

Genealogy Basics –Verifying Oral History

By Joe Petrie

Introduction: One Oral History Source

My principal oral history source was my mother's sister, Miss Mary Ann Tobin (1902 – 1985) of Glace Bay and Halifax, NS. Aunt May stayed with us in Dedham MA every third summer beginning in the late 1940s until the early 1970s.

She taught French at the School for the Blind in Halifax. I was immersed in her adopted French language every third summer. She had a summer schedule that included a summer in Europe and a summer at Laval University in Quebec.

Amazingly, she was the family genealogist despite having lost about 95% of her vision when she was about age 12. Fortunately when she was a senior citizen (age 80) she had volunteers write our family history that she dictated to them – but could not read.

Aunt May was the source for a number of my mother's families. For example, just about every piece of genealogical information on Martin Adolphe Camus (1838 – 1919) of St. Malo, France; Little Bras d'Or and North Sydney and his first wife Lucy Boutilier (1827 – 1895) of Little Bras d'Or and North Sydney was from Aunt May. She never met Lucy or Adolphe's second wife, Annie Beaton (1838 – 1901).

The focus of this document is Catherine Camus, Lucy and Adolphe's eldest daughter. She was also known as Kate Cames.

Aunt May's Oral History about her Maternal Aunt, Catherine Camus (1864 – 1932)

The document will show that Aunt May clearly did know a lot about her Aunt Kate.

Aunt May's and my mother's Aunt Kate was and still is a mystery to me. I've discovered little bits and pieces of information about her over time but still not enough to really feel comfortable writing about her. I learned a lot about her last month when I discovered her children.

I learned that early in her life Aunt Kate had left home to work in Boston in 1889. **Supposedly, oral history was that she never returned to her home in North Sydney.**

Oral history was that she had cared for a widow's child. I assume that it was to care for Tom Brady's and his first wife's one child, James Edward Brady (aka J Edward Brady) in Weymouth, MA.

Kate and Tom Brady eventually married. Kate was about 30. **Oral history was that they had no children.**

Actual History (using Newspapers and Web Sites):

About Catherine never returning to North Sydney: On a visit to the Beaton Institute. I learned that in 1892 Catherine left Boston to visit her brother John Camus in North Sydney. John was ill. Both of her parents were still alive.

About Catherine being child-less: Actually, Tom and Kate had 3 daughters: Mary Alice, Helen Catherine and Edith Elizabeth. Those 3 daughters were Aunt May's and my Mom's first cousins. I discovered them in November 2015.

Ancestry web site information allowed me to track Aunt Kate. She was married in 1895 (Ancestry, Massachusetts Marriage records). She was in Ancestry's Census of North Sydney NS Canada for 1871, 1881 and 1891. She was in Ancestry's 1920, 1930 and 1940 Censuses. There is a conflict between the 1891 Canadian Census record and the US Census record of 1920 which indicated that Aunt Kate immigrated to the USA in 1889. The US census record for 1920 indicated that Kate was naturalized in

November 1895. Also Aunt Kate married Tom Brady in 1895 (Ancestry, Massachusetts Marriage Records). That was the year that her mother, Lucy Boutilier Camus, passed away.

A few years ago, I learned on a field trip to the Weymouth MA Town Hall and the Weymouth Public Library that Kate lived in Weymouth MA at the time of her youngest sister's death, my grandmother's death (1917). I researched that fact and found that she moved from Weymouth to Brockton after 1926. The US Census of 1930 showed that Tom and Kate were living in Brockton with her son-in-law Charles M Burke and his wife, their daughter Helen Catherine (Brady) Burke. Tom was still living with Charles and Helen in 1940. Using Ancestry's Massachusetts Death Index, I learned that Kate died in Brockton MA in 1932.

Finally, the US Census of 1920 showed that Milo's family lived with Edith's father and mother. Milo and Edith's oldest child (a son) was a month old.

Years ago, I tried to get more information on Kate from her daughter Edith's husband (Milo P Burke) but unfortunately, for some reason, he would not discuss his wife's mother. (At that time, I thought that Aunt Kate was Edith's step-mother.)

What follows is a Register Report of the known Descendants of Kate Camus and Tom Brady

Descendants of Catherine Camus "Kate" and Thomas F Brady

1. **Catherine¹ Camus "Kate"**, born 1864 in Little Bras d'Or, Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, Canada; died 1932 in Brockton, Bristol, Massachusetts, USA, daughter of Martin Adolphe Camus "Adolph Comes" and Lucy Boutilier. She married on 29 Jan 1895 in Weymouth, Norfolk, Massachusetts, USA **Thomas F Brady**, born 10 Feb 1859 in Weymouth, Norfolk, Massachusetts, USA.

