

# Evidence Analysis Assignment - For Rufus Ousler Hart

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Overview

Rufus Ousler Hart, the son of Alexander Pickens Hart and Mary Elizabeth Bradley, is fairly well documented in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century records of Randolph County, West Virginia. Those record sources, however, reveal significant conflicts in his date and place of birth. This assignment analyzes those sources in an attempt to resolve the conflicts and clarify his birth date and birth place, as well as other vital information.

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## 1.2 Summary of Record Sources

The following record sources containing vital information about Rufus O. Hart were used in this classification exercise:

- Birth register<sup>1</sup>
- Marriage record<sup>2</sup>
- 1880 U.S. federal census<sup>3</sup>
- 1900 U.S. federal census<sup>4</sup>
- 1910 U.S. federal census<sup>5</sup>
- 1920 U.S. federal census<sup>6</sup>
- Death certificate<sup>7</sup>
- Death register<sup>8</sup>
- Gravestone<sup>9</sup>
- *Randolph County Pioneer Index*<sup>10</sup>
- *The Harts of Randolph*<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Randolph County, West Virginia, Register of Births, v. 1, 1871, p. 84, row 27, entry for Hart Rufus, 07 April 1871; digital image, West Virginia Archives and History, *The Vital Research Records Project* ([http://www.wvculture.org/vrr/va\\_view.aspx?Id=1562327&Type=Birth](http://www.wvculture.org/vrr/va_view.aspx?Id=1562327&Type=Birth) : accessed 18 September 2015).

<sup>2</sup> Randolph County, West Virginia, Marriages, v. 3, 1898, p. 325, Rufus Hart and Lucy Logan, 12 February 1898; digital image, West Virginia Archives and History, *The Vital Research Records Project* ([http://www.wvculture.org/vrr/va\\_view.aspx?Id=11021389&Type=Marriage](http://www.wvculture.org/vrr/va_view.aspx?Id=11021389&Type=Marriage) : accessed 18 September 2015).

<sup>3</sup> 1880 U.S. census, Randolph County, West Virginia, population schedule, Roaring Creek, p. 5th (penned), enumeration district 57, dwelling 41, family 41, Rufus Hart in household of A.P. Hart; digital image, *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 18 September 2015); citing NARA microfilm publication T9, roll 1412.

<sup>4</sup> 1900 U.S. census, Randolph County, West Virginia, population schedule, Leadsville, sheet 1-B, enumeration district 117, dwelling 14, family 14, Rufus Hart and household; digital image, *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 18 September 2015); citing NARA microfilm publication T623, roll 1771.

<sup>5</sup> 1910 U.S. census, Randolph County, West Virginia, population schedule, Beverly, sheet 9-A, enumeration district 116, dwelling 152, family 152, Rufus Hart and household; digital image, *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 18 September 2015); citing NARA microfilm publication T624, roll 1696.

<sup>6</sup> 1920 U.S. census, Randolph County, West Virginia, population schedule, Roaring Creek, sheet 14-A, enumeration district 165, dwelling 212, family 223, Rufus Hart and household; digital image, *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 18 September 2015); citing NARA microfilm publication T625, roll 1971.

<sup>7</sup> "Certificates of deaths (West Virginia), 1917-1973," West Virginia Archives and History, *The Vital Research Records Project* ([http://www.wvculture.org/vrr/va\\_dcsearch.aspx](http://www.wvculture.org/vrr/va_dcsearch.aspx) : accessed 18 September 2015), digital image, Rufus O. Hart, 07 April 1928, no. 5538, West Virginia State Department of Health, Division of Vital Statistics.

<sup>8</sup> Randolph County, West Virginia, Randolph County Deaths, v. 4, 1928, p. 73, row 9, entry for Hart, Rufus O, 07 April 1928; digital image, West Virginia Archives and History, *The Vital Research Records Project* ([http://www.wvculture.org/vrr/va\\_view2.aspx?FilmNumber=808241&ImageNumber=324](http://www.wvculture.org/vrr/va_view2.aspx?FilmNumber=808241&ImageNumber=324) : accessed 18 September 2015).

<sup>9</sup> FindAGrave, *Find A Grave*, digital image ([www.findagrave.com](http://www.findagrave.com) : accessed 99 Sep 2015), photograph, gravestone of Rufus O. Hart (1870-1928) and Lucy E. Logan (1876-1926), Mabie, West Virginia.

