

Hello Minnie



This week, I had the chance to see my great-grandmother Mary "Minnie" MacEachern French for the first-time! Thanks to the genealogical community and an exchange of emails, I was able to learn a little more about her life and see a photograph. (Thank you Rick!)

Notes left by the daughter of Susan Jane Wilkie indicated that at the age of 18 her mother left Cape Breton, Nova Scotia for Boston and lived with her cousin George French (my grandfather) and her Aunt Minnie. According to the notes, Susan learned dressmaking from Mary. The best news of all was that there was a photograph of Susan Jane "Jennie" Wilkie Small, Charles S. Small, Charles Jr. and Aunt Min taken in about 1916. That is Minnie on the left

Mary MacEachern (MacEachron) was born on 25 April 1877 in Sydney, Nova Scotia, Canada to Duncan and Mary Maloney

MacEachern. On the 13th of April 1897 she married Walter Abraham French, a carriage driver, in Boston, Massachusetts. Walter was born in Cambridge, Massachusetts to Horace E. and Laura Foster French. My grandfather George Bradley French was born in 1898. Walter and Mary's marriage did not last. The 1910 Census, recorded on April 22, 1910, identifies Mary was living with George on Huntington Avenue in Boston. The census lists Mary as a widow, however, that might not be entirely accurate (better a widow than a divorcee?). In George's personal belongings at the time of his death is a letter from his father, Walter, to Ralph H. Hallett, Esquire:



Walter A. French

New York, March 8, 1910

Dear Sir:

I have been advised that my wife, Mrs. Minnie French, of your city, has started a divorce proceeding against me in the court of your city, on the grounds of desertion, intoxication, cruelty, non-support, etc., and I understand the summons was returnable last month. I desire to have you enter an appearance for me and look after my interests in the proceedings. I have no desire to take a contest over the divorce, or the custody of the child, George, but I wish to be

informed of the progress of the proceedings, and to be advised promptly if a decree is granted. I would also like to have you see that no decree for alimony is entered against me. Very Truly Yours,

The 1940 Census has Mary living in Lowell, Massachusetts with Archie and Margaret McLean. She is listed as being Archie's aunt and listed as a widow. As for Walter, he appears in a March 1942 Social Security Application and Claim, I have no details as to the date or location of his death. A September



1918 World War I draft registration card identifies Walter Abram French, living in New York City, with a date of birth of 26 January 1875 (2 years earlier than his true date of birth).

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