

Charles Lawless Family Story

Life Summary

This is the story of the Charles Lawless family. Charles was the brother of Eugene Lawless, our great-grandfather on the Lawless side.

Significant names in this story are Leopold and Eileen. Anna Lawless named two of her children after her uncle and cousin. Paulina may have been the inspiration for Dorothy Johnson Lichty naming one of her daughters Pauline. However, it is not known if Dorothy knew any of the Charles Lawless story.

<i>Charles Leopold Lawless</i>	<i>Paulina “Lina” Chase</i>
Charles Leopold Lawless was born 24 March 1865 in Rathmines South, Saint Peter's, County Dublin, Ireland. His parents were William John Lawless (born 1830) and Louise Marie Denise (Denis) Van Laer (born 1840). He was a younger brother of Eugene William Lawless. The record of his birth is found in Ireland Civil Registration. When Charles was 21, he emigrated from Ireland to Decatur Nebraska. The exact date is not certain, but he was in Nebraska to marry Paulina Chase in November 1887. He went to Nebraska because his brother Eugene had bought land and set up a household four miles southwest of Decatur. Charles became a farmer when he first moved to Decatur. Charles probably didn't own land in the area, but may have farmed with his brother or the Chase family.	Paulina was born about 1867 and was a daughter of Hiram Chase (The Elder) and <i>Nungainsa (Nunzainza) (Clarissa) Noyes (Noyse)</i>. <i>Nungainsa</i> was a member of the Omaha Indian Tribe in Macy NE, about 10 miles north of Decatur. Hiram Chase The Elder, was a government inspector, and Paulina's mother, Nunzainza, was the granddaughter of Wahnookega, chief of the Omaha Indians. Wahnookega's name appears on all treaties signed to the Omahas. (He signed the treaty between the United States and the Omahas in 1854. His other name was Noyse.) When Paulina and her brother Hiram were orphaned, they went to live with the James Ashley Family in Decatur. James Ashley had a hardware store.

Marriage

Charles met Paulina Chase in Decatur where she lived as a ward of James Ashley, hardware store owner. They were married in Decatur at the house of James Ashley on November 22, 1887. The marriage was performed by an ordained Minister of the Gospel, Pres (Presbyterian?) Church.

They may have lived with the Eugene Lawless family for a time. By March, 1888, they had moved to a place in Decatur according to a notice in the Decatur Herald.

Charles and Paulina had two children: (Mary) Eileen Lawless (born 8 September 1888—died 4 June 1911) and John Wm(?) Sheely Lawless (born January 1891—died after June 1891 and before Jan 1892). Paulina and her children, Eileen and John, are found in the Omaha Indian Tribal rolls.

Paulina was not in very good health and died of consumption in September 1894. She died at Eugene and Bessie Lawless' home as noted in a newspaper item. Her daughter Eileen was 6 years old. Paulina was buried on the Chase family property alongside her son.



Charles and Eileen

Charles and Eileen likely continued to live with the Eugene family after Paulina died. Charles left and worked at rough jobs, one of which was in a lumber camp. He may have tried to take Eileen with him for a while, but camp life was too rough for a young child. She went back to live with Eugene & Bessie's family for a few years until she was sent to live at a hospital/convent in Maryville, Missouri.

Eileen spent the rest of her short life living at the hospital as a ward, may have worked as a nurse, and later joined the Sisters of St. Joseph as a nun (Sr. Anselma). She developed consumption (tuberculosis) and died June 4, 1911 at the age of 22.

Charles moved to Port Arthur Texas after 1901 and worked for a Marine Shipper. He continued living there until he died January 14, 1913 from a heart condition. His brother Eugene went to Port Arthur during his final days and brought him home to be buried by his wife and son in Nebraska.

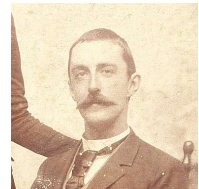
The Whole Story – Or – As Much As We Know

Now that you know the outline of the Charles Lawless family, we can explore more about what their lives were like and how the story developed. We don't know everything, but what we do know gives us a glimpse into their lives and how they connect with the Eugene Lawless story and our grandmother Anna/e Lawless Johnson. A connection between Sr. Anselma and Eugene's daughters gives clues about why they went to Clyde Missouri for their education. The letters from Sr. Anselma to Anna give us information about Anna's early life that we would not have known otherwise.

Charles, Paulina, Eileen, and John

Charles and Eugene were younger sons of Dublin lawyers, but were drawn to the Nebraska frontier and the farming community. Eugene was the inspiration and Charles followed him. Charles very likely immigrated to Nebraska in 1887. It is not known if he became a citizen.

