

## *Descendants of William Laughner*

The Schooler connection to the Laughners is the marriage between Dorothy Myrtle Laughner and Russell Lowell Schooler. The progenitor of their line, William J. Laughner, married Catherine Harmon, daughter of Jacob Harmon, but no link has been established to the William Harmon line.

The Laughners were one of the founding families of Whitestown, Boone County, Indiana. Brothers Wesley, George and Elmer founded the Indianapolis-based Laughner's Cafeteria chain in 1888. Several Laughners owned and ran the pharmacy in Whitestown from 1898 until 1953, when it was sold to Charles Hine (who later moved it to Zionsville). The Laughners dominated the Whitestown band around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Carrying on the musical tradition, Clair Laughner was a pianist and big band leader in Los Angeles in the 1930s.

### *Generation No. 1*

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#### **1. William J<sup>1</sup> Laughner<sup>1</sup>**

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Born: November 03, 1807 in Pennsylvania

Died: July 25, 1870; buried Lutheran Cemetery, Boone County, Indiana.

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Married: **Catherine Harmon** November 18, 1830 in Greene County, Tennessee (by Philip Hinkle), daughter of **Jacob Harmon**

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#### **Children**

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+ 2            i. **Samuel J<sup>2</sup> Laughner**, born in Greene County, Tennessee

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+ 3            ii. **Ambrose Miller Laughner**, born November 04, 1835 in Greene County, Tennessee

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#### More About William J Laughner:

In 1843 William moved to Clinton County, Indiana. In 1849 he moved to Whitestown, Boone County, Indiana. He was a storekeeper, a Democrat and a Lutheran.

William "traveled with his brother by schooner across the Ohio River at Madison, Indiana. They followed the Old Indian Trail North and located at Middlefork, Clinton County, Indiana. Here William and Catherine had two children. He left on a visit to his people again on horseback. He fell ill at Madison, Indiana. He tried to continue but after crossing the river he had to turn back. Too ill to travel by horse he took the train from Madison to Indianapolis. After resting up for a few days, he took his horse again and worked his way over the trail known as the Greenfield Indian Trail until he reached the vicinity of Whitestown.

In this locality many Tennessee families had settled, including Ambrose Neese, Philip Ottinger, William Miller, and Silas White. While visiting these people he was persuaded to purchase a home of 40 acres. He returned to his family in Clinton County. After six years there he moved his family to Boone County in 1849.

While his sons tilled the soil he ran a store and drove a wagon to Indianapolis, selling his products and buying articles for his establishment."

- Whitestown History, Janice West

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## 2. Samuel J<sup>2</sup> Laughner (William J<sup>1</sup>)<sup>I</sup>

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Born: Greene County, Tennessee

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Married: (1) Sarah Ottinger<sup>I</sup>

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Married: (2) Rebecca Isenhour<sup>I</sup> November 08, 1858

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### Children

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4 i. Louisa<sup>3</sup> Laughner<sup>I</sup>. She married Charles Hine<sup>I</sup>.

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+ 5 ii. William Jonathon Wesley “Jonathon” Laughner<sup>I</sup>.

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6 iii. Albert T Laughner<sup>I</sup>. He married Sarah Hine<sup>I</sup>.

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+ 7 iv. George B Laughner<sup>I</sup>.

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+ 8 v. Elmer B Laughner<sup>I</sup>.

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More About Samuel J Laughner:

Samuel owned 80 acres of farm land, and was a vocal music teacher as well as a farmer.

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## 3. Ambrose Miller<sup>2</sup> Laughner (William J<sup>1</sup>)

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Born: November 04, 1835 in Greene County, Tennessee.

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Married: Rowanna Neese, daughter of John Neese and Susannah Isenhower.

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### Children

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+ 9 i. Bert<sup>3</sup> “Brite” Laughner.

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10 ii. Candacie Laughner. She married Charles E Dummich<sup>I</sup>.

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11 iii. Centrilla Laughner. She married C W “Bally” Shoemaker<sup>I</sup>.

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+ 12 iv. Fidilia “Della” Laughner.

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+ 13 v. J T “Frank” Laughner, born October 27, 1874 in Worth Township, Boone County, Indiana.

