

1902 - Zella Cox with her father

The Life of
Zella Cox Tull Karet
(1883-1971)

by Granddaughter Robin Yonash
March, 2013

Table of Contents

Early Years	1
Marriage and Children	2
Life in California	4
Life in New Orleans.....	4
Samples of Zella's Art	5
Death in Louisiana.....	6
Zella Cox Genealogy	6
Ancestry.....	6
Tignal Franklin (Frank) Cox Ancestry	7
Clara Elenora Atkins Ancestry	8
Descendants.....	9
Places Zella Lived in Louisiana.....	10

Early Years

Zella Cox was born 16 February 1883 in Streator, La Salle County, Illinois. She was the second of two children, both daughters, born to Tignal Franklin (Frank) Cox (1854-1940) and Clara Elenora Atkins (1855-1939). For details on Zella's ancestry, see the section *Zella Cox Genealogy* below.

The 1900 Census on 16 June found her at age 17 living with her mother at 104 N. Second St. in Streator. The 1901 Streator City Directory lists her with occupation student. In 1904 she was listed with the occupation teacher, at age 21. At the time of the 1910 Census on 16 April, she was age 27 and her occupation was art teacher at a studio; she was still living at home. The following year she appeared in the La Salle, Peru County, Illinois City Director living at 101 E. Main St. with the occupation of artist. La Salle is about 20 miles northwest of Streator.

Streator is a city in LaSalle and partially in Livingston counties in Illinois. The city is situated on the Vermilion River approximately 81 miles southwest of Chicago in the prairie and farm land of north-central Illinois.

Streator was named for Worthy S. Streator, an Ohio industrialist who financed the region's first coal mining operation. It was founded in 1868 and incorporated as a city in 1882. Streator's early growth was due to its success as a coal producer, a major glass manufacturer and a railroad hub in the midwest. According to the 2010 census, the population of Streator was 13,710 people. It appears that Second St. from Zella's time is now Second Ave. as it runs north-south but Second St. is now an east-west route.

This is a 1939 aerial photo of Streator.



Marriage and Children

Around 1914, when Zella was 31, she married [Frank Henry Tull](#), age 21, an oil worker from Aubry, Johnson County, Kansas. At least the assumption is they married prior to daughter Jacquelyn's birth; but no record has been found in Illinois or Kansas--either at the state or county level (La Salle and Livingston in Illinois, Johnson and Franklin in Kansas). Frank was the son of George F. Tull (1864–1931) and Nancy Davis (Daisie) Lewis (1866–1958).

How did an artist from Streator, Illinois manage to meet and marry a blue-collar worker from Aubry, Kansas? Consider the following: Zella had an aunt living in Williamsburg, Franklin County, Kansas which is about 60 miles southwest of Aubry. Her husband was the brother of Clara's (Zella's Mom) second husband, so it could be assumed that she might be a favorite aunt of Zella and that Zella would visit her aunt and her cousins in Williamsburg. Frank was in the oil business, and oil was discovered in Franklin County in the early 1900's so it is possible that he was in or around Williamsburg at the same time Zella was there.

In any case, their eldest daughter, Jacqueline, was born on 08 May 1915 in Streator. The 1916 Streator City Directory (data gathered in 1915) found Zella and Frank living at 211 No. 2nd St. in Streator, which was just a few doors away from Zella's mother, Clara Atkins Cox Peddicord, who lived at 204 No. 2nd St. Frank was working at the Williams Hardware Co. in Streator.

Frank and Zella were living in El Dorado, Butler County, Kansas when their second and final child, a daughter named Gwendolyn Florence, was born on 31 October 1916. When Frank registered for the WWI Draft on 5 June 1917 the family was living at 514 Washington, El Dorado (see map and photo on next page).

