

10. The children and grandchildren of Jesse Richard Smith and Bessie Lee Hudman

10. Jesse Richard Smith 11 SEP 1867 • Atascosa County, TX - 2 FEB 1944 • Tuolumne County, CA
 Bessie Lee Hudman 17 APR 1882 • Texas - 26 FEB 1955 • Los Angeles, CA
 Marriage: 25 March 1899 Fresnal School, Doña Ana, New Mexico
 Anna May Bowen Smith 8 SEP 1872 • Ostego, Allegan, MI - 17 MAY 1950 • Tuolumne, CA
 Married between 1930 and 1940



Photos from Ancestry posted by Gwen Childs and Bonnie Dean.

In 1867, Twins Jesse (or Jessie) Robert (or Richard) was born along with his twin brother Benjamin Benton. I'm inclined to think that it is probably Jesse Richard after his father, but it is not clear. Like his brothers and sisters, he was born in Pleasanton, Tx and moved to Runnels, then Tom Green County in 1879. In

an undefined manner between 1880 and 1899, he made his way to Otero, NM where he married Bessie Hudman. Recognizing the familiar Hudman name from his older sisters' marriages to Phineas and Benjamin

65. Jessie Robert Smith 16 OCT 1902 • Cloudfcroft, NM - 30 NOV 1981 • San Bernardino County, CA
 Viola May Scott - APR 1906 • Los Angeles County, CA - 12 NOV 1994 • San Bernardino County, CA
 Marriage: 3 Jan 1934 • Los Angeles, CA



Jesse as a young boy from Kristin Lee and Viola as a nurse in 1929 from Heather Oplinger – both on FamilySearch.

The 2nd son of Jesse and Bessie arrived in 1902 after their move back to New Mexico from Texas, and like his brother siblings, he cannot be found in censuses until he pops up with his mother and her new husband in Globe, AZ in 1920 at which time he was erroneously identified as a female/stepdaughter. He had begun his retail career early as he was working as a clerk at a department store at the age of 18. See the census above with Joseph. He was too young for WW1 so we lack that registration card to provide clues so the first time that we encounter him in in 1934 when he and Viola Scott get married.

Children of Jesse and Viola Scott Smith

231	Richard Milton Smith	1938	2018	Jesse and Viola's Child#1
232	Margaret Elaine Smith	1936		Jesse and Viola's Child#2
233	Dorothy Irene Smith	1940	2019	Jesse and Viola's Child#2
234	Charles Beauford Smith	1942	2013	Jesse and Viola's Child#4

231. Richard Milton Smith 15 MAR 1935 • Orange County, CA - 19 MAY 2018 • Oroville, CA
 Anna I Garlatz 11 OCT 1937 • Chicago, ILL - Living
 Marriage: 21 Feb 1958 • Los Angeles, CA



Richard's obituary photo

The first child of Jesse and Viola arrived in March 1935 in Orange County, CA where his father was working as a manager of a retail department store which was discussed in his biography. He was joined before the end of the 1940's by sisters Margaret and Dorothy, and then in 1942 by a little brother Charles. In 1958, he married Anna Garlatz. She was the oldest child of Wesley and Elsie Warnier Garlatz. She had two younger sisters and a younger brother. Her father was born in Seattle to Polish immigrants while her mother was born to a Swedish father and an Austrian mother. She's going to have fun doing genealogy. I did a quick search of her siblings and it seems that her sisters had multiple marriages, while Anna and Richard were married 60 years.

Richard died in 2018 and his obituary reads:

Obituary of Richard M. Smith

His Legacy... Richard M. Smith was born in Orange, California in 1935 and was 83 years old. He was the first of four children born to Jesse and Viola Smith. He loved animals, tractors, and the fire service and was a Captain for the Los Angeles City Fire Department for 20 years. Richard was a member of the Berry Creek and Kelly Ridge Volunteer Fire Departments. He worked at the Bloomer Mountain Fire Lookout and was a fireman through and through, loving every moment of it. He enjoyed animals, working with firewood, catching fish, and helping others. He was a great handy man with strong hands, and a strong work ethic. He was very devoted to his family. Richard passed away on May 19, 2018 at Oroville Hospital.

