

In Search of Paulina, Maternal GGG-Grandmother

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Introduction

I am the gg-granddaughter of John B. Coquigne¹ (1827-1914) and Eliza Jane Root (1837-1908), who married in 1853 in Mundy township, Genesee county, Michigan where nine children were born to them, six of whom survived to adulthood. Much has been learned about the Coquigne family, their roots in Jouarre, France, their voyage to America in 1831, and their early years in/around Oswego county, New York. But what of the ancestry of Eliza Jane (hereafter referred to as EJ)? The documentation tells us that EJ's father was Charles Wheeler Root (hereafter referred to as CW), about whom very little is known. But even less is known about the identity and life of EJ's mother, a woman of the given name Paulina. According to family story, Paulina died when EJ was 12 years old, probably around 1849, a time when few records before or memories after were recorded.

In this article, I will discuss what we know, or what we think we know about EJ's mother, Paulina. I will then present a summary of the different avenues of research I have traveled, and conclude with some speculations and ideas I have about how to further pursue this research question.

What's In a Name?

What about the given name Paulina? The name sounds French to me, but there could have been other nationalities to use that given name for a female. See <https://www.behindthename.com/name/paulina>. The name is a female version of Paulinus, a variant of Paulus meaning “the little.” Related names are Paul, Paula, and Pauline.

I have to admit that I have sometimes wondered if Paulina was really the given name of EJ's mother. Maybe the name sounded something *like* Paulina? Maybe something like Polly? Polly was generally used as a nickname for Mary, and supposedly Paulina named one of her daughters Mary Ann. But the few records we have do seem consistent in stating a name like Pauline or Paulina.

The name of Paulina does not seem to have been passed down in our family as was often the case in those times. EJ's first-born daughter was named Helen, and don't we wonder where that name came from? Nevertheless, none of EJ's other daughters or granddaughters got a name like Paulina, although curiously, the name Mary or Mary Ann does seem to have carried down two of her daughters' lines. In the same way, none of the daughters or granddaughters of EJ's brother, Charles H. Root, got the name Paulina. Whoever Paulina was, she was not remembered by name among her descendants.

Finally, as we will see from the records, Paulina seems to have had any or all of the following surnames:

- Nichols/Nickols/Nickels
- Vannatta/Van Atta
- Lauton/Lawton
- Root

So the research question here is simple. Who was Paulina, mother of Eliza Jane Root?

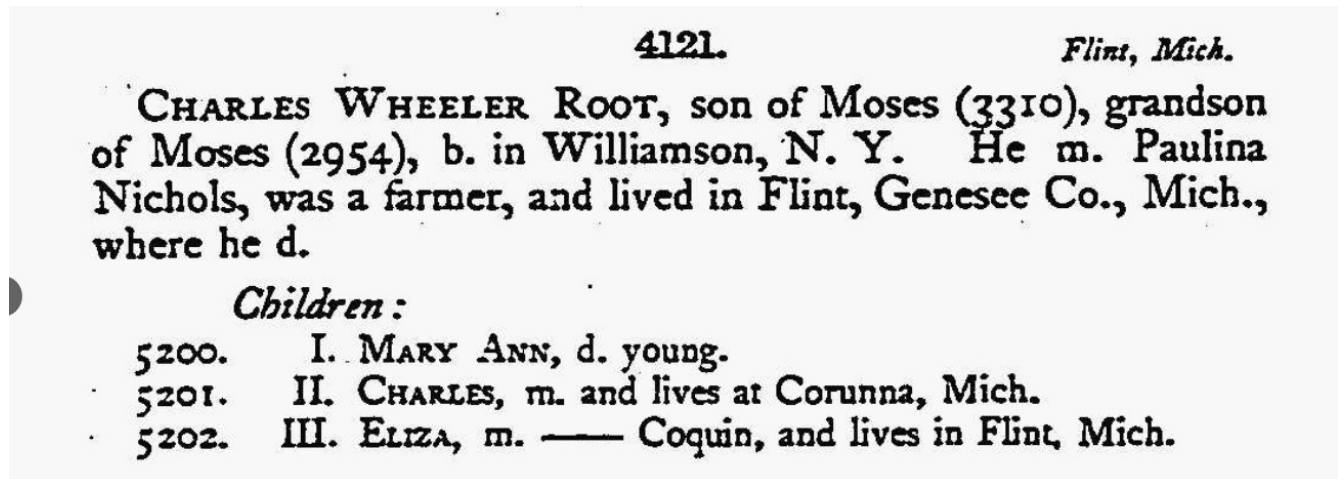
¹ He was baptized with the name Jean Baptiste Coquigne.

