

# Register Report for Alfred Lansing Sharpe

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## Generation 1

1. **Alfred Lansing Sharpe-1** was born on 21 Nov 1858 in Ravenna, Portage County, Ohio[1]. He died on 19 Apr 1916 in Binghamton, Broome County, New York, his home @ 212 Court Street[2, 3].

Notes for Alfred Lansing Sharpe:

General Notes:

Alfred Lansing Sharpe, known as Fred, is my great uncle. His surname was spelled "Sharp" in references we see while living in his native born Ohio. However, after relocating in Texas, he began using "Sharpe" as the spelling. His two brothers also did this as they moved from their Ravenna, Portage County, Ohio home to Texas and to Chicago respectively. Interestingly, their half brother, Charles Sharp, remained the rest of his life in Ravenna, and never added the "e" to his surname, nor did any of Charles' descendants do so.

Fred began work as a boy telegraph operator for the Erie Railroad, which is natural, his father having work for that railroad as well. Following that, he was employed by the Cleveland, Lorain & Wheeling Railroad, then with the Gould System. Subsequently, he went into the mercantile trade, then into cattle ranching and politics.

He is named for his Uncle Alfred Lansing Kellogg, the 10 year old brother of his mother at the time of Fred's birth. That uncle's name was derived from two of the great uncles Alfred had in the Kellogg family.

Fred migrated from Ravenna, Portage County, Ohio to Georgetown, Williamson County, Texas in 1882. By 1880, at age 22, he no longer was listed in the household headed by his father, John Elsefer Sharp II, according to the U.S. Census in Ravenna. He embarked in the hardware, implement and vehicle business in Georgetown in 1892.

Williamson County (Texas) Courthouse has an Affidavit on file in it's Record of Births, page 13, dated February 1, 1940 certifying as to the accuracy of John Oakly Sharpe's birth being November 11, 1889. The Affidavit was requested by an Emma Seery of Austin, TX, though we do not know of her interest or motivation to secure the Affidavit. It does provide interesting family information. It cites the father's birth date and place. There is a hand written note on the certificate which states that the father, Alfred Lansing Sharpe, died in 1916. This is the only record I have purporting to indicate his death date. It does not indicate the location when he died. It states that Alfred is age 31 at the time of John's birth, which is compatible with my records. It states that Alfred's Trade or Profession was that of a railroad agent, a merchant, a member of the Texas Legislature and the Collector of Revenues in El Paso. It states that John was one of two children born to this mother, but that John was the only child of those two living at the time of the Affidavit.

Fred's second son, Alfred Lansing Sharpe, Jr., died on Fred's 33rd birthday, when the son was just less than six months old. Fred's wife, Lucy, died nine months later. We have no information about the cause of either of the two deaths, nor whether the causes of death had any relationship. I have visited their grave markers at the cemetery in Georgetown, Williamson County, Texas where so many of the Sharpe family are interred, including my parents.

In early 1894, Fred was included in a new six member Board of Directors to oversee the publication of the town's newspaper, the *Williamson County Sun*, a publication which began in 1877 that still publishes in 2011. Williamson County is named after Robert McAlpin Williamson, a leader and veteran of the Battle of San Jacinto, that famous 18 minute battle on April 21, 1836, which sealed the break of the Texans from the nation of Mexico to create the Republic of Texas.

Fred relocated to El Paso County, Texas about 1899 to began ranching. This was cutting edge adventure. El Paso County only had been organized since 1850. He became very successful at this endeavor, and was particularly known for his ability to supervise

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effectively the many workers, young and old, that were needed. His U Bar Ranch was near the town of San Elizario, and was along the Rio Grande, the river bordering the United States with Mexico. The ranch was near the small town of Ysleta, which is the oldest town recognized in what is now the State of Texas, having had its beginnings attributed at about 1682.

My contacts with the El Paso County Offices and the El Paso Historical Society have revealed that records do now survive today which could identify the exact property and boundaries of the ranches of that day.

Fred and his family resided in the city of El Paso. He may have continued a law practice activities in Williamson County while residing in El Paso County, as his name appeared on numerous property transactions filed in Williamson County as late as 1905, showing him as a Trustee.

