In Search of Paulina,
Maternal GGG-Grandmother

Revision 5

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Introduction

I am the gg-granddaughter of John B. Coquigne[1] (1827-1914) and Eliza Jane Root (1837-1908), who married in 1853 in Genesee county, Michigan. They lived in Mundy township 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[2] to use that given name for a female. 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 the following surnames in her lifetime:

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

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

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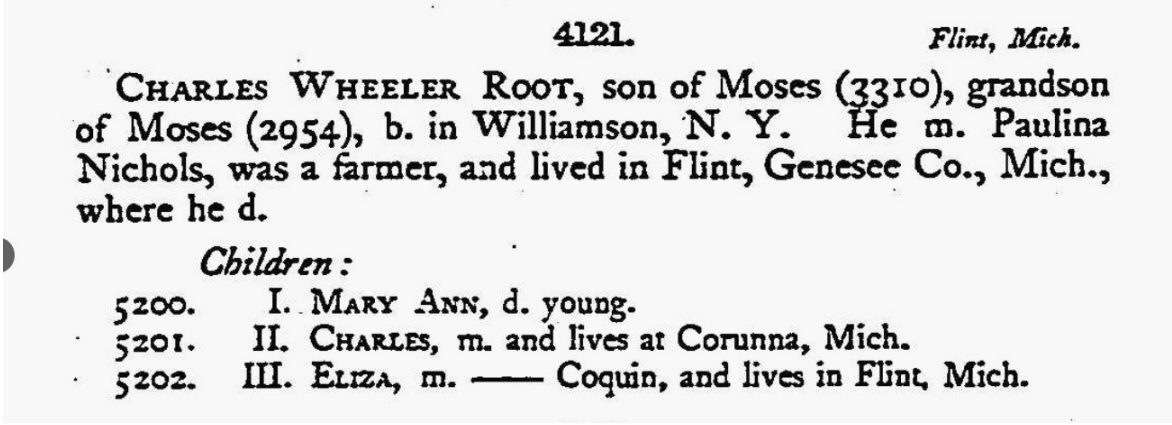
1 He was baptized with the name Jean Baptiste Coquigne.
2 Behind the Name: Paulina

The Evidence

Records

There are four written 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.[3]
2. A genealogy[4] published in 1870:



4121. *Flint, Mich.*

CHARLES WHEELER ROOT, son of Moses (3310), grandson of Moses (2954), b. in Williamson, N. Y. He m. Paulina Nichols, was a farmer, and lived in Flint, Genesee Co., Mich., where he d.

Children:

5200. I. MARY ANN, d. young.
5201. II. CHARLES, m. and lives at Corunna, Mich.
5202. III. ELIZA, m. —— Coquin, and lives in Flint, Mich.

3. The marriage record of EJ's brother, Charles Henry Root to Lena Sheldon (Chatterson) on 21 Oct 1901 in Three Oaks, Berrien, MI.[5] 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 Coquigne[6] with these particulars:
   - died 21 Jun 1908 in Mundy, Genesee, MI
   - born 6 Mar 1937 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)

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

4 *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.

5 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.

6 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: Mundy, Genesee. Digital image from Michiganology.

Stories

The following stories are excerpts from documents passed down to descendants of John B. Coquigne and Eliza Jane Root.[7] 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.

7 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.

Some Questions

Birth Place of Eliza Jane Root

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 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 applies to two other people whose names just happen to match those named in Individual #4121 in the Root Genealogy (see Records section). 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,[8] 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.
- Perhaps the report of EJ's birth date is incorrect. Maybe 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

