

## Charles (Vient) Cummings, Great-Grandfather of Charles Sieracki



**Charles Joseph Vient (Cummings)**

The following information is taken from an account written by Cummings family genealogist Ray Cummings and updated by Charlie Sieracki. Ray did extensive research of Hugo families and in effect opened a window to our past.

Charles Cummings was born on May 1, 1859, in Gentilly, a village just across the St. Lawrence River from Trois Rivières, Canada. His father Prudent emigrated with his family to Minnesota in the late 1860s; consequently, Charles lived most of his life in Hugo, MN. He was known there not only as Charles Cummings, but also as Charlie Viens or Vient and as C.V. Apparently, for business purposes (he and a Mr. Griffiths had a wallpaper and paperhanging business in the early 1890's in Minneapolis at 309 Wright Block) Charles adopted the last name of Cummings. But when he was among his family and friends in Hugo, he was known as Charlie Vient. He often signed his name as "C. V. Cummings." He inserted the "V" to indicate that his name had been Vient. His parents, his siblings and at least one of his children vacillated between using Viens, Vient and Cummings.

Name changing occurred frequently among French-Canadian families. And our family presents a good example of this custom. The surname of the family in France was Jean. In Canada, our ancestors changed the name to Viens. My great-great-grandfather Prudent changed it to Vient. The baptismal name of Charles Cummings was Charles Vient. Members of this family in Minnesota at various moments used any of the following names: Viens, Vient, and Cummings.

Charles Cummings married Catherine Belland on May 19, 1884, at St. Genevieve's Catholic Church in Centerville, Minnesota. Catherine was the daughter of Peter and Lucie (Bibeau) Belland.



**Peter and Lucie Belland**

Catherine was born on December 14, 1864, in little Canada, Minnesota, and she died on June,1953 in St. Paul, Minnesota. Charles died on August 5, 1948 in Hugo, Minnesota.



**Catherine Belland with her daughter Rose**



This picture of the farmhouse that C.V. and Catherine built was taken on the occasion of a family reunion in July, 2021. Underneath it is a picture of their family posed in front of the house in the early 1900s. My grandfather and grandmother, Alfred and Mary (Peloquin) Cummings are standing to the left. Alfred is wearing the same style of hat that his father is wearing. The splendid clothes and the architectural detail of the big house speaks to the wealth of the family.



**Steam-powered threshing machine**

C.V. owned a steam-powered threshing machine, which was also an indication of his wealth. During the winter, the threshing machine was converted into an ice cutting machine. My grandfather, Alfred Cummings, was part of the crew that took the machine onto the frozen lakes to cut blocks of ice. My cousin Marcel LaValle told me that the winters were bitterly cold and the workers slept in the farmers' barns. But they were hardy and knew how to dress for the cold. Sadly, it was the Spanish Flu in 1918 that took my grandfather from his pregnant wife and three-year-old daughter.

Charles and Catherine had nine children.

Rose: born May 1, 1885, in Hugo, died December 29, 1980, in West St. Paul.

George: born January 22, 1886, in Hugo, died July 11, 1936, in Hennepin County. William: born October 9, 1887, died December 5, 1926.

Alexander: born March 7, 1889, in Centerville.

Lewis: born November 30, 1890, in Centerville, died January 26, 1959, in Minneapolis.

Alfred: born on October 19, 1892, in Hugo, and died November 11, 1918 in Minnesota. Clara: born on September 2, 1894 in Hugo, died July 19, 1990, in Ramsey County. Irving: born on September 13, 1896, in Hugo, died December 29, 1988, in Hugo. Genevieve: born July 30, 1898, in Hugo, died about the same day.



**Rose Cummings in her wedding dress**

### **Rose**

When Rose was single, she used to go dancing at Clinton's Bar (then Peltier's) in Hugo across from the old bank and the old Legion Club. She married Albert C. Bemlott on November 22, 1904, at St. John the Baptist Catholic Church in Hugo, Minnesota.

Albert was born about 1884 in Minnesota and died on November 27, 1947, in St. Paul, Minnesota. Rose's mom, Catherine, had sent her to the Bemlott farm near Sunfish Lake just outside of White Bear Lake, MN to get rutabagas. It was threshing day when Rose met Albert: it was love at first sight. In 1904, George worked as a teamster in the Hugo, Minnesota area. George liked the job until he had to work with the barrels of grease from restaurants. Rose said he was very meticulous. He hated the grease, so he quit. Albert and Rose had four children: Marie, Christopher, George Charles, and Lorraine Catherine.

### **George**

George married Amelia Gregoire on October 1, 1907, in Hugo. She was the daughter of Edmund Gregoire. She was born on March 19, 1888, in Quebec. She died on December 17, 1963, in Ramsey County, Minnesota. George was a watchman for Pillsbury Flour. In 1930, they lived at 518 Edmon St in St. Paul, and Amelia worked as a seamstress in a clothing factory in St. Paul. George and Amelia had two children: May and Edna Grace. May was born October 6, 1908, in Minnesota and died in April 1996 in Minnesota. Edna Grace was born on March 29, 1910 in Minneapolis. She died on October 1980 in Bradenton, Florida. During a terribly hot summer in the mid 1930's. George succumbed under the hot conditions in the flour mill.

### **William**

William married Marie Bernier in about 1910. She was the daughter of Joseph Bernier and Emily Foucher. Marie, or "Big Mary" as she was called, was born in 1888 and died on December 18, 1974. (My grandmother Mary Peloquin Cummings had the nickname "Little Mary.") In 1920, Bill was a butter maker at a creamery in Morton, Renville County, Minnesota. William and Mary had three children: Dorothy, Bernice, and Audrey.



