

PREFACE

This biography of George Buery traces his life from birth in 1826 at Mietesheim, Bas-Rhin, France to his death in 1892 at Morton, Renville County, Minnesota at the age of 66 years, 1 month, and 11 days.

While researching for this biography, it became apparent that some explanations were needed to help the reader understand how certain information was interpreted and presented.

First, although George was born with the surname BURY, many different variations of his name (such as BEIRY, BERG, BERRY, BUERRY, BURI, PERRY, RUY,) are found in reference literature, censuses, and other biographical sources. The spelling BUERY is found in the U. S. as early as the 1850 census and is the spelling adopted by George and his descendants. Other U. S. branches of the family continue to use BURY. In this biography, when reference sources are cited or census information is used, proper names are quoted as they were found in the source material. When appropriate, alternate name spellings are shown within parentheses ().

Second, there can be confusion when referring to a geographical feature or political entity which includes the name “Birch Cooley”. In Renville County, Minnesota there is a Birch Cooley Township, a Birch Cooley Creek, a former Birch Cooley Village, and a specific geographical area sometimes referred to as Birch Cooley. It is not uncommon to find any of these designations written as Birch Coulee, Birch Coolie, or some variation.

Coulee is a French word meaning the bed of the stream, even if dry, when deep, and having inclined sides. The original name of the stream in the Coulee was La Croix creek, but the vicinity was known from the early days as Birch coulee, and this was finally corrupted to Birch Cooley, now the official name of the township.¹

For clarity and consistency in this biography, the following geographical names will be used when appropriate:

Birch Cooley Township – designates township in Renville County, Minnesota
Birch Cooley Creek - designates creek originally called La Croix Creek
Birch Cooley – designates general vicinity around Birch Cooley Creek

Exceptions will be when a direct quote is used and a reference citation is given in which case, the actual spelling will be quoted (i.e., La Croix Creek or Birch Coulee, etc.).

GEORGE BUERY BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

George Bury was born January 25, 1826 in the village of Mietesheim, Bas-Rhin, France. He was the older (by 30 minutes) of twin sons born to parents Jean Adam Bury and Marguerithe (née Teutsch) Bury. His twin brother was named Jean Adam Bury after his father.^{2,3}

George immigrated to the United States in about 1846 when he was twenty years old. He worked at his trade of cooper (barrel maker) in Canada and Buffalo, Erie County, New York.³

In 1847 at Buffalo, New York, he married Margaret Scherman (Shirm)³ who was born April 9, 1825 in Engwiller, Bas-Rhin, France.⁴ They had three daughters:

Magdalena (born in 1847 in Buffalo, Erie County, New York)⁵

Catherine (born June 1, 1848 in Buffalo, Erie County, New York)^{5,6}

Margaret (born May 1850 in Buffalo, Erie County, New York)⁵

The 1850 United States Census finds them in the 4th Ward, Buffalo, Erie County, New York listed as follows:

George Buery, Age: 23 yrs. old, Sex: M, Occ: Cooper, Value of Real Estate: \$400, b/France.

Margaret Buery, Age: 24 yrs. old, Sex: F, b/France.

Catherine Buery, Age: 2 yrs. old, Sex: F, b/New York.

Margaret Buery, Age: 3/12 months old, Sex: F, b/New York.

Their daughter, Magdalena, died in August 20, 1849.⁵

In 1854, George's wife Margaret died, probably in Buffalo, New York.³

In 1855, George Buery married Salomé (Sally) Coffman (Kaufman), probably in Buffalo, New York.³ Salomé was born in France February 10, 1826 and died April 18, 1898 in Morton, Minnesota.⁷

Salomé's sister, Marie (Mary) Coffman (Kaufman) married John Kumro in 1856 in New York.⁸ The two families remained close neighbors from that time forward.

Sometime in 1856, the Buery and Kumro families left Buffalo, New York to travel to Mankato, Minnesota.