His Family... Richard is survived by his wife of 60 years, Anna, four daughters and one son. He loved his grandchildren and great grandchildren very much – all 18 of them. He was preceded in death by his parents and brother.

His Farewell Service... A Memorial Service will be held on Saturday, June 16, 2018 at 11:00 AM, at Unity Church, in Oroville, California, where Richard was a member. In lieu of flowers, Richard would like donations to go to Widows, Orphans & Disabled Fireman's Fund, Los Angeles Fireman's Relief Association, P.O. Box 41903, Los Angeles, CA 90041. Arrangements are entrusted to Ramsey Funeral Home 530-534-3877.

From his obituary, we can see that Richard was an active community member and a fireman for most of his career. It mentions 5 children and 18 grandchildren. My research indicates that the children are Janet Smith 1958, Jacqueli Smith 1961, Joann Smith 1964, Jonathan Smith 1969, and Jenny Smith 1972. I have not been able to find out anything about them. Janet may have married someone named Thompson. Jacqueli may have married Julian Benjamin.

Children of Richard and Anna Garlatz Smith

573	Janet Smith	1958	Richard and Anna's Child#1
574	Jacqueli Smith	1961	Richard and Anna's Child#2
575	Joann Smith	1964	Richard and Anna's Child#3
576	Jonathan Smith	1963	Richard and Anna's Child#4
577	Jenny Smith	1972	Richard and Anna's Child#5

232. Margaret Elaine Smith 3 APR 1936 • Orange, CA - Living
 Joseph C Miller ABT 1935 • Michigan - Living
 Marriage: 9 Jul 1958 • Los Angeles, California



Margaret's photo from 1956 UC Santa Barbara yearbook

Margaret was the 2nd child born to Jesse and Viola arriving to join her brother in April 1936. She appears with the family in 1940 and 1950 Censuses. I have not found any records or news of her early years, but in 1958 after graduating from college, she married Joe Miller. Joe was a young man who was in school at Cal Poly when they married. He was the son of Calvin Eugene Miller 1902–1992 and Bernice Lillian Kuemerle 1907-1993. He was born in 1935 in Detroit where his father was working in a steel mill and he had a twin sister, Jean Carrol Miller. The family moved to California before 1950, and his father was running a bowling alley.

Margaret Smith to Wed Aug. 2, 1958

Miss Margaret Smith, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Jesse R. Smith, has set Aug. 2 for her wedding date with Joe Miller, son of Mr. and Mrs. Calvin Miller of San Gabriel. Miss Smith is an alumna of UC, Santa Barbara campus. Her fiancé attends Cal Poly at San Luis Obispo.

There are three children with the last name Miller born to a mother named Smith born in 1961 in San Bernardino. Two of these children are twin girls which strongly suggests that these may be Margaret and Joe's children, but I cannot confirm this.

This is about as much as I have been able to find.

233. Dorothy Irene Smith 20 MAY 1937 • Los Angeles, CA - 1 DEC 2019 • California
 #1 Donald Allen Vonk 20 MAR 1936 • Des Moines, Iowa - 24 JAN 2002 • California
 Marriage: 18 Mar 1955 • Los Angeles, CA
 #2 William Leroy Banks 16 JUL 1936 • Cleveland, OH - 14 AUG 1976
 Marriage: 28 Jul 1961 • Los Angeles, CA – Div 1969
 #3 William Reisiger Jr 11 OCT 1938 • Manhattan, NY - 11 OCT 2004 • Bradenton
 Marriage: 21 Nov 1964 • Los Angeles, CA – Div 1969
 #4 Phillip William Edwards 29 JUN 1943 • Oklahoma - 10 DEC 2018
 Marriage: 8 Jan 1973 • Glendale, CA - Div 1978



Photo of Dorothy posted on FamilySearch by Heather Oplinger

Jesse and Bessie's 3rd child was Dorothy Irene who joined the family in May 1937 and appears as a youngster in the 1940 and 1950 Census's in LA. Records and news article then indicate that in 1955 when she was 17, she married Donald Vonk. Their wedding is described below.