Charles Lawless with wife Paulina and daughter Eileen. Taken in Blair Nebraska about 1890.



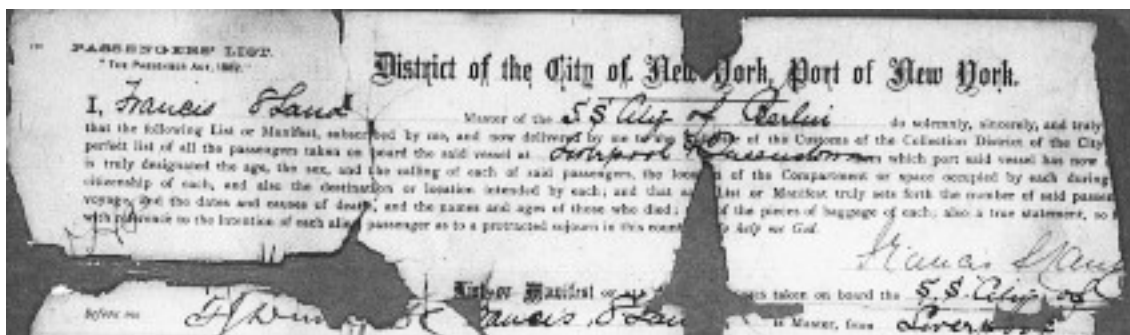
Charles Lawless



Paulina Chase Lawless



Eileen Lawless



431	J. R. Burgos	25	Male	Mason	England	Manhattan	Boston
2	C. Lawless	21	M	Irish	Ireland	Dublin	

A passenger record shows a C Lawless from Dublin Ireland arriving in New York on the ship City of Berlin on March 19, 1887. He intended to be in the country on a "Protracted Sojourn". The information in the list fits with what is already known about Charles. His age is shown as 21, so he boarded the ship before his birthdate of March. He is shown as living in Dublin and is a citizen of Ireland. The only odd thing is that his intended destination is shown as Boston and he intended to travel to Nebraska. Because all the other information is correct, this record is believed to be Charles Lawless, Eugene's brother with a 98% reliability.

Charles didn't waste much time finding a wife. Charles and Paulina Chase likely knew each other because the community was rural and rather small. Paulina and her brother Hiram lived with the James Ashley family in the town of Decatur after her parents died. They are listed with the Ashley Family in the 1800 census. The social scene at the time consisted of visits with friends and occasional house dances. Charles and Paulina may have met in a social situation or possibly through business dealings in the town.

MARRIAGE LICENSE, Book _____ COUNTY, NEBRASKA. 541

Charles Lawless and *Paulina Chase*
Before the County Judge of *Decatur* County, Nebraska, *Nov 21 1887*

AFFIDAVIT.

I, *Charles Lawless* of *Decatur* County, State of *Nebraska*, age *22* years, do hereby solemnly swear that I am acquainted with *Paulina Chase* who now resides at the residence of *James Ashley* in the town of *Decatur*, County of *Decatur*, State of *Nebraska*, is of the age of *20* years and is single, of sound disposing mind, and unmarried; that said *Paulina Chase* is of the age of *20* years and is single, of sound disposing mind, and unmarried; and that we have freely and lawfully entered into the bonds of matrimony, and we have no impediment to our marriage.

I furthermore do solemnly swear that the following persons, maintaining the names of the aforesaid parties, their ages, color, place of birth, residence and parental names, is correct in every particular, to the best of my knowledge, information, and belief, truly:

NAME OF PARTY	AGE	PLACE OF BIRTH	RESIDENCE	TESTIMONY	WITNESSES
<i>Charles Lawless</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>Decatur, Neb.</i>	<i>Decatur, Neb.</i>	<i>John Ashley</i>	<i>James Ashley</i>
<i>Paulina Chase</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>Decatur, Neb.</i>	<i>Decatur, Neb.</i>	<i>John Ashley</i>	<i>James Ashley</i>

Subscribed and sworn to before me *Nov 21 1887* at *Decatur*, Nebraska.

County Judge

ISSUE OF LICENSE

Application having this day been made by *Charles Lawless* for license for the marriage of *Charles Lawless* and *Paulina Chase* aged *22* years and *20* years, and it appearing by the affidavit of *Charles Lawless* as above recited, that the said parties are of competent age and condition to marry;

and all the requirements of the law having been complied with, LICENSE IS THEREFORE GRANTED them.

day of *Nov* 1887

CERTIFICATE OF MARRIAGE.