<sup>10</sup> Luran D'Ablemont Ragland, *Pioneer Index Randolph County, West Virginia* (Bowden, West Virginia: Seneca Publishers, 2007), page 122; digital images, Google Books (<https://books.google.com/books?id=xzT0LBBjFeEC> : accessed 18 September 2015).

<sup>11</sup> Katherine Hart Frame, *The Harts of Randolph or Mostly Descendants of Edward and Daniel Hart, sons of John Hart, The Signer* (Parsons, West Virginia: McClain Printing Company, 1976), 244.

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## 2 BIRTH ANALYSIS

### 2.1 Source Data Classifications

For the birth of Rufus O. Hart

Data Type	Information	Source	Informant	Source Type	Information Type	Evidence Type
Date	07 Apr 1871	Birth register	undetermined	Derivative	Undetermined	Direct
Date	1870-1871 (age 9)	1880 census	undetermined	Original Copy	Undetermined	Direct
Date	1870-1871 (age 27)	Marriage record	bride, Lucy Logan	Original Copy	Secondary	Direct
Date	Nov 1871	1900 census	undetermined	Original Copy	Undetermined	Direct
Date	1870-1871 (age 39)	1910 census	undetermined	Original Copy	Undetermined	Direct
Date	1871-1872 (age 48)	1920 census	undetermined	Original Copy	Undetermined	Direct
Date	08 Nov 1870	Death register	John Hart, son	Derivative	Secondary	Direct
Date	08 Nov 1869	Death certificate	undetermined	Original Copy	Undetermined	Direct
Date	07 Nov 1870	Gravestone	undetermined	Original Copy	Undetermined	Direct
Date	07 Nov 1870	Randolph County Pioneer Index	undetermined	Authored Narrative	Undetermined	Direct
Date	07 Nov 1870	Harts of Randolph	Rufus' daughter	Authored Narrative	Secondary	Direct
Place	Beverly, Randolph, WV	Birth register	undetermined	Derivative	Undetermined	Direct
Place	Kansas	1880 census	undetermined	Original Copy	Undetermined	Direct
Place	Randolph County, WV	Marriage record	bride, Lucy Logan	Original Copy	Secondary	Direct
Place	Kansas	1900 census	undetermined	Original Copy	Undetermined	Direct
Place	Kansas	1910 census	undetermined	Original Copy	Undetermined	Direct
Place	WV	1920 census	undetermined	Original Copy	Undetermined	Direct
Place	WV	Death register	John Hart, son	Derivative	Secondary	Direct
Place	WV	Death certificate	John Hart, son	Original Copy	Secondary	Direct
Place	Kansas	Daughter's delayed birth record	Rufus' daughter	Original Copy	Secondary	Direct
Place	Jackson County, KS	Harts of Randolph	Rufus' daughter	Authored Narrative	Secondary	Direct

### 2.2 Birth Date Analysis

Record sources for Rufus O. Hart suggest four potential birth dates:

- 08 November 1869
- 07 November 1870
- 07 April 1871
- November 1871

The 1870 and 1871 dates are supported by evidence from multiple sources. The 1869 birth date is recorded solely on Rufus' death certificate.<sup>12</sup> Although the informant is reported to be John Hart, his son, a closer examination of the death certificate suggests more than one informant.

<sup>12</sup> "Certificates of deaths (West Virginia), 1917-1973," West Virginia Archives and History, digital image, Rufus O. Hart, 1928, no. 5538.

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The birth month and birth day are typed, while the birth year is handwritten. The “age in years” is typed, while the “age in months” and “age in days” is handwritten. This indicates that the original informant knew only some of the information at the time the death certificate was created and the rest of the information was appended later. Therefore, the informant is undetermined for the birth date and age information on the death certificate. Due to the unknown source of this information, its inconsistencies with other records (including the death register and gravestone), and its lack of additional support, the 1869 birth date is not credible. Also, Rufus’ sister, Mabel, was born 24 February 1869,<sup>13</sup> making an early November 1869 birth date for him exceedingly unlikely. For the foregoing reasons, the 1869 birth date is rejected.

The November 1871 birth month/year is stated explicitly in the 1900 census<sup>14</sup> by an undetermined informant, but most likely Rufus’ wife. Rufus’ sister, Bertha, was born in February 1872,<sup>15</sup> making a November 1871 birth date for Rufus impossible, thus the November 1871 birth date is rejected.

That leaves 07 November 1870 and 07 April 1871 as plausible candidates for Rufus’ date of birth. Both are supported by the 1880 and 1910 U.S. census records,<sup>16</sup> where a calculated birth date range based on reported age at the time of enumeration encompasses both dates.