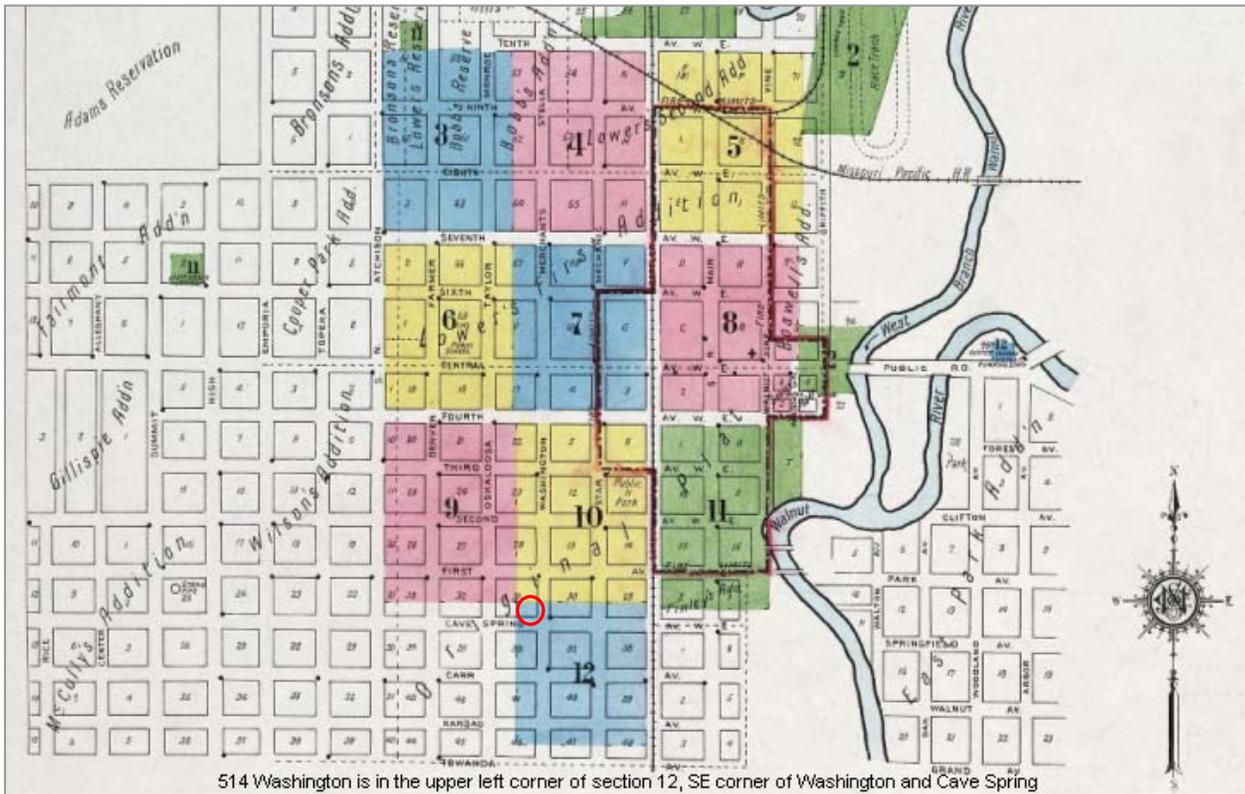
By 1918 Frank and Zella were living separately. At the time of Frank's induction into the US Army on 26 July 1918 he was working in Okmulgee, Okmulgee County, Oklahoma, as an oil driller. The 1919 Streator City Directory (data gathered in 1918) shows Zella and their daughters living in Streator, Illinois with her mother. It's not known whether Zella moved before or after Frank went into the service.

Frank was demobbed on 10 July 1919, but apparently Frank and Zella never got together again. The 1920 Amarillo, Randall County, Texas City Directory (data gathered in 1919) shows Frank living at 402 N Lincoln and working as an oil driller. Zella was living in Streator.

On 15 January 1920 the US Census shows Zella living at 104 So. Fourth St., with mother Clara and daughters Jacqueline and Gwendolyn. Zella was listed as the head of the family but did not provide an occupation.



514 [S.] Washington, El Dorado, Kansas



514 Washington is in the upper left corner of section 12, SE corner of Washington and Cave Spring

Life in California

In 1920, both Zella and her sister Myrtle and their families moved to Los Angeles County California.¹ Myrtle and her husband George Leonardy settled in Covina, but Zella's initial location is unknown.

Even though Frank Tull also moved to California in the early 1920's, he apparently had little or no contact with his daughters because there is no mention of him in the Covina newspapers for that timeframe whereas their maternal grandfather, Frank Cox, is mentioned several times in conjunction with Gwendolyn and Jacquelyn. However, there must have been some connection because later in life Gwen mentioned to her son that Frank had worked a long time at Signal Oil.

