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Case Study: Conflicting Direct Evidence

Requirement 6

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Charles Olin and Charles Melville – One Man or Two?

Resolving Conflicting Evidence to Merge Identities

Charles Olin was enumerated with his parents Thomas M. and “Margritte” J. Olin in Tilden Village, Jefferson Township, Madison, Nebraska on the 1900 census. Charles was born in Nebraska in December 1888.¹ This was the only census on which Charles Olin has been found. Yet obituaries and other documents attest to his existence for more than forty more years. How (and why) did Charles Olin “fly under the radar” for so long?

Olin enlisted in the United States Army for a term of three years on 22 January 1908 at Fort William Henry Harrison in Montana. The enlistment papers indicate he was 21 years 1 month at the time of his enlistment and identify T. M. Olin of Tilden, Nebraska as his father.² The town of Tilden, Nebraska lies mainly in Madison County, with a portion of the town in Antelope County.³ Only one Olin with the initials T. M. appears on the 1900 and 1910 U.S. census in Madison or Antelope counties, Thomas M. Olin, husband of Margaret.⁴

Charles’ birth date as provided in Thomas Olin’s pension application was 13 December 1888, making him 19 years and 1 month at the time of his enlistment.⁵ Though the age is off by exactly two years, the identification of T.M. Olin as his father is convincing evidence that Charles Olin who enlisted at Ft. William Henry Harrison is the son of Thomas Olin and wife Margaret. If he enlisted in the army in January 1908, one month after his 19th birthday, it is reasonable to assume that Charles was living with his parents in Tilden up until his enlistment.

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¹ 1900 U.S. census, Jefferson, Madison, Nebraska, population schedule, enumeration district (ED) 119, p. 9B, dwelling 186, family 188, Thomas M. Olin; digital images, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 1 February 2019); citing National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) microfilm publication, T623, roll 934.

² Charles M. Olin, Medical Examination of Recruits, 22 January 1908, Ft. W. H. Harrison, Montana, attested by Capt. J. H. Ford, 6th Infantry; Entry No. 91; Enlistment Papers, 1798 to October 31, 1912; Records of the Adjutant General’s Office, 1780s-1917, Record Group 94; National Archives, Washington, D.C.

³ *Wikipedia* (<http://en.wikipedia.org>), “Tilden, Nebraska” rev. 19:31, 12 January 2019.

⁴ Search of 1900 and 1910 U.S. censuses for Thomas M. Olin in Nebraska in Madison and Antelope counties; digital images, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 1 February 2019); citing NARA microfilm publication T623, rolls 916 and 934 and NARA microfilm publication T624 rolls 838 and 851.

⁵ Thomas M. Olin (Pvt., 8th Independent Battery, Wisconsin Volunteer Light Artillery, Civil War), pension no. S.C. 385,894, Case Files of Approved Pension Applications..., 1861-1934; Civil War and Later Pension Files; Department of Veterans Affairs, Record Group 15; National Archives, Washington, D.C.

There are no compiled military service records for Charles Olin. He served in the United States Army, also known as the “Regular Army.”⁶ “The War Department did not compile military records for men who served in the regular army.”⁷

Charles Olin deserted the army on 2 November 1908.⁸ Apparently he evaded capture and court martial for his desertion.⁹

Miscellaneous Other Records for Charles Olin

Records for Olin family members point toward residences for Charles on the west coast, including San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Portland.

- Charles Olin of San Francisco was named as a surviving son in Thomas Olin’s 1920 obituary.¹⁰
- The San Francisco *Chronicle* reported on a 1931 marriage license issued in Reno for Charles Olin and Ethel Parker, both of Los Angeles.¹¹
- Margaret Mahood Olin’s 1935 obituary listed survivors Mrs. Lavina Smith, Omaha, Mrs. Clarissa Goodall, Ft. Collins, Colo., Mrs. Sarah Ives, Tilden, Joseph Olin, North Bend, Wash. [sic], Chas Olin, Portland, Ore., and one stepson, I. R. Olin, Tilden.¹²
- Joseph Olin’s 1946 obituary identified among the survivors, “...a brother Charles Olin, San Francisco; and three sisters, Mrs. M. Lavilina [sic] Smith and Mrs. Sadie Ives, Nebraska and Mrs. Clara McIntosh, Colorado.”¹³

⁶ Charles M. Olin, Medical Examination of Recruits, 22 January 1908, Ft. W. H. Harrison, Montana, entry No. 91; Enlistment papers 1798 to October 31, 1912; RG 94, Na-Washington.

⁷ Trevor K. Plante, “An Overview of Records at the National Archives Relating to Military Service,” Prologue: The Journal of the National Archives 34 (Fall 2002): digital images, *National Archives* (<https://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/2002/fall/military-records-overview.html> : accessed 22 March 2019).

⁸ “6th Infantry, January 1905-December 1909”, November 1908, p. 5, Loss-Deserted, entry no. 7, Charles M. Olin; imaged in “Returns from Regular Army Infantry Regiments, June 1821 to December 1916,” database with images, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 15 July 2018) > image 352 of 457; imaged from U.S. Returns from Regular Army Infantry Regiments, 1821-1916, microfilm publication M655, 300 Rolls (Washington, D.C.; National Archives and Records Service, 1966), roll 75, Sixth Infantry, 1905-1909.

⁹ Index to Army Court Martial Cases, 1894-1917, entry PC-29 17, Kelly to Ray, Container #3; Newman-Oyola, p. 461, “Olesen, Fred W. to Oliver, Edward M.; Office of the Judge Advocate General (Army), Record Group 193; National Archives, Washington, D.C.

¹⁰ “Death Comes to Sadden Many Homes: Thomas Madison Olin,” *Tilden Citizen* (Tilden, Nebraska), 20 February 1920, p. 1, col. 1.

¹¹ “Reno Marriage Licenses,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, 30 December 1931, p. 11, cols. 7-8; digital images, *NewsBank: San Francisco Chronicle* (access through participating libraries : accessed 1 February 2019).

¹² “Margaret Olin, Pioneer Resident Dies at Ninety,” *Tilden Citizen*, 18 July 1935, p. 1 col. 6.

¹³ “J. S. Olin Passes at Keizer Hospital,” *Coos Bay Harbor* (North Bend, Oregon), 15 August 1946, p. 1, col.6.

- Joseph Olin's granddaughter shared stories told by her mother, Margaret Olin Hewett, and provided access to Margaret's scrapbooks, documenting visits by Margaret and her husband to San Francisco during the early to mid-1940s, where "Uncle Charles took them to fancy restaurants and plays and the opera."¹⁴

Though obituaries and family stories indicate Charles lived in San Francisco, he does not appear in censuses, military draft registrations, or voting registers in San Francisco.

- No Charles Olin appears in the 1910-1940 US Federal censuses in San Francisco.¹⁵
- No Charles Olin born in Nebraska in 1888 +/- 10 years appears in World War I or World War II draft registrations.¹⁶
- No Charles Olin appears in San Francisco voting registers.¹⁷

Only one record, not created by, nor tied to, the Olin family, has been located in San Francisco for Charles Olin: a 1912 San Francisco city directory entry for a bartender named Charles Olin residing at 140 Ellis.¹⁸

The only governmental agency record found for Charles Olin after 1908 is an Affidavit of Application for Marriage License in Washoe County, Nevada. Charles Olin of Los Angeles, California, not previously married, requested a license to authorize his marriage with Ethel Parker. Both Ethel Parker and Charles Olin swore an oath and signed the affidavit on 29 October 1931.¹⁹

It is possible that Charles Olin's desertion from the U.S. Army in 1908 prompted him to avoid interactions with the government. At the time of Charles' desertion, "the maximum limit of the term of confinement (at hard labor) for desertion committed in

¹⁴ Joan Hewett Kingsley [ADDRESS FOR PRIVATE USE], Portland, Oregon, interviews by Mary Kircher Roddy, April 2018; notes privately held by Roddy [ADDRESS FOR PRIVATE USE], Seattle, Washington, 2019. Joan related stories her mother and father told about time spent with Joan's mother's "Uncle Charles."

¹⁵ *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 1 February 2019), in database = "Census & Voter Lists," 1900s, for "First and Middle Names" = Cha* (exact), "Last Name" = Olin (exact, sounds like and similar), "Birth year" = 1888 +/- 10, "Lived In" = San Francisco, California, USA (exact to this place).

