several months, while son Charles, a carpenter, helped build the community of Hesperia,⁵⁶ which lies east from Pentwater on the border of Newaygo and Oceana Counties. In Charles' interview,

⁴⁶ Joseph J. Robbins Civil War pension no. S.C. 193978, RG 15, NA-Washington. Certificate to Disability of Soldier dated 13 November 1879.

⁴⁷ Joseph J. Robbins Civil War pension no. S.C. 193978, RG 15, NA-Washington. Letter dated 21 July 1880 from Adjutant General's Office to the Commissioner of Pensions.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Joseph J. Robbins Civil War pension no. S.C. 193978, RG 15, NA-Washington. Invalid Army Pension dated 16 January 1865.

⁵² Joseph J. Robbins Civil War pension no. S.C. 193978, RG 15, NA-Washington. Invalid Army Pension dated 16 January 1865.

⁵³ *Hesperia Centennial Souvenir Book, 1866-1966* (Greenville, Michigan: Greenville Printing Company, 1966), 7.

⁵⁴ Benson Robbins (Co. C, 21 1th Penn. Inf.) index card; "Civil War and Later Veterans Pension Index."

⁵⁵ "Charles Robbins One of First to Visit Hesperia."

⁵⁶ Ibid.

he stated that he had an aunt living near Martin's Lake in Newaygo County.⁵⁷ This woman, as yet unidentified, may have been the reason the Robbins family relocated to the area. Hesperia was to be Joseph and Marinda's final home community.

On 30th May 1867, William Wallace Robbins was born.⁵⁸ This late-in-life child, born when Joseph was 47 and Marinda was 40, surely must have been a surprise. The family was enumerated on 19th September 1870 in Newfield Township, Oceana County; their local post office was given as Hesperia. Joseph was a farmer, owning \$800 worth of real estate. Living in the home were Emeline, Lee, Frank, and Willie.⁵⁹ Certainly Lee and Frank would have done the majority of the farm work, with Joseph being blind. All the other Robbins children lived in the surrounding countryside: Charles, Viola, and their three sons lived in Denver Township, Newaygo County;⁶⁰ Evaline, her husband Peter Ackerson,⁶¹ and their infant son Stephen resided in Otto Township, Oceana County,⁶² while Benson boarded and farmed with the Alex Walker household in Dayton Township, Newaygo County.⁶³

As Hesperia and its surrounding communities grew, so did the Robbins family. The succeeding generations did not stay put, however. Charles and Viola and their children removed to Southbrook Township, Cottonwood County, Minnesota around 1872,⁶⁴ to homestead⁶⁵ near Viola's family. In 1879, Evaline and Peter Ackerson followed suit, to LeRay Township, Blue Earth County,

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Newaygo County, Michigan, "Deaths, 1867-1897," 1882 section, p. 316, William W. Robbins entry, rec. no. 1146; digital image, *FamilySearch.org* (<http://www.familysearch.org> : accessed 6 July 2014). Age at 7 June 1882 death: 15 years, 8 days.

⁵⁹ 1870 U.S. census, Oceana Co., Michigan, pop. sch., p. 6 (penned), dwell. 50, fam. 50, Joseph J. Robbins household.

⁶⁰ 1870 U.S. census, Newaygo Co., Michigan, pop. sch., p. 73A (stamped) or 15 (penned), dwell. 122, fam. 121, Chas. H. Robins household.

⁶¹ Oceana County, Michigan, "Marriages, 1868-1925," p. 136, rec. no. 55, Peter Jacob Ackersouth [*sic*] and Evaline Lovachin Rollins [*sic*] entry; digital image, *FamilySearch.org* (<http://www.familysearch.org> : accessed 8 June 2013).

⁶² 1870 U.S. census, Oceana County, Michigan, population schedule, Otto Township, p. 705A (stamped) or 1 (penned), dwelling 8, family 8, John [*sic*] J. Ackerman household; digital image, *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 30 January 2012); citing NARA microfilm publication M593, roll 696.

