

## Fern Smith Tischer

Robin Wirthlin

**TO:** The Family of Fern Smith Tischer

### RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

Use DNA and documentary research to identify Fern Charlotte Smith Tischer's biological parents. Fern was born on 11 December 1911, in Chicago, Cook, Illinois, and died 1 June 2005 in Lake Odessa, Ionia, Michigan.

### LIMITATIONS

- DNA tests were taken at AncestryDNA, but not transferred to other DNA testing companies.
- DNA segment analysis could not be employed in this project because AncestryDNA does not provide DNA segment information or a chromosome browser to help prove kinship. However, AncestryDNA has the most user-submitted family trees of any DNA testing company. Therefore, pedigree triangulation (comparing family trees of 2 or more matches in the same shared match group and amount of shared DNA to identify ancestors) was the best mitigating technique for discovering ancestors shared with DNA matches.

### BACKGROUND SUMMARY

The following was known when the search started in 1998:

1. Fern Smith Tischer was born on 11 December 1911 in Chicago, Cook, Illinois.<sup>1</sup>
2. Ruth Brady went with Bessie Green (original adoptive mother) to pick up the newborn baby, Fern. Bessie was scared, so Fern was given to Ruth Brady (friend of Bessie) when she was less than one hour old.<sup>2</sup>
3. Fern lived with Ruth and John Brady until she was six weeks old when she was suddenly taken away from them and given to Bessie and Elmer Green.<sup>3</sup>
4. When Fern was between 6 and 8 years old, she was given to Bessie's parents, Mabel and John F. "Jack" Smith, to do housework and care for them in their old age.<sup>4</sup>
5. When Fern was about ten years old, she overheard Bessie and Mabel talking. She had recently learned that she was adopted and was curious about the conversation. Bessie and Mabel said,

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<sup>1</sup> Probate Court of the County of Barry, Michigan, Certificate of Determination of Time and Place of Birth, Fern Hull, filed 14 June 1944, birth date 11 December 1911, Chicago, Cook, Illinois, Father William Hull, mother unknown, legitimate, foster mother Ruth Brady Ripstra verified the birth date.

<sup>2</sup> Ruth Brady Ripstra, (Villa Park, Illinois) to Fern Smith Tischer, greeting card, December 1983, privately held by Fern's family, [ADDRESS FOR PRIVATE USE], Michigan, 2021; also Fern Smith Tischer, (Lake Odessa, Michigan), telephone interview by Robin Wirthlin, November 1998, transcript privately held, Robin Wirthlin, Robin@FamilyLocket.com, 2021.

<sup>3</sup> Fern Smith Tischer, interview, November 1998.

<sup>4</sup> Fern Smith Tischer, interview, November 1998; also 1920 U.S. census, Barry County, Michigan, population schedule, Yankee Springs Township, p. 312 (stamped), Enumeration District (E.D.) 66, sheet 4-B, dwelling 93, family 95, John F. Smith household; image, *Ancestry* (<http://www.ancestry.com> : viewed 8 January 2021), citing National Archives microfilm T625, roll 756. Eight-year-old Fern is listed as John F. and Mabel Smith's daughter.

“If only Fern knew that the doctor that delivered her just lives up the street on [Fern couldn’t remember the street during the interview].”<sup>5</sup> Fern walked to the doctor’s home office at either 329 S. Ashland bl. or 3229 Washington Ave. and wrote down the address.<sup>6</sup> She was satisfied with just this information until 1930.

6. Fern wrote to the doctor in 1930, asking if she was illegitimate.<sup>7</sup>

7. Dr. James Austin Stough, MD, replied on 10 January 1930.<sup>8</sup>

“Miss Fern Smith (Hull) ...You are not an Illegitimate child. You was born about 4 months after your parents were married. Your fathers name was or is William Hull. Your mothers name I don’t know that I ever knew. Your parents left Chicago about 6 years after you were born, they then had three more children. Your parents were attending Oberlin College at Oberlin Ohio when the trouble happened.”

Research undertaken before 2005 included extensive research conducted between 1998-2005 in census records, city directories, Oberlin College Archives, birth records, name change records, marriage records, death records, probate records, obituaries, online searches, and draft registration cards.<sup>9</sup> No records for William Hull or a child born on 11 December 1911 were located that identified Fern’s biological parents. Dr. James Austin Stough (1861-1934) delivered Fern.<sup>10</sup> None of his medical records or logbooks are known to exist.<sup>11</sup> Fern Smith Tischer passed away on 1 June 2005 without learning the identity of her biological parents.<sup>12</sup>

## SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

- Analyzed autosomal DNA test results for Fern Smith Tischer’s son Corwin Tischer, daughter LT,

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<sup>5</sup> Fern Smith Tischer, interview, November 1998.

<sup>6</sup> “U.S., City Directories, 1822-1995,” *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/2469/images/4730907?pld=1234398855> : accessed 5 February 2021), 1917, James A Stough, physician, 329 Ashland bl, image 870 of 1130, p. 1738; also 1910 U.S. census, Cook County, Illinois, population schedule, Chicago, p. 64 (stamped), Enumeration District (ED) 881, sheet 7A, dwelling 65, family 122, James A. Stough household, citing National Archives microfilm T624, roll 263, FHL microfilm 1374276; address 329 Ashland Boulevard; also 1920 U.S. census, Cook County, Illinois, population schedule, Chicago, p. 123 (stamped), Enumeration District (ED) 757, sheet 6-A, dwelling 69, family 144, James A. Stough household, citing National Archives microfilm T625, roll 322; address 3229 Washington Ave., Chicago, original access date on microfilm 7 April 2001.

<sup>7</sup> Fern Smith Tischer, interview, November 1998.

<sup>8</sup> J.A. Stough, (West Palm Beach, Florida) to Miss Fern Smith (Hull), letter, 10 January 1930; privately held by Fern’s family [ADDRESS FOR PRIVATE USE], Michigan, 2021.

