

Chapter 4

Generation 4

4.1 Children of William Nelson³ Bensley

39. ELZA L.⁴ BENSLEY (William Nelson³ Bensley, Adaline M.² Higinbotham, John¹ Higinbotham)

Elza L. Bensley, son of William Nelson Bensley and Rosetta Easton, was born 8 November 1889 in Charleston, Coles Co., IL [1]. In 1893 Elza and family were in Taylorville, Christian Co., IL as Elza's sister Lou Ella⁴ was born there [2]. By 1900 the family had removed to Coles Co., IL. The 1900 Federal census of Coles Co., IL (E. D. 26, p. 8B) lists Elza L. Bentsley, born November 1889 IL, living in Hutton Township with his parents W^m N. and Rosette. He is listed as having attended school for 3 months in the last year.

On 24 December 1910, Elza L. Bensley married **Pearl Thompson** (born 4 December 1891 in Dequeen, Sevier Co., AR; died 22 November 1964 in Arlington, Gilliam Co., OR) in DeQueen, Sevier Co., AR. He was a resident of DeQueen at the time [3]. The couple resided in or near Broken Bow, McCurtain Co., Oklahoma in late 1911, as their son Raymond C.⁵ Bensley was born there [4]. Presumably c. 1917 Elza Bensley served in the U. S. Army during World War I [5]. By 1920 Elza returned to Illinois. The 1920 Federal census of Coles Co., IL (E. D. 54, p. 4A) lists Elza L. (sic.) Bensley, age 30 and single, living at 765 Eleventh St. in Charleston City with his parents William M. and Rosa. His occupation was given as signpainter, working on his own account. His son Raymond is enumerated in the same household, and Pearl Thompson is not living with them. On 8 August 1921, a decree of divorce was granted to E. L. Bensley from Pearl Thompson on the charge of desertion [6].

On 2 August 1921, Elza L. Bensley remarried, to **Velma Carolyn Wright** (born 22 November 1901 in Pana, Christian Co., IL; died 21 November 1982 in Norman, Cleveland Co., OK) in Taylorville, Christian Co., IL. At the time of the marriage, his occupation was "moving picture operator" [7]. The couple took up residence initially in Taylorville; their children Lyle, Betty, Robert and William were born there. Circa 1930 the family may have been in the vicinity

of Caddo, Bryan Co., OK, as the couple's child Erma was born there. Evidently they returned to Taylorville in 1932 and 1935; the births of their children Henry and Mary are reported to have taken place there. By 1938 Elza and family returned to Oklahoma [8]. Circa 1941 Elza took up residence in Caney, Atoka Co., OK, where he resided for 35 years [9]. Circa March 1976 Elza moved to Norman, Cleveland Co., OK, where he lived until near his death [10].

Elza L. Bensley died 15 August 1977 in Talihina, Latimer Co., OK. He was buried 17 August 1977 in Sunset Memorial Park, northeast of Norman [11]. Elza continued work as a signpainter, the job he eventually retired from [12].

Spouse 1: PEARL THOMPSON



Figure 4.1: William Andrew Province and Pearl Thompson

Pearl Thompson, daughter of William Balos Thompson and Mary Funderburk, was born 4 December 1891 in Dequeen, Sevier Co., AR [13]. On 24 December 1910, Pearl Thompson married Elza L. Bensley in DeQueen, Sevier Co., OK. The marriage had ended, for all practical purposes, by fall 1916: Pearl Thompson married **William Andrew Province** (born 7 December 1877 in TX; died 20 April 1952, place unknown) on 1 September 1916 in Bowie County, TX [14]. Pearl remained in or near Bowie County in late 1917 as her daughter Ruby Lorene Provence was born 23 November 1917 in De Kalb, Bowie Co., TX.

Pearl and her family are next found in Broken Bow, McCurtain Co., OK circa 1919, as their child Fredrick N. Provence was born there on 30 September 1919 [15].

The 1920 Federal census of Bowie Co., TX (E. D. 16, p. 11A) lists Will and Pearl Province, ages 41 and 28 resp., living in an unincorporated part of Justice Precinct #3 with Will's children Anie P., William and Beatrice [16] and Will and Pearl's children Ruby and Fred. Also in the household was Pearl's widowed father William B. Thompson.

On 8 August 1921 the marriage of Pearl Thompson and Elza L. Bensley formally ended. By 1924 Pearl and family had removed to Hood River, Hood

River Co., OR, as her child Franklin Cecile Provence was born there on 16 January 1924. They are again found in Hood River in 1925, as her child Lillian Marie Provence was born there on 25 July 1925. Another move, to Bakersfield, Kern Co., CA, took place by 1927, as Pearl's child Charles Andrew Provence was born there on 16 January 1924. And by 1929 the family had returned to De Kalb, TX, as child Bessie Ruth Provence was born there on 9 October 1929.

Pearl Thompson died 22 November 1964 in Arlington, Gilliam Co., OR. Her place of burial is unknown to me [17].