The November 1870 birth date is additionally supported by the death register, his marriage record, the gravestone, and two authored narratives,<sup>17</sup> all providing secondary or undetermined information.

The April 1871 birth date is additionally supported by the birth register and the 1920 census calculated birth date range.<sup>18</sup> In general, records created closer to the time of the event are likely

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<sup>13</sup> Randolph County, West Virginia, Register of Births, v. 1, 1869, p. 79, row 23, entry for Hart Mabell, 24 February 1869; digital image, West Virginia Archives and History, *The Vital Research Records Project* ([http://www.wvculture.org/vrr/va\\_view.aspx?Id=1570022&Type=Birth](http://www.wvculture.org/vrr/va_view.aspx?Id=1570022&Type=Birth) : accessed 18 September 2015). Also, Frame, *The Harts of Randolph*, 244.

<sup>14</sup> 1900 U.S. census, Randolph Co., West Virginia, pop. sch., Leadsville, sheet 1-B, ED 57, dwelling 41, family 41, Rufus Hart and household.

<sup>15</sup> 1900 U.S. census, Randolph County, West Virginia, population schedule, Valley Bend, sheet 2-A, enumeration district 123, dwelling 20, family 23, B.H. McElwee in household of W.W. McElwee; digital image, *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 18 September 2015); citing NARA microfilm publication T623, roll 1771. Frame, *The Harts of Randolph*, 244.

<sup>16</sup> 1880 U.S. census, Randolph Co., West Virginia, pop. sch., Roaring Creek, p. 5th (penned), ED 57, dwelling 41, family 41, Rufus Hart in household of A.P. Hart. 1910 U.S. census, Randolph Co., West Virginia, pop. sch., Beverly, sheet 9-A, ED 116, dwelling 152, family 152, Rufus Hart and household.

<sup>17</sup> Randolph Co., West Virginia, Randolph County Deaths, 4, p. 73, entry for Hart, Rufus O. Randolph Co., West Virginia, Marriages, 3, 1898, p. 325, Rufus Hart and Lucy Logan. FindAGrave.com, *Find A Grave*, photograph, gravestone of Rufus O. Hart (1870-1928) and Lucy E. Logan (1876-1926), Mabie, West Virginia. Ragland, *Pioneer Index Randolph County, West Virginia*, page 122. Frame, *The Harts of Randolph*, 244.

<sup>18</sup> Randolph Co., West Virginia, Register of Births, 1, 1871, p. 84, entry for Hart Rufus. 1920 U.S. census, Randolph Co., West Virginia, pop. sch., Roaring Creek, sheet 14-A, ED 165, dwelling 212, family 223, Rufus Hart and household.

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to be more accurate than those created later, with an original birth register typically offering the highest quality of primary, direct information for a birth date. Thus the birth register's date of 07 April 1871 should trump the other date. However, this particular birth register is not an original record of primary information and requires a closer examination.

### The Randolph County Birth Register

The birth register for Randolph County, West Virginia for this period of time is not a typical birth register. The births are not in chronological order. They are sequenced by year, district, and then roughly alphabetical order by the first letter of the surname. This establishes that the information in the register was copied from another source, making the birth register a derivative record. The register contains all the detailed information typically recorded for a birth, so it is not an index.

Further inspection of the birth register pages for several years surrounding 1870 reveals a few clues that may explain how these records were created. The top of each page or district section begins with, "Births in District No. N in the County of Randolph" often followed by a person's name and the word "asesor" [sic]. At the end of the annual list of births for many of the years there is a signature; for example, "Teste – James D Wilson, Clerk". The word *teste* used in this context means "to bear witness" and indicates the official nature of the recording. This suggests that the local assessors documented the births in their own districts and these births were later copied by the clerk from the assessors' records into the county birth register. Therefore, this birth register is a derivative record containing undetermined information.

The quality of the information in the birth register may be further questioned because the data was hand copied, birth by birth, into the county ledger book from other documents, with the potential for errors and omissions that such copying may incur. Could a birth date of 07 November 1870 be inadvertently transcribed as 07 April 1871? When copying many records into an alphabetical format it is conceivable for a clerk to accidentally record the birth month of one child for the next child, perhaps writing "April" instead of "November". But it would be unlikely for him to accidentally enter a birth from the year 1870 into the birth register pages for 1871; pages which presumably didn't yet exist at that time. To test for the possibility that the clerk inadvertently wrote the year "1871" on the top of the page instead of "1870," two other people with births on the same page as Rufus were tracked in later records.<sup>19</sup> Both analyses confirmed the birth year of 1871 on the register page as correct.

