

**The Descendants of Johann Peter BECKERLE and Anna Margaretha KELLERMAN:
Johannes (John) Walter BECKERLE (from p. 2-118)**

1.3.12.1.4 Johannes Walter BECKERLE; b. 25 Jan & bapt. 28 Jan 1844, Hessloch, Germany, son of 1.3.12.1 Johannes BECKERLE and Anna Margaretha BARDON;¹ never married.² John emigrated as a teenager to Orangetown, Rockland Co., NY sometime bef. Jun 1860,³ prob. not with his nuclear family.⁴ He enlisted for three years in Nov 1863 in Co. E, 5th NH Volunteer Infantry Regiment and served in the Civil War as an infantryman, a private.⁵ The 5th had returned to NH to enlist replacements in Apr 1863 after having their ranks decimated at Gettysburg.⁶ We saw no record of their recruiting in NY. On 09 Nov 1863, they arrived by steamer in Maryland. We don't know how John made contact with 5th NH; perhaps their steamer made a port call in NYC on the way to Maryland. The unit guarded Confederate prisoners in Maryland until May 1864, when they were summoned as part of the Army of the Potomac under U.S. Grant and engaged in the battles of the Wilderness (05-07 May 1864) and Spotsylvania (08-21 May 1864.) On 03 Jun 1864, they fought at Cold Harbor, which was the costliest day in the unit's history, with 202 of their 577 men killed. In the continuing campaign that developed into the siege of Petersburg, a series of engagements occurred between 15 and 19 Jun at Baylor's Farm, Withal, and Weir Bottom Church that continued to erode the regiments rolls. The 5th did not see action again until 16 Aug, when one of their skirmishers killed a Confederate General in a minor engagement. In Oct 1864, the 3-year obligation of the unit's original enlistees was met, and as a result the ranks were so greatly diminished that the regiment was temporarily reduced to a battalion. The replacements they received from that point forward were mostly (80%) bounty men, i.e., men who enlisted for the money they received and then deserted. The siege of Petersburg occupied John's regiment until 01 Apr 1865, when the last supply line into Petersburg was cut. For the next few days they were involved in Grant's fast-paced pursuit of General Robert E. Lee through central Virginia, which ended in Lee's surrender on 07 Apr, ending the war.

After the war John returned to his parents' farm in Orangetown. He had not been officially mustered out of the Army as of 12 Jun 1865.⁷ He soon left NY and settled in CA.⁸ In 1871 or 1872 he was a herder at "Lambert's" (ranch?) in Merced Co. less than 20 years after the county was founded by just a few hundred settlers.⁹ In 1878

¹ LDS film 948719. His middle name from his death record, q.v. He used the name "John" throughout his life.

² Zarb (1985.) Kotheimer, p. 12, looking at Hessloch church records, claims that John m. Katherine BARDON. We believe that John left Germany before he was of an age to marry, but the marriage could have occurred in the US and been reported back to Hessloch in correspondence. In such cases, it was common to make a notation in the church records, usually at the baptismal record, but we did not see such a notation at John's baptism nor in any records available to us through the early 1870s. We assume Kotheimer is incorrect, based on family's testimony to the contrary and the fact that he is never seen with a wife in any US record.

³ There are two John Beckerles of the proper age in the Rockland Co., NY, census enumeration for 1860, and we believe both are our John. 1860 USfc (J. Beckerle) shows John with his parents on their farm on 27 Jun, and 1860 USfc (J. Koch) shows John (and probably his younger sister, Katherine) in the household of his mother's sister, Katharina BARDON on 02 Jul. The two households were only a few miles from one another.

⁴ He is not on the ship's manifest. See 1.3.12.1 for reference.

⁵ John appears as a "deceased comrade" in an undated (ca. 1913-1914) membership roster for McPherson Post no. 51, Hanford, CA, Dept of CA and NV, the Grand Army of the Republic, a photograph of which was sent to us in Nov 2014 by SB. We thought John's entry contained a typographical error, and assumed he served with the 5th NY volunteers. In fact, the 5th NY was decommissioned in May 1863, six months prior to John's enlistment, so we believe the CA record is accurate. John (as Bakerlee) is on a muster roll of Orangetown, NY men in service (NY, Registers of Officers and Enlisted Men Mustered into Federal Service, 1861-1865, vol. 3, image 214 of 786, ANCESTRY.COM, seen Dec 2014.) This document, apparently produced ca. May-Jun 1865, lists both his unit at enlistment and his current unit as unknown, which supports the idea that he was in an out-of-state unit..

⁶ FIFTHNHVOL.ORG/HISTORY for all unit history, movements, engagements, etc. unless otherwise noted, including some short, direct quotes that are not indicated in the text..