An aside note is appropriate at this point, to recognize that the first Thanksgiving celebration to take place on ground that ultimately became the United States happened on April 28, 1598, twenty-two years earlier than the Plymouth Colony celebration. It was a group of Spaniards, led by the Spanish explorer, Juan de Onate, that feasted on the river banks of the Rio Grande after arriving near what now is El Paso, Texas. They had come through a 350 mile trek from Santa Barbara, Mexico, across the Chihuahuan Desert, so they had plenty to celebrate. In 1990, the Texas Legislature passed a resolution recognizing San Elizario, Texas, on the outskirts of El Paso, as the site of the first true Thanksgiving. The historians of El Paso do not now know where the location of this first Thanksgiving was, outside of the description given here. However, it really does sound in or close to what became Fred's ranch. So, it is exciting to think of our family having this connection to the first Thanksgiving, in Texas, as well as the first Thanksgiving in Plymouth Colony. That Thanksgiving, celebrated in 1621, was called by Governor William Bradford, who is Fred's fifth (and my seventh) great grandfather.

It perhaps can be said (with tongue in cheek) that Fred started the Republican Party revolution in Texas. He was elected to the twenty-ninth Texas Legislature from district #100 encompassing El Paso County in 1904. He was the only Republican to win any race in El Paso County, and this Legislative position was taken with a 1,050 to 1,028 vote (22 vote margin - 50.5%). He won seven out of twelve precincts. These were the out-of-the-city precincts that carried him to victory, as the city precincts were heavily Democratic in their voting patterns.

I took occasion to browse the microfilm files of the *El Paso Evening News* for a couple of months leading up to the 1904 election day. It can be said that the newspaper was overtly a Democratic Party supporter, actually endorsing the Party, as a whole, in its print. There were numerous articles over those months about Democratic Party activity and meetings. However there was no mention of even the existence of Republican Party candidates or activities, except for an occasional mention of the Presidential race, with Theodore Roosevelt running for what would be his successful second term.

The article reporting the election news on November 9 was headlined, "Patrick A. Dwyer only Democrat who lost." The upset of Mr. Dwyer by Fred Sharpe was acclaimed with awe and surprise. Words from Dwyer's interview were quoted and quite a bit of narrative was given by the newspaper. Sharpe's name was mentioned only three times: (1) stating who beat Dwyer, (2) in a quote of Dwyer saying he'd sent a congratulatory telegram to Sharpe and (3) the precinct vote count table. There was no lauding or congratulation of Mr. Sharpe by this Democratic newspaper!

Representative Sharpe's victory was by a vote of 1,128 (52%) to 1,050 (48%), winning in seven of the 12 voting precincts. The winning precincts were mostly in the ranching and non-urban areas.

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Fred's election received attention even in his home state. *The Athens Messenger and Herald* reported in its issue of December 29, 1940, page 7, about his home time friends in near-by Ravenna, Ohio who had received word of "the election of Alfred L. Sharpe of El Paso County, Texas as the only Republican member of the legislature of the Lone Star state over Saloonist Pat Dwyre, his Democratic opponent, whom he easily defeated."

It is reported that he was the first Republican elected to a Texas state level office since the days of post Civil War Reconstruction period. It is also reported that he authored the first anti-gambling legislation adopted by the Texas Legislature. The vitality of that bill was tested and sustained by the Texas Supreme Court, thereby placing into the hands of law enforcement officers a reliable instrument to support their arrests. A water irrigation bill was also authored by Alfred and passed. Legislative commentary claims these were two of the most important bills of that Legislative session, and that their success attested to the legislative skill plied by Representative Sharpe. There was a called session of that 29th legislature that met April 15-May 14, 1905. The Governor was S. W. T. Lanham and the Lt. Governor was George D. Neal.

Fred served only part of one term, as he resigned December 22, 1905 to receive an appointment from President Theodore Roosevelt to be the Collector of Customs at the Port of El Paso. This was considered one of the most important federal positions in all of Texas. President Roosevelt is the fifth cousin of subsequent President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, who was Fred's half sixth cousin, twice removed.