What We Know

Records

There are four sources where the name of EJ's mother appears. I will list them here in date order (the date the document was written or published).

1. A marriage record between Charles W. Root and **Pauline Nickols** on 19 April 1835 in Washtenaw county of Michigan Territory.²
2. A genealogy³ published in 1870:



3. The marriage record of EJ's brother, Charles Henry Root to Lena Sheldon (Chatterson) on 21 Oct 1901 in Three Oaks, Berrien, MI.⁴ His father was noted as Charles W. (we presume the surname Root), and his mother's maiden name was noted as **Pauline Lauton (or possibly Lawton)**.
4. The death certificate of EJ Coquigne⁵ with these particulars:
 - died 21 Jun 1908 in Mundy, Genesee, MI
 - born 6 Mar 1837 in New York (the year is a presumed error, assumed to be 1837)
 - father was Charles W. Root born in NY
 - mother was **Plina Vannatta born in NY**
 - informant was John B. Coquigne (husband)

2 Ancestry.com, Michigan, County Marriage Records, 1822-1940 [database on-line]; Washtenaw, 1827-1851. Lehi, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2016.

3 *Root genealogical records, 1600-1870: comprising the general history of the Root and Roots families in America* by James Pierce Root, New York 1870, p. 458.

4 Michigan, Marriage Records, 1867-1952. Michigan Department of Community Health, Division for Vital Records and Health Statistics. Digital image from Ancestry.com, Michigan, Marriage Records, 1867-1952 [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2015.

Ancestry.com, Michigan, County Marriage Records, 1822-1940 [database on-line]; Registers, 1887 - 1925, 1901 Alcona - Chippewa, Lehi, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2016.

5 State of Michigan, Department of State, Division of Vital Statistics, Certificate of Death #491, Eliza Jane Coquigne, date of death: June 21, 1908, place of death: Munday, Genesee. Digital image from [Seeking Michigan](#).

Stories

The following stories are excerpts from documents passed down to descendants of John B. Coquigne and Eliza Jane Root.⁶ This information is believed to have been authored by Mary Ann Spillane 1891-1989, a daughter of Henry K. Spillane and Louise Coquigne, and a granddaughter of John B. Coquigne and Eliza J. Root.

Eliza Root was born March 6, 1837, near Argentine. She was only 12 years old when her mother died. After that she kept house for her father and brother, also went where father found work. She stayed and worked at a hotel near Fenton run by people by the name of Francisco, which were distant relatives of hers. She was exceptionally beautiful, and very bright, lovable girl, to know her was to love her.

Eliza Root was married to John B. Coquigne after a brief courship, July 4, 1853 at midnight by Justice Guideon Watrous of Whigville, about one-half mile from the hotel where they were attending a party. To this happy union the following children were born.

Helen C. - May 24, 1854

Louise - September 1, 1855; died October 31, 1916

Emily - April 30, 1857; died October 5, 1900

Eugene Peter - March 12, 1859

Harriet - born 1861; died April 26, 1868 at age 7 years, 2 months

Charles H. - Born 1863; Died August 30, 1864, age 11 months

Johnnie and Julie - Born October 3, 1869; Julia died March 1, 1872 at age 3 years

Amelia - Born May 5, 1873

Another excerpt:

"John became acquainted with a beautiful young girl, Eliza Root, who was born March 6, 1837, near Argentine. Her mother had died when Eliza was twelve years of age and afterwards Eliza kept house for her father and brother, going wherever her father could find work. ... A distant relative by the name of Francisco owned a hotel near Fenton, and Eliza eventually went there to work. About that time she met John Baptist Coquigne and after a brief courtship they were married at midnight on July 4, 1853, by Justice Gideon Waterous of Whigville, which was about one-half mile from the hotel where they were attending a party. "In the early days of the marriage of John and Eliza, life was not easy. They lived in a log house and had to spin wool for yarn with which to make clothes and stockings. But, in spite of privations and hardships, they lived together for fifty-five years."

Source: Descendants of Eugene Peter Coquigne and Emma Net Brown as of December, 1960.

⁶ My thanks to P. D. Williams who shared information from a scrapbook passed down from his g-grandmother, Ada Spillane. Coquigne-related documents in my possession were passed down through my grandmother, Eliza Jane Coquigne Gillespie, as well as through the family of my grandmother's sister, Ernestine Coquigne Waterous.