⁶³ 1870 U.S. census, Newaygo County, Michigan, population schedule, Dayton Township, p. 63A (stamped) or 15 (penned), dwelling 126, family 123, Alix [*sic*] W. Walker household; digital image, *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 28 September 2013); citing NARA microfilm publication M593, roll 693.

⁶⁴ "Charles Robbins One of First to Visit Hesperia."

⁶⁵ Charles H. Robbins (Cottonwood County, Minnesota), homestead patent no. 5920; "Land Patent Search"; digital images, *General Land Office Records* (<http://www.glorerecords.blm.gov/PatentSearch> : accessed 6 July 2014).

Minnesota. There, Evaline gave birth to their sixth child, a stillborn boy,⁶⁶ and died shortly after.⁶⁷

The Senior Citizen

Much of what is known about Joseph's senior years comes from local and federal censuses and his pension record. On 19th June 1880, Joseph, Marinda, Emeline, and Willie were enumerated in their home in Newfield Township.⁶⁸ Next door, were son Lee, his wife Florine, and their son Perry.⁶⁹ Again, Joseph is listed as a farmer; again, it is likely his sons Lee and Willie, with occupations of farmer and farm worker, respectively, were responsible for the heavy work. Benson was boarding at the Dayton Township home of William and Lovilla Martin,⁷⁰ next door to Frank and Helena and their children.⁷¹

In 1882, Joseph's biography was published with several errors in the *History of Manistee, Mason and Oceana Counties, Michigan*.⁷² That same year, his fifteen-year-old son, Willie, died of scarlet fever.⁷³ The next year, Joseph was listed on the Michigan Pensioners Roll.⁷⁴ In 1884, when the Michigan State Census was taken, his household consisted of Marinda, Emeline, and two of Evaline's children, Mary and George, besides himself.⁷⁵ In 1890, he was

⁶⁶ 1880 U.S. census, Blue Earth County, Minnesota, mortality schedule, LeRay Township, p. 1, line 12, Evaline Ackerson; digital image, *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 24 March 2012); citing NARA microfilm publication T132, roll 1.

⁶⁷ 1880 U.S. census, Blue Earth Co., Minnesota, mort. sch., p. 1, line 23, stillborn male Ackerson.

⁶⁸ 1880 U.S. census, Oceana Co., Michigan, pop. sch., p. 583A (stamped) or 16D (penned), dwell. 162, fam. 162, Joseph J. Robbins household.

⁶⁹ 1880 U.S. census, Oceana Co., Michigan, pop. sch., p. 583A (stamped) or 16D (penned), dwell. 161, family 161, Leander Robbins household.

⁷⁰ 1880 U.S. census, Newaygo County, Michigan, population schedule, Dayton Township, p. 361D (stamped) or 24 (penned), dwelling 233, family 243, Wm. Martin household; digital image, *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com> : 6 July 2014); citing FHL film 1,254,598.

⁷¹ 1880 U.S. census, Newaygo Co., Michigan, pop. sch., p. 361D (stamped) or 24 (penned), dwelling 234, family 244, B. F. Robbins household; digital image, *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com> : 6 July 2014); citing FHL film 1,254,598.

⁷² *History of Manistee, Mason and Oceana Counties, Michigan, with Illustrations and Biographical Sketches of Some of Its Prominent Men and Pioneers*, 147.

⁷³ Newaygo Co., Mich., "Deaths, 1867-1897," 1882 section, p. 316, William W. Robbins entry.

⁷⁴ *List of pensioners on the roll, January 1, 1883, giving the name of each pensioner, the cause for which pensioned, the post-office address, the rate of pension per month, and the date of original allowance, Volumes 1-5*. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1883, p. 361; digital image, *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com> : 6 July 2014).