The 1923 Pasadena City Directory (data collected in 1922) lists Zella as the widow of Frank Tull, but he was still alive, so probably they were divorced by 1922. Her address was 503 N. El Molino, Pasadena, and she was working as a clerk.

About 1923, when she was 40, Zella married Joseph J. Karet. According the 1926 Voter Registration Index, Zella and Joseph were living at 444 S. Hope, Los Angeles, California and Zella was registered as a Socialist. She was working as an artist.

By early 1926, and possibly prior to this, Zella's daughters, ages 11 and 10, were living with Zella's sister Myrtle and husband in Covina.² They never lived with their mother again.

Life in New Orleans

By the time of the 1930 Census on 17 April, Zella, age 47, and Joseph were living 734 St. Peters St., New Orleans, Orleans Parish, Louisiana. They are recorded on separate pages of the Census, but he is listed as head and she as wife at the same address. Zella gives her occupation as numerologist in a private studio.

Why she moved to New Orleans is unknown; however, her father, Frank Cox, lived and worked there from 1890-1900 so possibly she felt some connection?

Zella applied for a Social Security Card on 27 May 1937 at age 54. She was living at 153 S. Rampart St. in New Orleans, and working for the WPA Education Program at 813 Canal Bank Building.

The 1940 Census on 1 April found Zella living in an apartment at 1741 Coliseum St., New Orleans with husband Joseph J. Karet. Zella gave her occupation as "Bookbinder for a Research Project", however she had not worked for over a year (65 weeks). Husband Joseph was also unemployed.

Joseph died 13 December 1944 in New Orleans, after 21 years of marriage. Zella was 61. She never remarried.



1741 Coliseum St., New Orleans

The 1945 and 1949 New Orleans City Directories show her living at 2816 Milan in New Orleans. In the 1952 and 1954 directories she was living at 1812 Baronne, New Orleans. Her occupation was artist. In 1954 she was 71 years old.

These locations are shown on the map in the section *Places Zella Lived in Louisiana* below.

¹ This is according to Zella's granddaughter's birth certificate, where Gwen states that she has been in the state for 24 years as of the birth date. It is also consistent with Myrtle's death certificate

² On 12 February 1926 the *Covina Argus* reported that "Jacquelyn Tull, who makes her home with her aunt and uncle, Mr. and Mrs. George Leonardy" had a skating accident.

Samples of Zella's Art

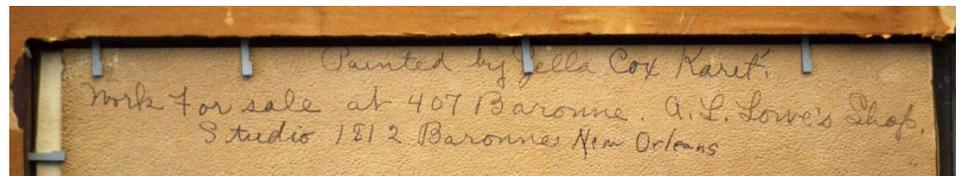
The only known surviving examples of Zella's artwork are shown here. The first is in the possession of a family member as of 2013; the other was sold to a private party for \$225 in 2011 but was found on the web. Given the location of her studio on the back, it was painted sometime 1950 or later.



Zella Cox, 1912



Cotton Picking, signed "Zella Karet" in a period wood frame



Inscription on the back of "Cotton Picking"

Death in Louisiana

On 11 December 1971, at age 88, Zella succumbed to cardiovascular disease complicated by pneumonia. At the time, she was living with friends at 4808 Newlands St. in Metairie, Jefferson Parish, Louisiana. Having been a long-time Christian Scientist, she donated her body to Louisiana State University for medical research.

Zella Cox Genealogy

Ancestry

As mentioned above, Zella was the second of two children, both daughters, born to painter and theater architect, Tignal Franklin (Frank) Cox (1854-1940) and Clara Elenora Atkins (1855-1939). The document [Frank Cox Biography](#) provides details on Frank's life and work.

Her paternal grandparents were James Clayton Cox (~1830-1903) and Mary Ann Nicholosl (1836-1911). Their lives are chronicled in the [James Clayton Cox & Mary Ann Nicholson Biography](#). Her paternal line traces back to Colonial Virginia, South Carolina, North Carolina, and Maryland. While it has not been possible to confirm, according to family stories^{3,4} the ancestors of her great-grandfather, Wilson Cox, came from Wales and her great-grandmother Martha Mallet traced her ancestry to Scotland.