Children of Elza L. Bensley and Pearl Thompson

115. i. Raymond C.⁵ Bensley

- b. 18 Dec 1911 in Broken Bow, McCurtain Co., OK
- m. 30 Dec 1935 to **Helen M. Griffiths** in Vandalia, Fayette Co., IL
- d. 9 Jul 1990 in Taylorville, Christian Co., IL
- bur. 12 Jul 1990 in Camp Butler National Cemetery, Riverton, Sangamon Co., IL

Spouse 2: VELMA CAROLYN WRIGHT

Velma Carolyn Wright, daughter of John Allen Wright and Mary Margaret Davenport, was born 22 November 1901 in Pana, Christian Co., IL [18]. The 1910 Federal census of Christian Co., IL (E. D. 29, p. 9B) lists Velma Wright, age 8, living on 715 E. Poplar St. in Taylorville with her parents J. A. and Mary.

On 26 November 1918, Velma Carolyn Wright married **Shelby C. Johnson** (born circa 1896 in an unknown location; date and place of death unknown) in Christian County, IL [19]. In 1920 Velma is found with her parents. The 1920 Federal census of Christian Co., IL (E. D. 30, p. 13A) lists Velma Johnson (although the name "Johnson" is struck through on the record), age 18 and married, at 500 E. Bidwell St. in Taylorville with her parents John and Mary. Her marriage to Shelby C. Johnson dissolved by August 1921.

On 2 August 1921 Velma Carolyn Wright married Elza L. Bensley in Taylorville, Christian Co., IL. Velma Carolyn Wright died 21 November 1982 in Norman, Cleveland Co., OK [20], and was buried in Sunset Memorial Park Cemetery in Norman, Cleveland Co., Oklahoma. [21].

Children of Elza L. Bensley and Velma Carolyn Wright

116. i. Lyle Monroe⁵ Bensley

- b. 6 Jun 1922 in Taylorville, Christian Co., IL
- m. 14 Jul 1941 to **Nettie Savanna Henry** in Durant, Bryan Co., OK
- d. 1 Jan 1991 in Dallas, Dallas Co., TX
- bur. unknown

117. ii. Betty Jean⁵ Bensley

- b. 10 Jan 1926 in Taylorville, Christian Co., IL
 - m. to **Thomas Adair Carter** in Atoka, Atoka Co., OK; date unknown
 - d. unknown
 - bur. unknown
- 118. iii. Robert Kent⁵ Bensley**
- b. 15 Feb 1927 in Taylorville, Christian Co., IL
 - m. 26 Aug 1946 to **Irene Elizabeth Carter** in Sherman, Grayson Co., TX
 - d. 26 Jun 1984 in Tarrant Co., TX
 - bur. unknown
- 119. iv. William Alan⁵ Bensley**
- b. 11 Feb 1929 in Taylorville, Christian Co., IL
 - m. 5 Nov 1949 to **Edna Joyce Jordan** in Dallas, Dallas Co., TX
 - d. unknown
 - bur. unknown
- 120. v. Erma Clotene⁵ Bensley**
- b. 17 Feb 1930 in Caddo, Bryan Co., OK
 - m. 21 or 28 Oct 1946 to **Earlie B. Whatley** in Dallas, Dallas Co., TX
 - d. 31 Jan 1999; place unknown
 - bur. unknown
- 121. vi. Henry Elza⁵ Bensley**
- b. 13 Jan 1932 in Taylorville, Christian Co., IL
 - m. 3 Apr 1954 to **Mary LaDell Phillips** in Clovis, Curry Co., NM
 - d. unknown
 - bur. unknown
- 122. vii. Mary Darlene⁵ Bensley**
- b. 5 Aug 1935 in Taylorville, Christian Co., IL
 - m. 3 May 1952 to **Fred Thomas, Jr. Donahoo** in Muskogee, Muskogee Co., OK
 - d. unknown
 - bur. unknown
- 123. viii. Lucille Ann⁵ Bensley**
- b. 2 Jan 1938 in Caney, Atoka Co., OK
 - m. 11 Feb 1954 to **Troy Lee Alverson** in Webbers Falls, Haskell Co. (?), OK
 - d. 8 Sep 2001 in Lowell, Benton Co., AR
 - bur. in Frisco Springs Cemetery, Rogers, Benton Co., AR; date unknown
- 124. ix. Warren Dale⁵ Bensley**
- b. 17 Jul 1940 in Caney, Atoka Co., OK

- m. 4 Jan 1965 to **Lucy Ann Lewis** in Bentonville, Benton Co., AR
- d. unknown
- bur. unknown

125. x. Patricia Kay⁵ Bensley

- b. 24 Oct 1942 in Caney, Atoka Co., OK
- m. 9 Feb 1961 to **Bernd HH Zell** in Kingsland, Camden Co., GA
- d. unknown
- bur. unknown

126. xi. Paul Varian⁵ Bensley

- b. 2 Apr 1951 in Muskogee, Muskogee Co., OK
- m. 22 Nov 1969 to **Fannie Sue Mason** in Caney, Atoka Co., OK
- d. unknown
- bur. unknown

Notes

[1] The birth date given is from the 1997 *US Social Security Death Index*. The information was accessed via the Internet at www.ancestry.com. The same birthdate, and the birth place, appears in the program for the funeral of Elza Bensley, in the possession of Helen Henagar.

