

Roddy-Ruddy One-Name Study

Researched & Prepared by Kim Roddy (2011 - present)

INTRODUCTION



Research into the Roddy-Ruddy name and associated families is motivated by my own surname, but more importantly, my family's attempt to discover our true connection to other Roddy or Ruddy families.

My Great-Grandfather, Harry Francis Roddy, was reportedly born December 22, 1878, in Chicago, Illinois, USA. By the time he was two, his mother had remarried and he grew up with a last name of Myatt. Harry only took the Roddy surname sometime before his 19th birthday, in 1897, while the family was living in Denver, Colorado, USA. 64 years later, he stated on an employment record that his father was "Charles Roddy," born "near London, England."¹ His mother, Katharine "Katie" Mary Burns, apparently told people that Harry's father, her first husband, died sometime before Harry's 2nd birthday. To date we have been unable to find any record of Kate Burn's first marriage to Charles Roddy, or anyone else during the appropriate time, but these civil records were only just being required to be recorded in Illinois by the end of the 1870s. We also cannot find a birth record of Harry Roddy that matches information he provided his entire life on military and other job records other than that of an un-named baby boy born to "Katie Burns" in Chicago, about a month after his stated birthday, with no father's name provided. We found her, however, with baby Harry in the 1880 U.S. Census living in La Porte, Indiana, USA, listed as a widow, but going by Mary Burns, her middle and maiden names. During the entire period of her childhood, throughout the pregnancy, and decades past the birth of my great-grandfather, Katie's parents, brothers, and sisters continued to live in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, USA. The entire family was Catholic with numerous birth, marriage, and death records, including burials in local Catholic cemeteries. Katie is not among them after the baby was born.

While researching this story and looking for the "correct" Charles Roddy, I have become more and more convinced that the child was conceived out of wed-lock. I believe 22-year-old Katie got pregnant in early 1878 and choose not to tell her conservative, Catholic parents. She may have been going to school in Chicago, got pregnant and had the baby there, then left the state to go to Indiana and try to find a husband. This mystery has led me to research all Roddy and Ruddy families that lived near the Burns family in Milwaukee and Chicago, especially during the years around the time of Harry's presumed conception in the spring of 1878.

In an attempt to find the most likely father and then research any living male descendants for a yDNA test that might confirm our relation, I have also researched Roddy-Ruddy families in Ireland and the United Kingdom during the latter half of the 1800's. With all of this information, and still no answer to my relationship to any Roddy family past the four generations to my great-grand father, I decided to continue broadening my research and officially publish my results in

¹ This information is from Harry Roddy's Personnel Record for the Commercial Iron Works, Portland, OR, dated 26 Aug 1942. It is the only written information that our family has on his biological father.

hopes of solving this mystery and possibly helping others along the way. The Roddy surname was registered with the Guild of One-Name Studies in 2011.

After my initial research, including some DNA tests, it has become apparent that at least some Roddy and Ruddy families are related, and I have 65 of 67 marker matches for the male line yDNA to both Roddy and Ruddy men living today. Because of this, I have expanded the scope of the one-name study to include both the Roddy and Ruddy surnames as primary variants.

Additional research focused on Roddy and Ruddy families near the area of Milwaukee and Chicago has revealed a handful of families whose ancestors, like mine, took on the Roddy or Ruddy name as an adult, apparently as a result of the revelation that they were adopted or after reaching adulthood as an orphan and looking for their birth father. I have been considering the possibility that one or more Roddy-Ruddy men were getting girls pregnant and then moving out of town to avoid the responsibility. It is my belief that DNA tests may someday resolve these questions and possibly link these families together.

The study results are, and will continue to be, a work in progress. While the Roddy-Ruddy surname is not an extremely common name, neither is it extremely rare. I have estimated that there are approximately 10,000-20,000 individuals with these surnames living today. A rough estimate of all individuals recorded in history with either of these two names is on the order of 50,000-100,000 people total. It is indeed a daunting task to discover and document them all, and it will probably take years, if not decades, of research to accomplish.