

# Vay Rawerts – “Bits and Pieces”

From Lorraine Rivard Naze

Our youngest daughter's husband is Timothy Rawerts. I had heard Tim mention several times that his name should really be Timothy Quamme. His great grandfather, Thomas Clarence Quamme a Norwegian, was a traveling troubadour and musician, going from town to town he would rent a hall and show movies or whatever would interest the citizens enough that they would be willing to pay admission.

Thomas married, and in time the couple had a son. The mother died while the baby was still an infant, "Vay was born in September 1912 and his Mother died in December". Thomas could not raise a son by himself and continue his life's work. A German family by the name of Rawerts offered to take the boy and raise him. Vay adopted the name Rawerts after the 1930 census possibly when he married or when his first child is born 1932. Thomas did not abandon his son; all through the years, Thomas was involved with Vay. In time, Thomas married Lucille Bormuth. They had three daughters.

The image shows two historical documents side-by-side. The left document is a WWI Draft Registration Card for Thomas C. Quamme, No. 11, dated 5/3. It lists his name as Thomas C. Quamme, age 28, born May 14, 1889, in Hillsboro N.D., U.S. His occupation is listed as Plummer Minn. He is a natural born citizen. He is married to his wife, and they have two children. He is currently in the State Guard. The right document is a Registrar's Report for the same individual, dated May 26, 1917. It describes him as a slender man with blue eyes and brown hair. The report is signed by the Registrar, W. J. [unclear], and is filed with the Board for the County of Pennington, State of Minnesota, in Thief River Falls, Minn. The file number is 22-4-22.A.

Thomas Quamme's WWI Draft Registration

About ten years ago, I received a letter from Martha McLean. She had been looking for info on Thomas and found my name as having him in my data base. She wrote asking what I knew about Thomas Quamme. Martha's mother's sister was Lucille Bormuth. I answered her letter and told her that the only thing I knew about Thomas was that he was my son-in-law's great grandfather. Martha answered and said they never knew that "Uncle Tom" had been married before or that he had a son by a first marriage. She wrote, "I have many pleasant memories of Uncle Tom and his visits with us in the years after his divorce from Lucille."

Martha sent us a copy of a march Thomas had written and respectfully dedicated to Elmer J. Eklund, Post #117, American Legion, Department of Minn. The price of it was 35 cents, and it was published by Quamme & Schmitz. The cover page of the march named it "THE LEGION FOREVER", by Thos. C. Quamme. writer of "THAT RUM TUM MELODY" fox trot (also) "A WESTERN HEROINE" march Etc.

Tim Rawerts writes, "Nancy and I were attending this little church in Eden Prairie (12 members) and we had a piano player come in on Sundays to play for us. Cindy was a

*REALLY great piano player so I asked her if she would play this song my Great Grandpa Tom had written. She told me to bring it in next Sunday and she would play it after church. I brought it in and after church she looked at it a while and said she would need to practice during the next week because the song was rather complex. The next Sunday she played it and we recorded it. I hadn't heard it since I was little kid so it was nice to hear again. I believe I still have the sheet music somewhere in the house."*

We sent a copy of the tape to Martha.



Vay Quamme Rawerts and his Red River Ox Cart

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**To Continue:** I did not know Vay until about 10 years ago. He was a very attractive man... and was very polite. He built two oxcarts; one is somewhere up near Thief River Falls with the local French club there, and the second one was on display at Fort Snelling. I wish I had known more about his life and what he remembered about his father.

*Tim writes, "Grandpa was a gregarious sort of man and loved to tell stories that usually contained some colorful language. When He married my Grandmother Minnie Ulrich, her Father was very unhappy she was marrying a Norwegian. He had lots of stories about that. Vay and Minnie were happily married for just over 50 years before Grandma died. Some of my greatest memories are sitting at the kitchen table on the homestead near Red Lake Falls with Grandpa holding court at the end of the table. At a minimum his shirt was unbuttoned to the waist showing his chest, but a lot of times he had no shirt on at all. I can still vividly see him pounding his index finger on the table making a point."*