A picture of 1910 El Paso seen in the pages of some of the *El Paso Times-Herald* issues show the increasing incidents of automobile accidents there. Lots of Democratic Party and some Republican Party activities are reported in the paper. A census of churches in the community are shown:

- 5 Baptist Churches
- 4 Presbyterian Churches
- 3 Methodist Churches
- 2 Episcopal Churches
- 1 Congregational Church
- 1 Disciples of Christ - Christian
- 3 Roman Catholic Churches
- 2 Lutheran Churches
- 1 Non-Denominational Church
- 1 Salvation Army Ministry
- 1 Y.M.C.A

Others religions  
2 Christian Science  
2 Synagogues

Theodore Roosevelt was the military officer who recruited my grandfather Sharpe and other new soldiers at the Menger Hotel in San Antonio for the Spanish American War in 1898.

The February 28, 1910 issue of the *Wichita Daily Times* (Wichita Falls, TX) carried a report on page 5 that U.S. President William H. Taft, the father-in-law of my seventh cousin, once removed, sent to the Congress a nomination of Alfred L. Sharpe to become the Collector of Customs at Paso Del Norte, Texas. This was a re-nomination for a new Presidential Administration, carrying over from the immediately previous Republican Administration. Another report of this nomination appeared in the Washington (D.C.) Post on Tuesday, March 1, 1910, page 4. The Rio Grand Republican of Las Cruces, New Mexico, March 4, 1910, carried an article about Sharpe's re-appointment, citing the names of three other contenders for the nomination.

Fred's fourth wife, Catherine Leavell, died by 1910, leaving Fred with their 13 year old

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daughter, Holland Sharpe. There was a 21 year old son, John (Jack) Oakley Sharpe from Fred's second marriage, which was to Lucy Oakley, who had died at a young age. It wasn't long before Jack moved to California for the rest of his life.

About 1914, Fred moved to Binghamton, New York to become the superintendent of the office buildings owned by his cousin, Willis Sharpe Kilmer. Fred is a first cousin to Willis' mother, Julia Sharpe Kilmer, so he is first cousin, once removed to Willis. Fred had his daughter, Holland, living with him and his fifth wife, whose name I do not have. They resided at 212 Court Street in Binghamton, New York.

Holland reportedly inherited an estate of some proportional significance from her mother, Catherine Leavell. We know this only by reference to that fact in the newspaper articles cited below about Alfred Sharpe's death called her an heiress who augured with her father over management of the money. Fred had been designated as the guardian or trustee of those funds to manage them on behalf of Holland. She had been contending with her father for him to release guardian control of them to a San Antonio attorney of her choosing, and Fred apparently had steadfastly declined such request.

On the evening of April 19, 1916, Holland, along with her supportive step-mother, had reopened the issues on guardianship. The discussion ended when Holland and her step-mother went upstairs in somewhat of a heated conclusion. Fred was described as following them up the stairs when he discharged a revolver handgun he had obtained.

Fred is reported as shooting his 18 year old daughter, Holland, wounding her with two shots in the back. This incidence is reported in at least these newspaper accounts: The *Middletown Daily Press*, April 20, 1916 (Middletown, New York); the *Trenton (NJ) Evening Times*, April 21, 1916; the *Altoona (PA) Mirror*, April 20, Page 1; the *Hutchison (KS) News*, April 20, 1916; the *Fort Wayne (IN) News*, April 20, 1916; the *Santa Fe New Mexican*, April 20, 1916; the *Bakersfield Californian*, April 20, 1916; the *Reno Evening Gazette* (NV), April 20, 1916; the *Des Moines (Iowa) Daily News*, April 20, 1916; and the *Orange County (NY) Times Press*, April 21, 1916. All of these stores report that on the evening of April 19, Alfred Sharpe and his daughter augured over his management of her inheritance, which concluded in the shootings. In Texas, the *Laredo Times*, April 23, 1916 and the *Victoria Daily Advocate* published the story with the same details in its issue of Friday afternoon, April 22, 1916. It is evident that this occasion received fairly wide national attention. There is repeated error in most all of these articles. Apparently there was an early misunderstanding on the part of the press about Holland's name. It is repeatedly cited as "Helen."