To the County Judge of *Decatur* County, Nebraska:

Eugene Lawless of the County of *Decatur*, State of *Nebraska*, do hereby certify that on the *21* day of *Nov*, A.D. 1887, at *Decatur*, Nebraska, I duly joined in marriage *Charles Lawless* and *Paulina Chase*, both of legal age, and both of sound disposing mind, and that there were present as witnesses *John Ashley*, *James Ashley*, *John Ashley*, and *James Ashley*, all of whom were of legal age, and all of whom were of sound disposing mind, and that the said parties were by me lawfully joined in marriage, and that the said parties were by me lawfully joined in marriage, and that the said parties were by me lawfully joined in marriage.

Charles, age 22, and Paulina, age 20, were married in Decatur at the house of James Ashley on November 22, 1887. The marriage was performed by an ordained Minister of the Gospel, Pres (Presbyterian?) Church. Several members of the Ashley family were witnesses as listed on the marriage certificate. Eugene Lawless was not one of the witnesses. Eugene was Catholic and may not have 'approved' of Charles being married by a Protestant minister so may have declined to be a witness. This is only speculation and not documented.

It is possible that Charles and Paulina lived with the Eugene family after their marriage, but no record of that survives. A newspaper notice from March 1888 mentions that Charles and Paulina took up residence in the town of Decatur, but does not mention an address. (*Decatur Herald, March 1888*) Charles and Paulina lived in Decatur or nearby, but very little information survives about their earlier life.

Charles and Paulina's daughter Eileen was born September 8, 1888. A son, John William Sheely Lawless was born during the week before January 29, 1891. He was listed in the Omaha Indian Tribal Rolls with Paulina and Eileen that was recorded in June of 1891. It is assumed that John died later in 1891 because he does not show up on the next Census Roll taken in January 1892.

Cousin Theresa Lichty tells about Grandma Anne telling this story about her mother Bessie. The time was probably late 1891. Anne's brother Johnny was sick or failing because Bessie didn't produce enough milk. Bessie wrote to many doctors for help about what she could do to help him get well. A doctor from New York told her to rub olive oil on his body and give him cow's milk mixed with sugar on a rag to suck. The treatment worked and Johnny lived until 1956. Bessie's comment was that she didn't know how the seemingly healthy Indian boy (named John) died and her John lived.

Charles and Farming

Charles spent time as a farmer when he first moved to Decatur. Charles probably didn't own land in the area, but may have farmed with his brother or the Chase family. He probably also helped his brother Eugene on GarryOwen, the Lawless farm. Charles and Eugene very likely had a close relationship and the families spent time together. Eugene took care of his younger brother in many ways.

A newspaper item from January 1891 has this to say about Charles:

"Charles Lawless, who married in to the Omaha tribe, has been appointed county commissioner of Thurston Co. to fill vacancy caused by the resignation of Mr. Wheeler, another white man who lived on the Omaha reservation until recently. His family have fallen heir to an estate in Indian Territory, and he has moved there."
(*Lyons Mirror Jan 15, 1891*)

The Chase family had property on the Omaha reservation and Paulina had at least two pieces of land close to Macy. That land passed to her daughter Eileen when she died. The land was eventually sold.

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An article talks about Charles' success with a patch of beans.

The Pender Republic Nov 25 1932 – From 40 years ago. (Original article was in 1892.)

Charles Lawless was over from the Omaha agency. He says there is no occupation on earth like farming in this particular section; an example, a patch of beans which cost him seven days labor, netted him \$63 cash.

Charles was a person who experimented and tried to help his community. A newspaper article told how he developed a hog cholera remedy that he claimed would give hogs immunity. He offered to test his remedy. This is an article in the *July 4, 1901 Tekamah Journal* is mainly in his own words.

Cholera Immunes

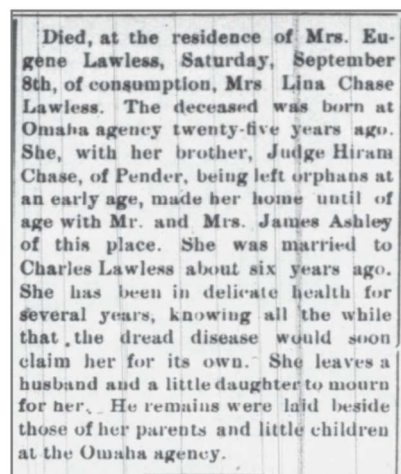
Chas. Lawless, a farmer living between Decatur and Lyons having experimented with hog cholera remedies says in the Lyons Mirror of last week: "On the 16th of June I took 3 shoats up to a Mr. Fitch on the reservation for a test against hog cholera. He has lost about 100 head. Should these stand the test I have over 80 that I will place in any herd infected with cholera. I will be greatly obliged to anyone who will inform me from now on of any herd infected with cholera so that I can take some pigs there. This is for the benefit of those engaged in the swine industry, and all should take deep interest in this new discovery. Should these three pigs die from cholera it will not shake my belief in the theory a particle; it will be because I've made a mistake and if so I know just when and where I made it. When I treated the dam of these I did not know so much about the laws of immunity as I do now. Consequently the next generation will be Cholera proof."