Her maternal grandparents were Davis Atkins and Elizabeth Batten and their ancestors go back to Colonial Pennsylvania.

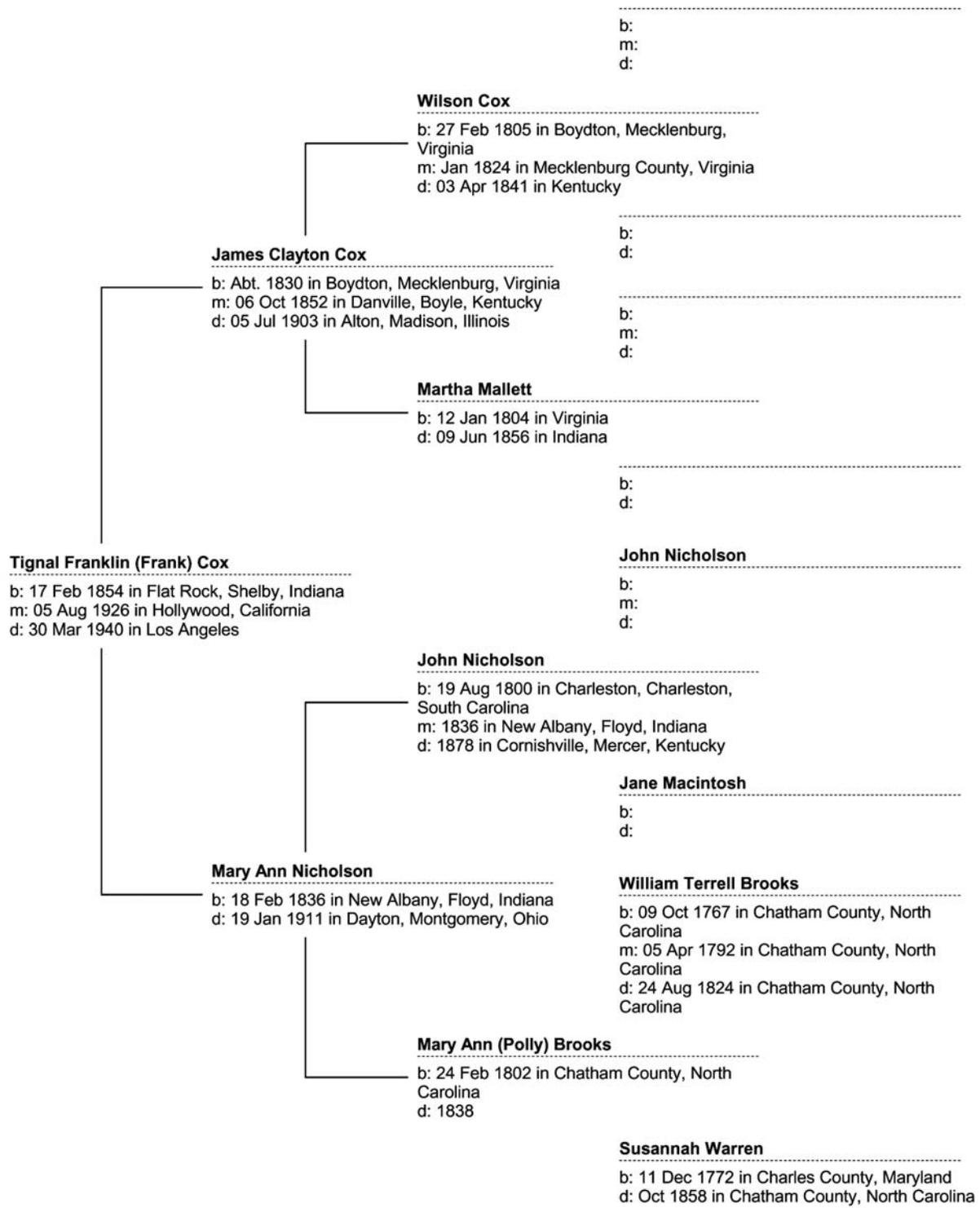
Zella's ancestors fought in the American Revolution and the Civil War, and her husband Frank Tull served in World War I.