Birth Place of EJ

In reviewing these records, an important detail is where EJ was born. One record, a family story, says EJ was born in Michigan, but six other records, including four federal censuses where EJ might well have been the informant, all say that EJ was born in New York. What makes this confusing is that if EJ was born in March of 1837 in NY, then how do we explain that her parents were apparently married in Michigan in 1835? These are the only explanations I can think of at the moment:

- Perhaps the 1835 Michigan marriage record is circumstantial, meaning it applies to two other people whose names just happen to match those named in Individual #4121 in the Root genealogy. This possibility seems unlikely to me, but I suppose it is possible.
- CW traveled to Michigan territory in 1835 where he married Paulina (whether he knew her before that is unknown). Then CW and Paulina went back to NY for whatever reason. Moses Root, CW's father, had died in 1832,⁷ but CW's mother and several siblings probably still lived in the Wayne county area of NY. In this scenario, Paulina gave birth in NY to one if not two children. We don't know where the daughter Mary Ann was born or died, but we know the son Charles H. was later born in Michigan, which indicates that Paulina, after giving birth to EJ in NY, did make the return trip to Michigan.
- The report of EJ's birth date is incorrect. Perhaps EJ was born before 1835, and her mother, Paulina Nichols, had her young daughter with her when she married CW in the Michigan Territory.

To give some further historical context, we might remember this was the time of the [Toledo War](#) (1835-1836). Maybe CW wanted nothing to do with that conflict, and returned to New York, coming back to Michigan again only after it had become a state in 1837. Or, for all we know, CW did participate in the conflict, and Paulina went back to NY to stay with family until it was safe to return to Michigan.

Birth Time and Place of Paulina

The next question is when Paulina was born. I have tried to estimate Paulina's age by assuming she was probably around the same age as Charles Wheeler Root, but there are no certain records of his birth either. The only record we have of CW telling his age is the 1880 census of Iowa where we are only speculating his identity, but in that record, he was born around 1806 or 1807. Based on that, perhaps Paulina was born around the same time. If that is the case, then CW was 28 or 29 when married to Paulina in 1835, and she was perhaps a bit younger, so maybe born between 1808-1810, making her in the age range of 25-27 when she married CW. However, we need to be very careful to flag this information as speculation. Paulina could have been much younger or even much older when she married CW – we just can't know for sure given the current evidence.

The evidence is not clear about Paulina's place of birth. Most records point to a birth place of New York, but not consistently. 1880 was the first census where the birth place of enumerants' parents was reported. Both EJ and her brother, Charles H., neither living in the same Michigan county by that time, reported their mother's birth place as Canada. But by 1900, EJ reported her mother born in NY, while Charles reported his mother born in MI, although we must keep in mind we don't know for sure who was reporting this information in any of these cases.

⁷ According to the Root Genealogy source; unfortunately no other documentation has been located about Moses Root except speculative census records.

We should make note that Canada was a travel route between New York and Michigan, as confirmed by the family story of the Coquigne's crossing at Niagara Falls on their journey to Michigan. See the following map. If Paulina truly was born in Canada, perhaps her family was from New York traveling across the northern border of Lake Erie in the early 1800s.



Finally, I have considered whether Paulina was born in Michigan, since that is perhaps the place where CW met her. But honestly, Michigan was one of the fronts where the War of 1812 was fought (see the [Siege of Detroit](#)), so it's hard to imagine that Paulina was born to a family living in Michigan at that time. But it's not impossible, and there are probably many scenarios where just such a thing might have been the case.

Death of Paulina

If, according to the family story, Paulina died when EJ was 12, then Paulina's death probably occurred around 1849. I checked the 1850 mortality census for any woman with a given name P*A, P*N*, or P*L*E born between 1805 and 1815 who had lived anywhere in the US and whose death was reported in that census. I did not recognize any match as somebody who might have been EJ's mother.

I think we have to at least consider the possibility that Paulina did not die early on, but rather she or CW left the marriage. If CW was cruel or unreliable or too much of an itinerant, it's entirely possible that Paulina left him and remarried, possibly to somebody of the surname Vannatta or Lauton. It's something to keep in mind.

Michigan Research

Washtenaw County

I am a bit befuddled as to why Charles Wheeler Root was in [Washtenaw County](#) in 1835. Ann Arbor was and still is the county seat, and the oldest settlement, Ypsilanti, was established in 1809 by French traders. There had to have been a good reason for CW to be in Washtenaw – either there was family and/or employment opportunity there. Something drew him to that particular place, and I don't know yet what that was.

Were there other Root's in Washtenaw county? Yes. An Augustus Root was enumerated in the town of Panama, and an Erastus Root was enumerated in Ann Arbor. From later census records, it seems that [Augustus Root](#) had origins in Vermont. But the other individual, Erastus Root, seems have been born in the early 1790s in New York. CW had an uncle named Erastus, but he was born later and supposedly died young. At this point, I don't know if or how either of these Root's might have been related to CW.