⁷⁵ 1884 Michigan state census, Newaygo Co. pop. sch., p. 50, dwell. 204, fam. 209, Joseph J. Robbins household.

enumerated on the U.S. Federal Census of Union Veterans and Widows,⁷⁶ and again in 1894 on the Michigan State Civil War Veterans and Widows Census.⁷⁷

Meanwhile, Marinda had filed for an increase in Joseph's pension on his behalf, due to his deteriorating health and probable dementia. In her general affidavit of 16th April 1888, she made the following statement:

[Joseph] is not able to do any manual labor at all, and has not been able to do any such work for the past twenty years...he is very infirm and is confined to the house nearly the whole of the time and to his bed about two thirds of the time...whenever he goes out from the house any distance he is obliged to be attended by some one on account of dizziness with which he is afflicted a great deal after making him unconscious and unable to help himself at all...he is also afflicted with chronic Diarrhoea causing a great deal of care to be bestowed upon him...he is obliged to be aided at nearly all times when at his meals, and also has to be aided about the house most of the time...especially at night time she [Marinda] has to bestow a great deal of care upon him on account of his restlessness caused by said dizziness and other disabilities as aforesaid.⁷⁸

A neighboring couple, William and Hester A. Winters, also signed an affidavit on the same day, stating:

... they are well acquainted with the said Joseph J. Robbins and know him to be unable to perform any manual labor at all...they have frequently seen him when afflicted with dizziness and that at different times have been obliged to help him to his house from their house...on account of said dizziness and infirmity...[he] is obliged to be attended at nearly all times...he is confined to the house nearly the whole of the time, and requires the care and aid and attention of some one at his meals and about the house....⁷⁹

It's not clear if Joseph received an increase in his pension. Regardless, by 1893, another increase request was made. One can almost hear the desperation in Marinda's statement, especially considering she had a mentally disabled middle-aged woman, her daughter Emeline, to look after as well.

⁷⁶ 1890 U.S. census, Oceana County, Michigan, Union Veterans and Widows schedule, Newfield Township, p. 40, line 50, Joseph J. Robbins; digital image, *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 6 July 2014); citing NARA microfilm publication M123, roll 20.

⁷⁷ *Census of the state of Michigan, 1894*. Lansing Mich.: W. Gardner, 1896, p. 207; digital image, *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com> : 6 July 2014).

⁷⁸ Joseph J. Robbins Civil War pension no. S.C. 193978, RG 15, NA-Washington. General Affidavit of Marinda Robbins dated 16 April 1888.

⁷⁹ Joseph J. Robbins Civil War pension no. S.C. 193978, RG 15, NA-Washington. General Affidavit of William Winters and Hester A. Winters dated 16 April 1888.

I have been [the] wife of [the] claimant for fifty years and for the Last past 18 years I have had to Dress and undress claimant and Since the fall of 1891 I have had the whole care of him[.] he is so blind he is unable to do anything and I have had to wait on him constantly to the present time and he is getting worse all the time....⁸⁰

Help appeared to be on the way in the form of a young couple. On the 1900 census, Joseph, Marinda, and Emeline are enumerated on their farm in Newfield Township.⁸¹ While none of them are listed as having an occupation, in the same house are living Dell and Gertrude Fredrick, ages 32 and 19, respectively.⁸² Dell's occupation is listed as a farmer, and he was paying rent, probably to Joseph, whose farm was owned, free of mortgage. Surely this couple provided financial and physical assistance to a family sorely in need of it. It's possible they could have been relatives, but that has yet been undetermined.

In 1903, the family doctor, W. A. Crandall, signed an affidavit swearing to Joseph's condition, which he just observed that day:

...on June 11th he [Dr. Crandall] visited the claimant with the purpose in view of ascertaining the extent of claimant's disability from disease of the eyes. He finds that claimant has opacity of the cornea of both eyes, and cannot discern objects at all[,] that the light hurts his eyes, so that his attendants are compelled to keep the room in which he is darkened. He complains of a smarting sensation of the eyes and a pain through both temples. This condition requires him to be confined to his room and necessitates he regular and constant personal aid and attendance of another person to help him to use the cuspidor, chamber[,] and assist him in the use of any trifling thing that may be necessary for his comfort necessitating the attendance of another person to stand over him to assist him in his meals....⁸³

This difficult situation was to last another two years. Joseph died on 27th July 1905 at his home in Newfield Township.⁸⁴ Dr. Crandall gave the cause of his death as paralysis.⁸⁵ He was buried the following day in Hesperia West Cemetery.