⁷ 1865 NYSc (J. Beckerle.) His enlistment ran through Nov 1866, and we don't know when he was discharged.

⁸ Zarb (1985.) A newspaper notice, cited later in this entry, also ties the John we see in California to Pearl River.

⁹ CA State Library, CA History Section; Great Registers, 1866-1898; Collection Number: 4-2A; CSL Roll Number: 26; LDS microfilm 976937, seen on ANCESTRY.COM Nov 2014, as "Beckerly." There is an Englishman, Ricardo Lambert (d. 1871,) bur. in Merced Co. outside the fence of an unmarked "pioneer" cemetery "near the foot of the bluff above Snelling as one goes out the road to Dry Creek" (Outcalt, 1925.) Historical facts from Lackey (undated.) John is not in the index to the 1870 federal census for Merced Co., seen on MERCEDGENEALOGY.COM Nov 2014.

John farmed in Cottonwood, Merced Co., now a “ghost town.” The town was likely located west of Volta, Merced Co., on or near Cottonwood Creek.¹⁰ In Jun 1880, John lived in that area in Merced Co., in the territory west of the San Joaquin River.¹¹ John bought 160 acres in Merced Co. in 1885,¹² possibly the piece he farmed. ([call for details and sale.](#)) In 1888 he still farmed in Cottonwood,¹³ but by 1890 he farmed in Volta.¹⁴ In the four Merced Co. voter registration records cited, John claimed to be born in NY State, which was not the case. By 1892, John lived in Hanford, CA.¹⁵ He owned a relatively small property, which may have been a fruit farm, about 1.5 miles SE of Hanford proper, immediately south of the Cross Creek schoolhouse.¹⁶ At age 48, John was 69 inches tall, with hazel eyes, brown hair, and a dark complexion. He was missing the little finger of his left hand.¹⁷ John was a member of the McPherson Post (no. 51) of the “Grand Army of the Republic” (a Civil War veterans’ association,) which met in Hanford.¹⁸ He may have been active in politics.¹⁹ 1894 was an eventful year for John. At the Republican primary elections, held at the Dallas schoolhouse in Hanford, there was a fracas that escalated into a gunfight in which one James McCaffrey was shot dead. ([Spoke w/ Sherman, the ref. librarian 24 Nov 2014, 559.582.0261. They have the Journal back to 1891 and he will look.](#)) John was present at the schoolhouse and later was called as a defense witness for William Ryan who was charged with (and eventually convicted of) second-degree murder in McCaffrey’s death.²⁰ During the prosecution’s final presentation, John’s testimony was challenged and “the personal character of Beckerle was ... assailed by witnesses... summoned for that purpose.” Then, in the Hanford newspaper of 07 Aug 1894,²¹ just a month later, we learn this:

“Constable Boone, of Traver,²² was in Hanford yesterday, looking for parties who stole two large water troughs from up in his section. Several parties down this way are alleged to be implicated in the theft. The troughs were found at John Johnson’s place, in the Dallas neighborhood, and he and John Beckerle have

¹⁰ “Great Registers,” *ibid.*, as “Beckerlee.” [MERCEDMUSEUM.ORG/EXHIBITS/PAST](#), “Ghost Towns of Merced County,” seen Nov 2014. Many ghost towns in the San Joaquin Valley were unceremoniously plowed over and the land returned to agriculture. In the case of Cottonwood, it was likely inundated with the creation of the San Luis reservoir, which is fed from the north by the remnant of Cottonwood Creek. Alma, of the Merced Co. Genealogical Society, says that Cottonwood was a region as well as a small town within that region (*in litt.* Dec 2014.)

¹¹ 1880 USfc (Backerlin.) We are not certain if this unmarried, 34-year-old farmer, “John Backerlin,” is our John, but we strongly suspect it is.

¹² The “Land Records” database at [USERDB.ROOTSWEB.ANCESTRY.COM/LANDRECORDS/](#) shows the cash sale to(?) John Beckerle of the following parcel in Merced Co., CA on 12 Jun 1885: twp. 009S, range 008E, section 13, document no. 8132, serial no. CACAAA 096733, seen Nov 2014. The parcel described, one square mile (640 acres, called a “section,”) is located about 3 miles north of exit 407 (Santa Nella Blvd.) on Interstate highway 5 in Merced Co. The intersection of I-5 and the Delta-Mendoza aqueduct occurs on the southern border of John’s section, and the east border is Whitworth Rd. (Assessor’s maps, Co. of Merced, CA, rev. 12 Aug 2009; Index book 69, Assessor’s maps, Co. of Merced, CA [1956;] and Assessor’s map, book 69, p. 22 [1956,] all seen on [WWW.CO.MERCED.CA.US](#) Nov 2014.) Alma (*ibid.*) *in litt.* Dec 2014 says John owned the SE ¼ section in section 13.

