

Great Grandfather
Melchoir Rudolph Yenney (Yenni) 1872-1941
&
Great Grandmother
Bostrva (Barbara) Babler Yenney 1874-1949

Ancestry from my mother, Barbara Pearl Yenney (male side). Biography prepared by Stephen S. Saucerman 4-1-2019

GREAT GRANDFATHER:

Melchoir Rudolph Yenni (later 'Yenney'), our Great Grandfather, was born an only child to Rudolph and Anna Yenni in Canton Glarus, Switzerland on May 28, 1872. He attended public school there and received the standard education offered. He was also reared and confirmed in the Christian faith as delivered by the Reformed Church of Switzerland (*fascinating history; check it out*). At the age of 20, he emigrated to America, where he located in the area around the town of Elgin, Fayette County, Iowa (*Elgin is known as 'The Little Switzerland of Iowa').



On June 14th, 1894, Melchoir married Bostrva Babler (also from Switzerland; see her bio below). The couple went on to have five children: Melchoir Jr., Freida, John, Elmer and Margaret. Bostrva went by the name 'Barbara' (of which we'll be referring to her from here on), while at the same time, Melchoir was also known to sometimes go by 'Mike', perhaps to sound more 'American' to those around them - which was a consideration to many immigrants of the time. During his early years in the states, Melchoir moved around and even experimented with farming in Minnesota and Iowa (3 to 4 years), but eventually landed back in the Elgin area, where he became employed in the service of the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railway Company. There he would remain for the next 38 years before retiring in July 16, 1938.



By all accounts, he was a widely liked and respected man and – later in life - even served on the Elgin City Council for 14 years, until ill health forced him to resign his service. Melchoir became seriously ill on Friday, September 5, 1941 and passed away the following Monday morning, September 8th, at the age of 69 years, 3 months and 10 days. He was survived by his widow Barbara and all five of his children. In his obituary, it stated that Melchoir was “*respected for his thoroughness and efficiency*” and that “*his family and friends loved him dearly for his characteristics of gentleness*”.

After the funeral, the five children (and their families) returned home: John to Waukegan, IL, Melchoir Jr. to Huron, SD, Freida (Mrs. R. A. Crider) to Elgin, and Elmer and Margaret (Mrs. Charles Knight) to Janesville, WI. Also attending the funeral (*Uncle Chuck's brothers) were Mr./Mrs. Carlton Knight and Mr./Mrs. J. E. Knight, both of Fayette.

GREAT GRANDMOTHER:

Bostrva 'Barbara' Babler Yenney, our Great Grandmother and Melchoir's only wife, was one of five children born to (father) Friedolin and (mother) Elsbeth Babler in Nitfurin, Canton Glarus, Switzerland on September 15th, 1874. Like Melchoir, she attended the public school and was reared in the Christian faith of the Reformed Church of Switzerland. At the age of 19, Bostrva emigrated to America (at some point adopting the name 'Barbara') and - shortly after arrival on June 14, 1894 - was united in marriage to Melchoir Yenney. They had five children (see above and below). Excepting 3 years in WI/MN farming with her young husband, she spent the majority of her new living in and around the Elgin, IA area. Barbara Yenney became ill on Thursday, June 22, 1949

while in Janesville, WI visiting her son, Elmer. She passed away early Friday morning (July 1st) at the Mercy Hospital in Janesville. She was 74 years of age. She was preceded in death by her husband, Melchoir, but survived by all five children. In her obituary, it was written that “Mrs. Yenney was a home-loving soul. Her home and family always came first. Her hands were always busy when she was able”.

General Facts – Melchoir and Barbara Babler Yenney

Relationship	Great Grandfather
Who	Melchoir Rudolph Yenney (Senior)
Birth date	May 28, 1872
Death date	September 8, 1941
Occupation:	Sect Foreman - Railroad/City Councilman
Birth where	Canton Glarus, Switzerland
Death where	Elgin, IA
Burial loc:	Elgin City Cemetery, Fayette County, Iowa
Spouse to:	(Bostrva*real) Barbara (Babler) Yenney
Married date:	June 14, 1894
Divorced date:	n/a
Birth date	9/15/1874
Death date	July 1, 1949
Birth where	Switzerland
Death where	Janesville, WI (Mercy Hospital)
Burial loc:	Elgin City Cemetery, Fayette County, Iowa
Children #1:	Melchoir Rudolph Yenney Junior (Aug 3, 1895-1964)
Children #2:	Freida (R. A. Crider) (1899-)
Children #3:	John Frederick Yenney 1/20/1899-1964 (F's twin?)
Children #4:	Elmer L Yenney (1904-1962) *Grandpa
Children #5:	Margaret (Knight) Yenney (1905-)
Sibling #1:	**only child
Mother:	Anna Blumer Yenney (Melchoir's mother)

“MELCHOIR”

The name ‘Melchoir’ is Hebrew in origin and (depending on the use) means ‘king’ or ‘light’. Melchoir is also the name traditionally assigned to one of the wise men (also known as The Magi, or Three Kings) who visited and bestowed gifts upon the newborn baby Jesus.