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+	14	vi.	<b>John W Laughner.</b>
+	15	vii.	<b>Martin Luther Laughner.</b>
+	16	viii.	<b>Riley O “Swappy” Laughner</b> , born October 12, 1868; died December 25, 1969.
+	17	ix.	<b>Sarah Laughner.</b>
+	18	x.	<b>Clyde O Laughner</b> , born July 09, 1880 in Whitestown, Boone County, Indiana; died February 03, 1966.
	19	xi.	<b>Albert G Laughner<sup>1</sup>.</b>
<u>More About Albert G Laughner:</u> Died as an infant.			

#### More About Ambrose Miller Laughner:

Before 1903 Ambrose was a drug storekeeper, on the northwest corner of the Big Four Railroad tracks at Main Street, Whitestown, Boone County, Indiana. He also farmed 1 mile west of Whitestown, Boone County, Indiana. He lived at the northwest corner of Turner and Bowers Streets, Whitestown, Boone County, Indiana.



L to R, Front – Clyde  
and M Luther. Back –  
JT Frank, Bert, Riley,  
John



L to R – Centrilla,  
Candacie, Sarah, Della



Ambrose Laughner house at the northwest corner of Turner and Bowers Streets, Whitestown, Boone County, Indiana



Ambrose Laughner Family. L to R, Front – Sarah, Candacie, Rowanna, Ambrose, Centrilla, Fidella. Back – Bert, Riley, John, M Luther, Clyde, JT Frank

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## 5. William Jonathon Wesley<sup>3</sup> “Jonathon” Laughner (Samuel J<sup>2</sup>, William J<sup>1</sup>)<sup>f</sup>

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Married: **Kathryn Myers<sup>f</sup>**

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### More About Jonathon Laughner:

Jonathon was a restaurateur who founded the Indianapolis-based Laughner’s Cafeteria chain at 4 Indiana Avenue in 1888. The restaurant opened as Laughner & Perry Confectionary, a joint venture between Jonathon and William J Perry. Laughner later bought out his partner in 1892, and in 1900 open Laughner’s Dairy Lunch, also in Indianapolis. Jonathon’s brothers, George A., Ora and Elmer, all entered the business. Jonathon and his son Claude opened a restaurant together, and Claude’s five children later joined the business. Claude introduced the cafeteria-style restaurant concept in 1920. His sons, Charles, Lloyd, and Richard, formed Laughner Brothers. A cousin was involved in the founding of rival MCL Cafeterias. Charles Laughner was the last CEO. Cafeteria-style restaurants began to decline in popularity in the 1980s. They began closing the out-lying restaurants and gradually retreated to Indianapolis. The last cafeteria closed its doors in 2000.<sup>4</sup> (See appendix below.)

Jonathon resided in Indianapolis, Marion County, Indiana.

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## 7. George B<sup>3</sup> Laughner (Samuel J<sup>2</sup>, William J<sup>1</sup>)<sup>f</sup>

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Married: **Lucy Pennock<sup>f</sup>**

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### More About George B Laughner:

George was a co-founder of Laughner’s Cafeteria with his brother Wesley. A George Laughner is pictured in the Whitestown band in 1890.

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## 8. Elmer B<sup>3</sup> Laughner (Samuel J<sup>2</sup>, William J<sup>1</sup>)<sup>f</sup>

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Married: **Rosa Shillinger<sup>f</sup>**

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### More About Elmer B Laughner:

Elmer was a co-founder of Laughner’s Cafeteria with his brother Wesley.

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Whitestown Band, May 30, 1890 in Colfax, Indiana. L to R, Front – Harve Cline, Dess Hull, John H “Johnnie” Laughner, Clyde Laughner, George William, Riley Laughner. Back – John W Laughner, George Laughner, Edward Laughner, Charles Sea, Bert Laughner, Julius Beech.



Whitestown Band, Boone County, Indiana, c. 1916

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**9. Bert<sup>3</sup> “Brite” Laughner** (Ambrose Miller<sup>2</sup>, William J<sup>1</sup>)

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**Child**

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+ 20            i. **Claire<sup>4</sup> Laughner.**

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More About Bert Laughner:

Bert was a member of the Laughner Band, Whitestown, Boone County, Indiana<sup>1</sup> in 1890. He was a pharmacist.

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**12. Fidilia<sup>3</sup> “Della” Laughner** (Ambrose Miller<sup>2</sup>, William J<sup>1</sup>)

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Married: **James Etter<sup>1</sup>**

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More About James Etter:

James was a farmer on Maple Grove Farm.