¹⁶ For WWI draft registrations, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 1 February 2019), in database = "U.S., World War I Draft Registration Cards, 1917-1918," for "First and Middle Names" = Cha* (exact), "Last Name" = Olin (exact, sounds like and similar), "Birth year" = 1888 +/- 10, "Birth Location" = Nebraska, USA (exact to this place). For WW2 draft registrations, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 1 February 2019), in database = "U.S., World War II Draft Registration Cards, 1942," for "First and Middle Names" = Cha* (exact), "Last Name" = Olin (exact, sounds like and similar), "Birth year" = 1888 +/- 10, "Birth Location" = Nebraska, USA (exact to this place).

¹⁷ *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 1 February 2019), in database = "California, Voter Registrations, 1900-1968," for "First and Middle Names" = Cha* (exact), "Last Name" = Olin (exact and sounds like), "Lived In" = San Francisco County, California, USA (exact to county & adjacent counties).

¹⁸ H.S. Crocker, compiler, *Crocker Langley San Francisco Directory for the Year Ending August 1912* (San Francisco: H. S. Crocker Co., 1912), 1296, Chas Olin; digital images, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 1 February 2019).

¹⁹ Washoe County, Nevada, Affidavit of Application for Marriage License, no. 29069, Olin-Parker, 1931; County Clerk's Office, Reno.

time of peace” was three years.²⁰ In order to avoid this punishment, Charles may have adopted an alias. The absence of a court martial for Charles Olin indicates this strategy was effective.

Charles Melville

Charles Olin does not appear in census records, draft registrations or voting registers. However, a Charles Melville with similar details does.

- Charles Melville, born 13 December 1887 in Chicago, residing at 111 Mason, San Francisco, registered for the draft on 5 June 1917. His occupation was unemployed bookkeeper.²¹
- Charles Melville was classified 1A and called for a physical examination on 26 May 1918. After the examination he was classified 5G, ineligible for induction into military service.²²
- Charles Melville appeared on the 1919 list of registered voters, residing at 238 O’Farrell in San Francisco.²³
- Charles Madison Melville, born 13 December 1888, residing at 950 Franklin Str. in San Francisco, registered for the draft 27 April 1942. His birth place was given as San Francisco. He was employed by T. A. Brown of the Val Mar Social Club.²⁴ The Val Mar Social Club was an club operated by Arthur Brown, and was raided in 1948 as part of a crackdown on gambling establishments.²⁵

²⁰ Lt. Col. John Biddle Porter, *The Military Laws of the United States, 4th ed., 1901, With Supplement Showing Changes to August 22, 1911* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office 1911, p. 1541; digital images, *HathiTrust* (<https://babel.hathitrust.org> : accessed 1 February 2019).

²¹ “United States World War I Draft Registration Cards, 1917-1918,” database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1968530> : accessed 3 September 2018) California > San Francisco City no 13 > Lu, C.-Pucci, A. > image 1808, card for Charles Melville; National Archives Microfilm publication M1509, roll CA304.

²² Zina Rhone, Archives Technician NARA at Atlanta, [(E-ADDRESS FOR PRIVATE USE),} to Mary Kircher Roddy, e-mail, 22 February 2019, “Re: Research in Atlanta at National Archives,” Personal Correspondence Folder, Mary Kircher Roddy; privately held by Roddy, [(E-ADDRESS), & ADDRESS FOR PRIVATE USE], Seattle, Washington, 2019.

²³ “Supplementary to Register City and County of San Francisco to and Including October 14, 1919,” Precinct 38, Assembly Dist. 33, Charles Melville; imaged in “California, Voter Registrations, 1900-1968,” database with images, Ancestry (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 17 February 2019) > San Francisco County > 1919 > Roll 023 > image 846 of 861; citing Great Register of Voters. Sacramento, California: California State Library.

²⁴ “United States World War II Draft Registration Cards, 1942 [Fourth Draft; ‘Old Man’s Registration’], images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1861144> : accessed 15 July 2018), card for Charles Madison Melville, serial no. 1081, Local Draft Board 96, San Francisco, San Francisco County, California; citing NARA microfilm publications M1936, M1937, M1939, M1951, M1962, M1964, M1986, M2090, and M2097 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.).

²⁵ “Gambling Patrons Face Crackdown,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, 8 February 1948, p. 8, col. 6; digital images, *NewsBank: San Francisco Chronicle* (access through participating libraries : accessed 1 February 2019).

- Charles Melville, age 51, born in California, and his wife, Ethel, age 30, born in Texas, living at 601 O'Farrell St. in San Francisco, were enumerated on the 1940 census. Charles' occupation was clerk in a social club.²⁶
- Charles and Ethel Melville appeared on the 1940 list of register voters, residing at 601 O'Farrell St. in San Francisco.²⁷
- Charles M. and Ethel L. Melville appeared on the 1944 list of register voters, residing at 950 Franklin in San Francisco.²⁸
- Charles Melville applied for a Social Security number on 3 January 1937. He listed a birth date of 13 December 1888 in San Francisco, California. His address was 318 So. Kingsley Dr., Los Angeles, California. His employer was Clarence Blazer. He identified parents as Thomas Madison Melville and Margaret Jane Wilson.²⁹ Thomas Madison Olin and Margaret Jane Mahood are the parents of Charles Olin.³⁰

To the extent that birthdates appear on these records, they are identical with that of Charles Olin, except for the date on the WWI draft registration which is exactly one year off. The first and middle names of the parents on the Application for Social Security Number are identical to those of Charles Olin.

The birth locations identified on World War I and World War II draft registrations, the Social Security number application, and the 1940 census enumeration for Charles Melville differ from the Nebraska birth of Charles Olin, but it is possible he changed this detail in order to avoid reporting commonalities with the Army deserter, Charles Madison Olin.

Charles Melville was mentioned in a number of articles in San Francisco newspapers between 1915 and 1918.

²⁶ 1940 U.S. census, San Francisco County, California, population schedule, San Francisco Assembly District 22, ED 38-175, p. 17A, dwell. 758, Charles Milville; digital images, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com> ; accessed 12 December 2018); citing NARA microfilm publication, T627, roll 305.

²⁷ "Index to Register City and County of San Francisco to and Including July 18, 1940," Precinct 95, Assembly Dist. 22, Charles Melville, affidavit no. 116 and Ethel L. Melville, affidavit no. 117; imaged in "California, Voter Registers, 1900-1968," database with images, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 1 February 2019) > San Francisco County > 1940 > Roll 064 > image 1591 of 2106; citing Great Register of Voters, California State Library, Sacramento.

²⁸ "Index to Register City and County of San Francisco to and Including September 28, 1944," Pct. 1, AD 23, Charles Melville, affidavit no. 51 and Ethel L. Melville, affidavit no. 52; imaged in "California, Voter Registers, 1900-1968," database with images, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 1 February 2019) > San Francisco County > 1944 > Roll 073 > image 11 of 1300; citing Great Register of Voters, California State Library, Sacramento.

²⁹ Charles Madison Melville, SS no. 564-10-4831, 3 January 1937, Application for Account Number (Form SS-5), Social Security Administration, Baltimore, Maryland.

³⁰ Thomas M. Olin Civil War pension no. S.C. 385,894, RG 15, NA-Washington.

- “Charles Melville, 674 Broadway” - \$200 in currency stolen from his coat left in his unlocked room.³¹
- Billiards runs worth mention – Seven by G. [sic] Melville³²
- Charlie Melville angry over billiards – lost to J. Holbrook.³³
- Charlie Melville returns to San Francisco after playing billiards in Sacramento.³⁴
- Charlie Melville “will probably be taken from the ranks of prominent billiardists of the city...” being called for the draft.³⁵
- At Wright’s... “Charlie Melville and T. Hollingsworth are scheduled to clash tonight.”³⁶ (Wright’s Billiard Palace was located at 82 Ellis St. in San Francisco in 1918.)³⁷
- “Charlie Melville, local billiard star, left San Francisco yesterday for an Army camp, being on [sic] of those in the draft.”³⁸
- “Charles Melville, the local billiard fan, has been laid up for about ten days and is recuperating from his illness in fine shape.”³⁹

The addresses for Charles Olin’s 1912 city directory entry and Charles Melville’s 1917 draft registration and 1919 voter registration are each within about two blocks of Wright’s Billiard Palace.⁴⁰ It seems likely that billiardist Charles Melville mentioned in the newspaper articles is Charles Olin using the alias Melville.