He was confident in his belief in the remedy. The article states that he lived between Decatur and Lyons, so he and his family were possibly living with the Eugene family at the time. The timing of this article (affects) some of the assumptions made about when Charles moved to Port Arthur, possibly in 1900. Or did he go to Port Arthur and then travel back to the Decatur area? The information available gives no direct statement about his location at that time.

Paulina was not in very good health and died of consumption on September 8, 1894, Eileen's 6th birthday. She died at Eugene and Bessie Lawless' home as noted in a newspaper item in the Decatur Herald. Eileen and Charles probably lived with Eugene's family for a time before and after Paulina's death. This would be the time when Eileen spent time with her Aunt Bessie and formed a close bond with her.

The Weekly Burtonian (September 13, 1894) published this notice about Paulina's death.

"Died, at the residence of Mrs. Eugene Lawless, Saturday, September 8th, of consumption, Mrs. Lina Chase Lawless. The deceased was born at Omaha agency twenty-five years ago. She, with her brother, Judge Hiram Chase, of Pender, being left orphans at an early age, made her home until of age with Mr. and Mrs. James Ashley of this place. She was married to Charles Lawless about six years ago. She has been in delicate health for several years, knowing all the while that the dread disease would soon claim her for its own. She leaves a husband and a little daughter to mourn for her. Her remains were laid beside those of her parents and little children at the Omaha agency."



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After Paulina died, Charles worked at rough jobs. A Pender Republic newspaper article from 1900 identifies Charles as working as a railroad grader, but we don't know where he was based at that time. He also worked in a lumber camp. He may have tried to take Eileen with him for a while, but camp life was too rough for a young child. She may have lived with Eugene's family, but soon after her mother died, she was sent to live in Maryville, Missouri. Eileen is listed as a ward at the St. Joseph Hospital in Maryville in the 1900 census. The hospital was run by the Catholic Sisters of Saint Joseph and Eileen lived in the convent with them.

In about 1900 (or a few years later), Charles moved to Port Arthur, Texas and worked for a Marine Shipper (according to his death certificate). He was living there when his daughter Sr. Anselma visited him in 1905 to tell him about taking vows in the religious life. He died in Port Arthur on January 14, 1913.

Charles' death certificate gives us information about him. We already know statistics about him – birth date, place, parents. Other information includes names of doctors, undertaker, and registrar of the certificate.

- Charles died at the Mary Gates Hospital, Port Arthur, Jefferson County, Texas.
- The informant was E. W. Lawless.
- Cause of death: Valvular disease of heart for at least 10 years.
- He was to be buried in Macy, Nebraska.

These two newspaper articles have more information about Charles' death. Eugene went to Texas about the time Charles died. He probably arrived before Charles died because he was the informant on the death certificate that was filed on January 15, the day after Charles died. He brought Charles back to be buried near Macy on the Chase homestead.

From The Decatur Herald Jan 16, 1913

A message tells of the death of Mr. Chas. Lawless, at his home in Port Arthur, Texas, yesterday. The remains is expected in Walthill Saturday afternoon and the funeral is to be held at Macy, Sunday, the interment being made beside the wife and children, who are buried on the Chase farm near that place.

From The Pender Republic, Pender Nebraska, 17 Jan 1913.

Charles Lawless Dead. Charles Lawless died at Port Arthur, Texas, Wednesday of this week of dropsical trouble. He had been in poor health for some time so that his death was not unexpected. Mr. Lawless was for several years a resident of Thurston County and is known to a large number of Republic readers. While a resident of our county he took an interest in public affairs and served several years as County Commissioner from his district.

He was married November 10, 1888* at Decatur, Nebr to Miss Paulina Chase, a sister of our townsman, Hiram Chase. Mrs. Lawless died a number of years ago. She and a child** were buried on the Chase homestead near Macy. The body of Mr. Lawless will be brought to Macy and buried by their side tomorrow, Saturday, January 18.

*The marriage was November 22, 1887. The newspaper item was incorrect.

** The child referred to would be John who died as an infant.

The presumed errors in the article reminds us that journalists are not perfect!