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<sup>19</sup> For Earnest Harper, listed directly above Rufus in the birth register: Randolph County, West Virginia, Register of Births, v. 1, 1871, p. 84, row 26, entry for Harper Earnest, 09 April 1871; digital image, West Virginia Archives and History, *The Vital Research Records Project* ([http://www.wvculture.org/vrr/va\\_view.aspx?Id=1562327&Type=Birth](http://www.wvculture.org/vrr/va_view.aspx?Id=1562327&Type=Birth) : accessed 18 September 2015) and Social Security Administration, "U.S., Social Security Applications and Claims Index, 1936-2007," database, *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com) : accessed 18 September 2015), entry for Ernest H. Harper, 1937, SS no. 500-09-3517. For James Hogan, listed directly below Rufus in the birth register: Randolph County, West Virginia, Register of Births, v. 1, 1871, p. 84, row 28, entry for Hogan James, 06 April 1871; digital image, West Virginia Archives and History, *The Vital Research Records Project*

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## Analysis of Secondary and Undetermined information

The lack of primary information for the birth date of Rufus Hart makes it difficult to reach a conclusion about which of the two potential dates, 07 November 1870 or 07 April 1871, is his birth date. Since both dates are based wholly on secondary or undetermined information, it may be helpful to gain an understanding of where that information may have originated.

Some of the census records support both dates because the calculated date range is so broad. For this reason, the census records will be disregarded and the focus will be on the other sources.

### Records supporting the 1870 birth date:

- The February 1898 marriage record<sup>20</sup> - the informant for this record, the bride, Lucy Logan, asserted Rufus' age as 27.
- The death register,<sup>21</sup> with his son John as informant
- The gravestone,<sup>22</sup> informant unknown
- *Pioneer Index Randolph County*<sup>23</sup>
- *The Harts of Randolph*<sup>24</sup>

The latter two sources are authored narratives. The author of *The Harts of Randolph* is Katherine Hart Frame, the daughter of Rufus, who presumably obtained her father's birth date from her father or mother, making this a more credible source than most authored narratives. The author of *Pioneer Index Randolph County* obtained the birth date from the gravestone, thus it is not a source of independent origin and can be discounted as a source providing additional support.

The 1870 birth date is reported across several decades of records by multiple informants. Does this mean it is correct, or is it simply wrong information that has been perpetuated by family lore?

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([http://www.wvculture.org/vrr/va\\_view.aspx?Id=1562327&Type=Birth](http://www.wvculture.org/vrr/va_view.aspx?Id=1562327&Type=Birth) : accessed 18 September 2015) and 1900 U.S. census, Randolph County, West Virginia, population schedule, Mingo, sheet 9-B, enumeration district 120, dwelling 169, family 169, James Hogan in the household of George Hogan; digital image, *Ancestry.com*

(<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 18 September 2015); citing NARA microfilm publication T623, roll 1771.

<sup>20</sup> Randolph Co., West Virginia, Marriages, 3, 1898, p. 325, Rufus Hart and Lucy Logan.

<sup>21</sup> Randolph Co., West Virginia, Randolph County Deaths, 4, p. 73, entry for Hart, Rufus O.

<sup>22</sup> FindAGrave.com, *Find A Grave*, photograph, gravestone of Rufus O. Hart (1870-1928) and Lucy E. Logan (1876-1926), Mabie, West Virginia.

<sup>23</sup> Ragland, *Pioneer Index Randolph County, West Virginia*, page 122.

<sup>24</sup> Frame, *The Harts of Randolph*, 244.

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## Records supporting the 1871 birth date:

The main record providing support for the 1871 birth date is the birth register for Rufus Hart.<sup>25</sup> Although it is a derivative record, it is the record closest in time to the actual birth. Despite the potential for copying errors by the clerk, this information is not based on hearsay, but on official documentation from the local assessors. Then why does it conflict with so many other record sources?

Before reaching a conclusion on the birth date of Rufus O. Hart, an analysis of the inconsistencies on his place of birth will be performed.

## 2.3 Birth Place Analysis

Record sources differ on the birthplace of Rufus O. Hart. Some indicate he was born in Randolph County, West Virginia, while others report the state of Kansas as his place of birth. The records containing the conflicting birth places do not correspond, like-to-like, with the records containing the conflicting birth dates, making it necessary to analyze the birth date and birth place independently.