On the thought that CW met Paulina in Washtenaw county, I checked for Nichols families there. I found the following names there:

- Tillie Nichols, Ypsilanti
- Crie (mistranscription for Cyril), Rufus, Andrew, and Josiah Nichols, all in Dexter

The household of Cyril Nichols had a female in the 15-20 age group, but she was the oldest female in the household and might have been a wife. The household of Josiah Nichols had a female in the 10-15 age group, which makes her a good candidate to be Paulina. However, in the 1840 census of Josiah's household, still in Washtenaw, a female appears in the 20-30 age group who could well have been the same person seen in the previous census.

So far, I don't find evidence of Root or Nichols family connections in Washtenaw county, which is not to say that they did not exist and we don't yet recognize them.

Genesee County

The Root Genealogy (see What We Know, [Records](#)) says that CW was a farmer in Flint, [Genesee](#), Michigan. If that is so, I have not found a land patent, deed, tax list, or census for any Charles W. Root who was born in NY and who lived in Genesee county from 1830-1900. What this tells me is that CW probably never owned any property himself, and that he probably moved around frequently looking for work, and thus he was somehow always between places when the census-taker came around.

It's worth noting that CW had a brother, Jeremiah Denison Root, who supposedly also lived and died in Flint. So far, I have not found any Michigan record of this Jeremiah Root.

There was another Root family in Gaines, Genesee, Michigan: [Erastus Eugene Root](#), b 1808 in Aurelius, Cayuga, NY, d 1891 in Gaines, son of William Root, b 1786 in VT (same place as Augustus Root), d supposedly 1842 in Salem, Washtenaw, MI. More research of this family might be required, but so far, I don't see a connection with the CW branch of Root's, or any possible lead to the identity of Paulina.

There is, however, one other clue to this story in Genesee county. Our family story says:

“She [EJ] stayed and worked at a hotel near Fenton
run by people by the name of Francisco, which were distant relatives of hers.”

This leads us to an entirely different avenue of research. Here is a summary of what I have found so far:

- The only Francisco family I found in Genesee county during that time period was that of John H. Francisco who married Catherine Bodine in 1847 in White Hall, NY. John was the son of Robert N. Francisco and Betsy Musson, both of whom migrated to MI and died in Wayne county. Catherine was the daughter of William Bodine and Mary Egle, both of whom migrated to MI and died in Pine Run (Vienna twp) in Genesee county, MI. John H. Francisco appears to have been a farmer who settled in Montrose, about 5 miles west of Vienna twp. Both of these townships are about 30 miles north of Fenton twp, and not apparently near any hotel in that locale.
- It appears that the Francisco family may have been French in origin.⁸ If EJ was related to them, either the Francisco's married into the Root family somewhere (I believe this Root family are thought to be English in origin), or the Francisco's were somehow related to EJ's mother, Mysterious Paulina. I suppose there is also a chance that EJ was distantly related to the Bodine's rather than the Francisco's.
- The question of the hotel is interesting. Apparently the first hotel in Fenton was built in 1837,⁹ and according to one source:

“In the 1850s, the railroad reached and ended in Fenton, making this village an important commercial and transportation center. Wagon trips came down from Flint, Saginaw, and the north, since Fenton was the farthest a railroad had ever reached in this part of the State. To facilitate shipping, a road was built between Flint and Fenton.”¹⁰

In researching this detail about the railroad more, it doesn't seem that the trains actually reached Fentonville until 1856, which is after EJ married JB Coquigne. However, the work on the tracks was begun in 1852, and we can imagine so were roads leading to Fenton. Perhaps EJ was staying with the Francisco's in Montrose, and made her way down to Fenton in anticipation of steady employment coming with the railroad. Once there, however, she met and married JB Coquigne and they settled in nearby Mundy township.

So all of this is interesting, but can any of this help to understand EJ's mother, Paulina? Try as I might, I don't yet see a concrete lead.

8 See public family tree “Gorlick_2016-06-04“ by Jeanne Gorlick, <https://www.ancestry.com/family-tree/tree/101095665/family/pedigree>

9 History of Genesee County, Michigan, Her People, Industries and Institutions, by Edwin O. Wood, LL.D, President Michigan Historical Commission, 1916; access 10 Feb 2018, <http://www.usgenet.org/usa/mi/county/lapeer/gen/ch5/fenton.html>

10 Michigan History, “Founding Fenton,” <http://michiganhistory.leadr.msu.edu/founding-williamston-52/>

Surname Research

The following sections summarize my research of the various surnames that have been associated with Paulina, besides, of course, Root.