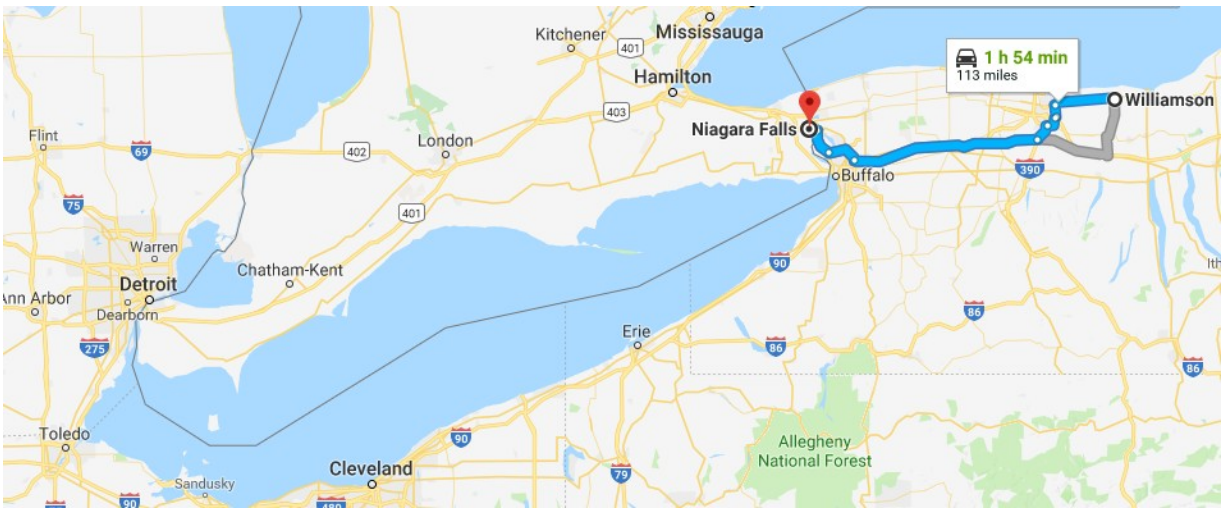
The next question is when Paulina was born. I have tried to estimate Paulina's age by assuming she was probably around the same age as Charles Wheeler Root, but there are no certain records of his birth either. The only record we have of CW telling his age is the 1880 census of Iowa where we are only 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,

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

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.

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



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 Seige of Detroit), and it's hard to imagine that many families wanted to settle in a region that was being overrun by British and indigenous forces. But Paulina being born in Michigan in the early 1800s is not impossible, and there are probably many scenarios where just such a thing might have been the case.

Marriage of Paulina to CW

As we know, people don't have to be married to have children. That said, we are assuming that Paulina was married to Charles Wheeler (CW) Root because of the 1835 Washtenaw marriage record, and because EJ was apparently born as a Root. So because Paulina has been associated with CW, much of my investigation into Paulina is about understanding and following CW. But CW's story is somewhat elusive. Here is a summary of his life:

- CW was a son of Moses Root and Hannah Denison.
  - According to the Root Genealogy, Moses Root was born in West Stockbridge, MA. "He removed to Black River country, and lived in Williamson, Wayne Co, NY. He died in 1832 at age 52."
  - The Root Genealogy says that Hannah Denison died in 1856. I've found no record of her death, but she was enumerated with her sons Enos and Henry in the 1850 census of Cambria, Hillsdale, MI.

    - The Root Genealogy says that CW's brother, Jeremiah Denison Root, married Ann Corwin and he was a farmer in Flint, Genesee, MI where he died without children. I have not found any record of Jeremiah D. Root in Michigan.
- As for CW himself, we know the Root Genealogy says he was born in Williamson, NY, married Paulina Nichols, and was also a farmer in Flint, MI. Again, there are no records to be found in MI for CW other than the 1835 marriage record.
- The only other record I've found that might be our CW is in the 1880 census of Marshalltown, Marshall, IA. In that enumeration, CW was a widower, a retired farmer, age 73 (b 1807 in NY) whose parents were both born in CT. Was he our CW Root? We don't know.

Without more concrete details about CW, understanding Paulina's relationship to him is difficult.

Death of Paulina

If, according to the family story, Paulina died when EJ was 12 years old, 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 their 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.

Surname Research

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

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 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.