Neither Charles Melville nor Charles Olin was included in San Francisco City directories between 1913 and 1920.⁴¹ The addresses on Charles Melville’s 1917 draft

³¹ “Woman’s Escort is Beaten and Robbed,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, 10 January 1915, p. 32, col. 3; digital images, *ProQuest Historical Newspapers: San Francisco Chronicle* (access through participating libraries : accessed 1 February 2019).

³² “Billiards,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, 22 February 1918, p. 12, col. 7; digital images, *ProQuest Historical Newspapers: San Francisco Chronicle* (access through participating libraries : accessed 1 February 2019).

³³ “Billiards,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, 13 April 1918, p. 8, col. 7; digital images, *ProQuest Historical Newspapers: San Francisco Chronicle* (access through participating libraries : accessed 1 February 2019).

³⁴ “Billiards,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, 21 April 1918, p. N9, col. 8; digital images, *ProQuest Historical Newspapers: San Francisco Chronicle* (access through participating libraries : accessed 1 February 2019).

³⁵ “Billiards,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, 1 May 1918, p. 8, col. 5; ; digital images, *ProQuest Historical Newspapers: San Francisco Chronicle* (access through participating libraries : accessed 1 February 2019).

³⁶ “Billiards,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, 25 June 1918, p. 8, col. 7; ; digital images, *ProQuest Historical Newspapers: San Francisco Chronicle* (access through participating libraries : accessed 1 February 2019).

³⁷ H.S. Crocker, compiler, *Crocker Langley San Francisco Directory for the Year Ending June 1918* (San Francisco: H. S. Crocker Co., 1918), 1802, Wright’s Billiard Palace; digital images, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 1 February 2019).

³⁸ “Billiards,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, 26 June 1918, p. 12, col. 6; ; digital images, *ProQuest Historical Newspapers: San Francisco Chronicle* (access through participating libraries : accessed 1 February 2019).

³⁹ “Billiards,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, 14 July 1918, p. N7, col. 3; ; digital images, *ProQuest Historical Newspapers: San Francisco Chronicle* (access through participating libraries : accessed 1 February 2019).

⁴⁰ Map, *GoogleMaps* (<http://maps.google.com> : accessed 17 February 2019).

⁴¹ H.S. Crocker, compiler, *Crocker Langley San Francisco Directory for the Year Ending July 1913* (San Francisco: H. S. Crocker Co., 1918), pp. 1257, 1389-90; similarly, June 1914, pp. 1295, 1433-4; June 1915, pp. 1322, 1466, 1468; June 1916, 1305, 1450-1; June 1917, 1392, 1544-5; June 1918, 1173, 1298-9; July 1919, 1119, 1245-6; 1920, 1126, 1230-1; digital images, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 1 February 2019).

registration and his 1919 voter registration are in the Tenderloin neighborhood.⁴² The 1919 address was the Appleton Hotel, “a seven-story Class B building containing 132 rooms and 100 baths.”⁴³ The 1917 address was for the Alda Hotel.⁴⁴ These hotels were Single-Room Occupancy hotels. Many such building were built in the Tenderloin and other neighborhoods in San Francisco in the decades following the 1906 earthquake.⁴⁵ Traditionally they were used by low-wage and transient workers.”⁴⁶ Few people appear in the 1918 San Francisco city directory with these addresses.⁴⁷ It is not surprising Charles was not listed in city directories of the era.

Neither Charles Melville nor Charles Olin appear on the 1918 voting register covering the period up to and including July 27, 1918.⁴⁸ The 1919 voting register on which Charles Melville appears is dated “to and including October 4, 1919.”⁴⁹ It can be deduced that Charles Melville registered to vote in San Francisco sometime between 28 July 1918 and 4 October 1919. Charles Olin, using the name Charles Melville, was reported playing billiards in San Francisco as late as mid-July 1918.⁵⁰

Charles Melville appears on some California records outside of San Francisco:

- Charles Melville, a lodger, age 32, was enumerated on the 1920 census in San Diego, California. He worked as a clerk in a club room. His birth place was

⁴² *Wikipedia* (<http://en.wikipedia.org>), “Tenderloin, San Francisco” rev. 05:16, 5 February 2019.

⁴³ For address of 238 O’Farrell as Appleton Hotel see “Says Woman Lured Him Over U.S.,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, 31 March 1916, p. 11, col. 2; digital images, *ProQuest Historical Newspapers: San Francisco Chronicle* (access through participating libraries : accessed 1 February 2019). For description of Appleton Hotel see “Large Holding on O’Farrell Street is Sold,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, 6 March 1920, p. 9, col. 7; digital images, *ProQuest Historical Newspapers: San Francisco Chronicle* (access through participating libraries : accessed 1 February 2019).

⁴⁴ “Man, Leaving Girl Who Took Poison, Goes Back to Work,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, 31 January 1917, p. 11, col 4; digital images, *ProQuest Historical Newspapers: San Francisco Chronicle* (access through participating libraries : accessed 1 February 2019).

⁴⁵ “Heart and History in San Francisco’s Tenderloin,” *Hosteling International Northern California Hostels*, (<http://norcalhostels.org/news/history-and-heart-san-franciscos-tenderloin> : accessed 23 June 2018).

⁴⁶ “History Of S.R.O. Residential Hotels In San Francisco,” *Central City S.R.O. Collaborative*, (<http://www.ccsroc.net/s-r-o-hotels-in-san-francisco/> : accessed 23 June 2018).

⁴⁷ *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 17 February 2019), in database = “U.S. City Directories, 1822-1995,” for “Any Event” = San Francisco, California, “Residence Year” = 1918, and “Key Word” = 111 Mason (exact), 238 O’Farrell (exact) and Appleton Hotel (exact), three separate searches, conducted 23 June 2018.

⁴⁸ *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 17 February 2019), in database = “California, Voter Registrations, 1900-1968,” for “First and Middle Names” = Cha* (exact), “Last Name” = Melville (exact and sounds like), and Olin (exact and sounds like), “Lived In” = San Francisco County, California, USA (exact to county & adjacent counties), “Residence Year” = 1918 (exact to this year; citing Great Register of Voters, California State Library, Sacramento).

⁴⁹ San Francisco, California, Index to Registration Affidavits, 1919, Pct. 38, AD 33, for Charles Melville.

⁵⁰ “Billiards,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, 14 July 1918, p. 55, col. 3; digital images, *ProQuest Historical Newspapers: San Francisco Chronicle* (access through participating libraries : accessed 1 February 2019).

Illinois and his parents were born in New York.⁵¹ No information is given as to who provided the residents' personal details to the enumerator. The official date of the 1920 census was 1 January 1920.⁵²

- Charles Melville appeared on the voting register for November 1920, residing at in Calexico. He lived at the St. Francisco Hotel and worked as a clerk.⁵³
- Charles and Ethel Melville appeared in the 1932 Long Beach directory. Charles worked as a salesman and they lived at 726 Maine av.⁵⁴

The date of the 1919 voting register places Charles Melville in San Francisco within seven months of the obituary of Thomas Olin. The enumeration of Charles Melville in the 1920 census places him in San Diego on 1 January 1920. It is possible that the author of Thomas Olin's February 1920 obituary was unaware Charles had moved from San Francisco to San Diego.

Charles Melville appears in various records in Portland, Oregon consistent with the residence of Charles Olin as mentioned in his mother's obituary:

- Charles Melville, automobile salesman, age 41, born in Illinois, with father and mother born in Illinois and Northern Ireland respectively, was enumerated on the 1930 census living at 189 Vista Avenue in Portland.⁵⁵ Margaret Jane Mahood Olin, Charles Olin's mother, was born in Northern Ireland.⁵⁶
- Charles Melville was robbed at gunpoint as he was parking his automobile in front of his residence on Vista Avenue on 11 February 1930.⁵⁷

⁵¹ 1920 U.S. census, San Diego County, California, population schedule, San Diego Township, ED 270, p. 12B, dwell. 62, fam. 10, Charles Melville in Stanley Goodan household; digital images, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com> ; accessed 12 December 2018); citing NARA microfilm publication, T625, roll 131.