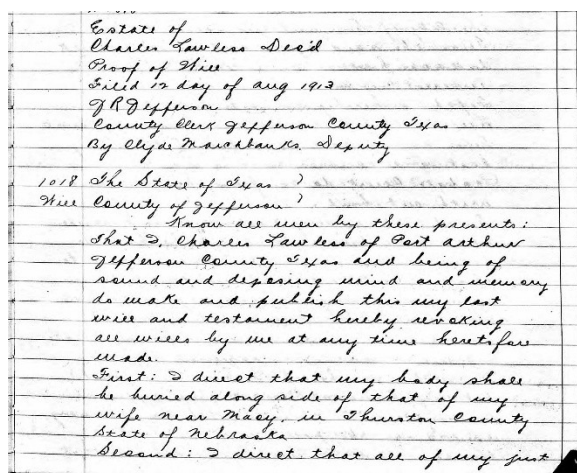
Nothing is known about the family graveyard on the Chase homestead, nor do we have any information about the location of the property or the cemetery.

Charles Lawless Will and Probate

Charles' will was filed on August 12, 1913 in Texas. It was signed on January 7, 1913. The will was accepted for probate in Texas and Nebraska. Two people witnessed his signature – neither was Eugene Lawless..

These are the main provisions of the will:

- He wanted to be buried beside his wife near Macy, in Thurston County State of Nebraska.
- His debts and obligations would be paid out of the estate.
- He gave his brother Eugene Lawless all of his property except for five lots of land situated in Mission View addition to the City of San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas.
- He gave the Mission View property to Dora and Andrew Book minor children of Andrew Book of Port Arthur Jefferson County.
- He appointed Lee Book of Port Arthur, Jefferson County, Texas as the sole executor of his last will.



Will of
Charles Lawless Dec'd
Proved 12 day of Aug 1913
J.R. Jefferson
County Clerk Jefferson County Texas
By Clyde Marshall, Deputy

1018 The State of Texas
County of Jefferson
Know all men by these presents:
That I, Charles Lawless of Port Arthur
Jefferson County Texas and being of
sound and disposing mind and memory
do make and publish this my last
will and testament hereby revoking
all wills by me at any time heretofore
made.

First: I direct that my body shall
be buried along side of that of my
wife near Macy, in Thurston County
State of Nebraska

Second: I direct that all of my just

Nothing is known about the Book Family, but Charles must have had some relationship with them because he left property to the children. Port Arthur is almost 300 miles east of San Antonio. We can only speculate about the reason Charles bought lots in San Antonio. He lived in Texas for about 14 years, so certainly had time to move around and meet people. We know for sure he was in Port Arthur when Sr. Anselma visited him in 1905 and that he died there in 1913.

The will was also probated in Nebraska. The Pender Republic published an "Order of Hearing on Probate of Foreign Will". The purpose was to grant Eugene Lawless as administrator. There may have been some property involved that could have been Indian lands that passed to Eileen when her mother died. There were at least two parcels that were part of Paulina Chase's allotment. Several property records about Paulina's property have been found, but the transfers of ownership are not well established. Eugene did request a final settlement for the will in October, 1922.

In 1922, Hiram Chase, Paulina's brother, challenged the ownership of one of the parcels that passed from Charles to Eugene. The parcel in contention is southwest of Macy. The property that Eugene and Hiram fought about was the E ½, 26, 25N, 9E, less than a mile SW of Macy. That parcel was eventually confirmed as Eugene's property after quite a lot of legal contention. A newspaper notice in January 1936 reported that the property was sold in a Sheriff's sale. Eugene had died almost 10 years before.

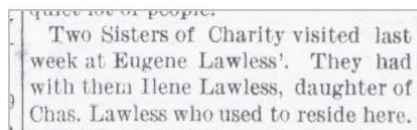
Hiram Chase was an interesting character and was a prominent personality in the Omaha Indian Community in Thurston County. More information about him is below.

Eileen Lawless, Sr. Mary Anselma

Eileen was 6 years old when her mother died. Eileen and her family may have been living with the Lawless family in 1893 when her cousin Anna Josephine was born. Soon after her mother died in 1894, Eileen was sent to live at St. Joseph Hospital in Maryville, Missouri. Maryville is about 175 miles from Decatur and nothing has been found about why she was sent there. That may have been arranged with the local Catholic priest and the diocese. We do not have any information about why Eileen was sent to Missouri. The Lawless family was important to her, though, based on the letters she wrote to Anna and her Aunt Bessie.

Three newspaper items were found about Eileen visiting in the Decatur area. The Tekamah Journal published this on July 5, 1900:

"Two Sisters of Charity visited last week at Eugene Lawless'. They had with them Ilene Lawless, daughter of Chas. Lawless who used to reside here."



Two Sisters of Charity visited last week at Eugene Lawless'. They had with them Ilene Lawless, daughter of Chas. Lawless who used to reside here.