Nichols¹¹ Research

We have already explored the idea that Paulina was born a Nichols, and that CW met her in Washtenaw county, MI where they were married (see previous section, [Genesee County](#), Michigan research). I have also looked for Nichols families in CW's home of Wayne county, New York. In 1830, we find the following Nichols families:

- Charles M Nichols in Williamson
- Samuel Nichols in Arcadia
- Henry Nichols in Macedon
- William Nichols and Thomas Nichols in Sodus
- Russel Nichols and David B Nichols in Rose
- Dvn Nichols in Port Bay
- John W Nichols in Butler

Of these, Charles M. Nichols in Williamson is an obvious possibility, but I don't see a female in his 1830 household who could be Paulina. Henry Nichols in Macedon is another good candidate because the middle name of Paulina's son, Charles, was Henry. But the makeup of this Henry Nichols' household looked like this:

males: 1 < 5, 1 20-30

females: 1 15-20, 1 60-70

At first, I was excited to find the female 15-20; she could be in Paulina's age range. But in looking at the household, I think that individual was probably the young wife of Henry Nichols, mother of the young male, and probably the daughter or daughter-in-law of the older female.

The only other lead we might have with the Nichols surname pertains to CW's youngest brother (presumably), Enos Lewis Root. Enos had 3 wives: [Jane Nichols](#),¹² Margaret Blood, and Mary E. Wetmore. We must remember there was quite an age difference between CW and Enos, perhaps as much as 20 years, so this might not necessarily be a case where two brothers of one family married two sisters from another family. It appears that this Jane was born in/around 1824 in Michigan, which implies her parents settled in Michigan Territory very early on. Enos and Jane were living in Hillsdale county in 1850, so in searching for other Nichols in that county, I found three Nichols families in that county in 1840, but none seemed to have a female in the right age category to have been Jane.

Vannatta Research

Where oh where did the Vannatta surname come from? John B. (JB) Coquigne reported his wife's mother's name as **Plina Vannatta** born in NY. JB was 81 years old at the time he reported this information, and he had been married to EJ for 55 of those years. He probably never knew Paulina

11 Spelling variations for this surname include Nickols and Nickels.

12 The documentation of Jane's maiden name is sketchy at best, so we must reserve the idea that it is incorrect.

personally, and even if he had, how would he have known her maiden name? His source of information had to have been his wife or her brother, but both were young children when their mother supposedly died – so how could they have known their mother's maiden name? Maybe the source was CW Root, JB's father-in-law, though it's not clear if JB ever met or knew CW either. These are all important questions, but still, after years of research, I have no reason to think that my gg-grandfather was anything but an intelligent man. I feel sure that the Vannatta surname must be a relevant clue to Paulina's identity.

First, I believe this surname was probably Dutch in origin. And we must consider there were likely several spelling variations of the name. Besides the spelling used on EJ's death certificate, Vannatta, other spellings I have researched include Vanatta, Van Natta, Van Atta.

Next, I searched for Van* in Wayne county, New York since that is the county where CW Root was from. Here's what I found in the 1830 census:

1. Peter, Samuel, Daniel Van Etten in Lyons
2. Peter Vanaman in Macedon¹³, household of 9, adults 40-50, 1 female 20-30
3. Peter Vannelton in Arcadia¹⁴, 2 adults, 20-30

That's a pretty narrow field, and all of these locations are within 15 miles of Williamson. Let's look at the last two candidates a little more closely.

- For the second person in the above match list, Peter appears as the last person on the sheet, and given the unclear handwriting of the census-taker, one could easily wonder about what Peter's surname really was. In addition, this Peter's household had a female who could be in the age range for Paulina. And it's probably significant to note that Moses Root was enumerated on the previous page. The household for that Moses Root doesn't match exactly what I would expect for CW's father, but it does fall into the realm of possibility.
- The last Peter in the above match list is especially interesting, not for his household alone but for other names appearing as neighbors:
 - David and Hiram Demmon. Both ancestry and familysearch transcribed this surname as Demmon, but I submit that the handwriting of this particular census-taker leaves some room for other interpretation. I think this surname *could* be Dennison, the surname of CW's mother!
 - Maad Root. This is the transcription by ancestry, and familysearch came up with a transcription of “Mada Goot”! Household: males: 1-1-0-0-0-1, females: 1-1-1-0-0-1 where the adults were 30-40.

I am not at all sure what to make of this one! Hannah Denison had a nephew named Hiram (son of Bebe Denison Jr) who definitely lived in Wayne, New York, but I don't know about a relative named David. And who was this Root? Given his age group, let's just say he was born around 1795, and in that case, I can't at the moment place who he might have been. But the significant thing for me in this record is the possible association of names: Maybe Denison's living next to a Root living next to somebody whose surname approximates Vannatta. Something to keep on our radar.