⁵² "1920 Overview," *United States Census Bureau* (www.census.gov : accessed 28 October 2018).

⁵³ "Index to Great Register, Calexico Precinct No. 1, Imperial County, California, 1920," no. 223, Charles Melville; imaged in "California, Voter Registrations, 1900-1968," database with images, *Ancestry* (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 17 February 2019) > Imperial County > 1920-1926 > Roll 002 > image 66 of 1294; citing Great Register of Voters. Sacramento, California: California State Library.

⁵⁴ R. L. Polk, publisher, *Polk's Long Beach California Directory 1932* (Long Beach: R. L. Polk & Co. of California, 1932), p. 402; digital images, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com> ; accessed 1 February 2019).

⁵⁵ 1930 U.S. census, Multnomah County, Oregon, population schedule, Portland City, Election Precinct 49, ED 26-53, p. 1B, dwell. 6, fam. 7, Charles Melville; digital images, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com> ; accessed 12 December 2018); citing NARA microfilm publication, T626, roll 1949.

⁵⁶ 1930 U.S. census, Madison County, Nebraska, population schedule, Tilden City, Jefferson Township, ED 60-28, p. 2B, dwell. 45, fam. 45, Margaret Olin; digital images, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com> ; accessed 18 February 2019); citing NARA microfilm publication, T626, roll 1288.

⁵⁷ "Robber Obtains \$369," *Morning Oregonian*, 12 February 1930, p. 22, col. 2; digital images, *NewsBank: Oregonian* (access through participating libraries : accessed 1 February 2019).

- Charles Melville, salesman, was arrested in a former basement poolroom 28 March 1934 on charges of conducting gambling games.⁵⁸
- Chas Melville, clerk, and wife Ethel L appeared in the 1935 Portland city directory living at 1811 NW Couch, apt 311.⁵⁹
- Charles Melville, along with nine other people, was arrested 19 January 1936 in a raid on The Spinning Wheel, an alleged gambling house near Tigard, Oregon, and charged with gambling and selling liquor after hours.⁶⁰

Charles Melville identified his employer in 1937 as Clarence Blazier [sic]. Blazier was arrested for being part of a bootlegging ring in Portland and San Francisco in 1918.⁶¹ In 1931 Blazier received a jail sentence and a fine for illegally operating a gambling ship off the California coast.⁶² He continued to operate gambling ships throughout the 1930s.⁶³ Charles Melville, playing billiards in San Francisco in 1918, may first have made the acquaintance of bootlegging Blazier about this same time. Blazier's family in Portland, including a brother Eugene, may have provided opportunities for Charles in the gambling world in Portland.⁶⁴

Charles Melville died in 1951 in Las Vegas, Nevada. His death certificate and obituary provide details which match those of Charles Melville from San Francisco and Charles Olin, son of Thomas Olin:

- Charles Melville was born in Tilden, Nebraska on 13 December 1888.⁶⁵ The birthdate is the same date as that of Charles Olin.⁶⁶ The birth location is the

⁵⁸ "20 Arrested in Raids," *Morning Oregonian*, 29 March 1934, p. 6, col. 4; digital images, *NewsBank: Oregonian* (access through participating libraries : accessed 1 February 2019).

⁵⁹ R. L. Polk, publisher, *Polk's Portland (Oregon) City Directory 1935* (Portland: R. L. Polk & Co., 1935), p. 862; digital images, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 1 February 2019).

⁶⁰ "Police Nab Ten in Sudden Raid," *Morning Oregonian*, 21 January 1936, p. 4, col. 4; digital images, *NewsBank: Oregonian* (access through participating libraries : accessed 1 February 2019).

⁶¹ "Clarence Blazier is Placed under Arrest," *The Oregon Sunday Journal* (Portland), 7 April 1918, p. 7, col. 5; digital images, *NewsBank: Oregonian* (access through participating libraries : accessed 1 February 2019).

⁶² "Game Ship Men Sentenced," *Los Angeles Times*, 21 January 1931, p. A3, cols. 6-7; digital images, *ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Los Angeles Times* (access through participating libraries : accessed 1 February 2019).

⁶³ Advertisement, S.S. Tango, *Los Angeles Times*, sec. 2, p. 12, cols. 7-8; digital images, *ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Los Angeles Times* (access through participating libraries : accessed 1 February 2019). See also "Raids Close Three Gaming Ships," *Los Angeles Times*, 2 August 1939, p. A, cols. 2-3; digital images, *ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Los Angeles Times* (access through participating libraries : accessed 1 February 2019).

⁶⁴ For relationship of Clarence and Eugene Blazier see "Obituary – Mrs. Blanche Morrison," *The Oregonian*, 9 May 1952, p. 17, col. 4; ; digital images, *NewsBank: Oregonian* (access through participating libraries : accessed 1 February 2019). For an example Eugene Blazier's connection with gambling see "Gambling is Charged," *Morning Oregonian*, 23 August 1917, p. 18, cols. 3-5; digital images, *NewsBank: Oregonian* (access through participating libraries : accessed 1 February 2019).

⁶⁵ Nevada State Department of Health, death certificate no. 51-660 (1951), Charles Melville; Department of Health, Carson City; "Nevada, Death Certificates, 1911-1965," digital images, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 11 April 2018).

⁶⁶ Thomas M. Olin Civil War pension no. S.C. 385,894, RG 15, NA-Washington.

same as used by Charles Olin when he enlisted in the army in 1908.⁶⁷ It is also consistent with the 1900 census of son Charles Olin in the household of Thomas and Margaret Olin.⁶⁸

- The informant on Charles Melville's death certificate was Mrs. Ethel Melville.⁶⁹ Ethel was the name of the woman Charles Olin married in Reno in 1931.⁷⁰
- Charles Melville's occupation was "Dealer" in a "Clubman" industry.⁷¹ This occupation is consistent with the occupations of Charles Melville whose 1942 draft registration shows he worked at the Val Mar Social club, Charles Melville who was arrested multiple times in Portland for gambling violations, Charles Melville who worked for Charles Blazier and Charles Melville who was enumerated in 1920 in San Diego and worked as a clerk in a club room.
- His obituary identifies him as Charles Madison Melville, "former casino employe [sic] at the Desert Inn resort hotel." It indicates he was born in Sheldon, Nebraska and resided in Las Vegas about two years, after coming from San Francisco.⁷² Sheldon is likely a mistake for Tilden.
- Survivors include "his widow, Mrs. Ethel Melville of Las Vegas and two sisters, Mrs. C. E. Smith of Omaha, Nebraska and Mrs. Clara McIntosh of Fr. Collins, Colorado."⁷³ Sisters Lavina Smith and Clara McIntosh had also been listed in the obituary of their brother, Joseph Olin.⁷⁴ Clinton Edwin Smith was husband of Margaret Lavina Olin.⁷⁵

Olin Family Artifacts - Postcards

Postcards sent to Joseph Olin provide evidence merging Charles Olin and Charles Melville into one person.

On the front of one post card is a color image of the entrance to Tijuana Fair. Printed in the upper left corner of the image are the words "4793. Tijuana Fair, Tijuana, Mexico." The picture shows two large towers, joined by an archway, bearing the words "Welcome Tijuana Fair." Flagpoles top each tower, the one on the left bearing a

⁶⁷ Charles M. Olin, Medical Examination of Recruits, 22 January 1908, Ft. W. H. Harrison, Montana; Entry No. 91; Enlistment Papers, 1798 to October 31, 1912; Records of the Adjutant General's Office, 1780s-1917, Record Group 94; NA, Washington.

⁶⁸ 1900 U.S. census, Jefferson, Madison, Nebraska, population schedule, enumeration district (ED) 119, p. 9B, dwelling 186, family 188, Thomas M. Olin; digital images, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 1 February 2019); citing National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) microfilm publication, T623, roll 934.

⁶⁹ Nevada death certificate no. 51-660 (1951), Charles Melville.

⁷⁰ Washoe Co., Nev., Affidavit of Application for Marriage License, no. 29069.

⁷¹ Nevada death certificate no. 51-660 (1951), Charles Melville.