⁸⁰ Joseph J. Robbins Civil War pension no. S.C. 193978, RG 15, NA-Washington. General Affidavit of Marinda Robbins dated 6 April 1892.

⁸¹ 1900 U.S. census, Oceana Co., Michigan, pop. sch., p. 134A (stamped) or 1 (penned), dwel. 8, fam. 8, Joseph J. Robbins household.

⁸² 1900 U.S. census, Oceana Co., Michigan, pop. sch., p. 134A (stamped) or 1 (penned), dwell. 8, fam. 9, Dell and Gertrude Fredrick.

⁸³ Joseph J. Robbins Civil War pension no. S.C. 193978, RG 15, NA-Washington. General Affidavit of W. A. Crandall, M.D. dated 11 June 1903.

⁸⁴ Michigan death certificate no. 147 (1905), Joseph J. Robbins.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Marinda also died in Newfield Township, 9th February 1912,⁸⁷ and was buried next to Joseph.⁸⁸



Gravestone of Joseph Josiah Robbins, Hesperia West Cemetery, Hesperia, Michigan.
Photographed at request of Miriam Robbins by *FindAGrave* (<http://www.findagrave.com>)
volunteer, Shawn St.Germaine (#46518024), 2006.

His Children

Children of Joseph and Marinda (Robbins) Robbins:

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Michigan death certificate 4 (1912), Marinda Robbins.

⁸⁸ Hesperia (Michigan) West Cemetery plat map, September 1950, drawn by Leslie L. Waterman. Copy obtained from Diana Wilkes, [ADDRESS FOR PRIVATE USE,] Norton Shores, Michigan.

- i. CHARLES H. ROBBINS, b. New York⁸⁹ or Liberty Twp., McKean Co., Pennsylvania,⁹⁰ 9th April 1844⁹¹; m. 1st VIOLA GERTRUDE PECK at Liberty Twp., 23rd October 1864⁹²; m. 2nd HELENA "LENA" (SWEET) ROBBINS, widow of his brother Frank, at Knox Co., Ohio on 30 August 1921⁹³; d. Hesperia, Oceana Co., Michigan, 20th January 1934⁹⁴; bu. Hesperia West Cemetery, Hesperia, 23rd January 1934.⁹⁵
- ii. EMELINE CATHERINE ROBBINS, b. Burton Twp., Cattaraugus Co., New York,⁹⁶ 16th March 1846⁹⁷; mentally disabled⁹⁸; never married⁹⁹; institutionalized at Traverse City State Hospital, Traverse City, Grand Traverse Co., Michigan, 19th July 1916¹⁰⁰; d. at Traverse City State Hospital, 11th November 1917¹⁰¹; bu. at Ann Arbor, Washtenaw Co., Michigan, 16th November 1917.¹⁰²
- iii. JOSEPH UZZA BENSON ROBBINS, b. Liberty Twp.,¹⁰³ 2nd June 1847¹⁰⁴; m. MARGARET JANE (HERIN) WADE, widow of Seabury Wade,¹⁰⁵ at Hesperia, Newaygo Co.,

⁸⁹ 1870 U.S. census, Newaygo Co., Mich., pop. sch., p. 73A (stamped) or 15 (penned), dwell. 122, fam. 121, Chas. H. Robins household. Birthplace for Chas. H. Robins: ditto marks indicating "New York."

⁹⁰ "Charles Robbins One of First to Visit Hesperia."

⁹¹ Joseph J. Robbins Civil War pension no. S.C. 193978, RG 15, NA-Washington. Questionnaire, Bureau of Pensions, 7 August 1899.

⁹² Dennis Brandt, Red Lion, Pennsylvania to Miriam Robbins Midkiff, letter 1 July 1998, family of Charles H. Robbins; privately held by Robbins [ADDRESS FOR PRIVATE USE,] Spokane, Washington.