**Alex and Emerance at their wedding**

## **Alexander**

Alex married Emerance Morin on June 28, 1911, in Minnesota. She was the daughter of George Morin and Mary Comeau. Emerance, or "Morancy" as she was known in the family, was born in December 1887, in Wisconsin.

According to his 1918 draft registration information, Alex was of medium height, had a medium build, blue eyes and brown hair. He was also suffering from rheumatism. He worked for the Soo Line Railroad. In 1930 he was a conductor on a railroad that operated out of Superior, Wisconsin. Between 1920 and 1930, they lived at 3300 Taylor St NE in Minneapolis. Later, they lived in a beautiful old house in Superior, WI. In 1910, Morancy was a clerk at a dry goods store in Minneapolis.

Alex and Morancy had three children. The first was Lawrence G. who was born on Oct. 16, 1914, and died on May 12, 1993, in St. Louis County, MN. Lawrence married Helen Cieslicki, the daughter of Francis Cieslicki and Mary Janowski. Helen was born in 1919. Lawrence and Helen had three children. Jerry, who was born in 1943, married Joanne Tagget. Colette, born in 1949, married Frederick A. Pekkala. Marc Laurence, born in 1954 in Superior, married Janice K. Lackson on August 22, 1981, in Douglas County, Wisconsin. Mark was a captain for the Superior Police Department. He retired in December 2005.

The second was Evelyn K. who was born in 1918 in Minnesota. Evelyn married Frank Swaab. They lived in Superior, Wisconsin. Frank and Evelyn had seven children: Bernadine, Paul, Tom, James, David, Lawrence, and Joseph.

The third child was Charles who was born in 1920. Charles married Marion Patton in about 1945. She was born about 1928. At one time, Charles worked for a railroad in the southern part of United States. In the 1950s, he moved to Florida and eventually resided in Lakeland, Florida. Marion was originally from Texas. Charles and Marion had three children: David, born in 1947, Joseph, born in 1949, and Martha, born in 1950.

## **Louis**

Louis married Blanche Mabel Brown in about 1912 in Minnesota. She was born in 1894 and may have been raised on the LaValle Farm near the Charles Cummings Farm. Blanche died on September 12, 1950, in Hennepin County, Minnesota of leukemia. On her headstone it reads "Who devoted her life to homeless children." She took in foster children. Louie and his brother Bill worked on street cars in Minneapolis. Between 1930 in 1953, Louis worked as a streetcar machinist in Minneapolis. Around 1950, he and Blanche lived at 3916 Snelling Ave. in Minneapolis.

Louie and Blanche had three children. Leroy was born about 1913 in Minnesota and was murdered sometime around 1930 in the western desert of the United States. Authorities found his clothes later and used a dental record

match to identify his body. He had been hitchhiking west when he was killed. Ardell Celia was born in about 1915 in Minnesota. She eventually owned a shoe store in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Alden G. was born in 1918 and died in 1921. He was buried in the Hugo Cemetery where his parents and his Cummings grandparents would be buried later.

### **Alfred**

Alfred married Mary Emma Peloquin on May 19, 1913, at St. John the Baptist Catholic Church in Hugo. She was the daughter of Calixte Peloquin and Edwige Peloquin. She was born in March 1895 in Minnesota, and she died on June 12, 1976, in Winona County, Minnesota. In 1920, Mary worked as a servant on the farm of Robert von Ellsberg in Blain Township, Anoka County, Minnesota. Mary, also known as "Little Mary," spent more than half of her life in a wheelchair, the victim of a deranged acquaintance who shot her with a pistol.

Alfred and Mary had two children, Marie Irene, who was born on April 16, 1915, in Hugo Minnesota and Alfred Leonard who was born on December 19, 1918, in Hugo, Minnesota and who died on November 23, 1985, in Carlton County, Minnesota.

### **Clara**

Clara Sophie married Harvey J. Peltier on April 23, 1923, at St. John the Baptist Catholic Church in Hugo. Harvey was born in 1893 and died Oct. 20, 1952 in Ramsey Co. In 1920, Clara was a boarder at 715 Jefferson St. in St. Paul, MN. She worked as a clerk at a publishing company. In 1930, Clara, Harvey, and little daughter Elaine (age 3) lived at 471 Fuller Ave. in St. Paul, MN. Harvey was a laborer at a printing company in St. Paul. Eventually, they had two other children: Francis and Anna Mae.

The picture below shows Harvey and Clara at her brother Irving's wedding.

### **Erving**

Erving married Mamie Margaret Cardinal on May 29, 1917, at Ste. Genevieve's Catholic Church in Centerville. Maurice Peltier, who lived at the farm across the road from Erving, once said Erving and Mamie met at a July 4th picnic. They honeymooned in Duluth, MN. Mamie was born on July 10, 1898, in Centerville and died in St. Paul on March 14, 1960, of a liver disease.



**Erving and Mamie at their wedding in 1917**

In November 1962, Erving married the spinster Mildred Crever. The marriage took place at St. John the Baptist Catholic Church in Hugo, MN.

Erving was a rural mail carrier for about forty years but had to retire because of complications from diabetes. He enjoyed playing and following baseball. He may have played the game with such Hugo men as Fred Carpenter, Sr., Bert Ethier and Jerry Brisson.

**Genevieve (Jeanie)**

Not known by many in the Cummings family, Jennie was born on July 30, 1898 and died the same day.