Mrs. Sharpe is quoted in the newspaper articles as having taken Miss Sharpe (Holland) to her bedroom to recline there in her wounded condition while awaiting for medical help. Mrs. Sharpe said that she heard another gunshot downstairs. That apparently was the one wherein Fred took his own life, shooting himself in the heart, in a moment of despair.

Holland is quoted as saying "It's all my fault. I hounded Papa too much over the money." She also was quoted as saying "I would rather have lost all the money in the world than have had this awful thing happen." One article described more details of Holland's wounds. One bullet penetrated her left lung. The second bullet penetrated her chest and right hand that was grasping her bosom.

Coroner Hank reported that reviewing Alfred Sharpe's papers revealed indications of suicidal thoughts.

Holland Sharpe survived the tragedy. Later, she married Mr. Thomas Frost Woodhull and she lived the rest of her life in San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas.

I have been unable to locate documentation as to Alfred Lansing Sharpe's funeral and burial.

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Sources: "Members of the Texas Legislature, 1845 - 1962, Editor WillL. Smith, publisher the State of Texas, pages 207 and 209.

"Land of Good Water," Page 263  
<http://www.genealogymagazine.com/alfredlsharpe.html>

"Texas Curiosities" by John Kelso, The Globe Pequot Press, Builford, Connecticut, 2000, page 160

"The El Paso Evening News," Wednesday, November 9, 1904  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Williamson\\_County,\\_Texas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Williamson_County,_Texas)

"Texas Co-op Power," November, 2007, page 37, ?Thanksgiving as a TexasThing, a Footnote in Texas History? by Clay Coppedge

R. Carlton Dumas, e-mail: [rdumas@reynoldscable.net](mailto:rdumas@reynoldscable.net), 2011-10-14 (&15).

Death Notes:  
Self-inflicted gun shot wound

**Lucy R. Oakley** was born on 12 Jan 1865 in South Carolina[4, 1, 5]. She died on 10 Feb 1893 in Georgetown, Williamson County, Texas.

Notes for Lucy R. Oakley:  
General Notes:

Lucy was born in South Carolina, 1865. We do not know how, where or why she met Alfred Lansing Sharpe.

We do not know why Lucy died at the early of age 28, nor do we know how that may relate to her son, Alfred, who died as a six month old infant, merely 10 months earlier. Though undocumented, it is believed that Lucy came to Texas with Alfred as his wife who probably came directly from Ravenna, Portage County, Ohio the hometown of her husband. Lucy was the third of four wives Alfred Lansing married. She died February 10, 1893 and is buried at the Odd Fellers Cemetery in Georgetown, Williamson County, Texas.

The 1940 Birth Record filed in Williamson County, Texas about her son, John Oakley Sharpe, says she was age 24 when John was born in 1889. She is indicated as being born in South Carolina and dying in Georgetown, Williamson County, Texas in 1893, which is consistent with her grave marker citation.

Alfred Lansing Sharpe and Lucy R. Oakley were married about 1888. They had the following children:

- i. John E. Oakley Sharpe was born on 11 Nov 1889 in Georgetown, Williamson County, Texas[1, 6, 7]. He died on 13 Feb 1955 in Oakland, Alameda County, California.

Notes for John E. Oakley Sharpe:  
General Notes:

John E. Oakley Sharpe was born the month before Jefferson Davis, the first and only president of the Confederate States of America, died in New

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Orleans at age 81 on December 6, 1889. I am Jack's first cousin, once removed. President Jefferson Davis is the husband of my 33rd cousin, Varina Anne Banks Howell. Davis also is the Uncle of my great, great aunt Susanah Elizabeth Davis Abney, wife of James Addison Abney of Lufkin, Texas.

The Record of Births, page 13, in Williamson County, Texas has an affidavit on file February 1, 1940 affirming the accuracy of John E. Oakley Sharpe's birth as being November 11, 1889.