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**13. J T<sup>3</sup> “Frank” Laughner** (Ambrose Miller<sup>2</sup>, William J<sup>1</sup>)

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Born: October 27, 1874 in Worth Township, Boone County, Indiana

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Married: **(1) Flossie Flannigan<sup>1</sup>**

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Married: **(2) Dora Scott<sup>1</sup>** May 04, 1897; born in Worth Township, Boone County, Indiana

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More About J T Laughner:

J T was a member of the Laughner Band, Whitestown, Boone County, Indiana<sup>1</sup> in 1890. He was a teacher & principal, as well as treasurer of Boone County, Indiana.

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**14. John W<sup>3</sup> Laughner** (Ambrose Miller<sup>2</sup>, William J<sup>1</sup>)

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Married: **May E Engledow<sup>1</sup>**

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More About John W Laughner:

John was a member of the Laughner Band, Whitestown, Boone County, Indiana<sup>1</sup> in 1890. He was a farmer near Whitestown, Boone County, Indiana.

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**15. Martin Luther<sup>3</sup> Laughner** (Ambrose Miller<sup>2</sup>, William J<sup>1</sup>)

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Married: **Flora Harmon**<sup>1</sup>

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More About Martin Luther Laughner:

They lived on the old Ambrose Laughner farm near Whitestown, Boone County, Indiana.

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**16. Riley O<sup>3</sup> “Swappy” Laughner** (Ambrose Miller<sup>2</sup>, William J<sup>1</sup>)

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Born: October 12, 1868

Died: December 25, 1969

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Married: **Lulu L Ottinger**<sup>1</sup>

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**Children**

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|----|--|
| 21 | i. <b>Verner<sup>4</sup> Laughner</b> , died 1962.                 |
| 22 | ii. <b>Audra Laughner</b> . She married <b>Brian Smith</b> .       |
| 23 | iii. <b>Mardelle Laughner</b> . She married <b>Charles Kouns</b> . |
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Riley Laughner

Riley Laughner family – L to R, Lulu, Verner,  
Riley, Audra

More About Riley O Laughner:

Riley was a member of the Laughner Band, Whitestown, Boone County, Indiana<sup>1</sup> in 1890. He played cornet in the Whitestown Band. He was a farmer, near Whitestown, Boone County, Indiana. He was a Democrat and a member of St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Whitestown, Boone County, Indiana.

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**17. Sarah<sup>3</sup> Laughner** (Ambrose Miller<sup>2</sup>, William J<sup>1</sup>)

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Married: **Ira B Goodwin<sup>1</sup>**

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More About Ira B Goodwin:

Ira was a farmer near Whitestown, Boone County, Indiana. He and Sarah had 5 children.

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**18. Clyde O<sup>3</sup> Laughner** (Ambrose Miller<sup>2</sup>, William J<sup>1</sup>)

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Born: July 09, 1880 in Whitestown, Boone County, Indiana  
Died: February 03, 1966

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Married: **Gertrude L Sholty** May 21, 1901

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**Children**

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|---|----|------|--|
| + | 24 | i.   | <b>Dorothy Myrtle<sup>4</sup> Laughner.</b>  |
| + | 25 | ii.  | <b>Esther May Laughner.</b>  |
| + | 26 | iii. | <b>Frank B Laughner</b> , born December 12, 1915 in Boone County, Indiana; died January 04, 2003 in West Palm Beach, Palm Beach County, Florida. |
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Clyde Laughner in 1901



Gertrude Sholty  
Laughner in 1901



Clyde Laughner Family



Clyde Laughner house at the southeast  
corner of Turner & Bower Streets,  
Whitestown, Boone County, Indiana

More About Clyde O Laughner:

Clyde attended Whitestown School, Whitestown, Boone County, Indiana. He was a member of St. Mark's Lutheran Church in Whitestown, serving on the council board. He was a member of the Laughner Band, Whitestown, Boone County, Indiana in 1890. He played in the Jamestown (Boone County, Indiana) Band, which played in the early 1900s at the Indianapolis 500 race. He was secretary in the Masonic Lodge, and was secretary in the Red Men, heading the committee for the picnic in Johnnie Stark's Park. Between 1898 and 1953 he was a pharmacist, when he sold to Charles Hine. He was the first mayor of Whitestown. Between October 1, 1910 and October 5, 1965 he was a government weather observer. He lived at the southeast corner of Turner & Bower Streets, Whitestown, Boone County, Indiana.