1920 United States Federal Census for Melchoir Yenney
Iowa > Fayette > Pleasant Valley > District 0101

STATE Iowa COUNTY Fayette TOWNSHIP OR OTHER DIVISION OF COUNTY Pleasant Valley Township NAME OF INCORPORATED PLACE Elgin WARD OF CITY _____

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE—BUREAU OF THE CENSUS
FOURTEENTH CENSUS OF THE UNITED STATES: 1920—POPULATION
SUPERVISOR'S DISTRICT No. 4 SHEET No. 1
ENUMERATION DISTRICT No. 101
ENUMERATED BY ME ON THE 2nd DAY OF January, 1920. Frederick D. Welch ENUMERATOR

PEACE OF ABODE	NAME	RELATION	TIME	MARRIAGE	CITIZENSHIP	EDUCATION	NATIVITY AND MOTHER TONGUE						OCCUPATION
							FATHER		MOTHER		OTHER		
1	Yenney, Melchoir	Head	M	W	Switzerland	Switzerland	Switzerland	German	Switzerland	German	Switzerland	German	Sect Foreman Rail Road
2	Yenney, Barbara	Wife	F	W	Switzerland	Switzerland	German	Switzerland	German	Switzerland	German	Sect Foreman Rail Road	
3	Yenney, John	Son	M	W	Switzerland	Switzerland	German	Switzerland	German	Switzerland	German	Sect Foreman Rail Road	
4	Yenney, Elmer	Son	M	W	Switzerland	Switzerland	German	Switzerland	German	Switzerland	German	Teacher School	
5	Yenney, Margaret	Daughter	F	W	Switzerland	Switzerland	German	Switzerland	German	Switzerland	German	Teacher School	

Timeline of Melchoir & Barbara Babler Yenney

Exact Date:	Age:	Description/Item:
5/28/1872	-	Melchoir Yenney is born to Rudolph and Anna (Blumer) Yenney in Canton Glarus Switzerland; he will stay in Switzerland until his is 20 years old.
9/15/1874	2	Bostrva (later Barbara) Babler, the future Mrs. Melchoir Yenney, is born in Canton Glarus Switzerland.
1877	5	Melchoir is educated in Canton Glarus schools and confirmed in the Christian faith of the Reformed Church of Switzerland [until 1890]
1892	20	Melchoir Yenney emigrates from Switz to the US, around Elgin, Iowa. He is 20 years old.