The next two pages provide ancestry charts for Zella's parents.

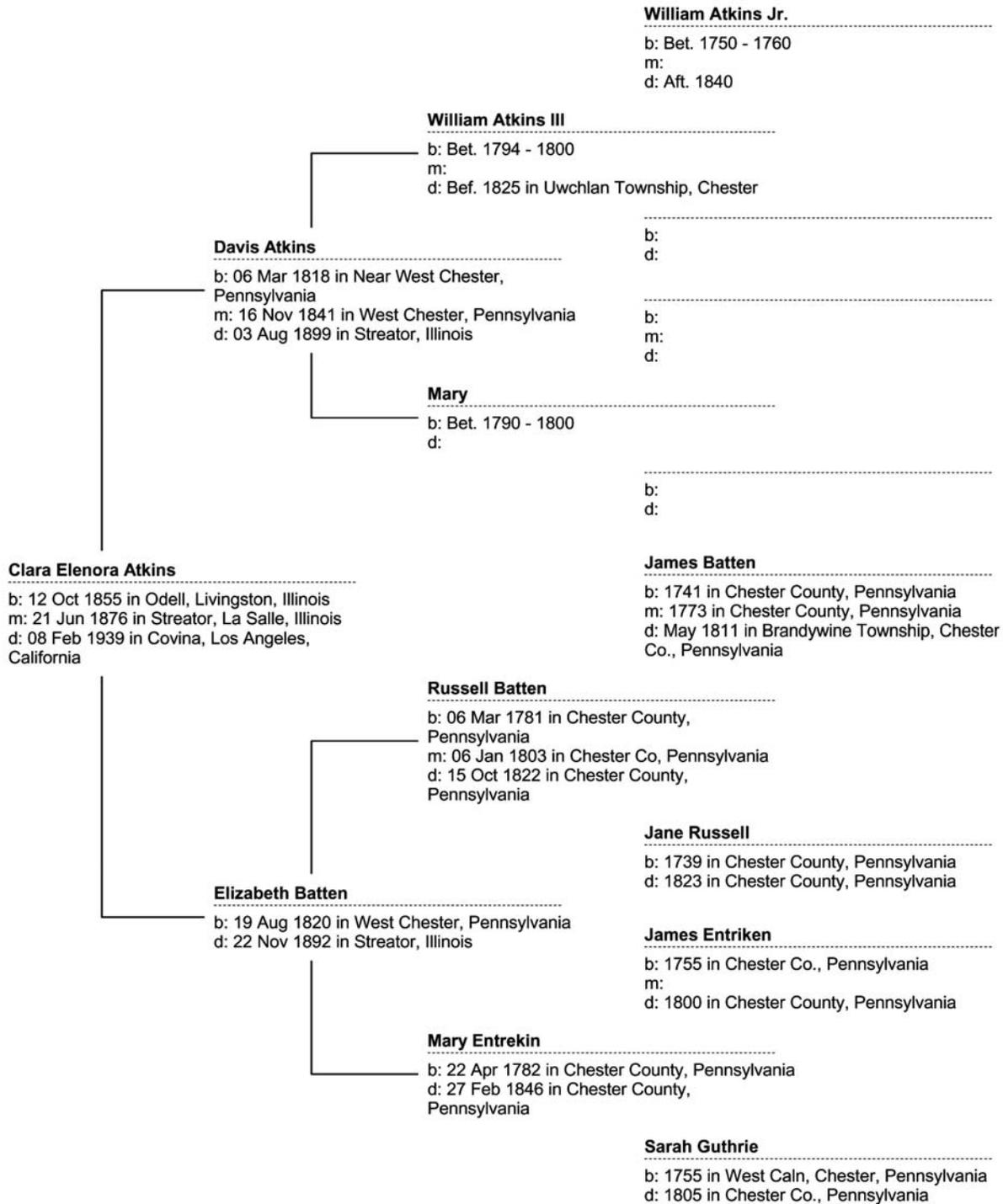
³ [The Cox - Nicholson Saga by Ludelle Cox Powell ~1967](#)

⁴ [A Narrative of the Origin and Wanderings of the Cox Family by Clark Cox ~1930](#)