A son, George Everett Buery was born June 1856 in Canada, probably during their steamboat trip through the Great Lakes en route to Minnesota.⁹

George Buery and his family settled in Mankato, Blue Earth County, Minnesota and are recorded in the 1857 Minnesota Territorial Census as follows:

1857 Minnesota Territorial Census, Mankato, Blue Earth County, Minnesota,
Enumerated 20 Oct 1857, Film Number: 944283, Digital Folder Number: 004539665,
Image Number: 00090:

George Berg, Age: 32, M, b/Germany, Naturalized: Yes, Occ: Cooper
Sally Berg, Age: 28, F, b/Germany
Katherine Berg, Age 9, F, b/New York
Margret Berg, Age: 7, F, b/New York
George Berg, Age: 1, M, b/Canada

By 1859 the Buery and Kumro families had settled on land claims in Renville County, Minnesota north of the Minnesota River and west of Birch Cooley Creek in an area known as Birch Cooley.¹⁰

The typical pioneer houses built that first year are described below in an article related by William Kumro, a son of John and Mary Kumro:¹¹

Minnesota was wild in those days, sparsely settled and overrun by Sioux Indians. Settlers took up homesteads and often they were without any neighbors for miles around. Houses were built of logs. The one on the Kumro homestead was built into the side of a hill, the back dug out into the hill, the front made of logs and a shake roof made of split slabs of trees completed the house.

By 1860, George Buery and his second wife, Salomé, had added two more children to the family:

Emely (Emily/Emma) (born November 3, 1857 at Mankato, Blue Earth, Minnesota)¹²
Mary Ann (born December 6, 1859 at Birch Cooley, Renville, Minnesota)¹³

The 1860 United States Census finds the Buery family enumerated at Beaver Creek, Renville County, Minnesota as follows:

1860 United States Census, Beaver Crk, (Beaver River on Census image), Renville, Minnesota, Post Office: Lower Sioux Agency, Brown Co., Series: M653, Roll: 573, Page: 380, Sheet 6, recorded on 10 Jun 1860 for Dwelling/Family 42/42:

George Ruy, 34 yrs. old, M, Occ: Farmer, Value of Real Estate: \$300,
Value of Personal Estate: \$150, b/France.
Sarah Ruy, 35 yrs. old, F, b/France.
Catherine Ruy, 12 yrs. old, F, b/New York.
George Ruy, 10 yrs. old, M, b/New York. (data error - should be Margaret)
Margaret Ruy, 4 yrs. old, F, b/Canada West. (data error - should be George)
Emaline Ruy, 3 yrs. old, F, b/Minnesota. (this is Emely/Emily/Emma)
Marrion (or Marrian) Ruy, 1 yr. old, F, b/Minnesota. (this is Mary Ann)

Another daughter, Martha (Mattie/Madaline), was born on November 16, 1861 at Birch Cooley, Renville, Minnesota.¹²

On August 18, 1862 the Buery family included George and wife Salomé (Sally) plus six children ranging in age from 14 years to 9 months.

This was the Buery family when, beginning the morning of August 18, 1862, the Dakota Sioux Indians began their massacre of inhabitants at the Lower Sioux Agency and then moved north across the Minnesota River where settlers including the Buery and Kumro families were living in the Birch Cooley vicinity.

The eye-witness narrative of the Buery family escaping to Fort Ridgely as seen through the eyes of 14 year-old Catherine Buery (later to become Mrs. John Vogtman) was published in the Hubbard Clipper newspaper on January 29, 1914.

The Buery family is listed among the approximately 250 - 300 pioneer Refugees at Fort Ridgely as follows:¹⁴

The following partial list of those who found refuge in Ft. Ridgely the first day of the massacre shows many names of early settlers of Renville county. According to the official reports the refugees at the fort from the various settlements were:

...La Croix Creek: ...

George Buery, aged thirty-seven, born in France.

Sally Buery, aged thirty-four, born in France, wife of George Buery.

