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Oliver W. Holmes – new information

Susan Dalhed

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Some new information on Oliver Wendell Holmes

Just after the publishing of SAG 2016/1 *Susan Dalhed* of Eagan, MN, sent the following information:

"I enjoyed the article on Oliver Wendell Holmes in the most recent issue of SAG.

"You may not remember, but I have been researching the two "Ben Benson families" in Houston County for many years. I am related to both of them (one directly; one through marriage). So, Oliver is hanging off a branch of my tree.

"For genealogical purposes, it might be helpful to know that Henry and Charlotte (Benson) Holmes had no biological children.

"Oliver Wendell Holmes was their adopted son. His birth information is correct. He was born 2 February 1902 in Saint Paul, Ramsey County, Minnesota at the Women's Christian Home to a woman of German descent named Bertha Stechmann. There is no other identifying information about his mother. His father is not named on the birth certificate."

Later Susan Dalhed added this information:

"My great aunt (my grandmother's sister) was Ella Vanda (Benson) Benson. Ella's husband, Charles Benson, was Charlotte Holmes's brother. So, Oliver Wendell Holmes was Ella's nephew. Ella is the one who told me Oliver was adopted during one of our genealogy discussions. The note in my file says the information is from a conversation in 1985. Apparently Oliver's adoption was common knowledge among my relatives and never treated as a secret. Oliver was well loved and accepted in the family. And, he had great affection for the Swedish community in which he grew up.

"Attached is a picture of the Oliver Wendell Holmes birth record. I found it in the Minnesota Historical Society Birth Certificate Index, which led to the actual record. The record was not sealed, as adoption records sometimes are, and was available as a public record. The

record number for the certificate is 1902-MN-36781. It shows Oliver was the illegitimate son of Bertha Stechmann (of German descent) and was born at the Women's Christian Home in St. Paul.

"Oliver's adoptive name was added by affidavit to the birth certificate in 1935 or 1936 by Oliver W. Holmes himself (according to a note on the back of the certificate). This probably happened when Oliver went looking for his birth certificate so that he could apply for a Social Security number. Another family member believes he needed a copy of his birth certificate in order to apply for a passport. He traveled extensively during his life, so this explanation is also making sense".

Ed's note: The only Bertha Stechmann found on Ancestry was born 1872 in Germany, and came in Sep. 1900 from Bremen, Germany, to Baltimore, MD, and was going to Pennsylvania.

8818-5-9-35-10M

PLACE OF BIRTH INDEXED

THE STATE OF MINNESOTA

Division of Vital Statistics

CERTIFICATE OF BIRTH

1902

1. County of Ramsey

Township of _____

Village of _____

or City of St. Paul

36781

Reg. District No. _____ No. in Registration Book _____

(Above numbers to be filled in only by local registrar or his deputy)

(No. _____ Woman's Christian Home St. _____ Ward)

(If birth occurred in a hospital or institution, give its NAME instead of street and number)

2. FULL NAME OF CHILD (Baby Boy Stechmann) Oliver W. Holmes

(Please PRINT names in capitals)

3. Sex Male

If plural births _____

4. Twin, triplet, or other _____

5. Number, in order of birth _____

6. Premature _____

7. Legiti. mate? NO

8. Date of birth February 2, 1902

(Month, day, year)

9. Full name _____

10. Residence (usual place of abode) _____

(If nonresident, give place and State)

11. Color or race _____

12. Age at last birthday (Years) _____

13. Birthplace (city or place) _____

(State or country)

14. Trade, profession, or particular kind of work done, as farmer, bookkeeper, etc. _____

15. Industry or business in which work was done, as factory, office, bank, etc. _____

16. Full maiden name Bertha Stechmann

17. Residence (usual place of abode) _____

(If nonresident, give place and State)

18. Color or race W

19. Age at last birthday (Years) _____

20. Birthplace (city or place) "German"

21. Trade, profession, or particular kind of work done, as housekeeper, typist, nurse, clerk, etc. _____

22. Industry or business in which work was done, as own home, lawyer's office, factory, etc. _____

23. Number of children of this mother (At time of this birth and including this child) (a) Born alive and now living _____ (b) Born alive but now dead _____ (c) Stillborn _____

24. If stillborn, period of gestation _____

25. Cause of stillbirth _____

26. Was 1% silver nitrate used to prevent infant blindness? Yes No

CERTIFICATE OF ATTENDING PHYSICIAN OR MIDWIFE*

I hereby certify that I attended the birth of this child who was _____ (Born Alive or Born Dead) at _____ M., on the date above stated, and that the above facts, as given _____ are true to the best of my knowledge, information and belief. (Signature) Harry P. Ritchie

PHYSICIAN, MIDWIFE, PARENT OR INFORMANT

(Cross out words which do not apply)

Given name added from a supplemental report _____

Date JAN 18 1936

Address _____

BUREAU OF HEALTH

Nationality stated as German on Woman's Christian Home record now in custody of State Board of Control.

MARGIN RESERVED FOR BINDING

WRITHE CAREFULLY, WITH UNFADING INK—THIS IS A PERMANENT RECORD

in case of more than one child a birth & SEPARATE RETURN must be made of each, and the number of each, in order of birth stated.