A chronology of his family establishes their residence as Randolph County for the time periods prior and subsequent to his birth in the 1870/1871 timeframe:

- His parents were married in February 1868 in Randolph County, where they were both residents at the time.<sup>26</sup>
- Their first child, Mabel, was born in February 1869 in Randolph County.<sup>27</sup>
- Rufus was their second child.<sup>28</sup>
- Their third child, Bertha, was born in February 1872 in Randolph County.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Randolph Co., West Virginia, Register of Births, 1, 1871, p. 84, entry for Hart Rufus.

<sup>26</sup> Randolph County, West Virginia, Marriages, v. 3, 1868, p. 16, entry for Alex<sup>r</sup> Hart and Mary E. Bradley, 06 May 1868; digital image, West Virginia Archives and History, *The Vital Research Records Project* ([http://www.wvculture.org/vrr/va\\_view.aspx?Id=11021875&Type=Marriage](http://www.wvculture.org/vrr/va_view.aspx?Id=11021875&Type=Marriage) : accessed 18 September 2015).

<sup>27</sup> Randolph County, West Virginia, Register of Births, v. 1, 1869, p. 79, row 23, entry for Hart Mabell, 24 February 1869; digital image, West Virginia Archives and History, *The Vital Research Records Project* ([http://www.wvculture.org/vrr/va\\_view.aspx?Id=1570022&Type=Birth](http://www.wvculture.org/vrr/va_view.aspx?Id=1570022&Type=Birth) : accessed 18 September 2015). Also, Frame, *The Harts of Randolph*, 244.

<sup>28</sup> 1880 U.S. census, Randolph Co., West Virginia, pop. sch., Roaring Creek, p. 5th (penned), ED 57, dwelling 41, family 41, Rufus Hart in household of A.P. Hart.

<sup>29</sup> 1900 U.S. census, Randolph County, West Virginia, population schedule, Valley Bend, sheet 2-A, enumeration district 123, dwelling 20, family 23, B.H. McElwee in household of W.W. McElwee; digital image, *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 18 September 2015); citing NARA microfilm publication T623, roll 1771. Frame, *The Harts of Randolph*, 244.

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It seems unlikely that the family lived in Kansas for the short period of time between the birth of Mabel and Bertha. The 1870 census would provide some additional information on their whereabouts at that time, but the family is unidentified in that census.<sup>30</sup>

The record sources reporting a Kansas birth for Rufus are:

- Three federal censuses (1880, 1900, and 1910)<sup>31</sup>
- His daughter's delayed birth certificate recorded in 1942<sup>32</sup>
- An authored narrative written by that same daughter, which specifies Jackson County, Kansas as Rufus' birthplace.<sup>33</sup>

None of these sources offers definitive primary information. The informant for the 1880 census was most likely Rufus' mother, and if so, his birth place would be primary information. Although the informants for the census records are unknown, they are clearly not one single individual because the 1880 census was enumerated when Rufus was a child living with his parents, while the later census records were enumerated when Rufus was married and living with his wife and children.

A search of online databases containing Kansas births and baptisms did not identify Rufus Hart.<sup>34</sup> However, Kansas did not mandate recording of vital records at that time, thus documented birth information is sparse and incomplete so this negative evidence is not conclusive. Also, there are additional sources of potential birth information for Kansas that were not researched due to time constraints.

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<sup>30</sup> 1870 U.S. census; database and digital images, *Ancestry.com* (<http://search.ancestry.com/search/db.aspx?dbid=7163> : accessed 18 September 2015); citing NARA microfilm publication M593. The following research was performed to find the Alexander P. Hart family in the 1870 census: database searches for Alexander Hart, Mary/Elizabeth Hart, Mabel Hart, individually with name variations, and by first name only as a family group did not identify the family. Author's line-by-line reading of the 1870 census in Randolph County, West Virginia did not identify the family. Author's line-by-line reading of the 1870 census in Jefferson Township, Jackson County, Kansas did not identify the family.

<sup>31</sup> 1880 U.S. census, Randolph Co., West Virginia, pop. sch., Roaring Creek, p. 5th (penned), ED 57, dwelling 41, family 41, Rufus Hart in household of A.P. Hart. 1900 U.S. census, Randolph Co., West Virginia, pop. sch., Leadsville, sheet 1-B, ED 57, dwelling 41, family 41, Rufus Hart and household. 1910 U.S. census, Randolph Co., West Virginia, pop. sch., Beverly, sheet 9-A, ED 116, dwelling 152, family 152, Rufus Hart and household.