C. Buery, aged fourteen, born in Buffalo, New York, a girl. (Catherine)

M. Buery, aged twelve, born in Buffalo, New York, a girl. (Margaret)

George Buery, aged six, born in Canada, a boy.

Emely Buery, aged four, born in Minnesota, a girl.

Mary Buery, aged three, born in Minnesota, a girl.

Martha Buery, aged nine months, born in Minnesota, a baby...

An excerpt from the inscription on the monument erected by the state of Minnesota on the former site of Fort Ridgely details the severity and duration of their ordeal:¹⁵

IN MEMORY OF THE FALLEN; IN RECOGNITION OF THE LIVING;
AND FOR THE EMULATION OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

Erected A. D. 1896, by the state of Minnesota, to preserve the site of Ft. Ridgely, a United States military post established in 1853, and especially to perpetuate the names and commemorate the heroism of the soldiers and citizens of the state, who successfully defended the fort during nine days of siege and investment, August 18-27, 1862, and who gallantly resisted two formidable and protracted assaults upon it, made August 20 and 22, 1862, by a vastly superior force of Sioux Indians under

command of Little Crow and other noted Indian leaders and warriors, August 18, 1862, the Sioux Indians of the Upper Minnesota river, in violation of their treaties, broke into open rebellion, and within a few days thereafter massacred about one thousand citizens in the southwestern part of the state, and destroyed property of the value of millions of dollars.

The pioneer refugees were eventually transported to safety to St. Peter by a convoy of civilian men with teams and wagons escorted by soldiers. From there, George Buery arranged for steamboat passage to St. Paul, but due to lack of food, bad river conditions and a leaking boat, the family went only as far as Le Sueur. There, George Buery found work in the harvest fields for a dollar a day. In December, he walked to Mankato to witness the hanging of the 38 condemned Indians, many of whom he was acquainted with.¹⁶

George Buery and his family eventually made their way back to Mankato where they were listed in the 1865 Minnesota State Census.

1865 Minnesota Territorial Census Schedules, 1849-1855, Mankato, Blue Earth County, Minnesota, June 1, 1865, Image 16 of 32, Family 243, FamilySearch.org:

George Beiry,	2 Males, 7 Females
Sarah	"
Margaret	"
George	"
Emma	"
Mary	"
Mathias	" (this is Martha/Mattie)
Caroline	"
Henrietta	"

By this time, the family had grown with the addition of two daughters whose exact birth locations are unknown since the family's whereabouts between Aug 1862 and Jan 1865 are sketchy:

Caroline (born Feb 1863 in Minnesota)¹⁷

Henrietta (born November 1864 in Minnesota)¹⁸

On January 17, 1865, Catherine Buery married John Vogtman in Mankato.^{5,6}

Later in 1865, George Buery returned with his family to his claim at Birch Cooley. Newlyweds John and Catherine Vogtman also relocated there to farm an adjacent claim and start their own family. The following excerpt, published in 1916, details the 1865 resettlement of Birch Cooley Township by the Buery, Kumro, and Vogtman families: ¹⁹

The vicinity of Morton has attracted settlers since the earliest days. Even before the massacre George Buerry, Henry Keartner, and John Kumro had settled in this neighborhood. At the time the railroad came through there were quite a few farms along the old bottom road which passed some half a mile back from the present site of the village.

At this time the nearest residence was that of George Buerry. After the outbreak he had returned to his former claim and at the time the railroad came through he was living in a stone house which is still standing. The house is located in the southwest quarter of the southeast quarter of section 30 Birch Cooley northeast of the village and on a piece of the old bottom road now discontinued.

To the southeast of Buerry on the same road was John Edgett in the southwest quarter of the northwest quarter of section 32.

Next to Edgett's was the home of John Kumro in the northwest quarter of the southwest quarter of section 32. He had been here before the outbreak and had returned a year later than George Buerry.

Northwest from Buerry along the same road was John Vogtman on the southeast quarter of the southwest quarter of section 30. He was a son in law of George Buery and returned with him after the massacre.