¹³ “Great Registers,” *ibid.*

¹⁴ “Great Registers,” *ibid.* Volta does lie west of the San Joaquin River, NW of Los Baños.

¹⁵ Hanford was then in western Tulare Co. but became the county seat of Kings Co. when Kings was formed in 1893.

¹⁶ “Great Registers,” *ibid.*, CSL Roll Number: 137; LDS film [976937](#), seen on [ANCESTRY.COM](#) Nov 2014. Also, Thompson, Thomas H. (1892) Official Historical Atlas Map, Tulare Co., CA; map 077 (Twp 19 S range 22 E, “Coe Colony,”) and also the index map, both seen on [HISTORICMAPWORKS.COM](#) Nov 2014. That it was a fruit farm is mentioned in Zarb (1985,) though map 077 does not indicate the property as such. Since John’s property was on the north edge of map 077, we examined the adjacent map (060) and found no adjacent land that he owned. SB first directed us to map 077, having seen it in CA, Jul 2014 and sent us a copy Nov 2014.

¹⁷ “Great Registers,” *q.v.*, above

¹⁸ Membership roll, *q.v.*, above

¹⁹ SB, *in litt.* Nov 2014. This would not be surprising, as the G.A.R. was “a *de facto* political arm of the Republican party” after the Civil War. Five members were elected President of the United States: Ulysses S. Grant, Rutherford B. Hayes, James A. Garfield, Benjamin Harrison, and William McKinley. The US federal holiday, Memorial Day, was first established by the Commander-in-Chief of the G.A.R. in 1868. The organization was dissolved in 1966 when its last member died ([WIKIPEDIA.COM](#), seen Nov 2014.)

²⁰ *Hanford (CA) Journal*, 24 Jul 1894, anonymous transcription on the thread, “[CATULARE] Hanford, Kings Co., CA – 24 July 1894.” Researched on [ROOTSWEB.ANCESTRY.COM](#) by SB, our copy received Nov 2014.

²¹ Prob. the *Hanford Journal*. Transcribed by Dee Sardoc and posted to the thread, “[CAKINGS] Hanford, Kings Co., CA – 7 August 1894” on [ROOTSWEB.ANCESTRY.COM](#), researched by SB, our copy received Nov 2014.

²² About 12 mi. NE of Hanford, in the NW corner of Tulare Co..

been arrested for the crime.²³ Both assert their innocence, and Beckerle says the troughs were brought to his place by other parties and he took them over to Johnson's. Both Beckerle and Johnson were arrested, but gave bonds for \$500 each and were released. The cases will be tried in Traver." (call for follow-up)

On 24 Sep 1895, it was reported in a Hanford newspaper that John had received word that his father [sic] had died in Pearl River, NY.²⁴ We were unable to locate John in the 1900 US census in Kings Co., CA, though it's likely he was there at the time.²⁵ John d. of a heart attack 10 Aug 1907, Hanford;²⁶ bur. 12 Aug 1907, (poss.) Hanford Cemetery, Hanford.²⁷ No known issue.

After John's death, his younger brother, Philip, traveled to CA from NY to settle John's affairs.²⁸

²³ Johnson, or Johnston - also one of just a few defense witnesses in the Ryan murder trial - was apparently a friend of John's. In 1900 kept a saloon in Hanford (1900 USfc, Johnston)

²⁴ It was John's mother who died in 1895. Researched (as a transcription) on ROOTSWEB.ANCESTRY.ORG and sent to us Nov 2014 by SB. According to the records of the Library of Congress, there was only one newspaper published in Hanford in Sep 1895, the *Hanford Journal* (1892-19???) (CHRONICLINGAMERICA.LOC.GOV/LCCN/SN93053037/, seen Nov 2014)

²⁵ We looked at every page of the original enumeration sheets in the following election districts: 34 (Lemoore and West End Twps., 41 pp.,) 35 and 36 (Lucerne Twp., 102 pp.,) and 37 (Hanford city, 59 pp.)

²⁶ CA certification of vital record (i.e., John's death,) Kings Co., Hanford, state file no. 19430, issued 14 Jul 2014, our copy courtesy SB, Nov 2014. Also, CA Death Index, 1905-1939, database on-line, © Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2013, col. 697, as "Beckerlu."

²⁷ There is no record for John on FINDAGRAVE.COM, nor is there any current record of his having been buried anywhere in Kings Co. (Hanford Cemetery District office, phone conversation 20 Nov 2014.) The district office suggested that he might be buried in Tulare Cemetery, but he is not (Tulare Public Cemetery, phone conversation, Nov 2014.) Another possibility is that his brother, Philip, had his body exhumed and sent to NY State for burial with his family.

²⁸ Zarb (1985)