Whitestown, Boone County, Indiana baseball team, around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Taken at Stark's Park. Clyde Laughner is in the back row on the right wearing a derby.



Clyde Laughner in 1957 taking weather readings



Laughner Drugstore at the northwest corner of Main Street and the railroad tracks, Whitestown, Boone Co., Indiana



Gertrude and Clyde Laughner at the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the drugstore, 1951

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## 20. **Clairo<sup>4</sup> Laughner** (Bert<sup>3</sup>, Ambrose Miller<sup>2</sup>, William J<sup>1</sup>)

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### More About Clairo Laughner:

He played piano with the Phil Harris Band<sup>1</sup>.

According to *Wikipedia*, Harris began his music career as a drummer in San Francisco, forming an orchestra with Carol Lofner (sometimes spelled “Laughner”) in the latter 1920s and starting a long engagement at the St. Francis Hotel. Lofner directed the orchestra while Harris played drums and sang, sitting up front center stage instead of behind the orchestra. Muzzy Marcellino was violinist. In 1932 the band left the St. Francis and began to tour. Shortly into the tour Lofner and Harris dissolved their partnership. Harris went on to play for *The Jack Benny Program*.

Samples of their band playing at the St. Francis can be heard in RealAudio format at

- <http://www.dismuke.org/how/prev10-05.html>
  - <http://dismuke.net/musicfiles/howmusic/igottheritz.ram>
  - <http://dismuke.net/musicfiles/howmusic/imsorrydear.ram>

From *Bing* magazine:

### THE MAKERS OF WOODBURY FACIAL SOAP PRESENT BING CROSBY

No. 21 5th March 1934; Announced by Ken Niles. With **Carol Lofner’s** Beverly Wilshire Orchestra and The Mills Brothers.

\*Shadows Of Love

Dancing In The Moonlight (Donaldson)

Carol Lofner’s Beverly Wilshire Orchestra  
with The Mills Brothers

\*Ida, Sweet As Apple Cider

Easter Parade (Berlin)

Carol Lofner’s Beverly Wilshire Orchestra  
The Mills Brothers

Jungle Fever

Medley:

Who Walks In When I Walk Out? (Hoffman)

Sophisticated Lady (Ellington)

Carol Lofner’s Beverly Wilshire Orchestra

I Found A New Baby

The Mills Brothers

Goin’ To Heaven On A Mule

She Reminds Me Of You

This Little Piggy Went To Market

“Into the Bing Crosby Monday evening program, there enters another orchestra. This time it is Carol Lofner, the mustachioed wand-waver, who undertakes the task of accompanying the crooner, as well as co-featuring with special musical numbers. Lofner bows into the picture today, KHJ, 5:30, as Gus Arnheim and his troupe bow out. It is an assignment on which Lofner will bend his best efforts, for it is a Coast-to-Coast assignment, and such things often lead to other—and remunerative—calls. As far as Crosby is concerned, Arnheim filled the bill to satisfaction. But Gus is called to San Francisco, and contracts there have been signed - he is on his way.” (*Los Angeles Examiner* 5 March 1934)

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**24. Dorothy Myrtle<sup>4</sup> Laughner** (Clyde O<sup>3</sup>, Ambrose Miller<sup>2</sup>, William J<sup>1</sup>)

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Married **Russell Lowell Schooler**, son of **Charles Walter Schooler** and **Mattie Livengood**

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Born: July 15, 1900 in Boone County, Indiana<sup>2</sup>

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**Children**

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- |   |    |     |                                     |
|---|----|-----|-------------------------------------|
| + | 27 | i.  | <b>Russell<sup>5</sup> Schooler</b> |
|   | 28 | ii. | <b>Charles O Schooler</b>           |
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More About Russell Lowell Schooler and Dorothy Myrtle Laughner:

In 1959 they lived in Lebanon, Boone County, Indiana.

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**25. Esther May<sup>4</sup> Laughner** (Clyde O<sup>3</sup>, Ambrose Miller<sup>2</sup>, William J<sup>1</sup>)

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Married **Ardra B Dulin**

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**Children**

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|--|----|-----|---------------------------------|
|  | 29 | i.  | <b>Austin<sup>5</sup> Dulin</b> |
|  | 30 | ii. | <b>Clyde Dulin</b>              |
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**26. Frank B<sup>4</sup> Laughner** (Clyde O<sup>3</sup>, Ambrose Miller<sup>2</sup>, William J<sup>1</sup>)<sup>3</sup>

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Born: December 12, 1915 in Boone County, Indiana

Died: January 04, 2003 in West Palm Beach, Palm Beach County, Florida.