<sup>9</sup> Research findings, Fern Smith Tischer file, Robin Wirthlin, Robin@FamilyLocket.com, 2021.

<sup>10</sup> Fern Smith Tischer, interview, November 1998; also *Find a Grave*, database and images, (<https://www.findagrave.com> : accessed 28 January 2021), memorial 27933530, Dr. James A. Stough (1861–1934), Greenwood Cemetery, Lagrange, LaGrange, Indiana; also “Dr. J.A. Stough of first L.H.S. Class Dies Here Tuesday,” *LaGrange Standard*, (LaGrange, Indiana), 12 July 1934, p. 1.

<sup>11</sup> Juin Whipple Foresman, San Juan Capistrano, California, to Robin Wirthlin, letter, 1 February 2002, memories of Dr. James Austin Stough, Personal Correspondence, privately held by Wirthlin, 2021.

<sup>12</sup> *Find a Grave*, database and images (<https://www.findagrave.com> : accessed 04 February 2021), memorial 80495682, Fern Charlotte Smith Tischer (1911–1 June 2005), Lakeside Cemetery, Lake Odessa, Ionia County, Michigan, USA.

and daughter Janet Tischer Okrei. Fern's biological parents were not found until DNA results were utilized.<sup>13</sup>

- Separated the DNA matches of Fern's children into clusters comprised of people descended from families with surnames Hunt, Lawrence, Miller, Mueller, Blomeyer, and Krull.
- Used pedigree triangulation method to discern that Fern's biological maternal great-grandparents were Henry Blomeyer and Henrietta Krull. Her maternal grandparents were George Adam Miller and Amelia Minna Louisa Blomeyer. Fern's paternal grandparents were Giles Hunt and Ann Lowrance.
- Learned that the surname of Fern's biological father, William, was Hunt, not Hull.
- **Discovered through DNA research that Fern Smith Tischer's biological parents are William Luther Hunt and Elizabeth Amanda Miller through DNA research.**
- Located records for the marriage of William L. Hunt and Elizabeth Amanda Miller. They married on 2 September 1911 in St. Louis, Missouri.<sup>14</sup> This verifies the marriage information provided in the 1930 letter from Dr. Stough to Fern that she was born four months after her parents married.
- Identified four additional children who were born to William and Elizabeth Hunt:
  - Robert Miller Hunt (born 24 April 1913, Chicago, Illinois).<sup>15</sup>
  - Cyril Bernard Hunt (28 Aug 1914, Chicago, Illinois).<sup>16</sup>
  - Elizabeth Ann Hunt (8 Aug 1916, Chicago, Illinois).<sup>17</sup>
  - William Luther Hunt, Jr. (6 Oct 1918, Washington, D.C. – 11 Jun 2017).<sup>18</sup> This verifies additional information in the letter from Dr. Stough to Fern. He wrote that Fern's parents had three more children before moving away from Chicago, Illinois.

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<sup>13</sup> 1920 U.S. census, Cook County, Illinois, population schedule, Chicago, p. 123 (stamped), Enumeration District (ED) 757, sheet 6-A, dwelling 69, family 144, James A. Stough household; image, *Ancestry* (<http://www.ancestry.com> : viewed 5 February 2021), citing National Archives microfilm T625, roll 322.

<sup>14</sup> St. Louis, Missouri, Office of Recorder of Deeds, Marriage License, Wm. L. Hunt and Elizabeth Miller, 2 September 1911; also "Missouri, County Marriage, Naturalization, and Court Records, 1800-1991," database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q57-8989-9N27> : accessed 8 January 2021), no. 167303, image 298 of 697, p. 575; Missouri State Archives, Jefferson City, citing FHL film #7513845; also "William Luther Hunt." Obituary, unknown newspaper, *Mackley Genealogy* ([http://mackleygenealogy.com/~mackley/Obit\\_Display.php?pid=HU\\_000927.jpg](http://mackleygenealogy.com/~mackley/Obit_Display.php?pid=HU_000927.jpg) : accessed 18 June 2018).

<sup>15</sup> *Find a Grave*, database and images (<https://www.findagrave.com> : accessed 9 January 2021), memorial 49209556, Robert Miller Hunt (24 April 1913–18 September 1962), Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington, Arlington, Virginia, USA.

<sup>16</sup> *Find a Grave*, database and images (<https://www.findagrave.com> : accessed 9 January 2021), memorial 59845982, Capt Bernard Cyril Hunt (28 August 1914–5 February 1990), Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington, Arlington, Virginia, USA.

<sup>17</sup> "Elizabeth Ann Hunt Gardner (Age 98) "Betty," *The Washington Post* (Washington, D.C.), 28-November - 30 November 2014; database with images, *Legacy* (<https://www.legacy.com/obituaries/washingtonpost/obituary.aspx?n=elizabeth-a-gardner&pid=173302614&fhid=16998> : accessed 8 January 2021).

<sup>18</sup> "Obituary of William L. Hunt," *David C. Gross Funeral Homes & Cremation Centers* (<https://davidcgross.com/tribute/details/136702/William-Hunt/obituary.html#tribute-start> : accessed 9 January 2021).

- Discovered that William Luther Hunt was born on 2 June 1886 in Farmington, St. Francois, Missouri.<sup>19</sup> He died on 18 November 1971 in Baltimore, Maryland, and was buried in Friendship United Methodist Church Cemetery, located in Friendship, Anne Arundel, Maryland.<sup>20</sup>
- Established that Elizabeth Amanda Miller was born on 17 February 1892 in Farmington, St. Francois County, Missouri, died on 15 March 1985 in Annandale, Fairfax, Virginia.<sup>21</sup> Elizabeth Amanda Miller was buried in Friendship United Methodist Church Cemetery in Friendship, Maryland.<sup>22</sup>
- Learned that William L. Hunt attended Carleton College.<sup>23</sup>
- Created a timeline of the important people and events surrounding Fern's birth
- Built a family tree for Fern Charlotte Smith Tischer.