Jack became an actor and spent much of his life in California. He took his mother's maiden name as his stage surname, being known as Jack Oakley.

He was born on the very same day as Washington became the 42nd state. He spent some time living with his family in Jeff Davis County and in El Paso, El Paso County, Texas. These citations were in the Census reports for those locations in 1900 and 1910, when he was ages 10 and 20. The rest of his life was on the West Coast in California, as far as we know.

A browse through some El Paso newspapers of 1910, when Jack was age 21, showed something of the social establishment which the Sharpe family apparently enjoyed. There is a report in the El Paso Times-Herald of August 19 about a visiting New York guest Jack had out at the family's ranch by the name of Bruce Cortelyou. He was the son of former Postmaster General and Secretary of the Interior, George B. Cortelyou. At that point, the newspaper identified him still as John O. Sharpe.

Cortelyou, George Bruce (kŪr't?lyu) , (1862?1940), was an American public official and business executive, b. New York City. He taught school, and after learning stenography, he became secretary to several New York City and federal officials. Appointed (1895) stenographer to President Cleveland, Cortelyou became secretary to Presidents McKinley (1900) and Theodore Roosevelt (1901). He also served under Roosevelt as Secretary of Commerce and Labor (1903-4), Postmaster General (1905-7), and Secretary of the Treasury (1907-9). He then left government service and became prominent as an executive of public-utility companies. Such were the family friends of the Sharpe's.

Source: <http://www.answers.com/topic/george-b-cortelyou>

The 1920 Census shows John E. Oakley Sharpe listed under the name of Jack Oakley. He was shown as an actor, married to an actress by the name of Ann. She had an age indicated as 37 and his age was indicated as 35. According to our knowledge, he really was age 30. One can only conjecture why the older age was given to the Census taker. It might have something to do with her age being so much older than his. The household was show in Los Angeles, Los Angeles County, California. Their residence is shown as being owned by them, rather than rented. However, it does not indicate whether any mortgage was on it.

- ii. Alfred Lansing Sharpe was born on 21 Nov 1891. He died on 10 May 1892 in Georgetown, Williamson County, Texas.

Notes for Alfred Lansing Sharpe:  
General Notes:

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Alfred lived only about 6 months, and is buried beside his mother, Lucy, who died only about 10 months later. He appears to be named entirely after his father, but the grave stone does not reflect a "Jr."

**Catherine Leavell** daughter of John Henry Leavell and Lula Holland was born on 21 Oct 1873 in Circleville, Williamson County, Texas[8]. She died between 1900-1910[9].

Notes for Catherine Leavell:  
General Notes:

Catherine (Kate) Leavell, was born the year Enrico Caruso (2/25/1873 - 8/2/1921), the Italian operatic tenor, was born. Kate, being born October 21, was born the same month as the famous pharmacist, Charles R. Walgreen, was born (October 9, 1873 - December 11, 1939).

Sources: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Enrico\\_Caruso](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Enrico_Caruso)  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles\\_Walgreen](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Walgreen)

Kate was born in Circleville, Williamson County, Texas October 23, 1871 at 3:00 AM. She was 12 years younger than her husband, Alfred Lansing Sharpe. The county birth record for their daughter, Holland, indicates Kate's occupation as a housewife.

According to the 1900 Census, Jeff Davis County, Texas, the father of Kate (John H. Leavell) was born in South Carolina and the mother (Lula Holland) was born in Alabama. That same Census report indicates that Kate was the mother of only one child, and that she had been married six years in 1900.

Alfred Lansing Sharpe and Catherine Leavell were married on 28 Mar 1895 in Georgetown, Williamson County, Texas[10]. They had the following children:

- i. Holland Sharpe[11, 12] was born on 17 Sep 1897 in Georgetown, Williamson County, Texas[11, 12]. She married Thomas Frost Woodhull in 1925[11]. She died on 09 Jun 1946 in San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas[13].

Notes for Holland Sharpe:  
General Notes:

Four days after Holland was born, The *New York Sun* published an editorial that answered a question from 8-year-old Virginia O'Hanlon: "Is there a Santa Claus?"