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Married: **Alfreda E. Galvin** August 1937 in Lebanon, Boone County, Indiana

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Died: September 05, 1977

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**Child**

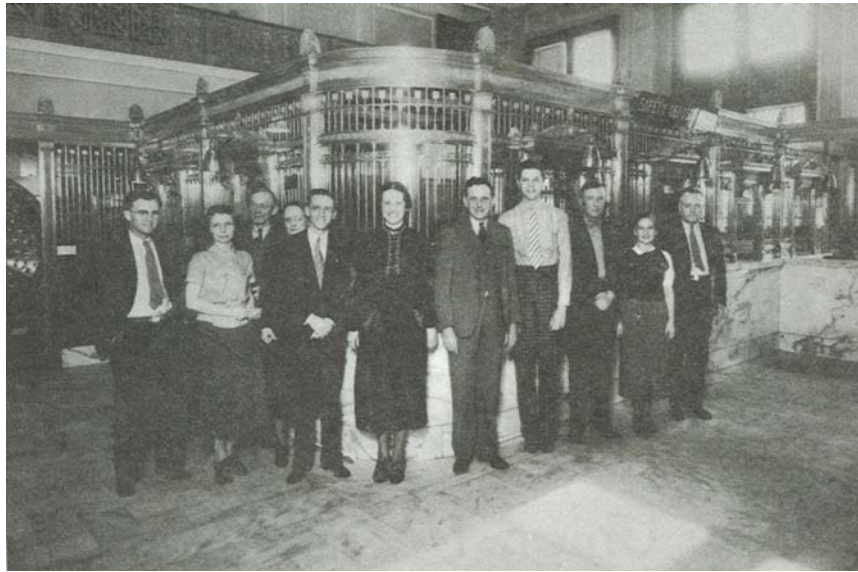
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|--|----|----|---|
|  | 31 | i. | <b>Christopher<sup>5</sup> Laughner</b> |
|--|----|----|---|
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More About Frank B Laughner:

Frank graduated from Whitestown High School, Boone County, Indiana. He was a member of the American Legion, Elks Lodge, Moose Lodge, and Ulen Country Club. Between 1942 and 1945 he served in the US Army in World War II. He was a prisoner of war and was awarded the Purple Heart. He lived in Lebanon, Boone County, Indiana. Before 1972 he was co-owner of L. Strauss & Co. in Indianapolis, Marion County, Indiana. In 1972 he moved to Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Between 1977 and 1987, he was manager of Maus-Hoffman men's clothing store in Bal Harbour, Florida. In 1995 he moved to North Palm Beach, Florida.



Boone County (Indiana) Bank staff, May 11, 1937. Alfreda Galvin Laughner is second from the right.

*Generation No. 5*

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**27. Russell<sup>5</sup> Schooler** (Dorothy Myrtle<sup>4</sup> Laughner, Clyde O<sup>3</sup>, Ambrose Miller<sup>2</sup>, William J<sup>1</sup>)

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Married **Alice Roop**

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**Children**

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- |    |   |
|----|---|
| 32 | i. <b>Mary Ann<sup>6</sup> Schooler</b> |
| 33 | ii. <b>William Charles Schooler</b>     |
| 34 | iii. <b>Janet Ruth Schooler</b>         |
| 35 | iv. <b>Edward James Schooler</b>        |
| 36 | v. <b>Thomas Schooler</b>               |
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## Appendix – Laughner Brothers, Inc.

Source: [http://www.indianahistory.org/hbr/business\\_pdf/laughner\\_brothers.pdf](http://www.indianahistory.org/hbr/business_pdf/laughner_brothers.pdf), accessed August 11, 2009.

### Laughner Brothers

Founded: 1888

Locations: 4 Indiana Avenue (1888– ); many subsequent locations; 4004 South East Street

William Jonathon Wesley Laughner, born in 1862, grew up on a farm in Whitestown, Indiana. His father ran a country store and sold produce between Whitestown and Indianapolis from a horse-drawn cart. Following his father's example, Jonathon operated a lunch wagon at fairs and in city parks throughout central Indiana. In partnership with William J. Perry, he opened Laughner & Perry Confectionary on 4 Indiana Avenue in 1888. It was the first in a long line of dining establishments operated by members of the Laughner family in central Indiana. Laughner & Perry began selling fudge, peanut brittle, taffy, and hand-dipped chocolates but soon began serving sandwiches and sodas as well. Laughner bought out his partner in 1892. In 1900 he opened Laughner's Dairy Lunch at 106 North Illinois Street, introducing new cafeteria-style service, which catered to the growing body of middle-class shopgirls, skilled tradesmen, and office clerks looking for a quick lunch.