## ITEMIZED RESEARCH FINDINGS

### DNA Inheritance

Since extensive documentary research was unsuccessful in identifying Fern Smith Tischer's biological parents, the next step was to use DNA research to identify them.<sup>24</sup> Although Fern passed away in 2005, she passed 50% of her DNA on to each of her children, of course each of them received a little different 50%. Three of Fern's children, Corwin Tischer, Janet Tischer Okrei, and LT, took AncestryDNA tests in late 2017 and early 2018. Results from the three DNA tests could be used to identify Fern's living biological family members, and possibly Fern's parents could be identified. The DNA match list for Fern's three children indicated that they had some close biological relatives – from first to third cousins.

The following information will lay a foundation for understanding DNA inheritance and testing results. Parents pass 50% of their DNA on to their children. These children become parents and, in turn, pass on 50% of their DNA to their children. The DNA that the second generation inherits is a mixture of about 25% of each grandparents' DNA. As the generations continue, DNA recombines and is passed on randomly but is generally cut in half with each generation. DNA matches can help verify ancestors 6-8 generations back in time.

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<sup>19</sup> "Missouri, Birth Registers, 1847-1919," database with images, *Ancestry* ([https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/1170/images/vrmmo1833\\_c6028-0087?pid=3017955](https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/1170/images/vrmmo1833_c6028-0087?pid=3017955) : accessed 8 January 2021), June 4, 1886, Male Hunt, entry 634, image 60 of 115, unpaginated.

<sup>20</sup> *Find a Grave*, database and images (<https://www.findagrave.com> : accessed 04 February 2021), memorial 115255793, William Luther "Buck" Hunt (2 June 1886–15 November 1971), Friendship United Methodist Church Cemetery, Friendship, Anne Arundel County, Maryland, USA.

<sup>21</sup> "Virginia, Death Records, 1912-2014, database and images, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com> : accessed January 2018), Elizabeth M. Hunt, (17 February 1892 – 15 March 1985), image 41 of 499.

<sup>22</sup> *Find a Grave*, database and images (<https://www.findagrave.com> : accessed 04 February 2021), memorial 115255792, Elizabeth Amanda Miller Hunt (17 February 1892–15 March 1985), Friendship United Methodist Church Cemetery, Friendship, Anne Arundel County, Maryland, USA.

<sup>23</sup> Robert Louis Hunt, "William "Buck" Hunt," *Geni* (<https://www.geni.com/people/William-Buck-Hunt/366147133680011694#/tab/overview> : accessed 23 December 2017).

<sup>24</sup> Wirthlin, Fern Smith Tischer file, 2021.

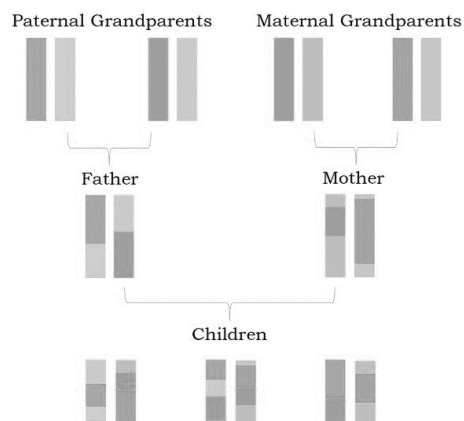


Figure 1 DNA segments are recombined and passed on to children, grandchildren, and so on through the generations.

In DNA test results, the amount of DNA shared between two relatives is given in centimorgans (cM). A centimorgan is a measurement of the likelihood that DNA will recombine. Generally speaking, the larger the cM amount, the closer the two people are related.

DNA itself cannot confirm family connections and must be used with genealogical information about family relationships for it to be meaningful. Therefore, historical records are critical to the success of DNA analysis.

The primary concept in DNA analysis is that DNA testers and their DNA matches share a common ancestor or common ancestral couple. When the relationship between two DNA testers is estimated or definitively learned via analyzing shared DNA and documentary research, the shared ancestor(s) can be determined. If one of the DNA matches knows who the shared ancestor was, the other DNA match can learn more about their family history, even if they didn't know who their ancestor(s) were at the beginning of the research. Frequently, DNA testers identify their ancestors by linking a family tree to their DNA account. Researchers can view the related family trees or search other online family trees to see or build connections between DNA matches and the ancestors they share in common with the DNA tester.

### DNA Research Findings

AncestryDNA reported a long list of people in their database who shared DNA with Fern's children. The first research step was to use the "Shared Matches" feature in AncestryDNA to create two genetic networks or groups of DNA matches related to Corwin and LT and each other. Janet Okrei's DNA results were available four months after Corwin and LT's results. The amount of shared DNA with each of Janet's DNA matches gave additional confirmation of the family relationships.

The first genetic network comprised DNA matches related to the three children's father, Gerald Tischer. The second genetic network comprised the rest of the matches – who by default were related to their mother, Fern. Information about the amount of shared DNA and family trees linked to the DNA matches' profiles had the potential to achieve the research objective and identify Fern's biological parents.