13 This transcription by familysearch, ancestry transcription was “Peter Van Meter”. Furthermore, in looking at this census sheet, it appears to be for the town of Arcadia and not Macedon.

14 This transcription by ancestry, familysearch transcription was “Peter Vn Netton”

And last, but not least, I decided to widen the net and look for Van* anywhere in NY prior to 1830 in hopes of spotting a female who might be in Paulina's presumed age group. Two matches caught my attention:

- John D. Vannatta in 1820 census of Onondaga. His household had two females apparently born after 1816, which is probably too late to be Paulina.
- Mary Van Natta in 1810 census of Spencer, Tioga, NY. There are two females in her household who might have been Paulina. So far, I can't find any other trace of who Mary or her children might have been, but there were many Vannatta's (of every spelling) living in that area of NY. While Williamson and Spencer are about 95 miles apart, the distance between the two could have been traveled relatively easily, so I consider this household to be a possibility, especially because our Paulina named a daughter Mary, and the name of Mary did travel down some other descendant lines.

Lauton/Lawton Research

Now what about this surname? Charles H. Root, EJ's brother, reported this surname himself on a form that specifically asked for his mother's maiden name. So what could be the possible explanations for him listing that surname?

We must remember that Charles H. was born in Michigan, not New York, and there was about a five-year age difference between him and his older sister, EJ. So if EJ was reported to be 12 when her mother died, Charles H. was only 7, and even then, I'm not sure how either child could have known their mother's maiden name. Nevertheless, here are some ways I can think that Charles H. might have come to write the Lauton surname:

- His sister told him that was their mother's maiden name.
- His father, CW, told him that was their mother's maiden name, and since there is reason to speculate that CW outlived Paulina, perhaps CW even told his son this information when Charles H. was older.
- Perhaps some other Root or Paulina relative told Charles H. that was his mother's maiden name.
- Perhaps Paulina remarried to somebody named Lauton while Charles H. was very little, and that is the name he remembered his mother having.

In this last case, I searched for L*ton in Michigan before 1850. Results were:

1830:

Genesee county (not yet formed)
Washtenaw: Daniel Laton in Dexter

1840:

Genesee county = 0
Macomb county: Mr. Lawton and Richard Lawton
Washtenaw county: David Laton, Geo Lawton, David Lawton
Shiawassee county: Joseph Lawton
Oakland county: John Laton

1850:

Genesee: William Laton in Gaines

Searches for any La*ton/Root marriages in Michigan, as well as any deaths for Paul* La*ton have turned up nothing so far. Either my supposition about the Lawton connection being in Michigan is wrong, or the records showing such connection either never existed, or were lost or destroyed, or were mistranscribed so we can't find them (yet).

Associated Families

I want to briefly mention other family names that might somehow lead to more information about our Paulina in the future:

- Francisco-Bodine. These families were already discussed in a previous section ([Genesee County](#), Michigan). However, in studying some Francisco family trees, I found this:
 - A Louisa A. Root, b 1818 VT, d 1870 IL married one Chester Wetmore 1810-1883. They had a son, Samuel H Wetmore, b 1835, who married a Harriet Francisco and they lived in White Hall, Washington, NY (located right on the Vermont border). The Wetmore/Whitmore family is definitely associated with descendants of my Coquigne-Root family, and the Francisco family may have some association with the Root's.
- Wetmore-Root. Besides the connection just mentioned above, there is another Wetmore connection in this story. Henry Sylvester Wetmore was the first husband of Maryette Blood, and when he died in 1862, she remarried to CW's youngest brother Enos Lewis Root! The Blood family was also from Vermont, lived in Chautauqua, NY, and then Michigan before moving to Utah!
- Larobardiere-Root. The Coquigne family traveled to Michigan with another French family, Larobardiere. One of these Larobardiere's married Louisa Coquigne, and a few generations later, one of their descendants, John J. Larobardiere married a Jean Root. At this time, I have not found any connection to the line of CW Root.

Conclusions

Sadly, we cannot yet come to any solid conclusions about the identity of Paulina. She may have been born in New York or Canada, and I can only guess at her birth year as being anywhere from 1800-1820. And we have four surnames that can be associated with somebody we think is the same individual with the given name of Paulina or Pauline. Which surname was her maiden name (if any), and assuming the other surnames were married names, besides CW Root, who were her other husbands and in what order did she marry them? I think we can agree that Paulina was a Nichols when she married CW in 1835, and I am going on the assumption that Paulina's marriage to CW was probably not her first one given that she was probably in her mid-20s in 1835. So what are the possibilities? Here's what I've come up with:

Paulina Surname Scenario #1

Name 1	Name 2	What Happened?
born Lawton	married first Vannatta	he died
Vannatta	married second Nichols	he died
Nichols	married third Root	she died.