Tignal Franklin (Frank) Cox Ancestry

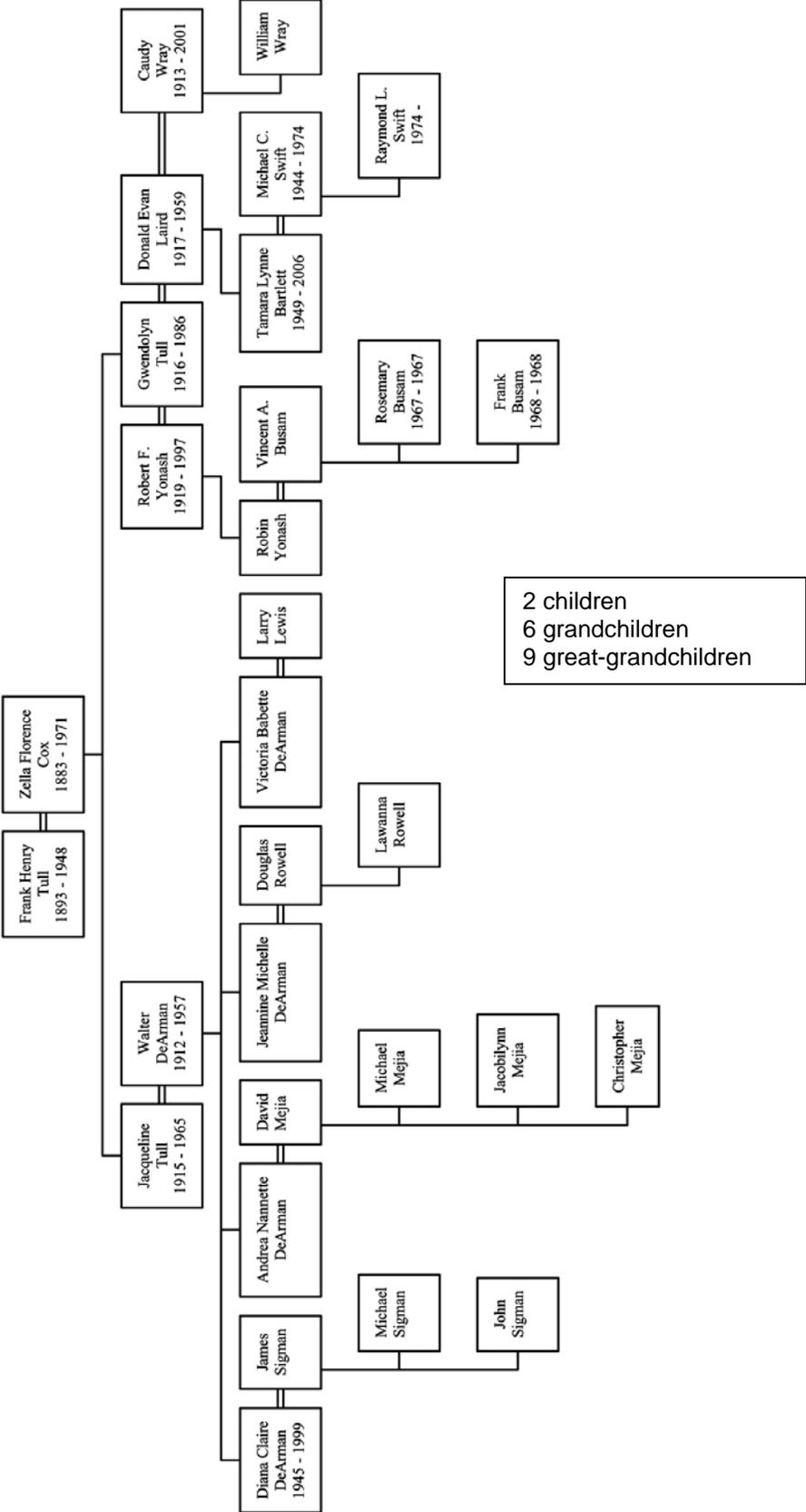


Clara Elenora Atkins Ancestry



Descendants

Descendants of Zella Cox



2 children
6 grandchildren
9 great-grandchildren

Places Zella Lived in Louisiana

This is a map of the known places that Zella Cox Tull Karet lived in Louisiana. For details on locations, see the full map [here](#).