At Laughner's cafeteria, customers selected food from glass cases and steam tables and ate their lunches in wooden chairs with tables attached to the chairs. Lunches served this way in cafeterias were sometimes called "one-arm lunches." Good food and quick service was the Laughner trademark. Laughner's cafeteria served meals around the clock to the city's war-swollen population during World War I. Many members of the extended Laughner clan operated cafeterias, confectioneries, and restaurants in Indianapolis over the years. (MCL Cafeteria, Laughner's primary regional competition, was begun in 1950 by a Laughner relative.) Laughner's brothers—George A., Elmer, and Ora—all entered the business. In 1909 Jonathon and George opened a restaurant at 310 West Washington Street. In 1913 Jonathon and his son Claude F. operated a restaurant at 162 North Illinois Street. Claude met his wife Flora in the back of his father's confectionery. The couple's five children grew up working in the family cafeterias, selling candy door to door, and helping run the concession stands that Claude operated at the State Fair, Indianapolis Motor Speedway, and Riverside Amusement Park beginning in 1912. "We worked the stands, we rode the rides free, and we slept on peanut stacks," Frances (Laughner) Tierney later recalled. "We ate peanuts all day long, and we were the envy of other children." Claude and Flora introduced straight-line tray rail service at the Central Cafeteria at 805 North Alabama Street, which they opened in 1920. During the 1930s the Laughner family ran many cafeterias in downtown Indianapolis, usually two or three at a time. In 1939 Claude and Flora divorced, and Flora opened her own cafeteria at 5115 East 10th Street the following year. (She later opened a second cafeteria at 10th Street and Emerson Avenue after her son Lloyd took over the East 10th Street location.) Claude retired from the business in 1958.