⁹³ Probate Court, Knox County, Ohio, "Marriage records 1920-1925," vol. 11, p. 143, no. 111, entry for Charles H. Robins and Helena M. J. Robbins; digital image, *FamilySearch.org* (<http://www.familysearch.org> : accessed 6 July 2014).

⁹⁴ Michigan Department of Health, death certificate [unnumbered] (1934), Charles B. [sic] Robbins; Division of Vital Statistics, Lansing.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Declaration for Widow's Pension, 23 August 1905, Marinda Robbins, widow's pension application no. 833,911, certificate no. 623,194; service of Joseph J. Robbins (Pvt., Co. E, 58th Penn. Inf., Civil War); Case Files of Approved Pension Applications..., 1861-1934; Civil War and Later Pension Files; Department of Veterans Affairs, Record Group 15; National Archives, Washington, D.C.

⁹⁷ Joseph J. Robbins Civil War pension no. S.C. 193978, RG 15, NA-Washington. Questionnaire, Bureau of Pensions, 7 August 1899.

⁹⁸ 1880 U.S. census, Oceana Co., Michigan, "Defective, Dependent, and Delinquent Classes" schedule, image 2, Emeline C. Robbins.

⁹⁹ Michigan Division of Vital Statistics, death certificate 420 (1917), Emelene Robbins; digital image, *SeekingMichigan.org* (<http://www.seekingmichigan.org> : accessed 15 March 2009).

¹⁰⁰ Ibid. Length of residence: 1 year, 3 months, 23 days.

¹⁰¹ Michigan death certificate 420 (1917), Emelene Robbins.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ "Obituary," obituary of Joseph Benson Robbins, unknown newspaper, Hesperia, Michigan, April 1931. Obtained by Judy Hammond, [ADDRESS FOR PRIVATE USE,] Frederic, Michigan.

¹⁰⁴ Joseph J. Robbins Civil War pension no. S.C. 193978, RG 15, NA-Washington. Questionnaire, Bureau of Pensions, 7 August 1899.

¹⁰⁵ "Obituary," obituary of Margaret Robbins, unknown newspaper, Hesperia, Michigan, August 1932. Obtained by Judy Hammond, [ADDRESS FOR PRIVATE USE,] Frederic, Michigan.

- Michigan, 2nd September 1888¹⁰⁶; d. Mount Vernon, Skagit Co., Washington, 11th April 1931¹⁰⁷; bu. at Harwood (Arlington) Cemetery, Arlington, Snohomish Co., Washington, 14th April 1931.¹⁰⁸
- iv. BENJAMIN LEANDER "LEE" ROBBINS, b. Pennsylvania,¹⁰⁹ 11th August 1850¹¹⁰; m. Florine M. Dutton at Greenwood, Oceana Co., Michigan, 29th February 1872¹¹¹; d. Daisy, Stevens Co., Washington, 2nd May 1929¹¹²; bu. Harwood (Arlington) Cemetery, 6th May 1929.¹¹³
- v. EVALINE L. ROBBINS, b. McKean Co., Pennsylvania,¹¹⁴ c. 1853¹¹⁵; m. Peter Jacob Ackerson at Otto Twp., Oceana Co., Michigan, 9th June 1868¹¹⁶; d. LeRay, Blue Earth Co., Minnesota, in March 1880¹¹⁷; bu. unknown.
- vi. BEN FRANKLIN "FRANK" ROBBINS, b. McKean Co.,¹¹⁸ 2nd June 1858¹¹⁹; m. HELENA "LENA" (SWEET) SKINNER, at Newfield Twp., Oceana Co., Michigan¹²⁰; declared

¹⁰⁶ Newaygo County, Michigan, "Marriages, 1868-1925," p. 12, rec. no. 146, J. Benson Robbins and Margaret T. Wade entry; digital image, *FamilySearch.org* (<http://www.familysearch.org> : accessed 6 July 2014).