[2] The birth date and place of Lou Ella Bensley was supplied by Karen⁶ (Bujak) Bensley, Wadsworth, OH. The source of information is currently unknown.

[3] See *Sevier County, AR Marriage Book 12*, p. 413.

[4] According to Illinois *Standard Certificate of Death*, registered number 90-109, filed with the Illinois Department of Public Health 12 July 1990, Raymond C. Bensley was born 18 December 1911 in Brokenbow, Okla.

[5] As per the obituary for Elza Bensley which appeared in the *Norman Transcript*, 16 August 1977.

[6] From the records of the Circuit Court in Charleston, Coles Co., IL. Records were extracted by Joseph Snyder, Clerk of the Circuit Court, on 23 February 1966.

[7] See *Christian County, IL Marriage Book E*, p. 7, record #1561.

[8] This chronology deduced from birth locations supplied by Michelle Vaughn, a descendant of Lucille Ann⁵ Bensley.

[9] Obituary for Elza Bensley, loc. cit. The exact quote is:

“... (Elza) lived in Caney for 35 years, and moved to Norman in March 1976.”

From the birthplaces of children Lucille Ann and Warren Dale, however, Elza and Velma may have resided in or near Caney from 1938 through 1976. More evidence is desired.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Date and place of death and burial as per the State of Oklahoma *Certificate of Death* number 15576, filed with the Oklahoma Department of Health on 9 September 1977.

The county in which the place of death (specifically the Oklahoma Veterans Center) is found is given as Latimer on the Certificate of Death. Others have said that the county is Le Flore. This will require investigation.

[12] Ibid.

[13] As per Paula Wigington (pwigington@earthlink.net). This information is repeated in an IGI listing, accessed at www.familysearch.com. Note the 1920 Federal census enumeration for Pearl, to follow, in which Pearl's father is listed as William B. Thompson.

[14] See *Bowie County Marriage Record, Vol. 10*, p. 150 for the record of this marriage. Mr. Provence is listed as “W. A. Provence” in the record.

[15] As per Paula Wigington. The 1920 census enumeration for William and Pearl has son Fred born in Texas; indeed the family is living in Bowie County, TX. It would be helpful if a birth record could be obtained for Fred.

[16] William Province had been previously married, to **J. Nelia Almond** (born March 1875 in North Carolina; died after 1910); Annie, William and Beatrice were children of this marriage.

[17] All information on the children of Pearl Thompson’s second marriage to William Andrew Provence, and Pearl’s date and place of death, is as per Paula Wigington.

[18] As per Michelle Vaughn, a descendant of Velma’s daughter Lucille Ann⁵ Bensley.

[19] See *Christian County IL Death Record, Volume D*, p. 206.

[20] As per Michelle Vaughn.

[21] As per Helen Henagar.

40. **ORLA T.⁴ BENSLEY** (William Nelson³ Bensley, Adaline M.² Higinbotham, John¹ Higinbotham)

Orla T. Bensley, son of William Nelson Bensley and Rosetta Easton, was born 30 July 1891 in Charleston, Coles Co., Illinois [1]. In 1893 Orla and family were in Taylorville, Christian Co., IL as Orla’s sister Lou Ella⁴ was born there [2]. By 1900 the family had removed to Coles Co., IL. The 1900 Federal census of Coles Co., IL (E. D. 26, p. 8B) lists Orla T. Bentsley, born July 1891 IL, living in Hutton Township with his parents W^m N. and Rosette. He is listed as having attended school for 3 months in the last year.

On 22 June 1915 Orla T. Bensley married **Letha Brandenburg** (born 30 November 1891 in Casey, Clark Co., Illinois; died Feb 1977 near Charleston, Coles Co., IL) in Charleston, Coles Co., Illinois [3]. The 1920 Federal census of Coles Co., IL (E. D. 57, p. 1B) lists Orla and Letha Bensley, both aged 28, living at 203 First St. in Ward 3 of Charleston with their son Granville. In 1929 the family lived at 10 Seventh St., also in Charleston.

At the time of his marriage, Orla worked as an ice deliverer. The 1920 Federal census gives Orla’s occupation as brakeman for the “T. St. L. and W”. He worked as a brakeman for the Nickel Plate line at the time of his death. Orla T. Bensley died 26 March 1929 in Edwardsville, Madison Co., IL in a train wreck. He was buried 29 March 1929 in the Roselawn Cemetery in Charleston, Coles Co., IL [4].

Spouse: **LETHA BRANDENBURG**

Letha Brandenburg, daughter of John Henry Brandenburg and Matilda A. Rogers [5], was born 30 November 1891 in Casey, Clark Co., Illinois [6]. Letha has not yet been located in the 1900 Federal census, although her father John appears to be enumerated in Parker Twp., Clark Co., IL (E. D. 14, p. 2A), living alone. The 1910 Federal census of Cumberland Co., IL (E. D. 35, p. 6A) lists Letha Brandenburg, age 18, living in Union Twp. with her parents John