The table below lists Fern’s children and the amount of DNA they share listed in centimorgans (cM) with their close DNA matches from genetic network 2. cM Range values are from the Shared cM Project Version 3.0.<sup>25</sup>

Tester	Corwin Shared DNA <sup>a</sup> .	LT Shared DNA <sup>b</sup> .	Janet Shared DNA <sup>c</sup> .	Relation	Shared DNA in cM for the Relationship	Most Recent Common Ancestor
Tester 1	451 cM	393 cM	394 cM	1C1R	102-980, avg. 433 cM	William Hunt/Elizabeth Miller
Tester 2	1062 cM	788 cM	794 cM	1C	396-1397, avg. 866 cM	William Hunt/Elizabeth Miller
Tester 3	1032 cM	625 cM	841 cM	1C	396-1397, avg. 866 cM	William Hunt/Elizabeth Miller
Tester 4	510 cM	652 cM	562 cM	1C	396-1397, avg. 866 cM	William Hunt/Elizabeth Miller
Tester 5	863 cM	678 cM	643 cM	1C	396-1397, avg. 866 cM	William Hunt/Elizabeth Miller
Tester 6	154 cM	300 cM	205 cM	2C	41-592, avg. 229 cM	Giles Hunt/Ann Lowrance
Tester 7	530 cM	557 cM	697 cM	1C1R	102-980, avg. 433 cM	Giles Hunt/Ann Lowrance
Tester 8	141 cM	198 cM	139 cM	2C	41-592, avg. 229 cM	George Miller/Amelia Blomeyer
Tester 9	194 cM	234 cM	190 cM	2C	41-592, avg. 229 cM	George Miller/Amelia Blomeyer
Tester 10	320 cM	207 cM	190 cM	2C	41-592, avg. 229 cM	George Miller/Amelia Blomeyer
Tester 11	210 cM	209 cM	145 cM	2C	41-592, avg. 229 cM	Henry Blomeyer/Henrietta Krull
<p>a. AncestryDNA matches for Corwin Tischer, database report, <i>AncestryDNA</i> (<a href="https://www.ancestry.com">https://www.ancestry.com</a> : accessed December 2017-July 2018) DNA match results for testers 1-11.</p> <p>b. AncestryDNA matches for LT, database report, <i>AncestryDNA</i> (<a href="https://www.ancestry.com">https://www.ancestry.com</a> : accessed December 2017-July 2018) DNA match results for testers 1-11.</p> <p>c. AncestryDNA matches for Linda Okrei, database report, <i>AncestryDNA</i> (<a href="https://www.ancestry.com">https://www.ancestry.com</a> : accessed April-July 2018) DNA match results for testers 1-11.</p>						

*Table 1 DNA comparison showing the amount of DNA that Fern’s children share with their biological cousins*

The amount of shared DNA between Corwin Tischer, LT, and Janet Okrei and Testers 1-11 was used to estimate relationships using the Shared cM Project tool.<sup>26</sup> The Shared cM Project is the industry accepted standard for evaluating family relationships based on the amount of shared DNA. Version 3.0 used the data from 25,000 DNA testers who reported the amount of DNA they shared with their known relatives.<sup>27</sup> All amounts of shared DNA between Fern’s children and Testers 1-11 fit within the observed range and high probability for specific relationships in the Shared cM Project. This information meant

<sup>25</sup> Blaine Bettinger and Jonny Perl, “The Shared cM Project 3.0 tool v3,” *DNA Painter* (<https://dnainter.com/tools/sharedcmv3> : updated 12 October 2017).

<sup>26</sup> Perl and Bettinger, “The Shared cM Project 3.0 tool v3,” *DNA Painter*, October 2017).

<sup>27</sup> Blaine Bettinger, *The Shared cM Project – Version 3.0* (August 2017), ([https://thegeneticgenealogist.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Shared\\_cM\\_Project\\_2017.pdf](https://thegeneticgenealogist.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Shared_cM_Project_2017.pdf) : accessed December 2017).

that the relationships were probable, and further verification with genealogical records was needed to confirm the relationships and the shared ancestors.

The DNA matches in cluster 2 were examined to learn if they had a linked or unlinked family tree or no tree at all. If a family tree was available, it was compared with others in Genetic Network 2 to identify ancestors and locations found in multiple DNA matches' trees. The DNA matches and their ancestors were added to a chart to illustrate their family connections. The amount of DNA shared with the closest DNA matches was used to place the matches into specific relationships in the family tree. As the chart grew, it became apparent that many of the close DNA matches shared the same ancestors (see figure 3).

Not all of the close DNA matches had family trees associated with their DNA profiles, especially those with higher amounts of shared DNA. An in-depth comparison of shared DNA and estimated relationships was correlated with hints from online family trees. Some "quick trees" were built for DNA matches with no tree or small family trees to connect to ancestors recorded in multiple DNA matches' family trees. Reasonably exhaustive research was not performed while building the quick trees, but strong evidence was obtained to verify each parent-to-child link.

Fern's parents were identified when people in the family trees of multiple DNA matches connected in both time and location. First, the connection between the Hunt and Lawrence families was established and confirmed with Giles Hunt and Ann Lowrance's 3 February 1875 marriage record.<sup>28</sup> Census records list family members and others living in the same household and were the most accessible records to identify their children. Information in census records may contain errors and is only as correct as the informant's memory and the census taker's understanding. The 1880, 1900, and 1910 U.S. census listed Giles Hunt and Ann Lowrance's children as Lucinda/Eliza L., John W., Bertha L., Parkhurst L., **William M./William L.**, Allen G., Carmen, and Bonnie D. Hunt.<sup>29</sup> Because similar family information was listed in the three censuses in St. Francois, St. Francois, Missouri, there was evidence that the correct family had been identified. William Hunt was named with different middle initials in the 1900 and 1910 census, and further research was needed to learn William Hunt's correct middle initial.

The relationship between the Millers and the Blomeyers was established through family tree comparison. The connection was verified with the 29 March 1868 marriage record for George Adam

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<sup>28</sup> "Missouri, U.S., Marriage Records, 1805-2002," database and images, *Ancestry* ([https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/1171/images/vrmmo1833\\_c6017-0321?pld=9612005](https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/1171/images/vrmmo1833_c6017-0321?pld=9612005) : accessed 1 February 2021), St Francois > Record images for St. Francois > 1836-1876, Giles Hunt and Annie Lawrence, 3 February 1875, p. 367, image 287 of 304, citing Missouri State Archives; Jefferson City, MO, USA; Missouri Marriage Records.