1892	20	Melchoir experiments with farming in MN & WI but eventually returns to the Elgin, IA area [until 1895]
6/14/1894	22	Melchoir marries Barbara (real first name 'Bostrva') Babler June 14th, 1894
1895	23	Melchoir & Barbara welcome their first child, son Melchoir Rudolph Yenney Junior (Melchoir Jr dies in 1964)
1/20/1899	27	Melchoir & Barbara welcome their second & third children (twins), son John Frederick (dies 8/21/1964) & daughter Freida (R. A. Crider) Yenney
1899	27	Melchoir goes to work for The Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway Company (will stay for 38 years)
1/20/1904	33	Melchoir & Barbara welcome their fourth child, son Elmer L. Yenney
1905	34	Melchoir & Barbara welcome their fifth child, daughter Margaret (Knight) Yenney (Margaret death date??)
10/29/1907	36	Rudolph Yenney (Melchoir's father and Barbara's father-in-law) dies in Elgin, IA
3/23/1911	40	A public auction at the house on Pleasant Street of Rudolph Yenney in Elgin will take place Saturday, March 25, 1911 (*listed by Melchoir)
5/12/1911	40	Anna Blumer Yenney (Rudolph's wife; Melchoir's mother) dies.
6/29/1911	40	"The four children of Melchoir Yenney, Elmer, Johnie, Freida and Margaret, are now over the measles and return to school
10/12/1911	40	Melchoir Yenney family spend Thurs/Fri taking in sights and visiting Exposition in Cedar Rapids, IA
4/3/1913	42	Children, Elmer and Margaret, are listed as pupils who have been neither absent or tardy in school (*several of these on various dates)
12/4/1913	42	Son, Melchoir Jr is now helper at the Rock Island Depot (*He does go on to work with the railroad for life)
7/27/1916	43	Son, Melchor Jr accepts a job as brakeman for the RR in Huron, SD.
5/10/1917	44	Son, Eighth-grade Elmer practices his part in the graduation exercise
12/27/1917	44	Son, John becomes a helper at the depot (railway station)
1/31/1918	45	Son, Elmer goes to work as an assistant at Capper's Store in Elgin
9/26/1918	45	Son, Melchoir Junior writes home to his parents Melchoir/Barbara from France - where he is stationed in WW1 - to tell them he met an Elgin boy, Fay Sullivan. He said they had a good visit and talked about home.
3/28/1918	45	Son, Elmer Yenney adds 35 cents to the Junior Red Cross Fund by selling a bird house he made to Mrs. Frank Capper
6/20/1918	45	Barbara Babler Yenney visits Melchoir in Cedar Rapids, where he is employed as a yard boss there.
2/6/1919	46	Melchoir (who is currently stationed at Cedar Rapids), comes home to Elgin to visit family for a few days.
5/29/1919	46	Melchoir (& friend John Johnson) return from Cedar Rapids after viewing the ruins of a starch factory explosion the previous Thursday evening.
7/3/1919	46	Melchoir Junior returns home from serving overseas during WW1, where he was a member of the 90th Division and served with the engineers. He's telling friends and family he goes by 'Mike' now.
9/18/1919	46	Sons, Melchoir and son Elmer visit Cedar Rapids on Friday
11/20/1919	46	Son, Elmer Yenney hits and gashes his chin and tongue at basketball practice; called a 'severe and painful' wound.
12/4/1919	46	Son, Elmer plays 'Peter Hartleigh' in the school play, "All on Account of Polly". *I'm assuming mom/dad went to see it :-)
12/18/1919	46	Son, Elmer is listed as having top grades at his high school with a 93.9% average overall.
1/29/1920	47	Children, Elmer and Margaret take part in a Declamatory Contest or oratorical and dramatic readings and plays
2/20/1920	47	Melchoir goes to Huron, SD to visit Melchoir Jr, who had taken a job there in 1916 and since moved his family.

7/15/1920	47	Melchoir and his section crew of 8 men escape death/serious injury (it is reported). As the men were standing in their motorcar and rounding a sharp bend, a fully-laden freight car stood in their path. Yenney set the brakes and yelled 'jump'. Everyone did. After the engine and motor car disputed the right of way, an invoice was taken. It was found that no one was badly injured, but the motor car was wrecked with its pilot knocked off the engine. It was judged to be an 'unfortunate accident'.
3/17/1921	48	Melchoir is injured in a handcart wreck; laid up for a week and is scarred and bruised.
6/3/1921	48	Son, Elmer graduates from Elgin High School, Elgin, Iowa
6/30/1931	48	Melchoir gets word from the Rock Island RR to reduce his section crew to two men (was 8). 6 men are laid off.
1924	51	Melchoir is elected to Elgin City council (14 years until ill health forced him to resign) [until 1938]
1/9/1925	52	Melchoir/Barbara Yenney return home from Huron, SD where they visited Melchoir Junior
7/2/1925	52	Blurb about son Elmer working at Chevrolet plant in Janesville, WI "the boys were busy as bees, pulling in good wages and enjoying good health as well as work".
7/21/1926	53	Son, Elmer of Janesville marries Ruth Wade of Waucoma (no attendants) at West Union.
7/29/1926	53	Son, Elmer comes from Janesville to visit folks in Elgin for 3 days
9/30/1926	53	Son, Elmer & Ruth Yenney and Charles Knight of Janesville, WI spend Sunday at the home of Melchoir Yenney in Elgin, IA
2/28/1929	53	Melchoir/Barbara welcome a new grandchild via son Elmer/Ruth Yenney. Her name is Zoa Ann Yenney
1/1/1931	55	Charles/Margaret Knight, Elmer/Ruth Yenney & family, & Melchoir/Barbara Yenney spend Christmas at home of Mrs. R. A. Crider (Elmer's sister Freida Yenney)
1/1/1931	55	Chas/Margaret Knight, Elmer Yenney family, and Melchoir/Barbara Yenney all spend Christmas day at Freida's (R. A. Crider) home. They stayed four days.
4/21/1931	55	Elmer/Ruth Yenney become parents of a second daughter, Barbara Pearl, born Tuesday, April 21, 1931 at Mercy Hospital in Janesville, WI
4/30/1931	55	Mrs. Melchoir Yenney (Barbara) spends a week visiting Elmer and Margaret Knight at their homes in Janesville (to see new granddaughter)
6/2/1932	56	Charles/Margaret Knight of Janesville, Elmer/Ruth Yenney & family spend Memorial Day in the home of Melchoir/Barbara Yenney in Elgin
7/26/1934	58	Son, Elmer & children visit Melchoir/Barbara Yenney in Elgin Sunday to Wednesday
3/14/1936	60	Son, Elmer Yenney re-elected president of Chevrolet local No. 121 International Union United Auto Workers in Janesville, WI
6/18/1936	60	Chas/Margaret Knight & Elmer/Ruth go to Elgin to spend the week at the homes of Melchoir/Barbara Yenney and Mr/Mrs RA Crider (Freida)
7/23/1936	60	Chas Knight & Elmer/Ruth go to Elgin to spend the weekend with Melchoir/Barbara Yenney and Mr/Mrs RA Crider (Freida) (*Barbara Yenney is ill, being cared for by Freida & Margaret)
8/10/1937	61	RA/Freida Crider & Mrs. Melchoir (Barbara) Yenney go to Janesville for visit to Chas Knight and Elmer Yenney homes. They pick up Margaret Crider (who was already there) and return home
7/18/1938	62	Melchoir retires from the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway Company after 38 years of employment
2/24/1938	62	Mrs. Melchoir Yenney (Barbara) arrives home after spending a week with Chas Knight and Elmer Yenney families in Janesville
12/28/1939	63	Melchoir/Barbara hold Christmas day. Melchoir Jr/family, Elmer/family, Chas/Margaret Knight, & Freida/RA Crider were all there. (*RA is a veterinarian and does by 'Dr.')
7/24/1941	65	Melchoir/Barbara Yenney return home Saturday night after 10 days in Janesville at the Elmer Yenney/Chas Knight homes. Chas/Margaret brought the elder Yenney's home and then returned to Janesville.
9/7/1941	65	Chas/Margaret & Elmer/Ruth arrive in Elgin, called by the serious illness to Melchoir Yenney . Margaret remained as all went home after 3 days. By the time they had returned to Janesville, word had come of Melchoir's death, compelling them to turn around at Janesville and return to Elgin, Iowa. Melchoir Junior (Huron) and John (Waukegan) also came to Elgin.
9/8/1941	65	Melchoir Yenney (Senior) dies after long illness