Miss Dorothy Irene Smith, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Jesse R. Smith of 6410 Repton St. became the bride of Donald A. Vonk, son of Mr. and Mrs. Gerald V. Vonk of 3213 Future St., the evening of March 18 in the Highland Park Presbyterian Church. The Rev. Graydon E. McClellan, pastor, performed the ceremony in a setting of mums and stock. Music for the occasion included "The Wedding March" and "I Love You Truly."

Given in marriage by her father, the bride chose a floor length gown which featured white net with satin panels, long sleeves, high collar and fingertip veil. Her bouquet was made up of red roses with streamers and an orchid. She carried a white Bible.

Serving as maid of honor for her sister was Miss Margaret E. Smith, also of Highland Park. Miss Smith chose a powder blue ballerina-length gown of tulle and carried a bouquet of salmon-colored

carnations. Bridesmaids were the bridegroom's sisters, Miss Sandra S. Vonk of Highland Park, and Mrs. Jean L. Enos of Pasadena. They elected to wear salmon-colored gowns similar to that worn by Miss Smith and carried powder blue carnations.

Best Man Richard D. Vonk, also of Highland Park, was best man for his brother. Ushering were the bride's cousin, Wesley E. Johnson of North Ridge, and the bridegroom's brother, Thomas R. Vonk of Highland Park.

A reception for 150 guests followed the wedding in the church's reception room. The couple left on a wedding trip to Yosemite and later visited Santa Monica.

Mrs. Vonk attended Franklin High School and is employed as an "information operator" by the Pacific Telephone Co., Highland Park. The bridegroom attended schools in Des Moines, Iowa, and has been in the U. S. Navy for two years. On Thursday, he will leave for Japan.

Well, all of that celebrations seems to have gone for naught. In 1960, Donald was marrying Charlene Gray and in 1961, Dorothy seems to have married William Leroy Banks. A brief comment on Donald. He was from Iowa and he had 8 brothers and 4 sisters. I'm not sure how his parents afforded this size family as in 1950, his father was a laborer in a lumber yard. Donald was about the middle of the pack and served in the Korean War in the Navy. He died in 1985.

Records show that a Dorothy Irene Smith married William Leroy Banks in 1961 and divorced in 1969, but I am of the opinion that this is a different Dorothy because our Dorothy married William Reisiger in 1964, had a daughter, Heather in 1965 and divorced in 1969, so those two events could not both be happening, and Heather is active on FamilySearch so I know that she is Dorothy's daughter. William was from New York. He was born in Manhattan in 1938 and seems to have had an older sister. His mother, Hazel Norris, was from Kansas and in 1940, his father was a railroad policeman. His father remarried a Dorothy in the 1940's and in 1950, he was a NY State Policeman. I have not put the pieces together how Dorothy and William got together, but they seem to have. Anyway, William died in 2004 and his obituary reads:

William "Irish Bill" Reisiger
Anna Maria Island

William Reisiger, "Irish born Bill" October 1938, passed away on October 31, 2004, at home. He is survived by his beloved daughter, Heather Oplinger; and three grandchildren, Jesse, Emily and Catherine. He was a long-time resident of Bradenton before moving to Anna Maria Island. Irish Bill was a veteran of the U.S. Navy.

He will be missed by many who loved him and disliked by none who knew him. Cremation will be handled by the Good Earth Crematory. Service and "Irish" wake to be announced. "May the road rise to meet your feet. May the sun shine on your face.

May the wind be at your back and may you be in Heaven three days before the devil knows you are dead."

While I have not found the marriage records, there was a divorce announcement in Florida in 1973 where he divorced a Rena Z. but I have not found out anything about her. His daughter Heather who was born to Dorothy is mentioned and she has married someone named Oplinger, but I have not found him.

