

Update on the Family of Emma Trickel-Bedford after her Murder in 1898

The April 7, 1898 issue of the Freeport Daily Bulletin said that Emma Bedford's two sons were to be brought up by their grandmother Trickel, who was "a well to do citizen of Browntown," after Emma's murder on March 26, 1898. The 1900 census showed that Emma's mother, Mary Trickel, 50, was living in Browntown, but neither of her grandsons was living with her. She did, however, have a 55-year-old, widowed servant living with her at the time. Mary E. St. Clair Trickel, passed away in Browntown on October 19, 1905. She was buried at the Franklin Cemetery between her husband and Emma.

Thomas Wesley Bedford, who was 13 at the time he witnessed the murder of his mother, was listed as a servant (probably a farm hand) living with Albert, 36, and Mary, 25, Bunt in Sylvester Township in 1900. He was then living with James, 29, and Margaret, 22, Terry in Gratiot in 1905. Both of these men were barbers and the couple had a 1-year-old daughter. Five years later Wesley (listed as T. W.) was living in Cadiz Township with Frank, 33, and Lourinda, 30, Flannery and their 9-year-old son. Wesley was working as a farm hand.



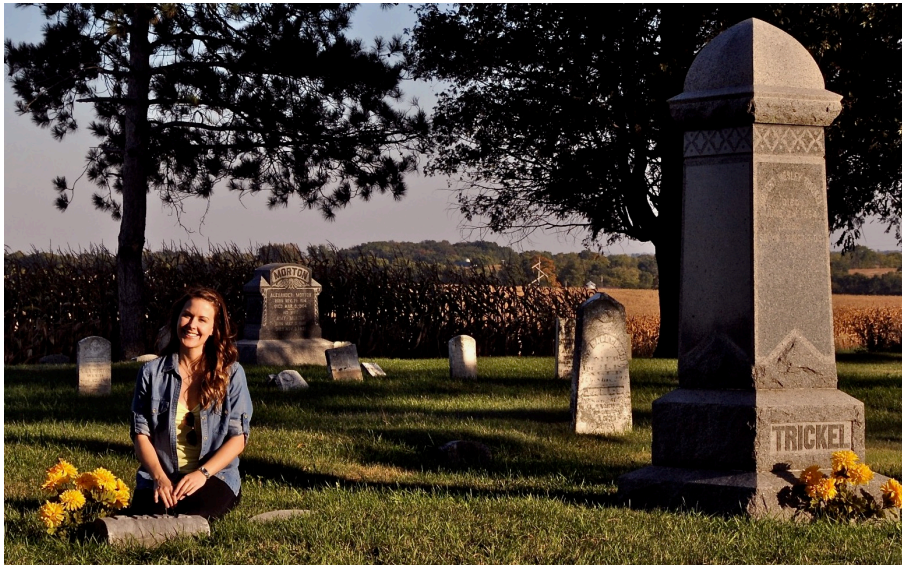
This early photo of Browntown, from the collection of a former Browntown couple, looks west on Main Street as it crosses Mill Street. It was somewhere in the downtown area that young Wesley Stover came crying in 1898 to let people know that he had just witnessed his mother being killed by her jealous boyfriend.

It appears that Wesley was living with George and Grace Olson and their five children in Minneapolis ten years later where he was working in a restaurant. By 1940 he was 55 and living in Lorance Township, Bollinger County, Missouri with his wife, Bertha, 31, and their 7-year-old son, William Wesley. At that time he was listed as a laborer for the WPA drainage project. He passed away on January 8, 1957 in Cape Girardeau leaving the son and one grandson. He had farmed in that area for nearly 30 years before retiring three years earlier.

His younger brother, Edward, who was 10 years old at the time of the murder, was adopted by Michael, 42, and Maggie, 41, Meighan. He was listed as their adopted son in the 1900 census. Mr. Meighan was a blacksmith in Grant County and had been married for 16 years. By 1910 Edward was living in Chicago with his wife, Margaret, and their newborn son, John. They were living on Laflin Street where Edward was working as a laborer at the stock yard. By 1920 the family of five, with daughters Marie, 18, and Anne, 2, were living on S. Bishop Street where Edward worked for the city electric department and John was a salesman for a radio firm; Marie was a stenographer in a shoe store. Ten years later the family, Edward, Margaret, Ann, Marie, her husband Charles, and their 1-year-old daughter, Marjorie, were at 7650 S. Bishop Street. Edward was a laborer at the city yards and his son-in-law managed a gas station. Edward passed away in Chicago on March 25, 1963.

Emma's death certificate said that she was born in Clarno Township on December 23, 1867, making her 30 years old when she was murdered. The death certificate also stated that she was divorced, but did not say that she was twice divorced. The marriage certificate shows that she was first married to the boys' father, Ellis Stover, on November 9, 1884 in Martin by E. Van Horn. Witnesses were D. D. Tyler and Rachel Van Horn. At that time, Ellis, 24, was a farmer in Cadiz Township and Emma was 18. Their son, Thomas Wesley, had already been born on August 28. By the time Edward was born on February 15, 1888, Ellis was working as a railroad man and the family was living in Browntown. It is unknown how long after that the couple divorced.

Stover was then living with his brother, John, in Browntown and working as a laborer in 1900. By



This photo shows Beth Stannard, great granddaughter of Emma Trickel Stover-Bedford of Santa Clara, California, placing flowers on Emma's grave. The photo was supplied by Helen Johnson of Browntown and is believed to have been taken in 2015.

1905 he was living with Edward and Emma McGuire in Cadiz Township where he was listed as a farm laborer. He was again listed with the same family as a hired hand in 1910. He passed away at the Green County Asylum on May 25, 1922 from cardiac decompensation.

It is believed that Emma married James Bedford in 1896 although no record was found. The marriage must not have lasted very long since the newspaper said that they were divorced at the time of her murder in March 1898. James, 23, was already married to another wife,

Lizzie, 18, by the time the census was taken on June 5, 1900 at which time they had an 8-month-old daughter, Ella. His widowed father, Thomas, an immigrant from England, was also living with them on the farm in Cadiz Township. Ella passed away later that year and two more children were born before they moved to Afton Township, Sanborn County, South Dakota. Two more children were born there prior to the 1910 census being taken. Another two children were born within the next five years and yet another son was born about 1922. James was still farming in the same township, listed next to his son Elmer, in 1930. James passed away at the age of 60 on May 5, 1937 in Davison County, South Dakota.

The rest of the story has now been told about the two boys and the two ex-husbands after the tragic murder suicide in the small village of Browntown in 1898. The only question I still have is whether the young men ever had anything to do with their father after losing their mother.