<sup>29</sup> 1880 U.S. census, St. Francois County, Missouri, population schedule, St. Francois, p. 422D (stamped), Enumeration District (ED) 118, dwelling 134, family 134, John C. Hunt household; image, *Ancestry* (<http://www.ancestry.com> : viewed 3 February 2021), citing National Archives microfilm T9, roll 714; also 1900 U.S. census, St. Francois County, Missouri, population schedule, St. Francois, p. 191 (stamped), Enumeration District (ED) 98, sheet 19-B, dwelling 133, family 133, Giles Hunt household; image, *Ancestry* (<http://www.ancestry.com> : viewed 3 February 2021), citing National Archives microfilm T623, 1854 rolls; also 1910 U.S. census, St. Francois County, Missouri, population schedule, St. Francois Township, p. 244 (stamped), Enumeration District (ED) 95, sheet 13A, dwelling 223, family 235, Jiles Hunt household; image, *Ancestry* (<http://www.ancestry.com> : viewed 20 January 2021), citing National Archives microfilm T624, roll 808.

Miller and Amelia Minna Louisa Blomeyer.<sup>30</sup> The 1880, 1900, and 1910 U.S. census listed their children as Emma, Daniel, Ety, Mancy, Coral/Cora, George/Geo/George F., Millie, Smith V., Henry B., **Lizzie/Elizabeth M.**, Waldon, Arthur W. The Find A Grave record for George Adam Miller listed the following children: Emma Theresa Miller Cleve, Daniel Adam Miller, Henrietta Isabelle Miller Bruner, Mary Alice Miller Smith, Cora Verena Miller McCoy, George Fredrick Miller, Lydia Elizabeth "Lizzie" Miller, Amelia Louisa Miller Strobel, Harry Smith Victor Miller, Henry Blomeyer Miller, **Elizabeth Amanda Miller Hunt**, and Arthur Waldo Miller.<sup>31</sup> When comparing census and Find A Grave records, it was noted that some of the Miller children had different names on the census, and not all of the children in the Find A Grave record were recorded on the censuses. Lydia Elizabeth "Lizzie" Miller was born and died between the 1880 and 1900 census, which explains why she is not recorded with the family but is recorded in Find A Grave.<sup>32</sup> It appears that Elizabeth Amanda Miller was named after her sister, who had passed away. The marriage and census records established the connection between George A. Hunt and Amelia Blomeyer and gave a list of children who were possible parent candidates for Fern S. Tischer.

Next, the intersection between the Hunts and the Millers was sought. At first, the DNA tests showed that the primary matches with family trees were Testers 1, 4, 7, 10, and 11. Tester 3 had no family tree connected with his DNA account. When he replied to a message one year later, he shared that he was adopted and didn't know [the identity of] any birth family members. As time went on, more of Fern's close relatives tested their DNA. Each of the newer testers, 2, 5, and 8, added DNA evidence that the family structure shown in the chart was correct.

The high amounts of DNA that Janet, Corwin, and LT shared with testers 1, 2, 4, and 5 indicated that the relationships were first cousins or first cousins once removed. If the testers were first cousins, then their parents were full siblings to Fern! This discovery meant that at least some of the information Dr. James A. Stough wrote to Fern was correct - that Fern's parents had more children (three) before they moved away from Chicago.

Records of Fern's siblings and parents were sought to confirm the DNA connections. It was discovered that Fern's sibling's parents were William Hunt and Elizabeth Miller. The relationships were verified when family trees and genealogical documents showed how the DNA testers fit into the larger family structure. The following timeline was established with records and corresponded with the information provided by Fern at the beginning of the research in 1998.

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<sup>30</sup> "Missouri, U.S., Marriage Records, 1805-2002," database and images, *Ancestry* ([https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/1171/images/vrmmo1833\\_c6017-0237?usePUB=true&usePUBJs=true&pId=9611311](https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/1171/images/vrmmo1833_c6017-0237?usePUB=true&usePUBJs=true&pId=9611311) : accessed 1 February 2021), St Francois > Record images for St. Francois > 1836-1876, George A. Miller and Emily L. M. Blomeyer, 29 March 1868, p. 209, image 203 of 304; citing Missouri State Archives, Jefferson City, MO, USA, Missouri Marriage Records.

<sup>31</sup> *Find A Grave*, database and images (<https://www.findagrave.com> : accessed 3 February 2021), memorial 104148343, George Adam Miller (2 February 1842–24 March 1915), Copenhagen Cemetery, Farmington, St. Francois County, Missouri, USA.

<sup>32</sup> *Find A Grave*, database and images (<https://www.findagrave.com> : accessed 3 February 2021), memorial 178353425, Lydia Elizabeth "Lizzie" Miller, (July 1882-16 October 1883), Copenhagen Cemetery, Farmington, St. Francois County, Missouri, USA.



Fern's four full-siblings were

- Robert Miller Hunt (born 24 April 1913, Chicago, Illinois).<sup>33</sup>
- Cyril Bernard Hunt (28 Aug 1914, Chicago, Illinois).<sup>34</sup>
- Elizabeth Ann Hunt (8 Aug 1916, Chicago, Illinois).<sup>35</sup>
- William Luther Hunt, Jr. (6 Oct 1918, Washington, D.C. – 11 Jun 2017).<sup>36</sup>