Dorothy is reported to have died on 1 Dec 2019, probably by Heather, but I have not found records to support that date.

Continuing the sage, Dorothy married a 3rd or 4th time in 1973 to Phillip William Edwards who was from Oklahoma and was 6 years younger than Dorothy. They divorced in 1979 but seem to have had a son, Scott Edwards around 1974. I have not been able to verify this, but there is a Scott Edwards that has posted many updates on FamilySearch about this family. I have communicated with him briefly and I did locate a Barrington Scott Edwards born in 1974 that may be him.

Scott has also indicated that Dorothy also married a William Scott Gordon 1917-1997. While I have found a lot of information about William, I have not found any marriages to Dorothy, although he did have several other wives.

To round out my discussion of Dorothy, in addition to possible children Heather Reisiger Oplinger, there are postings by a Charles Oplinger on FamilySearch who I have not discovered. He may be Heather's brother or son.

Children of Dorothy and her various husbands

578	Heather Reisiger	1965	Dorothy and William R's child
579	Scott Edwarda	1974	Dorothy and Phillip's child

233. Charles Beuford Smith 1 JUNE 1942 • Los Angeles, CA - 16 JAN 2013 CA?

Barbara Yvonne Beenken 23 JAN 1942 • California - 27 FEB 1994 • Fresno, CA

Marriage: 1 Jul 1966 • Los Angeles City, CA – Div 1976



Charles was the youngest child of Jesse and Bessie and has been rather elusive in my searching. He died in 2013, probably in California, but I cannot find a death index. His grave marker in San Gabriel, CA is shown and the inscription I had translated using AI with the results below.

CHARLES BUEFORD SMITH June 1, 1942 - January 16, 2013 踏花歸去馬蹄香 In love, there are no boundaries In memory, love lives forever

That's a beautiful tribute to Charles Buford Smith. The phrase "踏花歸去馬蹄香" translates to "As the horse returns, the fragrance of flowers lingers on its hooves," symbolizing a lasting impact and cherished memories. The sentiment "In love, there are no boundaries. In memory, love lives forever" is a touching reminder of the enduring nature of love and remembrance.

Exploring other records, I found that in 1960 when he was 17, he and Barbara Beenken seemed to have thought about getting marriage, but news articles seem to indicate that Barbara was still in high school and doing well, so they seem to have put it off until Jul 1966. While I cannot find records to support it, Charles would have been in the prime age group to have been affected by the war in Vietnam, though his grave marker does not give any indication. I searched for Smith kids born to a mother named Beenken and did not find any, so I assume that he was never a father.

In looking at Barbara, she seems to have been the only daughter of Conrad and Dorothy Challstrom Beenken from Iowa and Illinois. The married in 1937 and moved to California before 1940 where Conrad was a cement finisher, and Dorothy made pottery. In 1950, Conrad was a carpenter in the building industry and Dorothy was raising her young daughter. Newspaper searches yield several stories about a Barbara Beenken, but it seems to be Barbara A. Beenken and not our Barbara. As such, the yearbook photos that I have found cannot be definitely confirmed as our Barbara.

Barbara died in Fresno in 1994, but I have not found an obituary. In her father's 1980 obituary, she was mentioned as Barbara Smith and living in Dinuba, CA, a town in Tulare County. This is all I can find about Charles and Barbara.

This has been a frustrating family to research. Living in a large metro area like Los Angeles certainly reduces the chances that you will be written up in the newspapers unless you do something spectacularly good or bad. It also increases the chances that there will be others with the same of similar names particularly if your last name is Smith. As such, I think that this episode is reasonably accurate, but I do fear that there are a few "conclusions" that I have made that may not be correct. Hopefully a family member who knows the family will run across this and provide the necessary corrections.

Enjoy this edition and if you have any corrections, photos, etc. do not hesitate to contact me at rbills_houston@yahoo.com. This version was completed 8 Dec 2024.