Given this variety of surname spellings – as written then and as transcribed now – is it reasonable to think that VanEtten is a close match to Vannatta, the latter being the surname that JB Coquigne reported on EJ's death certificate? In other words, 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."[9]

So with that in mind, I searched for Van* in 1820 Ontario county and 1830 Wayne county, New York because this region is where CW Root was reportedly born and thus likely grew up. There were several households with surnames approximating Vanatta: Jacob, Peter, Daniel, Samuel, and Henry. See the section New York Research for more detail.

Next, I searched for any VE family trees with family members living in Wayne County, New York before and after 1830. I found one family group of interest – an outline of their genealogy[10] follows, noting that the details are not definitive given there are no birth records for the children, and, apparently, no will written by Jacob Van Etten Sr.

Jacob (James) VanEtten 1740-1825 (supposedly died in Lyons, NY, maybe the one enumerated in 1820 in Lyons, Ontario, NY (Wayne county was established in 1823))

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

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

John, 1783-1812, m. Sarah Van Noy; he apparently died in Lyons, Wayne, NY; his widow remarried to McNulty; they sold John's lands in Arcadia, Wayne, NY
Note that John and Sarah had a son, Peter, md Eliz. Penoyer, both died around 1850 in either NY or MI

Peter, 1784-1863, m. Polly Pitcher; he apparently died in Sodus, Wayne, NY
Note that Peter and Polly had a son named Peter, b abt 1828

Daniel, 1786-1845, m. Margareta Culleback; he died in Lyons, Wayne, NY, probate of his estate assigned widow Margaret as adm

Jane, 1788-1890, m. Van Ingwagen; they lived in Arcadia, Wayne, NY

Margaret, 1792-1896, maybe m. Vanderkar?

Jacob, 1793-1857, m. Elizabeth (Betsey); buried at Sodus Cemetery

Henry, 1794-

Catherine, 1796-1854

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9 "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

10 *Jacobus Jansen van Etten: some ten generations in America of Jacobus Jansen van Etten, immigrant, from Etten, North Brabent, Holland to Kingston, New York about 1663* by Scott, Eva Alice, Youngstown, OH, 1952, pp 48-50

Samuel, 1800-1835; notice of his death was published in the Wayne Sentinel, Palmyra, NY

So this family group gives us some context when looking at the Van Etten family groups in the early censuses. Remember we are guessing that Paulina was born 1808-1810, so we are looking for a female around 20 years old in 1830.

- Among the Lyons Van Ettens, Peter and Daniel each had a female who could have been as old as 19. I researched a bit the family groups of Peter and Daniel, but didn't find a daughter of the name Paulina.
- Henry VE of Arcadia had five young females in his household, two of them aged 15-19, so one of them could have been Paulina.

It's worth noting that Moses Root was also enumerated in Arcadia (even though the transcription says Moses was living in Macedon) in 1830. Although there was not a male enumerated in Moses' household who might have been his son, CW Root, it's still possible that CW was in the area, and/or that he returned to the area when Moses died in 1832.

Because the household of Henry Van Etten had a female who might have been Paulina, I searched the Wayne county deeds in hopes of finding out more:

- 7 Oct 1835, Arcadia, Wayne, NY, deed 17-556, identifies Maria as widow of Abraham Westfall dec, now married to Henry VE, and her right of dower, also names David, Leah, and Esther Westfall, and Martin and Eliz Sherer
- 18 Jun 1836, Arcadia, Wayne, NY, deed 20-403, Henry and wife Maria sold their Arcadia property to Sherbial G Rogers and Lyman Sherwood

Where did Henry and Maria go after 1836? I found one census enumeration of Henry VE in Munson Geauga, OH in 1840 with a household that fairly fits Henry's family group. Checking the deeds of Geauga county, OH:

- 18 May 1846, Munson, Geauga, OH, deed 36-517 and 518, Henry and Maria VE to/from Randall, land in Munson
- 7 Jan 1848, Munson, Geauga, OH, deed 38-550, Henry and Maria VE to Kline, land in Munson