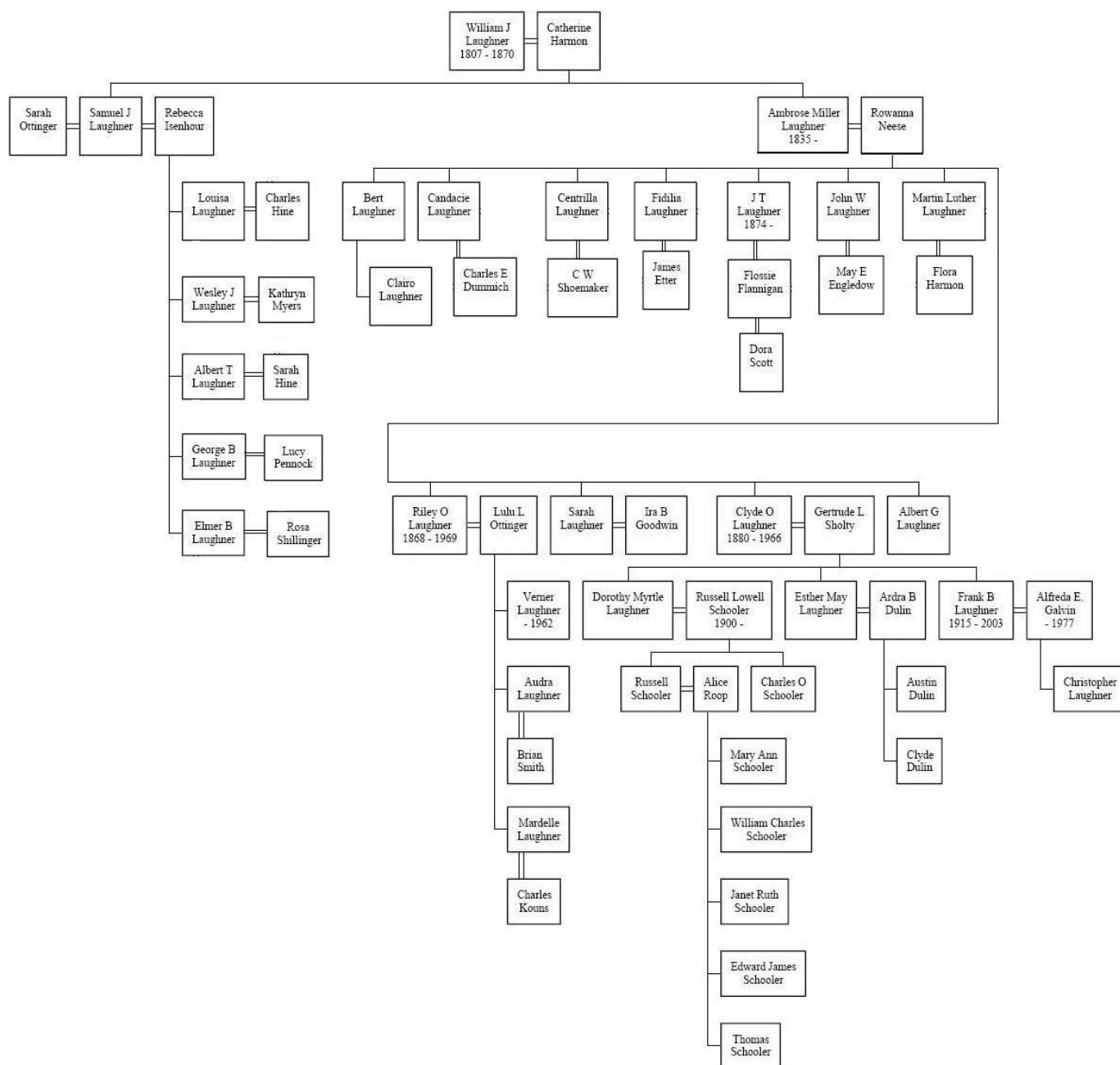
In 1957 Claude and Flora's three sons—Charles, Lloyd, and Richard—formed Laughner Brothers. Charles took the lead in adapting the family business to the changing times. Much of Laughner Brothers middle-class clientele was moving to the suburbs, and fast-food competition was contributing to the cafeteria's decline in popularity across the country. In the 1950s Charles tried to enter the nascent fast-food market with two unsuccessful drive-in restaurants (one of which featured the "Double-L," a double-decker hamburger with lettuce, cheese, mayonnaise, and special sauce that foreshadowed the Big Mac). After touring various restaurants throughout the country, Charles decided on a new look for Laughner's Cafeterias. In addition, the brothers made the decision to move into the suburbs. In 1964 the brothers built a free-standing cafeteria adjacent to the Southern Plaza shopping center on US 31 South, which featured elaborate Tudor-style dining areas replete with wood paneling, wall tapestries, pewter chandeliers, and stainedglass windows. The Southern Plaza cafeteria set the look for Laughner Brothers' cafeterias for the next twenty-five years. The restaurants built an appeal based on basic midwestern fare, which included sliced roast beef, sugar-cured and smoked ham, fried chicken, real mashed potatoes, and homemade desserts, such as Laughner's signature strawberry pie.

Gradually the brothers introduced further innovations. Beginning in 1969, the company opened cafeterias outside the city, eventually including locations in Kokomo, Terre Haute, and Plainfield. They opened the Dutch Oven, a pie shop and cafe, next to the Southern Plaza location in 1971 and Jonathon's



Restaurant and Pub, a full-service restaurant, in 1978. Their Castleton location, opened in 1987, featured a brighter, Southwest decor and departed radically from the traditional straight cafeteria line, offering various stations for different type foods, including a grill where food, such as blackened red snapper, mahimahi, swordfish, and filet mignon, was cooked to order; a drive-thru window; and an inside pick-up counter for dinners to go. By the mid-1990s, Laughner Brothers, headed by the fourth generation of the family, operated eight cafeterias, in addition to the Dutch Oven, Jonathon's, Classic U.S. Foods, and The Oven. The cafeteria closed intermittently in the late 1990s, the last one in 2000.

### *Descendants of William J Laughner*



### *Endnotes*

1. Janice West, *Whitestown History*.
2. *Index To Birth Records, Boone County [Indiana], 1882-1920*, WPA, Book R-9, p. 9.
3. "Zionsville (Indiana) Times-Sentinel," Obituary.
4. [http://www.indianahistory.org/hbr/business\\_pdf/laughner\\_brothers.pdf](http://www.indianahistory.org/hbr/business_pdf/laughner_brothers.pdf), accessed August 11, 2009.