Paulina Surname Scenario #2

Name 1	Name 2	What Happened?
born Vannatta	married first Lawton	he died
Lawton	married second Nichols	he died
Nichols	married third Root	she died.

Paulina Surname Scenario #3

Name 1	Name 2	What Happened?
born Vannatta	married first Nichols	he died
Nichols	married second Root	she left
Root	married third Lawton	she died.

Paulina Surname Scenario #4

Name 1	Name 2	What Happened?
born Lawton	married first Nichols	he died
Nichols	married second Root	she left
Root	married third Vannatta	she died.

In these surname scenarios, CW Root was either Paulina's 2nd or 3rd husband, and Nichols was Paulina's previous married name before marrying CW. That leaves Vannatta or Lawton as a maiden name, and

of those I lean toward Vannatta, mostly because I believe Vannatta to be a Dutch name, and Paulina to be a given name that a Dutch family might have given a daughter. This is obviously complete speculation on my part. I don't think the given name of Paulina was hugely common in that time period, but certainly families of other nationalities could have given that name to a daughter.

However, the evidence discussed in the [Vannatta Research](#) section seems the most hopeful, particularly the family group found in Macedon in 1830. It goes without saying that more research is required. Besides this lead, here are other items on my research to-do list:

- I believe I saw an index of the 1845 state census of Michigan where a Charles Root was enumerated in Washtenaw county. This would be important to look up, but it might not tell us much more about the identity of Paulina.
- While visiting the Michigan State Archives several years ago, I found a source that transcribed divorce records for Oakland County. I would like to follow up and see if there are comparable records for Washtenaw and Genesee counties, and if there is any mention of a divorce between CW and Paulina.
- Search for any Canadian records of a Paulina Nichols/Vannatta/Lauton born during the years of 1800-1820. If found, look for any evidence of that family migrating to Michigan.

Follow-Up and Possible Findings

As I reviewed the previous conclusions and my own suggestions about where to go next, I decided to trust JB Coquigne's report of EJ's mother as Plina Vannatta, and follow that idea a little farther, if possible. I found two areas of interest in my second round of research.

Part 1

p. 68 of 1830 census of Arcadia, Wayne, NY

David (possibly Dennison)

Hiram (possibly Dennison)

???? Root

Peter Vanetten

Peter McNulty

In exploring more about VanEtten families in Wayne county during this time period, I found that this Peter VanEtten was the son of John VanEtten and Sarah Van Noy. John died in 1812, and his property in Ontario/Wayne was inherited by his wife, Sarah, and four presumed children: James, Daniel, Peter, and Hannah. When they sold this property in 1826 and 1831, their spouses were listed (if any): Sarah, wife of Peter McNulty, James, Peter and wife Elizabeth of Arcadia, Daniel of Lyons, and Joseph Brearly and wife Hannah of Galen. Thus we see Peter Vanetten is enumerated next to his remarried mother, Sarah McNulty. But who was Peter's wife Elizabeth? Maybe a Root? We don't know.

It is of further interest to note what became of this family group. Peter, Daniel, and Hannah VanEtten as well Peter McNulty can all be found in 1840 in Plymouth, Wayne, Michigan, a location which is about five miles from the Washtenaw county line. These VanEtten's all died in Michigan, but it's interesting to note that Daniel lived in Hillsdale county during the 1850s and 1860s. The town he lived in was only a short distance from where Enos Lewis Root was enumerated in 1850, where it so happens that Enos' mother, Hannah Denison was also living! I know that family groups from the same region often traveled together and lived near each other in new destinations, I know that. But still we just have to wonder who was the Root who lived next door Peter VanEtten and Peter McNulty in 1830 Arcadia, NY, and could there be a longer connections between the families?

Even if I could solve this part of the puzzle, I'm just not sure it leads us to Paulina. I still think it's valid to think that VanEtten is a close match to Vannatta, which JB Coquigne reported on EJ's death certificate. Is the Van Etten surname the same as the Vannatta surname? I think probably yes. According to an interview with William Van Natta who has researched his family history for many years,

"The surname was changed and rearranged several times. But if your last name is Van Etten or Van Etta or Van Atta or Van Natta or Van Natter, you are probably related to Jacob. Some people capitalize the second part of the last name and some people don't. But if it starts with Van, then you're Dutch."¹⁵

Knowing this leads me to circle back one more time back to Wayne, New York.