And now where? I couldn't locate a household that fit for this Henry VE in 1850, but luckily that is the census where we can see the names of all household members. A search for Maria VE resulted in one household of interest in Camden, Hillsdale, MI – an older Maria VE living in the household of Abram VE. Checking the deeds of Hillsdale county, MI:

- 12 May 1848, Camden, Hillsdale, MI, deed O-253, Henry VE to Walter Harper land in Camden. In 1845, a Walter Harper had married a Maria VE, evidently the daughter of Henry.
- 8 Oct 1850, Camden, Hillsdale, MI, deed T-129 and 130, first involves the sheriff and Abram VE and Henry VE, second involves Henry and wf Maria, both deeds are selling to Harvey Osborn.

So this trail of deeds tells us more about the Henry and Maria VE first found in 1830 Arcadia, Wayne, NY. We know that:

- Maria was the widow of Abraham Westfall when she married Henry. Given that the censuses show Henry had several children in his household before marrying Maria, he probably also had a previous spouse, one who I speculate could have been the mother of our Paulina.
- Henry and Maria were living for awhile in Hillsdale county, MI – the same place where Daniel VE settled (probably Henry's nephew), as well as Enos Lewis and Henry Root, brothers of CW.
- Paulina gave her son the middle name of Henry, maybe after the Henry Van Etten here.

While the trail of evidence here is circumstantial, I think Henry Van Etten is a good candidate to have been the father of our Paulina.

Finally, I want to make note of another Henry Van Etten who was found in early Wayne county, NY. Cornelius W. VE, born about 1804, he died in 1836 in Lyons, and Samuel D. Westfall became special guardian to three orphans, John, Margaret, and Henry. This latter Henry is the one who shows up in Wayne censuses and deeds in 1850 and after. I don't know if or how these two VE lines would be connected, but it doesn't seem directly so.

Nichols[11] Research

If the 1835 marriage record in Washtenaw, MI applies to our Charles W. Root, then the record, or more accurately the transcription of the record, says CW married Pauline Nickols.

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.

Next, 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. So far,

11 Spelling variations for this surname include Nickols and Nickels.

I've only seen one child of this Samuel Nichols documented, but it's interesting to note that her name was Mary Ann (Brome), and that Samuel's wife's name was Eliza. Was our Eliza Jane really a daughter of a male Nichols from this family group rather than CW Root? Hmmmmm.

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.

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 (see the Records section, #3). So what could be the possible explanations for Charles H. listing reporting his mother's maiden name as Lauton?

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, EJ, told him that Lauton was their mother's maiden name.
- His father, CW, told him that Lauton 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 Lauton 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

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

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 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 Roots.
- 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.

New York Research

Most of the focus of my research is in Wayne County, New York which was established in 1823 from lands that were previously in Ontario and Seneca counties. Specifically, when Wayne county was formed, it was comprised of the towns of Lyons, Sodus, Williamson, Ontario, Palmyra, a part of the town of Phelps in Ontario County, and the Seneca County towns of Wolcott and Galen. Thus, we find the county seat, Lyons, was part of Ontario county in the 1820 census, but then part of Wayne county in the 1830 census.

It should also be noted that Lyons was one of the towns along the Erie Canal, the construction of which started in 1817 and was completed by 1825. The success of the Erie Canal not only allowed commerce to flow from the Atlantic to the Great Lakes, but it also gave many families a safer and faster route for making their way west. Probably all the ancestors in this article had some experiences on the Erie Canal.

We should also take note of Wayne county towns that prospered and evolved as a result of the Erie Canal. In particular, the village of Arcadia comes up in this research. This village was previously called Lockville, and was incorporated into the town of Newark in 1853.