¹⁰⁷ "Washington State Death Records," database, Washington State Archives-Digital Archives, *Washington State Digital Archives* (<http://digitalarchives.wa.gov> : accessed 6 July 2014), Joseph Benson Robbins entry.

¹⁰⁸ Lisa J. Morris, Arlington, Washington [(E-ADDRESS FOR PRIVATE USE),] to Miriam Robbins Midkiff, e-mail, 27 April 2005, "Re: Joseph Josiah ROBBINS," privately held by Robbins, [(E-ADDRESS) & STREET ADDRESS FOR PRIVATE USE,] Spokane, Washington.

¹⁰⁹ 1870 U.S. census, Oceana Co., Michigan, pop. sch., p. 6 (penned), dwell. 50, fam. 50, Joseph J. Robbins household. Birthplace of Benjamin L. Robbins: Pennsylvania.

¹¹⁰ Joseph J. Robbins Civil War pension no. S.C. 193978, RG 15, NA-Washington. Questionnaire, Bureau of Pensions, 7 August 1899.

¹¹¹ Oceana County, Michigan, "Marriages, 1868-1925," p. 215, rec. no. 408, Benjamin L. Robbins and Florine L. Dutton entry; digital image, *FamilySearch.org* (<http://www.familysearch.org> : accessed 6 July 2014).

¹¹² "Washington State Death Records," database, Washington State Archives-Digital Archives, *Washington State Digital Archives* (<http://digitalarchives.wa.gov> : accessed 6 July 2014), Leander B. Robbins entry.

¹¹³ Morris to Robbins Midkiff, e-mail, 27 April 2005.

¹¹⁴ Oceana Co., Mich., "Marriages, 1868-1925," p. 136, Peter Jacob Ackersouth [*sic*] and Evaline Lovachin Rollins [*sic*] entry. Born "McKane Co Pa."

¹¹⁵ 1860 U.S. census, McKean Co., Pennsylvania, pop. sch., p. 752 (stamped) or 18 (penned), dwell. 122, fam. 123, Joseph J. Robbins household. Age: 7.

¹¹⁶ Oceana Co., Mich., "Marriages, 1868-1925," p. 136, Peter Jacob Ackersouth [*sic*] and Evaline Lovachin Rollins [*sic*] entry.

¹¹⁷ 1880 U.S. census, Blue Earth Co., Minnesota, mort. sch., p. 1, line 12, Evaline Ackerson.

¹¹⁸ Oceana County, Michigan, "Marriages, 1868-1925," p. 67, rec. no. 6, Ben Franklin Robbins and Helena M. J. Sweet entry; digital image, *FamilySearch.org* (<http://www.familysearch.org> : accessed 6 July 2014). Ben Franklin Robbins' birthplace: "McKeen Penn."

¹¹⁹ Joseph J. Robbins Civil War pension no. S.C. 193978, RG 15, NA-Washington. Questionnaire, Bureau of Pensions, 7 August 1899.

¹²⁰ Oceana Co., Mich., "Marriages, 1868-1925," p. 67, rec. no. 6, Ben Franklin Robbins and Helena M. J. Sweet entry.

- insane in 1880¹²¹; d. by suicide by hanging, at Newfield Twp., 6th July 1916¹²²; bu. Hesperia West Cemetery, 18th July 1916.¹²³
- vii. WILLIAM WALLACE "WILLIE" ROBBINS, b. in Michigan, 30th May 1867¹²⁴; d. Hesperia, Newaygo Co., Michigan, 7th June 1882¹²⁵; bu. Hesperia West Cemetery,¹²⁶ date unknown.

¹²¹ 1880 U.S. census, Newaygo Co., Michigan, "Defective, Dependent, and Delinquent Classes" schedule, image 12, B. F. Robbins.

¹²² Michigan death certificate 146 (1916), Benjamin F. Robbins.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Newaygo Co., Mich., "Deaths, 1867-1897," 1882 section, p. 316, William W. Robbins entry. Age at 7 June 1882 death: 15 years, 8 days.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Hesperia (Michigan) West Cemetery plat map