⁷² "Melville Rites Slated Monday," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, 25 May 1951, p. 2, col. 4.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ "J. S. Olin Passes at Keizer Hospital," *Coos Bay Harbor*, 15 August 1946, p. 1, col. 6.

⁷⁵ Madison County, Nebraska, Marriage Records, 4:548, Clinton Edwin Smith and Margaret Lavina Olin, 1897; State Library and Archives, Nebraska State Historical Society, Lincoln; "Nebraska, Marriage Records, 1855-1908," digital images *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 3 February 2019).

Mexican flag and the one on the right a U.S. flag. The reverse side of the postcard is printed with publication information, including the words “Published by I. L. Eno, San Diego, Cal. Made in U.S.A.” The font used on the front and the printing on the back is identical to that used on a postcard, “4779. Enraging the Bull, Plaza de Toros, Tijuana, Mexico,” imaged in the Baja California and the West Postcard Collection.⁷⁶ Tijuana Fair was a casino on the corner of Second Avenue and Constitution in Tijuana built in 1915. It offered “boxing, gambling, cockfights, bullfights... and a nightclub featuring female models brought in from San Francisco.”⁷⁷ On this postcard Charles wrote:

How do you like the looks of this. [sic] Was up in L.A. last week and didn't get to send your cards. Wrote you a letter. [illegible] soon.

Charles

*Waldorf Hotel. San Diego*⁷⁸

On the front of the second postcard is a black and white photo of the Owl Theatre, in flames. Lettering in white in the upper right corner of the image, which appears to be the work of the postcard publisher reads, “Destruction By Fire Of The Owl Theatre – Feb. 9, 1920. Mexicali B. C. Mexico”.⁷⁹ The Owl Theatre, located just across the border from Calexico, “prospered with gambling, liquor sales and prostitution.”⁸⁰ The fire at the Owl could be seen from miles around.⁸¹ On the reverse of this postcard to J. S. Olin, Charles wrote:

Dear Bro & Sis – This was sure some fire. Theatre & gambling house confined. Will write you soon. Love to all.

*Chas*⁸²

Photographs provided by Joan Kingsley show Charles and his sister-in-law, Ida Lawler Olin, in affectionate poses, arms around each other.⁸³ “Sis” in the salutation on the Owl Theatre postcard likely refers to Ida rather than one of Charles’ sisters.

⁷⁶ “Baja California and the West Postcard Collection, MSS 235,” Special Collections & Archives, UC San Diego, (<https://library.ucsd.edu/dc/object/bb95245371> : accessed 22 June 2018).

⁷⁷ Lawrence A. Herzog, *From Aztec to High Teck: Architecture and Landscape Across the Mexico-United States Border* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 66-7.

⁷⁸ Charles M. Olin (San Diego, California) to J. S. [Joseph Samuel] Olin, Tijuana Fair postcard, ca. 1920; privately held by author, [ADDRESS FOR PRIVATE USE,] Seattle, Washington, 2018. Postcards were passed from Joseph Olin to his daughter Margaret to her daughter Joan Hewett Kingsley. In 2018 Joan gave postcards and other Olin family artifacts to Mary Roddy.

⁷⁹ Charles M. Olin (unknown residence, possibly Calexico, California) to J. S. Olin, Owl Theatre postcard, ca. 1920; privately held by author, [ADDRESS FOR PRIVATE USE,] Seattle, Washington, 2018.

⁸⁰ “Frank ‘Booze’ Beyer and Tijuana,” *San Diego Yesterday* (<http://www.sandiegoyesterday.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/Beyer.pdf> : accessed 22 June 2018).

⁸¹ “Three Shot as Dash to Grab Coin Follows Gambling-House Fire,” *Los Angeles Times*, 10 February 1920, p. 1, col. 7; *ProQuest Historical Newspapers: San Francisco Chronicle* (access through participating libraries : accessed 1 February 2019).

⁸² Charles M. Olin to J. S. Olin, Owl Theatre postcard.

⁸³ Charles Olin and Ida (Lawler) Olin photographs ca. 1925, privately held by Mary Kircher Roddy, [ADDRESS FOR PRIVATE USE,] Seattle, Washington, 2018. Photos were passed from Ida to her daughter

Both postcards were addressed to “Mr. J. S. Olin, North Bend, Oregon.” Both postcards bear Mexican postage stamps. The stamp on the Owl Theatre postcard has an image of Jesus Carranza and is a 4 Centavos stamp. This stamp was issued in 1917 and was in use until at least 1923.⁸⁴ The stamp on the Tijuana Fair postcard is a 5 Centavos stamp with a picture of Maclovio Herrera. This stamp was also first issued in 1917 and was in use until at least 1923.⁸⁵

Charles Melville was enumerated in San Diego in January 1920, working as a clerk in a club room about a month before the Owl fire.⁸⁶ He was listed in the voting register for the November 1920 election with an address in Calexico.⁸⁷ The timing indicates he moved to Calexico from San Diego sometime between January and October 1920. Neither the census nor the voting register identify his employer. Charles may have chosen to send these particular cards to his brother Joseph because had special interest in either the Owl or Tijuana Fair as an employee, as a customer, or both. Regardless, Charles’ connection to the images of establishments of “vice-tourism” support merging the identity of Charles Olin, brother of Joseph, with clubman/gambler/dealer Charles Melville of San Francisco, Portland and Las Vegas.

Searches for other men named Charles Olin and Charles Melville

There are no Melville families found living in Madison or surrounding counties in Nebraska in the 1880, 1900 or 1910 US federal censuses.⁸⁸ With no Melville families in the area in 1880 or 1900, it is unlikely that a Charles Madison Melville was born 13 December 1888 in Tilden, Nebraska, the exact same date and place where Charles Madison Olin was born. The lack of a candidate for a Charles Melville born in Tilden supports the contention that the Las Vegas death certificate for Charles Melville is really that of Charles Olin.

No Charles Olin appears in San Francisco city directories between 1918 and 1922, the years closest to the date of Thomas Madison Olin’s obituary identifying son Charles’

Margaret to her daughter, Joan Hewett Kingsley. In 2018 Joan gave a number of photos and other Olin family artifacts to Mary Roddy.

⁸⁴ Donna Houseman and James E. Kloetzel, *Scott 2018 Standard Postage Stamp Catalogue, Volume 4: Countries J-M from Around the World* (Scott Standard Postage Catalogue), Vol 4 B (Sydney, Ohio: Amos Media Company, July 2017), 360.

⁸⁵ Houseman, *Scott 2018 Catalog*, 360.

⁸⁶ 1920 U.S. census, San Diego, Co., Calif., San Diego Twp, p. 128, ED 270, dwell 62, fam. 10, Charles Melville in Stanley Goodan household.

⁸⁷ Imperial County, Calif., Calexico Pct. No. 1, Index to Great Register, 1920, no. 223, for Charles Melville.

⁸⁸ *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 11 June 2018), in database = “U.S. Federal Census Collection,” for 1880, 1900 and 1910 U.S. Federal Census, for “Last Name” = Mel* (exact, sounds like and similar), “Lived In” = Madison County, Nebraska, USA (exact to county & adjacent counties).

residence.⁸⁹ No Charles Olin appears in California voting registers in San Francisco between 1918 and 1922.⁹⁰

Searches for Charles Olin in Portland in 1935 consistent with a candidate for the son Charles mentioned Margaret Olin's obituary identified no Charles Olin in the 1934 Portland directory.⁹¹ A Charles A. Olin and wife Mildred appear in the 1935 Portland directory.⁹² Charles Alfred Olin, husband of Mildred, was born in 1896 in Girard, Kansas.⁹³ The middle initial and wife's name of this Charles Olin are inconsistent with the known details of Margaret Mahood Olin's son. However, a Chas Melville and wife Ethel L. lived at 1811 NW Couch, apt 311 in Portland in 1935.⁹⁴

No one named Charles Olin or Charles Melville who could be the brother mentioned in Joseph Olin's 1945 obituary appears in the 1945 San Francisco city directory.⁹⁵

DNA Evidence

Charles and Ethel Melville had no children. No children appear with them in the 1940 census.⁹⁶ No surviving children are mentioned in Charles Melville's obituaries.⁹⁷ Charles was 42 years old when he married Ethel. On his marriage license he reported that it was his first marriage.⁹⁸ It is possible he fathered one or more illegitimate children prior to his marriage to Ethel. But with no legitimate issue of Charles Melville,

⁸⁹ H.S. Crocker, compiler, *Crocker Langley San Francisco Directory for the Year Ending June 1918* (San Francisco: H. S. Crocker Co., 1918), p. 1299; similarly, 1919, p. 1279; 1920, p. 1231; 1921, p. 1166; 1922, p. 1266; digital images, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 1 February 2019).