9/9/1941	-	Melchoir's son, John, and family return to their home in Waukegan, IL after father's funeral
9/9/1941	-	Melchoir Jr returns home to Huron, SD after father's funeral
9/9/1941	-	Charles Knight returns home to Janesville (for work) after father-in-law's funeral; Margaret Knight (M's daughter) stays in Elgin
9/11/1941	-	Margaret Crider, Melchoir's granddaughter returns to Cedar Rapids after grandfather's funeral
9/11/1941	-	Elmer Yenney and wife Ruth stayed 4 days after Melchoir's funeral before returning to Janesville
1/22/1942	-	Barbara Babler Yenney leaves Elgin to visit the Chas. Knight and Elmer Yenney homes in Janesville, WI
2/5/1942	-	Barbara Babler Yenney returns home after visits with Chas. Knight and Elmer Yenney homes in Janesville, WI
12/17/1942	-	Barbara Babler Yenney leaves Elgin to visit the Chas. Knight and Elmer Yenney homes in Janesville, WI
1/20/1944	-	Barbara Babler Yenney leaves Elgin to visit the Chas. Knight and Elmer Yenney homes in Janesville, WI
10/25/1945	-	Elmer/Ruth Yenney visit the R. A. Crider (sister Freida) family and Barbara Babler Yenney in Elgin. (*Note: Freida had two daughters named Margaret and Barbara (just to confuse things :-))
1/17/1946	-	Barbara Babler Yenney leaves the Chas. Knight and Elmer Yenney homes in Janesville, WI to return to Elgin after a 6-week visit
8/7/1947	-	Barbara Babler Yenney is brought home from St. Mary's hospital in Rochester, MN by Freida (Crider) and Margaret (Knight). The daughter's returned home but Ruth Wade Yenney came to look after Barbara. Mrs. Yenney's condition "remains about the same, but she is happy to be able to be in her own home again".
8/14/1947	-	Margaret Knight & Elmer Yenney come from Janesville to visit their mother Barbara Yenney, who is ill. Margaret remained with mother; Elmer returned to Janesville
8/14/1947	-	Margaret (Mrs. Chas Knight) and Elmer Yenney come visit their mother Barbara Babler Yenney in Elgin, who is now very ill . Margaret remains; Elmer returns to Janesville.
7/1/1949	-	Barbara (Bostrva) Babler Yenney (Melchoir's wife; Elmer's mother) dies at Mercy Hospital in Janesville, WI at 75 years old.

NOTE #1: Most of the dates below are those of the newspaper date, so the events described may have happened a few days prior.

NOTE #2" 'Melchoir' ALWAYS refers to Melchoir SENIOR; Melchoir JUNIOR will have the suffix 'Junior'.