In attempting to follow the geographical movements of Moses Root, father of CW Root, we find:

- 1810 – Livonia, Ontario, NY – this Moses Root household had only three members, two adults and a male child, which doesn't exactly fit for our Moses Root (he would have had two male children by 1810, CW and Jeremiah D). But still worth noting.
- 1820 – Ontario, Ontario, NY – this location is five miles west of Williamson, and this household had six males under 16, which does fit for what we know of Moses' family. In this case, there was one male 10-15, which could have been either CW or Jeremiah D. We might guess that Jeremiah was still in his father's household and CW was already out on his own, although by what we know of him, he wasn't much more than 14 years old in 1820. Where might he have been if not in his parents' household?
- 1830 – Macedon, Wayne, NY – this household had two adults and two younger males, which somewhat fits for Moses' family, but given what we know of the family, there should have been other young males in this household. Perhaps the older children were living with another relative nearby? There was another Root family living in Arcadia, Wayne, NY living next to a Van Etten, and possibly some Dennisons. These Arcadia families are of high interest to my investigation.

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

  David (possibly Dennison)
  Hiram (possibly Dennison)
  ???? Root
  Peter Vanetten
  Peter McNulty

  - David and Hiram Demmon. Both ancestry and familysearch transcribed the surname of these individuals as Demmon, but I submit that the handwriting of this particular census-taker leaves 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. At the moment, I can't begin to identify who this Root was, but I think it's significant that a Root household was enumerated next to Vanetten. See more details about Van Etten families found in early Wayne County in the Vannatta Research section.

We should also note that I have not found any deeds pertaining to any Moses in Ontario or Wayne counties between 1800-1840. However, there were a couple deeds involving Charles Root and wife Elizabeth in Butler, Wayne, NY in the early 1830s. I suppose that might have been our CW Root and EJ – it's just not possible to tell for sure from a couple deeds. If it was them, they weren't there in Butler long, which might suggest they were ultimately headed west.

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 Roots 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 Roots 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 The Evidence, 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.

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 Roots, 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 Francisco[13] 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.[14] If EJ was related to them, either the Franciscos married into the Root family somewhere (I believe this Root family are thought to be English in origin), or the Franciscos were somehow related to EJ's mother, Mysterious Paulina. I suppose there is also a chance that EJ was distantly related to the Bodines rather than the Franciscos.
- The question of the hotel is interesting. Apparently the first hotel in Fenton was built in 1837,[15] 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."[16]

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 Franciscos 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 these details are interesting, but are we any closer to understanding who was EJ's mother, Paulina? Try as I might, I don't yet see a concrete lead.

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13 Many genealogies call this individual Robert N. Francisco or Robert Nelson Francisco. There is no documentation that this individual had a middle name or initial. It does appear, however, that he had a son called Nelson, thought to be Robert Nelson Francisco.

14 Several public family trees on ancestry.com point to a French family of the surname Fransoy as the origins of the Francisco families in America.

15 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.usgennet.org/usa/mi/county/lapeer/gen/ch5/fenton.html

16 Michigan History, "Founding Fenton," http://michiganhistory.leadr.msu.edu/founding-williamston-52/

Discussion

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 trust the report of JB Coquigne on his wife's death certificate.

In this round of research, the evidence discussed in the Vannatta Research section seems the most constructive, particularly the family group Henry Van Etten found in Arcadia, Wayne, NY in 1830. In that evidence, we found:

- a family group with a surname, Van Etten, which closely approximates the maiden name of EJ Root's mother as reported by JB Coquigne on the death certificate of his wife, EJ Root.
- a family group that was living in the same town as Moses Root, the father of CW Root.
- a family group with a female member who would have been of the right age to have been Paulina.
- a family group that migrated from NY to MI and lived for a while in Hillsdale county, the same county where the mother and two brothers of CW Root also settled.

This evidence is all circumstantial, nevertheless it gives us a framework to consider where before we had none at all when thinking about Who Was My GGG-Grandmother, Paulina??

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.
- Keep an eye out for any DNA matches that might tie into the families mentioned here.

Additional Reading

Hennie Warinner: A Family History by Christina Warinner

My note: this source is 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