### Timeline of events, key people, and locations surrounding Fern Smith Tischer's birth

Event	Date	Location	Source
Elizabeth Miller residence	15 April 1910	Farmington, St. Francois, Missouri	1910 U.S. census, St. Francois Co., Missouri, Farmington, p. 253 (stamped), ED 96, sheet 1B, dwell. 12, fam. 13, George A. Miller.
William L. Hunt residence	11 May 1910	St. Francois Twp., St. Francois, Missouri	1910 U.S. census, St. Francois County, Missouri, population schedule, St. Francois Township, p. 244 (stamped), ED 95, sheet 13A, dwell. 223, family 235, Jiles Hunt.
Wm Hunt residence	1911	4015 W. Vanburen, Chicago, Cook, Illinois	"U.S., City Directories, 1822-1995," <i>Ancestry</i> ( <a href="https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/2469/images/4715285?pid=1233755832">https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/2469/images/4715285?pid=1233755832</a> : accessed 3 February 2021), 1911, The Lakeside City Directory, Chicago, Illinois, Wm Hunt, image 178 of 761, p. 657.
William L. Hunt married Elizabeth Miller	2 September 1911	St. Louis, Missouri	"Missouri, County Marriage, Naturalization, and Court Records, 1800-1991," database, <i>FamilySearch</i> , entry for Hunt-Miller
Fern Charlotte Smith Born	11 December 1911	Chicago, Cook, Illinois	Delayed birth certificate; Interview with Fern Smith Tischer 1998
Ruth Brady took Fern home	11 December 1911	Chicago, Cook, Illinois	Ruth Brady Ripstra to Fern Smith Tischer, December 1983; also Fern Smith Tischer, interview, November 1998.
Wm L. Hunt residence	1913	3977 Drexel bl, Chicago, Cook, Illinois	"U.S., City Directories, 1822-1995," <i>Ancestry</i> ( <a href="https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/2469/images/4719782?pid=1233755832">https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/2469/images/4719782?pid=1233755832</a> : accessed 4 February 2021), 1913, Lakeside Annual Directory of the City of Chicago, image 333 of 911, p. 652, Wm L Hunt.
Robert Miller Hunt born	24 April 1913	Not directly stated	<i>Find a Grave</i> , memorial 49209556, Robert Miller Hunt (24 Apr 1913–18 Sep 1962).
Wm L. Hunt residence	1914	2456 Diana ct, Chicago, Cook, Illinois	U.S., City Directories, 1822-1995, <i>Ancestry</i> ( <a href="https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/2469/images/4724251?pid=1233755832">https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/2469/images/4724251?pid=1233755832</a> : accessed 4 February 2021), 1914, Lakeside Guide of Chicago, Chicago Directory Co., Wm L Hunt, clk, image 335 of 1002, p. 760.
Cyril Bernard Hunt	28 August 1914	Chicago, Cook, Illinois	<i>Find a Grave</i> , memorial 59845982, Capt Bernard Cyril Hunt (28 Aug 1914–5 Feb 1990); also "Illinois, Cook County, Birth Certificates, 1871-1949," index, <i>FamilySearch</i>

<sup>33</sup> *Find a Grave*, database and images (<https://www.findagrave.com> : accessed 9 January 2021), memorial 49209556, Robert Miller Hunt (24 April 1913–18 September 1962), Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington, Arlington, Virginia, USA.

<sup>34</sup> *Find a Grave*, database and images (<https://www.findagrave.com> : accessed 9 January 2021), memorial 59845982, Capt Bernard Cyril Hunt (28 August 1914–5 February 1990), Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington, Arlington, Virginia, USA.

<sup>35</sup> "Elizabeth Ann Hunt Gardner (Age 98) "Betty," The Washington Post (Washington, D.C.), 28-November - 30 November 2014; database with images, *Legacy* (<https://www.legacy.com/obituaries/washingtonpost/obituary.aspx?n=elizabeth-a-gardner&pid=173302614&fhid=16998> : accessed 8 January 2021).

<sup>36</sup> "Obituary of William L. Hunt," *David C. Gross Funeral Homes & Cremation Centers* (<https://davidcgross.com/tribute/details/136702/William-Hunt/obituary.html#tribute-start> : accessed 9 January 2021).

			( <a href="https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:Q23S-3HVV">https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:Q23S-3HVV</a> : accessed 20 January 2021), Cyril Bernard Hunt, Certificate No. 43197, 28 August 1814, Chicago, Reg Date 15 February 1960.
Wm L. Hunt residence	1915-17	2456 Geneva ter[race], Chicago, Cook, Illinois	"U.S., City Directories, 1822-1995," <i>Ancestry</i> ( <a href="https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/2469/images/4729061?pid=1233755832">https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/2469/images/4729061?pid=1233755832</a> : accessed 4 February 2021), 1915, Lakeside Annual Directory of the City of Chicago, Wm L Hunt, clk, image 385 of 1063, p. 774.
Elizabeth Ann Hunt	8 August 1916	Chicago, Cook, Illinois	"Elizabeth Ann Hunt Gardner (Age 98) "Betty," <i>The Washington Post</i> (Washington, D.C.), (28-November - 30 November 2014); database <i>Legacy.com</i> .
William Luther Hunt, Jr	6 October 1918	Washington, D.C.	"Obituary of William L. Hunt," <i>David C. Gross Funeral Homes &amp; Cremation Centers</i> , 6 October 1918.
Residence of William L. & Elizabeth Miller and children Robert M., Cyril B., Elizabeth A., William L. Hunt	10 January 1920	Washington, D.C.	1920 U.S. census, District Of Columbia, Washington, population schedule, Washington, D.C., p. 112 (stamped), Enumeration District (ED) 124, sheet 10-A, dwelling 152, family 239, William L. Hunt household; image, <i>Ancestry</i> ( <a href="http://www.ancestry.com">http://www.ancestry.com</a> : viewed 3 February 2021), citing National Archives microfilm T625, roll 208.
Residence of Fern Smith in 1920	24 January 1920	Yankee Springs, Barry, Michigan	1920 U.S. census, Barry Co., Michigan, Yankee Springs Township, p. 312 (stamped), ED 66, sheet 4-B, dwell. 93, fam 95, John F. Smith.