Another item was published in the Lyons Weekly, July 11, 1900.

“Sister Gertrude and Sister Serphine, of St. Joseph’s Hospital, Maryville, Missouri, were the guests of Eugene Lawless and family east of Lyons last week. In company with them was Mary Lawless, the only child of Charles Lawless. Shortly after the death of Mrs. Lawless several years ago Charles went to Port Arthur Texas where he now is and the little girl entered the convent. She owns considerable land in Thurston county left to her by her mother and the sisters came up to look after Mary’s interests. They were also selling chances on a lot in St. Louis at \$1 per chance. They returned home by the way of Lyons last Friday.”

This story from the July 13, 1900 edition of *The Pender Republic* gives us more information about Eileen after her mother died.

“The little eleven-year-old daughter of Chas. Lawless whose mother, a sister of Hiram Chase, has been dead for six or seven years, was the subject of quite an interesting contest in the county court last Monday.

“The little girl, who had been with her father for some time in a railroad grader’s camp, was taken in charge nearly six years ago by a Catholic priest down in Missouri and since that time reared and educated in his household. It was supposed until very recently that the child was without means.

“Last week the little girl, in company with two sisters of mercy, came up to Pender, the former to visit and the latter to learn what could be done about the little girl’s condition.

“The next day after arrival here, Hiram Chase, her uncle, knowing that the child’s father was an improper person to have the care and custody of the child, applied for guardianship of the child before the county court which was granted temporarily.

“A couple of days later the father of the child and the priest mentioned before came up to Pender desiring to have it arranged so that the priest could have charge of her and quite a legal battle was indulged in before Judge Comstock, who finally decided, and a stipulation by all parties agreeing thereto, to appoint M. W. Murray her guardian.

“This done, the little girl was committed to the care of this priest for a couple of years to enable her to finish her preparatory education and then, in company with the priest and her father, left Monday evening for Missouri.”

The article tells us more about Eileen as a young girl and how she lived. In September of 1900, Eileen was 12. To summarize:

- Eileen had been living with her father in a railroad grader’s camp ‘for some time’. He was trying to take care of her. The time she was living with her father would have been in 1894 or 1895 and after her mother died.
- The article says she was sent to live in a Catholic priest’s household in Missouri six years previously.
 - That would have been 1894 or 1895 and probably soon after her mother died. This would imply that she didn’t live with her father in the railroad graders camp for very long. We also assume that once she went to Missouri, that is where she lived from then on because she appears in census records from 1900 and 1910.
 - The priest’s household included the convent. Another article stated that she lived in a convent.
- Eileen inherited some Indian lands from her mother, so she had ‘means’.
- Hiram Chase said Charles was an improper person to care for Eileen and wanted to have guardianship.
- The Judge gave the guardianship to the priest, M.W. Murray.
- Charles and the priest (presumably M.W. Murray) took Eileen to Missouri in 1900.
 - Eileen is listed in the 1900 census as being a Boarder with Mother Augustine. The heading identifies the census was enumerated at St. Francis Hospital. It is assumed there was a convent attached to the hospital where the nuns lived and presumably where Eileen lived. Eileen is identified as Mary Lawless. The census entry lists the Sisters as well as patients.



Eileen Lawless Confirmation.
About Age 12

Eileen lived with the nuns in Maryville from the time she was 6 or 7 and appeared to be dearly loved by them. This love and caring shows in the letters to her Aunt Bessie and cousin Anna. In Eileen's obituary on FindAGrave, we learn that at the age of 16, she 'entered' (*became a novitiate?*) the Sisters of St. Francis, Maryville, MO, on October 4, 1904.



Eileen received the habit and the religious name, Sr. Anselma, on June 15, 1905. Sr. Anselma took vows in June and then went to tell her father what she had done. On October 8, 1905, Sr. Anselma in Maryville, Missouri, wrote to her Aunt Bessie and said this:

"I was in Port Arthur the last of June and three days of July to see my father. Rev. Mother let me go with Sr. Salesia. You may be sure my father was very glad to see me, and indeed satisfied with the life I chose. It did me good to know that he was so well contented, but how could he be otherwise."

Eileen and her cousin Anna Lawless knew each other and had a close relationship. The letters that Eileen (Sr. Anselma) wrote to Anna were very affectionate and it is obvious that they had shared some of their lives. The sharing may have been when they were very small and lived at GarryOwen with Anna's family. It is more likely that they became close when Anna went to Missouri for schooling in 1907, 1908 and 1909.

An article in The Decatur Herald (April 1907) talks about Eugene taking Anna to Maryville where she entered St. Joseph's Hospital "to complete her church studies preparatory for confirmation." Sr. Anselma is identified as one of the instructors in the school. This may be the time they began to know each other.