George and Salomé Buery's last child, Henry, was born on October 15, 1866 at Birch Cooley. ²⁰

On August 1, 1871, George Buery was issued a Homestead Patent for a 160 acre tract of land located in Sections 30 and 31 of Township 113N, Range 34W, Birch Cooley Township, as follows: ²¹

S ½ of SE ¼ of Section 30 in Township 134, Range 34
N ½ of NE ¼ of Section 31 in Township 134, Range 34

In 1882, a portion of his land in Section 31 was included in the original survey of Morton Village. ²²

Morton was surveyed July, 1882, by George W. Cooley, on a portion of the west half of the northeast quarter and the east half of the northwest quarter of section 31, township 113, range 34. and filed August 9, 1882. The original owners were William G. Bartley, Elizabeth S. Bartley, George Buery and Salome Buery.

According to an 1883 Morton property assessment, the principal owners of the newly platted Village were Geo. Berry (Buery), M. P. Hawkins, W. G. Bartley and C. E. Burhaus. Six of George Buery's daughters also owned individual lots:²³

Mary Jorges, lot 21, block 1
Catherine Vogtman, lot 23, block 1
Emma Ahrens (Ahrendt), lot 24, block 1
Mattie Berry (Buery), lot 1, block 2
Henrietta Berry (Buery), lot 2, block 2
Caroline Berry (Buery), lot 3, block 2

According to a translation of the 1888 plat map of Renville County, George Buery owned 150.47 acres in Sections 30 and 31 of Birch Cooley Township leaving approximately 9.53 acres on the west side of his land in Section 31 that had been platted in the Village of Morton. At that time, his stone farmhouse stood northeast of the village boundaries on his land in Section 30.²⁴

George Buery died on March 7, 1892 at Morton, Minnesota and is buried in the Morton City Cemetery, Lot 3, Block 22, Bed 16.⁷ His obituary reads:²⁵

The funeral services of Mr. Geo. Buery, held at the Christian church last Sunday afternoon, were well attended. Rev. Joscelyn preached a very pathetic sermon from the text 'O death where is thy sting, Oh grave where is thy victory?'. Lying on the pulpit before him was the old family bible, worn by many years' service, and which with a few loaves of bread were the only things the family carried with them the time of the Indian massacre when they fled for the safety of their lives.

Salomé Buery died on April 18, 1898 in Morton, Minnesota and is buried next to George in the Morton City Cemetery, Lot 3, Block 22, Bed 15.⁷

George Buery's children from his first wife, Margaret Shirm, were:

Magdalena (1847 – August 20, 1849)⁵
Catherine (June 1, 1848 – December 16, 1922); married John Vogtman⁶
Margaret (May 1850 – March 28, 1873); married John Christian Ahrendt²⁶

George Buery's children from his second wife, Salomé Coffman (Kaufman) were:

George Everett (June 5, 1856 – May 18, 1912); married Margaret B. Miller²⁶
Emely (November 3, 1857 – October 4, 1931); married John Christian Ahrendt²⁶
Mary Ann (December 6, 1859 – February 4, 1890); married Henry Jacob Jorges²⁶
Martha (November 16, 1861 – February 28, 1909); married Levi F. Charter²⁶
Caroline (February 1863 – 1905); married Le Roy J. Stegner²⁶
Henrietta (November 1864 – October 13, 1953); married Luther D. Aldrich²⁶
Henry (October 15, 1866 – November 2, 1933); married Louise Scheer²⁶