*Table 2 Timeline of events and locations of important people in Fern S. Tischer's life*

**Key**  
 All DNA matches are compared to Fern's children:  
 Janet (J), Corwin (C), and LT (L).  
 Shared DNA shown in # cM  
 Dotted line= Fern's connection to her biological family  
 1C1R = First Cousin Once Removed

**Fern Charlotte Smith  
 Tischer's  
 Biological Family**

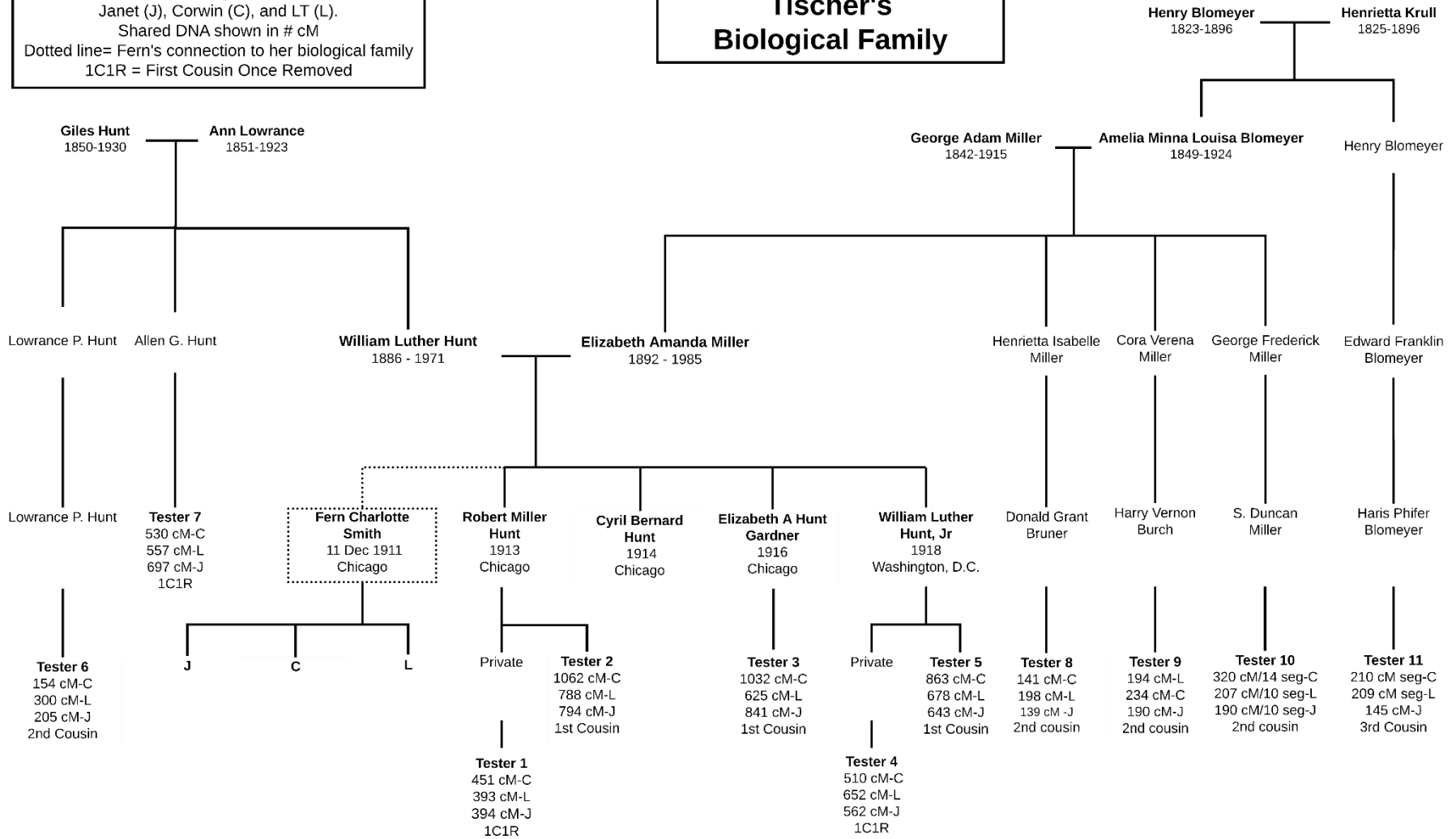


figure 3 Pedigree chart showing family relationships and the amount of DNA that verifies the DNA tester's locations in the family tree

Dr. James Austin Stough told Fern that her father's name was William **Hull**. DNA connections revealed that Fern was related to the **Hunt** family. Dr. Stough misremembered Fern's parent's surname. The difference in the names could be due to the length of time - nineteen years - between 1911 when Fern was born and 1930 when Dr. Stough wrote to her and stated that her father's name was William Hull.

It is unknown how Dr. Stough knew William Hunt and the specific information that the Hunts had three more children before moving away from Chicago. Why didn't Dr. Stough know Elizabeth's name? Further research could discover if the Stoughs and the Hunts attended church together.

The obituaries of both men may give clues about how they knew each other. William Hunt's obituary stated that he was a 50-year member of Candida Lodge A.F. and F.M. of Chicago [Ancient Free and Accepted Masons].<sup>37</sup> Dr. James A. Stough's obituary reported that he was a member of the Chicago Masonic and Odd Fellows Lodges. Were the two men members of the same Masonic lodge? Further research could uncover the connection.

Dr. Hull also wrote that Fern's parents were attending Oberlin College in Oberlin, Ohio, "when the trouble happened." A life sketch of William Hunt stated that he had attended Carleton College in Farmington, Missouri.<sup>38</sup> William was listed with his parents in the 1910 census for St. Francois, St. Francois, Missouri.<sup>39</sup> Elizabeth Miller lived in Farmington, St. Francois, Missouri, in 1910, where Carleton College was located.<sup>40</sup> While the time cannot be pinpointed, the location and opportunity for acquaintance allowed for their first child's conception.

Dr. Stough also told Fern that her parents were married four months before she was born. A marriage license and return record certified that William L. Hunt and Elizabeth Miller were married in St. Louis, Missouri, on 2 September 1911.<sup>41</sup> They obtained a marriage license on the same day that the marriage was performed.