Children of Catherine Camus "Kate" and Thomas F Brady were as follows:

- + 2 i **Mary Alice² Brady**, born 27 May 1895 in Weymouth, Norfolk, Massachusetts, USA; died 1963. She married **Edward John McLaughlin**.
- 3 ii **Helen Catherine² Brady**, born 8 Jan 1898 in Weymouth, Norfolk, Massachusetts, USA; died 6 Sep 1986 in Brockton, Bristol, Massachusetts, USA. She married in 1920 **Charles Mason Burke**, born 4 Mar 1891 in Brockton, Bristol, Massachusetts, USA; died Dec 1963.
- + 4 iii **Edith Elizabeth² Brady**, born 30 Apr 1902 in Weymouth, Norfolk, Massachusetts, USA; died 8 Oct 1980 in Brockton, Bristol, Massachusetts, USA. She married **Milo Patrick Burke**.

Generation 2

2. **Mary Alice² Brady** (Catherine¹ Camus), born 27 May 1895 in Weymouth, Norfolk, Massachusetts, USA; died 1963. She married on 12 Jan 1915 in Weymouth, Norfolk, Massachusetts, USA **Edward John McLaughlin**, born 1891; died 1989.

Children of Mary Alice Brady and Edward John McLaughlin were as follows:

- 5 i **Mary Pauline³ McLaughlin**, born 26 Aug 1915 in Weymouth, Norfolk, Massachusetts, USA; died 31 Jan 2000 in Braintree, Norfolk, Massachusetts, USA. She married **Thomas C Clancy**.
- 6 ii **John³ McLaughlin**, born 1920.

4. **Edith Elizabeth² Brady** (Catherine¹ Camus), born 30 Apr 1902 in Weymouth, Norfolk, Massachusetts, USA; died 8 Oct 1980 in Brockton, Bristol, Massachusetts, USA. She married on 16 Jun 1919 in Weymouth, Norfolk, Massachusetts, USA **Milo Patrick Burke**, born 20 Oct 1893 in Brockton, Bristol, Massachusetts, USA; died Dec 1966 in Brockton, Bristol, Massachusetts, USA.

Children of Edith Elizabeth Brady and Milo Patrick Burke were as follows:

- 7 i **Thomas Francis³ Burke**, born 11 Nov 1919 in Weymouth, Norfolk, Massachusetts, USA; died 22 Aug 1920 in Weymouth, Norfolk, Massachusetts, USA; buried 24 Aug 1920 in St Patrick's, Brockton, Bristol, Massachusetts, USA.
- 8 ii **Charles E³ Burke**, born 27 Nov 1920; died 1 Nov 1996 in Brockton, Bristol, Massachusetts, USA.
- 9 iii **Mary Patricia³ Burke**, born 13 Oct 1923 in Massachusetts, USA; died 2 May 1994 in Stoughton, Norfolk, Massachusetts, USA.
- 10 iv **John William³ Burke**, born 1924; died 1975.
- 11 v **Bernard³ Burke**, born 25 Aug 1925 in Brockton, Bristol, Massachusetts, USA; died 10 Mar 1981 in Brockton, Bristol, Massachusetts, USA.
- 12 vi **Edith Genevieve³ Burke**, born 1929.
- 13 vii **Kenneth J³ Burke**, born 27 Apr 1931 in Brockton, Bristol, Massachusetts, USA.
- 14 viii **Anna C³ Burke**, born 1933; died 1933.

Summary:

My discovery of an additional 20 family members was a wonderful accident of my verification effort. I suspect that there are more descendants. I wonder if 2 of Aunt Kate's daughters married Burke relatives.

The discovery was also a reminder for me to verify what can be verified using official records. Members of the Association of Professional Genealogists are advised to verify with at least two sources.

My Aunt May and my mother (her younger sister) never met their Aunt Kate. I think that Aunt May simply repeated to me what she heard from her mother's family, from her father, and from mother (who died when Aunt May was 15 and my Mom was 12).

In all other cases, her information has been accurate and verified. As I write this, I wonder whether Aunt Kate and the family were estranged and her Canadian family knew nothing about Aunt Kate's 3 daughters.

Finally, I plan to use the Comments section in the Ancestry Public Member Trees records to link Aunt Kate's living descendants to the rest of the living Camus cousins in my database. I plan to offer an updated Register Report for Adolphe's descendants and Aunt Kate's Pedigree Chart.

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Your corrections, comments and suggestions are appreciated. Please Email me at joe-apg@norwoodlight.com.

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