Sr. Anselma wrote letters and encouraged Anna in her studies at St. Joseph's Academy in Clyde Missouri (1908-1909). Several letters survive that were sent to Anna there. Sr. Anselma also may have either attended school in Clyde or spent time there. In several letters Sr. Anselma asked Anna to remember her to several sisters that she named.

In January 1908, Sr. Anselma spent some time in a hospital in Oklahoma City being treated for consumption. She had to gain some weight before they would release her.

January 20, 1908 – letter from Sr. Anselma to Anna at St. Joseph Academy.

"I know you wonder how my health is. Indeed I have improved wonderfully—have gained almost 10 lbs. and feel very much better. I hope you are well. Have you increased in circumference? I hope not. For you know you wondered how you would fix that skirt?" ...

"May God bless you and all the dear Sisters who are doing so much for you and have done much for me also. With best wishes for good success in your studies and every other good thing you may desire, I

19
Sis of St Francis
Maryville, Mo.
Oct. 8, 1905
Dear Aunt Bessie
No doubt you feel a little out of sorts when you try to reckon back to the date of my last letter and find out that I owe you two for the last couple of months. But now I hope you will forgive me for neglecting you so long.
I was in Port Arthur the last of June and three days of July to see my father. Rev. Mother let me go with Sr. Salesia. You may be sure my father was very glad to see me, and indeed satisfied with the life I chose. It did me good to know that he was so well contented, but how could he be otherwise.

Sr. Anselma's handwriting has some base in a Spencerian style that was prevalent in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Penmanship was probably a significant part of her Catholic education that was common at the time.

remain with much love, In the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Your fond Cousin, Sister M. Anselma. P.S. Please excuse my scribbling. I wrote exceeding speed-limit.”

Sr. Anselma had a gentle sense of humor and a loving spirit. She also asked Anna to give her love to several of the sisters at St. Joseph’s Academy. This request gives the impression that Sr. Anselma had likely attended school there when she was young. Several of the letters mention sisters at the school.

By September, Sr. Anselma was back at St. Francis’ Hospital. She wrote a letter to Anna on September 18, 1908 that supports an earlier reference to Anna going to St. Francis for confirmation instruction. Anna was at St. Joseph Academy at the time. Sr. Anselma says she has 22 pupils, including one named Louis who is a problem. He could not sit still and would leave school during the day to go exploring. He gave Sr. Anselma a headache.

“He managed to persevere the first four days, in staying until school was out, but these last two or three days he gets [a] spell with his stomach (stummy ake) about 12:30 and “can’t go to school”. But you may be sure (he) doesn’t need any pills or medicine as it is all over in about an hour. But I am not the least sorry, as my head doesn’t ache quite so badly when he is absent, and the room is more quiet.”

In a letter to Anna in November 1910, Sr. Anselma makes this additional observation about Louis who has grown up some.

“Louis is growing to be quite a man. He serves Mass, mind you.”

Sr. Anselma was back in St. Anthony’s hospital in Oklahoma City again in February 1909. She is still hoping to gain weight so she can go home. She is back in Maryville before April 1910. At that time, Bessie was ill and Sr. Anselma was concerned about her.

“I have not left you out of mind in all that time but have been thinking quite a good deal about you all and most of all about dear Auntie – How is she? I do hope and pray she does not have to suffer long or much, but that if it is God’s holy Will to let her live long yet and grant her good health again. Let me hear from you soon in regard to her health. ... I shall remember you all as ever in my poor prayers, but esp. will I remember dear Aunt to our Lord’s loving Heart that He may comfort her with his grace in her hours of suffering.”

Bessie died in March of 1911 and Anna never went back to St. Joseph’s Academy. Sr. Anselma died just a few months later in June 1911. They were both taken into the “Lord’s loving Heart”.



Hiram Chase



Who was Hiram Chase, and how does he fit with Charles Lawless’ story? References to Hiram appear in newspaper articles of the time and several interactions between Hiram and Charles and Eugene were reported.

Hiram John Hathu Mi Chase was Paulina’s older brother and an attorney who was an influential member of the Omaha tribe. Paulina and her family are listed in the Indian Rolls with the Chase Family.

Hiram Chase is an interesting character. His actions give some insight into the Omaha tribe and how things worked at the time. He is included in this book because of his interactions with the Lawless family. A page in Wikipedia has information about him. Other sources give more information about who he was and what he did. Newspapers of the time also had quite a bit of additional information about his activities.