The marriage license stated that William lived in Chicago, which implied that he already lived in Chicago before the marriage was performed. The marriage license also noted that Elizabeth lived in Farmington, Missouri, at the marriage time. Additionally, a 5 September 1911 newspaper article from the St. Louis Post-Dispatch informed the public that William L. Hunt of Chicago, IL and Amanda Elizabeth Hunt of

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<sup>37</sup> "William Luther Hunt." Obituary, unknown newspaper, *Mackley Genealogy* ([http://mackleygenealogy.com/~mackley/Obit\\_Display.php?pid=HU\\_000927.jpg](http://mackleygenealogy.com/~mackley/Obit_Display.php?pid=HU_000927.jpg) : accessed 18 June 2018).

<sup>38</sup> Robert Louis Hunt, "William "Buck" Hunt," *Geni*.

<sup>39</sup> 1910 U.S. census, St. Francois Co., MO, St. Francois Township, p. 244 (stamped), ED 95, sheet 13A, dwell. 223, family 235, Jiles Hunt.

<sup>40</sup> 1910 U.S. census, St. Francois Co., MO, Farmington, p. 253 (stamped), ED 96, sheet 1-B, dwell. 12, fam. 13, George A. Miller; also Robert Louis Hunt, "William "Buck" Hunt," *Geni*; also Paul Batesel, "Carleton College Farmington, Missouri 1854-1916," *America's Lost Colleges*, (<https://www.lostcolleges.com/carleton-college> : accessed 5 February 2021).

<sup>41</sup> "Missouri, County Marriage, Naturalization, and Court Records, 1800-1991," database with images, FamilySearch ([https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QS7-8989-9N27?](https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QS7-8989-9N27?i=298&cc=298) : accessed 8 January 2021), no. 167303, image 298 of 697, p. 575; Missouri State Archives, Jefferson City, citing FHL film 7513845.

Farmington, MO obtained a marriage license.<sup>42</sup> The marriage records further validated the connection between the Hunt and Miller DNA matches and the link to Fern's biological parents.

STATE OF MISSOURI, } ss. No. 167303  
CITY OF ST. LOUIS. }  
THIS LICENSE authorizes any Judge of a Court of Record, Justice of the Peace or Licensed or Ordained Preacher of the Gospel, who is a citizen of the United States, to solemnize marriage between  
Mr. *Wm. L. Hunt*  
of *Chicago* State of *Ill.* who is *over* the age of  
twenty-one years and  
Miss *Elizabeth Miller*  
of *Farmington* State of *Mo.* who is *over* the age of  
eighteen years.

WITNESS my hand as Recorder with the seal of office hereto affixed at my office in the  
CITY OF ST. LOUIS, this *2nd* day of *Sept.* 19*11*.

COPY OF SEAL  
RECORDER OF DEEDS  
SEAL,  
SAINT LOUIS, STATE OF MISSOURI.

*Chas. F. Joy* Recorder.  
*C. J. Krueger*  
MARRIAGE LICENSE CLERK.

STATE OF MISSOURI, } ss.  
CITY OF ST. LOUIS. }  
This is to certify, that the undersigned, a *Justice of the Peace*  
did, at *St. Louis* in the State of Missouri, on the *2nd* day  
of *Sept.* 19*11*, unite in marriage the above named persons.

*C. J. Krueger*  
*1007 Chestnut St.*

Filed for Record this *2nd* day of *Oct.* 191*1*.

*Chas. F. Joy* Recorder.

Figure 2 Marriage License and Return for Wm. L. Hunt of Chicago, Ill. and Elizabeth Miller of Farmington, Mo.

Another confirmation of the marriage was William Luther Hunt's obituary, which referred to his and Elizabeth's 60<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary taking place two months before November 1971, which was calculated as September 1911.<sup>43</sup> When the information from the marriage license, newspaper notice, and obituary was considered together, there was no doubt that William Hunt and Elizabeth Miller fit the description given by Dr. James A. Stough that they were married four months before Fern was born.

## CONCLUSION

DNA evidence was the breakthrough needed in the search for Fern Charlotte Smith Tischer's biological parents. After DNA evidence pointed to William Hunt and Elizabeth Miller as Fern's parents, obituaries, birth, marriage, death records, census records, and city directories gave documentary evidence of family

<sup>42</sup> "Marriage Licenses," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, (St. Louis, Missouri), 5 September 1911, William L. Hunt, Chicago, Ill., and Elizabeth Miller, Farmington, Mo., p. 9, col 3; *Newspapers.com* ( [www.newspapers.com](http://www.newspapers.com) : accessed 8 January 2021).

<sup>43</sup> "William Luther Hunt." Obituary, unknown newspaper, *Mackley Genealogy* ([http://mackleygenealogy.com/~mackley/Obit\\_Display.php?pid=HU\\_000927.jpg](http://mackleygenealogy.com/~mackley/Obit_Display.php?pid=HU_000927.jpg) : accessed 18 June 2018).

relationships. When documents were considered along with the amount of shared DNA, the family relationships were substantiated, and a genetic connection was verified.

Fern's posterity has been given peace and closure to a long personal quest to identify her birth parents. While not always the case, Fern's biological family has had a positive reaction and embraced Fern's posterity.

#### **FURTHER RESEARCH SUGGESTIONS**

Search Carleton College records for William Hunt and Elizabeth Miller:

"Folder 3: Printed material, 1875-1913. House publications, including the first issue of The Exponent (February 1875), published by Carleton Institute, and seven issues of The Carletonian (1909-1913), published by Carleton College."

"The Carletonian" yearbook or newspaper was published from 1909-1913 - in the key timeframe for William Hunt and Elizabeth Miller to be students.

Locate church records for William Hunt and Elizabeth Miller in Farmington, St Francois, Missouri, St. Francois, St. Francois, Missouri, Chicago, Cook, Illinois, Washington, D.C.

Locate birth or christening records for Elizabeth Miller from Farmington, St. Francois, Missouri.