⁹⁰ *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 17 February 2019), in database = "California, Voter Registrations, 1900-1968," for "First and Middle Names" = Cha* (exact), "Last Name" = Olin (exact and sounds like), "Lived In" = San Francisco County, California, USA (exact to county & adjacent counties), "Residence Year" = 1920 +/- 2 years.

⁹¹ R. L. Polk, publisher, *Polk's Portland (Oregon) City Directory 1934 vol. LXIX* (Portland: R. L. Polk & Co., 1934), p. 985; digital images, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 1 February 2019), image 501.

⁹² R. L. Polk, publisher, *Polk's Portland (Oregon) City Directory 1935 vol. LXX* (Portland: R. L. Polk & Co., 1935), p. 957; digital images, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 1 February 2019), image 1549. Note, *Ancestry* identifies the directory as being for 1934. However, the 2104 images in the collection are comprised of the 1934 directory followed by the 1935 directory. Image 1067 shows the title page for the 1935 directory.

⁹³ "United States World War II Draft Registration Cards, 1942," images, *FamilySearch* card for Charles Madison Melville, serial no. 1081, Local Draft Board 96, San Francisco, Calif.

⁹⁴ *Polk's Portland City Directory 1935*, p. 862, image 1501.

⁹⁵ R. L. Polk, publisher, *Polk's Crocker-Langley San Francisco City Directory 1945* (San Francisco: R. L. Polk & Co., 1945), p. 1336 for Charles Olin and p. 1200 for Charles Melville; digital images, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 1 February 2019).

⁹⁶ 1940 U.S. census, San Francisco Co., Calif., San Francisco Assembly Dist. 22, p. 17A, ED 38-175, dwell. 758, Charles Milville.

⁹⁷ "Melville Rites Slated Monday," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, 25 May 1951, p. 2, col. 4. See also "Funeral Rites Set for Charles Melville," *Las Vegas Morning Sun*, 25 May 1951, p. 3, col. 2.

⁹⁸ Washoe Co., Nev., Affidavit of Application for Marriage License, no. 29069.

DNA testing will not necessarily provide evidence to merge the identities of Charles Olin and Charles Melville.

Physical Descriptions

Charles Olin's 1908 army enlistment and Charles Melville's 1917 and 1942 draft registrations provide physical descriptions.

	1908 Enlistment ^a	WWI Draft Card ^b	WWII Draft Card ^c
Eyes	Bro[wn] #4	gray	Hazel
Hair	D[ark] Br[own]	Black	Brown
Height	5'5"	medium	5'6"
Weight			135 lbs
Build		medium	
Complexion	Dark	Not asked	Light
Marks	Litany of small scars	Not asked	Scar on middle of forehead, under chin and mole behind right ear

^a Charles M. Olin, Medical Examination of Recruits, 22 January 1908, Ft. W. H. Harrison, Montana, attested by Capt. J. H. Ford, 6th Infantry; Entry No. 91; Enlistment Papers, 1798 to October 31, 1912; Records of the Adjutant General's Office, 1780s-1917, Record Group 94; National Archives, Washington, D.C.

^b "United States World War I Draft Registration Cards, 1917-1918," database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1968530> : accessed 3 September 2018) California > San Francisco City no 13 > Lu, C.-Pucci, A. > image 1808, card for Charles Melville; National Archives Microfilm publication M1509, roll CA304.

^c "United States World War II Draft Registration Cards, 1942 [Fourth Draft; 'Old Man's Registration'], images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1861144> : accessed 15 July 2018), card for Charles Madison Melville, serial no. 1081, Local Draft Board 96, San Francisco, San Francisco County, California; citing NARA microfilm publications M1936, M1937, M1939, M1951, M1962, M1964, M1986, M2090, and M2097 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.).

The height is consistent among all three records. The hair color varies between some shade of brown and black, but could be a subjective assessment which might differ among individual evaluators. Similar to the hair, description the eye colors can also subjectively vary. The appearance of hazel eyes can shift between brown and green.⁹⁹ The dark complexion of the 19-year-old son of a Nebraska farmer could be the natural result of working outdoors, and would not necessarily be inconsistent with the light complexion of the same man as a 53-year-old employee at a social club.

Olin Probate Files

Charles M. Olin was named as a legatee and heir-at-law in the probate proceedings of his parents, Thomas M. Olin and Margaret J. Olin. On 31 March 1920 in

⁹⁹ *Wikipedia* (<http://en.wikipedia.org>), "Eye Color" rev. 14:33, 18 January 2019.

the Petition for Settlement of Final Account in the matter of the Estate of Thomas M. Olin, he was identified as a son, with a residence “Not known.”¹⁰⁰

Charles was identified in Thomas Olin’s January 1920 obituary as living in San Francisco.¹⁰¹ But by 31 March his location was unknown by his family in Nebraska.¹⁰² He was listed under the name Charles Melville in the 1919 voting register in San Francisco.¹⁰³ By January 1920 he resided in San Diego, and later that year in Calexico.¹⁰⁴ Thomas Olin’s will provided that his wife would receive all his personal property and the “use, rents and profits arising from all the real estate owned by” him, and upon his death the real estate would be sold and the proceeds divided among his children.¹⁰⁵ It seems likely that, since no funds would be distributed to Charles in 1920 under the provisions of Thomas Olin’s will, his executor did not feel it necessary to determine Charles’ residence.

In the 1935 Petition for Final Settlement in the Estate of Margaret J. Olin, son Charles M. Olin’s residence was 1811 West [sic] Couch Street, Portland, Oregon.¹⁰⁶ In 1935 only one Charles Olin lived in Portland, Charles A. and wife Mildred, at 8547 N. Richmond Ave. However, Charles Melville lived at 1811 NW Couch.¹⁰⁷ Margaret Olin’s probate file identified her son Charles’ residence as 1811 West Couch. There was no West Couch in Portland, but prior to 1933 and continuing to today, there has been a Northwest Couch Street.¹⁰⁸ It seems likely that whoever provided the address used in the probate file was unaware of the layout and the directional identifiers used for streets in Portland.

An interesting detail is found on Charles Olin’s 8 December 1937 receipt of funds from Margaret Olin’s estate. Charles M. Olin signed the receipt. The signature is consistent with the signature on his 1931 marriage license application and the words “Charles” and “Olin” on the postcards to his brother. On all the receipts in the file, in addition to the signature of beneficiary, a blank line was provided for the signature of a witness in whose presence the beneficiary of the estate signed. There does not appear to

¹⁰⁰ Madison County, Nebraska, Probate Records, Book 6, p. 308 and following, Estate of Thomas M. Olin, 1920; Madison County Courts microfilm; Madison County Court, Madison, Nebraska.

¹⁰¹ “Death Comes to Sadden Many Homes: Thomas Madison Olin,” *Tilden Citizen*, 20 February 1920.

¹⁰² Madison Co., Neb., Probate Records, Book 6, p. 308ff, Estate of Thomas M. Olin.

¹⁰³ San Francisco, California, Index to Registration Affidavits, 1919, Pct. 38, AD 33, for Charles Melville.

¹⁰⁴ 1920 U.S. census, San Diego, Co., Calif., San Diego Twp., p. 128, ED 270, dwell 62, fam. 10, Charles Melville in Stanley Goodan household. See also Imperial County, Calif., Calexico Pct. No. 1, Index to Great Register, 1920, no. 223, for Charles Melville.

¹⁰⁵ Madison Co., Neb., Probate Records, Book 6, p. 308ff, Estate of Thomas M. Olin.

¹⁰⁶ Madison County, Nebraska, Probate Records, Book 9, p. 214 and following, Estate of Margaret J. Olin, 1935; Madison County Courts microfilm; Madison County Court, Madison, Nebraska.