“Hiram Chase born on the Omaha Reservation on September 9, 1861, in Macy, Thurston County, Nebraska. Chase was the great grandson of Omaha Chief Mohwoorgga. His father, Hiram Chase, Sr., was an interpreter and a post trader among the Omaha Indians, having come to Nebraska in 1854. Hiram attended mission schools on the Omaha Reservation in Nebraska until he was 15, then St. Stephen's Lutheran Academy in Zelienople, Pennsylvania, and Peru State College in Peru, Nebraska. Chase studied law at the Cincinnati Law School graduating with a Bachelor of Law degree, and in 1889 was the first Native American admitted to the bar in Nebraska. In 1892, Chase and fellow Omaha, Thomas L. Sloan, formed "Sloan & Chase, Attorneys-At-Law", the first Native American law firm in the United States. In 1893, Chase was elected County Judge of Thurston County, Nebraska, and served one term. In 1898, he was elected County Attorney and re-elected in 1901. Chase was the first to record the Omaha language on paper. In 1897, Chase wrote "O MU HU W B GRa Za: The Chase System of Reading and Recording the Omaha and Other Indian Languages." In 1884, Chase married Miss Cynthia Snyder and together they had seven children. Chase was involved in local community projects and a lifelong Freemason. “

[From Wikipedia- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hiram_Chase]

Hiram was active in the community and was recognized as “a clear and fluent speaker”. He was selected by the Omaha Tribal Council along with several others to represent the tribe in Washington DC. Hiram was an accomplished and well-recognized attorney and Native American civil rights advocate. He had several appearances at the U.S. Supreme Court. He also had an alcohol problem and took treatment at the Keely Institute in Omaha. (*The Decatur Herald, April 11, 1907*)

Additional information about Hiram comes from several other sources:

- Hiram’s father, Hiram Chase, Sr., (1840 - 1875) was an interpreter, having come to Nebraska in 1854. His mother, Clarissa NonZEInZE Noise (Noyse) (1840 - 1875), was the granddaughter of Wahnookega, an Omaha Chief.
- Hiram had one sister, Pauline Chase Lawless (1867 - 1894)
- He married Cynthia W Snyder (1863 - 1915) May 19, 1882. They had 9 children (or 7 as stated in other sources).
- Hiram died December 3, 1928 in Chadron, Nebraska at the home of his daughter Isabelle.
- Burial was in Rose Hill Cemetery at Pender, Nebraska.

How The Charles Lawless Family Story Was Developed

How do we know any of the Charles, Paulina, and Eileen story? Our Grandmother (Anne/Anna Johnson) didn’t talk about them that I recall. When Victor Johnson started researching the Johnson and Lawless families, he collected information about the Charles Lawless family from his mother Anne and her sister Eugenia. He also found property records in the local clerk’s offices. Anne and Eugenia saved Lawless family letters, pictures and other memorabilia and we are grateful! Because of their saving habits we know more about how our ancestors lived and who they were beyond the bare facts.

I used the collection of letters and documents that Victor preserved to write these stories. Then I also did some additional research in genealogical web sites and sites that had images of old newspapers. FindAGrave has been another good source of information, especially when a listing includes an obituary. The genealogical sites were helpful, but the newspapers revealed a treasure of stories that help fill in more about the Lawless families live. Early newspapers were dedicated mainly to local news about the people who lived there and their activities. Local items in the newspapers were reasonably accurate, but it is always best to be skeptical about the information if it is not supported elsewhere. If the paper made any errors, they were usually quickly corrected by people in the community! Charles was not as active in the Decatur Community as Eugene, but stories were found that fill in some of his life.

When Eileen joined the religious life, she wrote letters that give us a glimpse into her inner beauty as well as her loving connection with her father’s family. She was about 5 years older than our grandmother Anna, so probably

helped care for her baby cousin while she was still living with the Eugene family. The bond was strong as we can tell from the letters she wrote while Anna was in school at St. Joseph's Academy in Clyde Missouri (1908-1909). Letters and newspaper items also give glimpses into the relationship between Anna and Eileen. Eileen (Sr. Anselma) had a strong bond with her Aunt Bessie who very likely took the place of her mother for a time after Paulina died. Some of the letters are summarized here and more are included with the Eugene Lawless family story.

ChatGPT was used to transcribe letters and newspaper items. The results were checked to make sure the transcription was accurate. LLM/AI will make stuff up (hallucinate) or change wording even when I tell it not to. I had other interactions with ChatGPT about organization, but the writing in this story is mine.

Appendices for Charles Lawless' story include all the details that support their story. The appendices include census records, the Indian rolls, images of newspaper items and transcriptions, images of letters and transcriptions, birth and death records. The appendices are not attached to this story, but will be provided on request.

[B Gibbs, 2026]