Source: <http://www.stormfax.com/virginia.htm>

Holland Sharpe is my first cousin, once removed. Her mother apparently came from sources of wealth, as the newspaper articles about the family surrounding the time of her father's death, when she was age 18, indicated that Holland was the beneficiary of an estate received from her mother, who had died when Holland was about age 12 or 13.

Holland was shot in their Binghamton, New York home with a handgun by her father on April 19, 1916 in a family dispute over his control of her inheritance. Tragically, her father, going to another part of the home, turned the firearm upon himself, inflicting a fatal wound. She survived the wound he gave her.

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Holland went on to live with her uncle and aunt, George and Lula Gillette of San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas. Holland was still in that home at the occurrence of the 1920 US Census.

Holland married Mr. Thomas Frost Woodhull and resided for many years in San Antonio, Texas at 1510 Howard Street. The Woodhull family was a prominent family in San Antonio and was related, as well, to the Frost family, which were significant participants in the banking industry. Thomas' grandfather was Thomas Claiborne Frost, the founder in 1899 of San Antonio's Frost National Bank.

**Addie C. Crowell** daughter of Benjamin F. Crowell and Louisa Hill[14] was born on 28 Jan 1866[14]. She died on 02 Jun 1885.

Notes for Addie C. Crowell:  
General Notes:

Fred and Ada married May 28, 1884. There were no children from this marriage that lasted only a year until Ada died, June 2, 1885.

Alfred Lansing Sharpe and Addie C. Crowell were married on 28 May 1884. They had no children.

**Allie E.**

Alfred Lansing Sharpe and Allie E were married before 1882. They had no children.

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## Sources

- 1 Census, 1920, Los Angeles, Los Angeles County, California, Ward #253, Supervisor, Dist. #8, Enumerator Dist #434, Sheet 4B, for Jack Oakley indicates, his father was born in Ohio and his mother was born in South Carolina., It indicates Jack was born in Texas.
- 2 County Birth Records, Page 13, Texas Bureaus of Vital Statistics, records place of birth at Ravenna,, Portage County, Ohio Nov 21, 1858. A handwritten note on the record, says "died 1916".
- 3 Orange County (New York) Times Press, April 21, 1916 . Article reported contention between Alfred L. Sharpe and his daughter, Holland, over the issues of her inheritance and his guardianship of the funds. He wounded Holland in the heat of argument, then turned the handgun upon himself with a fatal shot to his heart.
- 4 Census, 1910, The Census for El Paso, El Paso County, Texas, for the Alfred L., Sharpe household lists John O. as a son, with the indication that his, mother was born in South Carolina.
- 5 Her Grave Marker Citation, Georgetown, TX.



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## Sources

- 6 California Death Index, 1940-1997, Indicates his death on February 13, 1955 and his birth as November 11,, 1889 in Texas. It says the name of his father was Sharp. Death, location is Alameda, which is assumed Alameda County. That county has, cities in it named both Alameda and Oakland. We believe he died in.
- 7 Texas Vital Statistics, Birth Record Book A, Page 13, Copy on file at the Records Department of the Williamson County, Texas, Courthouse.
- 8 Census, 1900, Census for (no city) Jeff Davis County, Texas, indicatges the birth, date of Kate L. Sharpe as being in October 1873.
- 9 Census, 1910, The El Paso, El Paso County, Texas Census Sheet #9 lists Alfred L., Sharpe as a widowed head of house, with only children John O. and, Holland living in the household.
- 10 Williamson County, Texas General Index to Marriages, Page 494, Book 8, page 398, License #905.
- 11 Ancestry.com, Public Member Trees (Provo, UT, USA, Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2006), www.ancestry.com, Database online. Record for Thomas Frost Woodhull.
- 12 Ancestry.com, Public Member Trees (Provo, UT, USA, Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2006), www.ancestry.com, Database online. Record for Josiah Townsend Woodhull.
- 13 Garve marker Photograph.
- 14 Ancestry.com, Public Member Trees (Provo, UT, USA, Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2006), www.ancestry.com, Database online. Record for Addie C. Crowell.

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