¹⁰⁷ R. L. Polk, publisher, *Polk’s Portland (Oregon) City Directory 1935* (Portland: R. L. Polk & Co., 1935), p. 862; digital images, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 1 February 2019).

¹⁰⁸ *Insurance Maps of Portland, Oregon, Vol. 1* (New York: Sanborn Map Co., 1924); digital images, “Digital Sanborn Maps 1867-1970,” *ProQuest* (access through participating libraries : accessed 18 February 2019) > Oregon > Portland [Multnomah Co.] > 1908-Dec. 1950* > vol. 1, 1908-Apr. 1950 > Index, Sheet oa.

have been a requirement for a notarized signature on the receipts of any of the beneficiaries. Charles M. Olin signed his receipt in the presence of “C. M. Melville.”¹⁰⁹

By 1937, Charles M. Olin had been living as Charles M. Melville for at least 20 years. It seems quite possible that none of his associates, other than his wife Ethel, knew his real name. When it came time in 1937 to have his true signature witnessed, there was no one Charles Olin could ask to do so. Any acquaintance would have known him as Charles Melville and questioned why he was signing the document under a different name. It seems he took the easiest route and “asked” his alter-ego Charles Melville to sign. Melville’s signature was different than his usual one, including an extra “L” in the middle of the surname. It is likely Charles M. Olin needed to make C. M. Melville’s signature sufficiently different from his own to avoid any questions from the executor or attorneys in Nebraska.

Handwriting evidence

Charles’ own handwriting provides evidence that Charles Olin and Charles Melville are one and the same. Signatures of Charles Olin and Charles Melville presented in Figure 1 show significant commonalities:

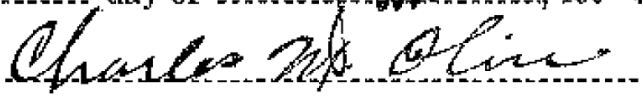
- The specific form of the uppercase “C” in Charles, accentuated by the diagonal upstroke in the middle of the letter, and the flourish at the top of the “C” are similar in the 1917 and all later signatures
- The specific form of the uppercase “O” in Olin as used in the address of postcards to his brother and the signatures of Charles Olin on the affidavit for marriage license and the receipt of funds from the estate of Margaret J. Olin all show two complete loops
- The signatures demonstrate a similar angle of slant of the letters
- The combination of the lowercase “l-i-n” in all instances of the name Olin is similar, particularly with regard to the use of points rather than humps in the “n”
- The formation of the uppercase “M” in the 1917 draft card and the postcards to Mr. J. S. Olin uses points rather than humps to form the tops of the letter

The 1908 signature on the enlistment document is likely one of Charles’ first legal contracts. It is possible Charles’ signature, particularly the formation of the strong uppercase “C,” may have changed as he matured and gained more confidence. But the slant of the letters and the use of points rather than humps on the lowercase “h” and “n” is consistent in all the signatures.

¹⁰⁹ Madison Co., Neb., Probate Records, Book 9, p. 214ff, Estate of Margaret J. Olin.

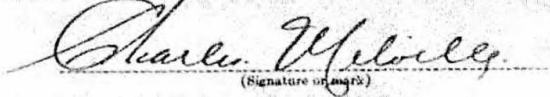
Figure 1. Signatures of Charles Olin and Charles Melville

Charles Olin Army Enlistment Papers: 22 January 1908^a



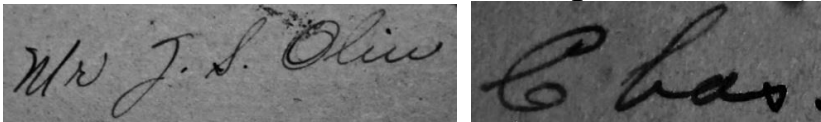
Charles Melville World War I Draft Card: 5 June 1917^b

affirm that I have verified above answers and that they are true.

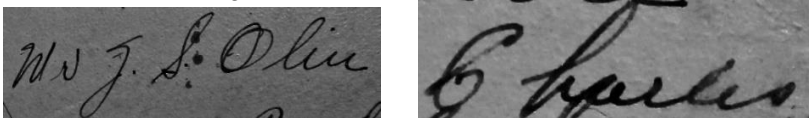


(Signature of registrant)

Postcard #1 (Owl Theatre fire) to Joseph Olin: circa 1920^c



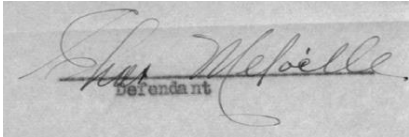
Postcard #2 (Tijuana Fair) to Joseph Olin: circa 1920^d



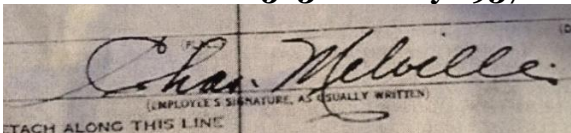
Charles Olin Marriage license: 29 October 1931^e



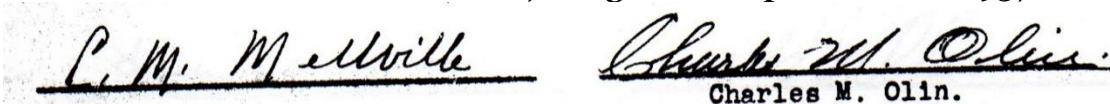
Chas Melville Waiver in State of Oregon v. Wooley et al: 4 September 1935^f



Chas Melville SS-5: 3 January 1937^g



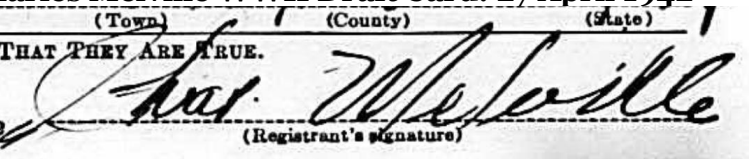
Charles M. Olin and C. M. Melville, Margaret Olin probate Dec. 1937^h



Charles Melville WWII Draft Card: 27 April 1942ⁱ

(Town) (County) (State)

ID THAT THEY ARE TRUE.



30-2 (Registrant's signature)

^a Charles M. Olin, Medical Examination of Recruits, 22 January 1908, Ft. W. H. Harrison, Montana, attested by Capt. J. H. Ford, 6th Infantry; Entry No. 91; Enlistment Papers, 1798 to October 31, 1912; Records of the Adjutant General's Office, 1780s-1917, Record Group 94; National Archives, Washington, D.C.

^b "United States World War I Draft Registration Cards, 1917-1918," database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1968530> : accessed 3 September 2018) California > San

Francisco City no 13 > Lu, C.-Pucci, A. > image 1808, card for Charles Melville; National Archives Microfilm publication M1509, roll CA304.

^c Charles M. Olin (unknown residence, possibly Calexico, California) to J. S. Olin, Owl Theatre postcard, ca. 1920; privately held by author, [ADDRESS FOR PRIVATE USE,] Seattle, Washington, 2018.

^d Charles M. Olin (San Diego, California) to J. S. [Joseph Samuel] Olin, Tijuana Fair postcard, ca. 1920; privately held by author, [ADDRESS FOR PRIVATE USE,] Seattle, Washington, 2018.

^e Washoe County, Nevada, Affidavit of Application for Marriage License, no. 29069, Olin-Parker, 1931; County Clerk's Office, Reno.

^f Washington County, Oregon, Circuit Court Files, Judgment Roll, Case No. 10105, The State of Oregon v. J I Wooley, Mike Bradley, Joe R Wilson, Charles Melville, Robert Gordon and Oakley Townsend, 1935; Washington County Circuit Court, Hillsboro.

^g Charles Madison Melville, SS no. 564-10-4831, 3 January 1937, Application for Account Number (Form SS-5), Social Security Administration, Baltimore, Maryland.

^h Madison County, Nebraska, Probate Records, Book 9, p. 214 and following, Estate of Margaret J. Olin, 1935; Madison County Courts microfilm; Madison County Court, Madison, Nebraska.

ⁱ "United States World War II Draft Registration Cards, 1942 [Fourth Draft; 'Old Man's Registration']", images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1861144> : accessed 15 July 2018), card for Charles Madison Melville, serial no. 1081, Local Draft Board 96, San Francisco, San Francisco County, California; citing NARA microfilm publications M1936, M1937, M1939, M1951, M1962, M1964, M1986, M2090, and M2097 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.).