15 "845 Life: The Van Natta family tree has many branches", John DeSanto, Times Herald Record, Middletown, NY, <http://www.recordonline.com/news/20170226/845-life-van-natta-family-tree-has-many-branches>, posted 26 Feb 2017

Part 2

1] I searched again for people of the Vannatta surname or similar in the 1830 census of Wayne county, NY, believing that CW Root may have first met Paulina there. As mentioned previously there were two men named Peter Van* in Arcadia, but there was another family I had previously overlooked: Henry Vnnetton,¹⁶ also in Arcadia where Moses Root was last seen.¹⁷ As mentioned previously, an individual named Henry catches my attention because that was the middle name given to CW and Paulina's only son: Charles Henry Root.

Here was the makeup of Henry Vanetten's household in 1830:

males: 2 5-9, 1 30-39; females: 1 < 5, 2 10-14, 2 15-19, 1 30-39

This Henry appears to have been born around 1795 (give or take), and there was at least one female in Henry's 1830 household who could have been our Paulina, born anywhere from 1811-1820, and if that's true, she was a bit younger than I have imagined her to be. But remember I have based her estimated age on a guess about when CW Root was born, and we have no vital records about him either.

2] Next, I started searching in the deeds of Wayne county (NY), and found one in 1836 from Henry VanEtten and wife Maria(h) selling property in Arcadia. I can't seem to find trace of this family group after that. But here are some important points to note:

1. Moses Root was enumerated on the previous page of this 1830 census, so he was nearby also living in Arcadia (even though the transcription says Moses was living in Macedon).
2. The household of Henry has young females, one of whom could have been Paulina.
3. It's also worth noting that Paulina named a daughter (we think her first daughter) Mary, possibly after the Maria we see here. Also she gave her son the middle name of Henry, maybe after the Henry VanEtten here.

I cannot prove this Henry VanEtten's ancestry, but some public family trees give us this general idea:

Jacob (James) VanEtten 1740-1825 (supposedly died in Lyons, NY, but I find no record of him there)

m1. Jannatje "Jane" Loew, several children, she died 1781

m2. Sarah Decker, 1763-1844, children were:

John (the guy mentioned previously), 1783-1812

Peter, 1784-1862, m. Polly Pitcher

Daniel, 1786--1845, m. Margareta Culleback

Jane, 1788-1890, m. Van Ingwagen

Margaret, 1792-1896

Jacob, 1793-1857, m. Elizabeth (Betsey)

Henry, 1794-???

¹⁶ This is transcription by familysearch, ancestry transcribed as "Henry Van Detton"

¹⁷ The census is a bit confusing. Ancestry transcribed the place as Macedon, but the sheet appears to be enumerating those in Arcadia. Either way, these towns are about 15 miles apart.

Catherine, 1796-1854

Samuel, 1800-1835

Besides the descendants of John (see Part 1) who mostly ended up in Michigan (which seems to me not a coincidence), the remaining VanEtten families all seem to have remained in the area of Wayne, NY.

So many questions to pose. Does the Henry VanEtten enumerated in 1830 Arcadia, NY really fit into the family group of Jacob VanEtten and Sarah Decker? Could Henry and Maria be Paulina's family group?

3] The next logical thing was to search (again) for Nichols in Wayne County, NY (see [Nichols Research](#)). I zoomed in on the one Nichols found in the same town as VanEtten and Root, Arcadia, and there was indeed a Nichols who lived there in 1830, Samuel Nichols. His household had two males in the 20-29 age group, so perhaps one of them was briefly married to or had relations with Paulina. Of course, there are a number of other Nichols in Wayne county, NY at that time, and I have not yet explored any of them. However, here is a public family tree that probably pertains to this Samuel Nichols:

<https://www.ancestry.com/family-tree/person/tree/100050960/person/200000552232/facts>¹⁸

So far, I've only seen one child of this Samuel Nichols documented, but it's interesting to note that her name was Mary Anne, and that Samuel's wife's name was Eliza. Was our Eliza Jane really a daughter of this unknown male Nichols rather than CW Root? Hmmmmm. Stay tuned.

Final Thoughts: Need to keep an eye on all DNA matches for anybody who might be connected to these family lines.

¹⁸ ancestry public family trees, "Ruth Brome" by user WRnickerson.

Additional Reading:

Hennie Warinner: A Family History by Christina Warinner

my note: not only very informative overall, but gives examples of women who had the name Paulina, so that female name was definitely used among Dutch people.

<https://sites.google.com/site/henniewarinnerfamilyhistory/notes>

Dutch Genealogy, Naming Traditions by Yvette Hoitink

<https://www.dutchgenealogy.nl/dutch-naming-traditions/>

Wikitree G2G, "Proper entry of Dutch "middle" name"

<https://www.wikitree.com/g2g/385873/proper-entry-of-dutch-middle-name>