REFERENCES

- ¹ The History of Renville County, Minnesota, Volume 2, Compiled by Franklyn Curtiss-Wedge, 1916, Chapter XLI, Township Histories, Birch Cooley Township, page 1290
- ² 1826 Actes de Naissance (Birth Records), Mietesheim, Alsace, Bas-Rhin, France, <http://etat-civil.bas-rhin.fr/adeloch/index.php>
- ³ History Of The Minnesota Valley, Including The Explorers And Pioneers Of Minnesota by Rev. Edward D. Neill, Minneapolis, 1882, Chapter LXXXIII, Renville County, pages 806- 807
- ⁴ 1825 Actes de Naissance (Birth Records), Engwiller, Alsace, Bas-Rhin, France, <http://etat-civil.bas-rhin.fr/adeloch/index.php>
- ⁵ FamilySearch™ International Genealogical Index (IGI)
- ⁶ John and Catherine Vogtman family Bible
- ⁷ Inscription on George and Salome Buery headstone located in Morton City Cemetery, Morton, Renville County, Minnesota
- ⁸ History Of The Minnesota Valley, Including The Explorers And Pioneers Of Minnesota by Rev. Edward D. Neill, Minneapolis, 1882, Chapter LXXXIII, Renville County, page 808
- ⁹ 1900 United States Census, 11-WD PORTLAND, Multnomah County, Oregon, Series: T623 Roll: 1351 Page: 99, ED 85, Sheet 12-B
- ¹⁰ The History of Renville County, Minnesota, Volume 2, Compiled by Franklyn Curtiss-Wedge, 1916, Chapter XXXVI, Cities and Villages, Morton Village, page 886
- ¹¹ Morton Enterprise newspaper (Morton, Renville County, Minnesota), 27 February 1936, page 11, columns 1 and 2; Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, Indians Come to Pioneer Home of John Kumro on August 17, 1862, as related by William Kumro to his daughter, Geneva
- ¹² Date from obituary for named individual
- ¹³ Mary Ann Jorges birth calculated from Register of Deaths, Morton, Minnesota, Volume B, Page 18, Line 9
- ¹⁴ The History of Renville County, Minnesota, Volume 1, Compiled by Franklyn Curtiss-Wedge, 1916, Chapter XXIII, Early Settlement, page 551
- ¹⁵ The History of Renville County, Minnesota, Volume 1, Compiled by Franklyn Curtiss-Wedge, 1916, Chapter XXVII, Fort Ridgely, page 651
- ¹⁶ Hubbard County Clipper newspaper, Park Rapids, Minnesota, 29 Jan 1914, The Sioux Massacre, by Mrs. John Vogtman
- ¹⁷ 1900 United States Census, Redwood Falls Twp., Redwood, 1st Ward, Minnesota, Series: T623 Roll: 786 Page: 134, ED 244, Sheet 1-B, recorded 1 Jun 1900 (Caroline)
- ¹⁸ 1900 United States Census, Redwood Falls Twp., Redwood, 1st Ward, Minnesota, Series: T623 Roll: 786 Page: 134, ED 244, Sheet 1-B, recorded 1 Jun 1900 (Henrietta)
- ¹⁹ The History of Renville County, Minnesota, Volume 2, Compiled by Franklyn Curtiss-Wedge, 1916, Chapter XXXVI, Cities and Villages, Morton Village, page 886
- ²⁰ Obituary, Henry Buery, Morton Enterprise newspaper (Morton, Renville County, Minnesota), Thursday, November 9, 1933, posted on findagrave.org, Memorial #40296401

REFERENCES

- ²¹ Homestead Certificate No. 1270, Accession Nr: MN1310_.143, BLM Serial Nr: MN NO S/N, U. S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, General Land Office Records
- ²² The History of Renville County, Minnesota, Volume 1, Compiled by Franklyn Curtiss-Wedge, 1916, Chapter XXIV, Villages Platted and Incorporated, page 562
- ²³ The History of Renville County, Minnesota, Volume 2, Compiled by Franklyn Curtiss-Wedge, 1916, Chapter XXXVI, Cities and Villages, Morton Village, page 889
- ²⁴ Translation of Plat Map of Renville County, Minnesota, 1888, <http://files.usgwarchives.org/mn/renville/plats/renplt88.txt>
- ²⁵ Obituary, (possibly the Morton Enterprise newspaper, date unknown)
- ²⁶ Minnesota Official Marriage System (MOMS), www.mncounty.com