Photographic evidence

Photographic evidence also suggests that Charles Olin and Charles Melville are the same man. Joan Kingsley provided several photographs and identified the subject as Charles Olin, her grandfather's brother.

One is a black-and-white photo of three people – a woman in a white top and polka-dot skirt, a curly-haired girl of approximately age 7 wearing a white dress, and a man wearing a white shirt, white slacks with a dark belt, white shoes, a dark necktie and a dark blazer. He holds the girl's hand. On the back of the photo is written "August '37 Reno." A post-it note attached by Joan reads "Charles and ??” (*Photo 1*).

A digital scan of a second photograph black and white photograph was provided by Brenda Roye (*Photo 2*). The picture is of a curly-haired girl of approximately age 7 wearing a white dress and standing on the running board of a car. A man holding her left hand is wearing a white shirt, white slacks with a dark belt, white shoes, a dark necktie and a dark blazer. In blue ink at the bottom is written "Jerry and Charles." At the top of the photograph a computer printed label reads "Aug 1937, Reno, NV, Geraldine Parker & Charles Melville." Brenda writes of the photo, "In the picture is Geraldine Parker is [*sic*] the daughter of Alfred Parker, brother of Ethel "Cecilia" Parker. This is a picture from my dad's collection and that is his handwriting at the bottom." Brenda's father is Ethel's younger brother.¹¹⁰

¹¹⁰ Brenda Roye, [(E-ADDRESS FOR PRIVATE USE),] to Mary Kircher Roddy, e-mail, 14 April 2018, "Re: Charles Madison Melville," Personal Correspondence Folder, Roddy Research Files; privately held by Roddy, [(E-ADDRESS), & STREET ADDRESS FOR PRIVATE USE], Seattle, Washington, 2018.

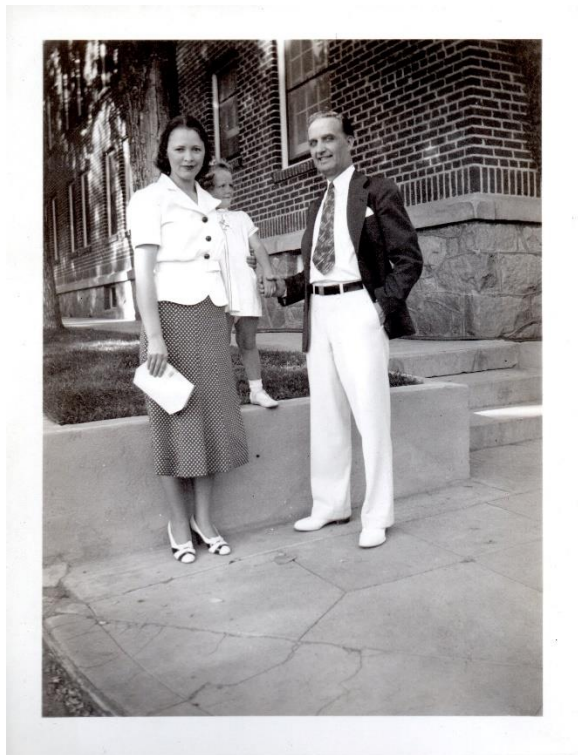


Photo 1¹¹¹



Photo 2¹¹²

Another black and white photograph provided by Joan is of a couple standing in front of a building (*Photo 3*). The man wears a medium colored blazer over a white shirt and patterned necktie, light colored slacks, spectator shoes and he holds a hat in his right hand. The woman next to him wears a medium colored suit, a wide-brimmed hat and she holds a purse and a pair of gloves in her right hand. On a Post-it note on the back of this photograph Joan has written “Charles & wife.”

Tonya Hettler, a Parker family researcher, attached a picture to Charles Madison Melville and Ethel Lenora Cecilia Parker in her Ancestry tree (*Photo 4*). A couple are seated on the steps of a porch. The woman on the left wears a medium colored, short-sleeved top and a skirt. The man wears a medium colored blazer over a white shirt and dark tie, dark slacks, light socks and polished oxfords. He holds a hat in his right hand. The couple smile at the camera.¹¹³ They appear to be the same couple with the child in Picture 1, and the couple in front of the building in Picture 3.

¹¹¹ Charles Olin, wife Ethel and unidentified child, August 1937, Reno, Nevada; privately held by Mary Kircher Roddy [ADDRESS FOR PRIVATE USE], Seattle, Washington, 2019. Joan Kingsley, Charles Olin’s great-niece gave the photo, which came from her mother’s scrapbooks, to Roddy in 2018.

¹¹² Geraldine Parker and Charles Melville, August 1937, Reno, NV; digital image circa 2018, from Brenda Royce [E-ADDRESS FOR PRIVATE USE]. Brenda is the niece of Ethel Lenore “Cecilia” Parker Olin, wife of Charles Olin. The Parker family knew Charles as Charles “Blackie” Melville.

¹¹³ “Melville, Charles Madison & Ethel Lenora Cecelia (Parker),” undated photograph, prob. ca. 1940, uploaded 27 April 2017 by Tonya Hettler, to “Zoch, Hettler and Allied Families 2017-04-25,” *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com/family-tree/person/tree/111283367/person/170200156211/facts>: accessed 23 June 2018), profile for “Charles Madison Melville.”



*Photo 3*¹¹⁴



*Photo 4*¹¹⁵

Two photographs, taken within days of each other in Reno, provided by separate, unrelated sources, identify the same man as Charles Olin and Charles Melville. A second pair of photographs of a man and woman, again from unrelated sources, identify the same man as Charles Olin and Charles Madison Melville. These photographs demonstrate that Charles Olin and Charles Melville are the same person.

Multiple pieces of evidence support merging the identities of Charles Olin and Charles Melville:

- Birth dates of both Charles Olin and Charles Melville were the same.
- The first and middle names of both men were the same.

¹¹⁴ Charles Olin and wife, ca. 1937; privately held by Mary Kircher Roddy [ADDRESS FOR PRIVATE USE], Seattle, Washington, 2019. Joan Kingsley, Charles Olin's great-niece gave the photo, which came from her mother's scrapbooks, to Roddy in 2018.

¹¹⁵ Tonya Hettler, "Zoch, Hettler and Allied Families 2017-04-05, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com/family-tree/person/tree/111283367/person/170200156211/facts> : accessed 13 May 2019), profile for "Charles Madison Melville."

- Charles Melville resided in the same locations at or near the same dates which obituaries of Charles Olin's father, mother and brother identified as Charles Olin's residences.
- Obituaries of Charles Melville identified sisters Lavina and Clara, two sisters mentioned in the obituaries of Charles Olin's father, mother, and brother.
- The wife of both Charles Olin and Charles Melville was named Ethel.
- Probate documents from the Estate of Margaret J. Olin placed her son Charles M. Olin at the exact same residence in Portland, Oregon that was used by Charles M. Melville at the time. There was no other Charles Olin in Portland who could be the son of Margaret Olin.
- Handwriting samples from both Charles Olin and Charles Melville demonstrate consistent formation of the same letters by both men.
- Photographs from the Olin family and the family of Ethel Parker Melville identified the same man by the names Charles Olin and Charles Melville, respectively.

Conclusion

Charles Madison Olin and Charles Madison Melville are one and the same. About 1910 or so, Charles Olin moved far from his Nebraska roots and his Montana military service to California where he assumed a new name and a new identity. He possibly made these changes to avoid arrest and imprisonment for his 1908 desertion from the Army.

The change of name does not appear to have significantly impacted his connection with his Olin family. His family may have known or suspected his alternate identity. They may have known about his desertion, or attributed the change to his career in the gambling industry and association with its shady characters. Nonetheless, Charles continued to correspond with his family. He was mentioned in their obituaries and they in his. He was named as an heir in the probate proceedings of his parents. To them, he was still their son and brother.

Charles Olin made a choice to live apart from his family and use a new identity, similar enough to his origins to make the deceit an easy one to keep, yet different enough to avoid detection by those from whom he was trying to disappear. Regardless of the surname he used, Charles Madison Olin and Charles Madison Melville are one, and only one, man.