<sup>32</sup> "Birth Certificates (West Virginia), 1880-1899," West Virginia Archives and History, *The Vital Research Records Project* ([http://www.wvculture.org/vrr/va\\_view.aspx?Id=3403615&Type=Birth](http://www.wvculture.org/vrr/va_view.aspx?Id=3403615&Type=Birth) : accessed 18 September 2015), digital image, Katherine Elizabeth Hart, 31 January 1899, delayed birth certificate no. 25472 (1942), West Virginia State Department of Health, Division of Vital Statistics.

<sup>33</sup> Frame, *The Harts of Randolph*, 244.

<sup>34</sup> "Kansas Births and Christenings, 1818-1936," database, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/search/collection/1674839> : accessed 18 September 2015; citing data collected by the Genealogical Society of Utah, Salt Lake City. "Kansas, Vital Record Abstracts, 1854-2009," database, *Ancestry.com* (<http://search.ancestry.com/search/db.aspx?dbid=2551> : accessed 18 September 2015; citing Vital Records abstracts of the Kansas Historical Society.



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The record sources reporting a West Virginia birth are:

- Rufus' death records (both the death certificate and the death register)<sup>35</sup>
- His marriage record,<sup>36</sup> with the bride as informant
- The 1920 census<sup>37</sup>
- The Randolph County birth register<sup>38</sup>

The first three do not provide primary information. The Randolph County birth register for Rufus reports that he was born in Beverly, Randolph County, West Virginia. This would typically be reliable primary evidence for a birth place. However, as discussed in the previous section, this register is a derivative source containing undetermined information, recorded after the fact from assessor's documents, and it conflicts with several other record sources.

## Resolving the conflict

It is possible that Rufus was born in Kansas in November 1870 while the family was there on an extended visit. Once back in West Virginia, the local assessor may have documented his birth in April of 1871 and the county clerk added it to the Randolph County birth register for that year. This would explain both the conflicting birth places and birth dates.

This hypothesis is strengthened by the correlation of the following pieces of indirect and negative evidence:

- Rufus' father, Alexander Pickens Hart, had a second cousin, Hugh See Hart, who lived in Kansas during that time period.<sup>39</sup> Hugh See Hart lived in Circleville, Jefferson Township, Jackson County, Kansas in 1870,<sup>40</sup> the same county reported as Rufus' birth location in *The Harts of Randolph*.<sup>41</sup>
- Rufus Oursler, a prominent citizen of Jackson County, Kansas and the founder of Circleville, lived there at the time of Rufus Ousler Hart's birth.<sup>42</sup> Rufus' middle name of

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<sup>35</sup> "Certificates of deaths (West Virginia), 1917-1973," West Virginia Archives and History, digital image, Rufus O. Hart, 1928, no. 5538. Randolph Co., West Virginia, Randolph County Deaths, 4, p. 73, entry for Hart, Rufus O.

<sup>36</sup> Randolph Co., West Virginia, Marriages, 3, 1898, p. 325, Rufus Hart and Lucy Logan.

<sup>37</sup> 1920 U.S. census, Randolph Co., West Virginia, pop. sch., Roaring Creek, sheet 14-A, ED 165, dwelling 212, family 223, Rufus Hart and household.

<sup>38</sup> Randolph Co., West Virginia, Register of Births, 1, 1871, p. 84, entry for Hart Rufus.

<sup>39</sup> Frame, *The Harts of Randolph*, 37, 241, 244. Ragland, *Pioneer Index Randolph County, West Virginia*, page 120-122.

<sup>40</sup> 1870 U.S. census, Jackson County, Kansas, population schedule, Jefferson Township, p. 6 (penned), dwelling 44, family 44, Hugh S. Hart household; digital image, *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 18 September 2015); citing NARA microfilm publication M593, roll 435.

<sup>41</sup> Frame, *The Harts of Randolph*, 244.

<sup>42</sup> William G. Cutler, *History of the State of Kansas* (Chicago: A. T. Andreas, 1883), Jackson County chapter, part 7; transcribed text, *The Kansas Collection* (<http://www.kancoll.org/books/cutler> : accessed 18 September 2015). 1870 U.S. census, Jackson County, Kansas, population schedule, Jefferson Township, p. 11 (penned), dwelling 75, family 75, Rufus Oursler household; digital image, *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 18 September 2015); citing NARA microfilm publication M593, roll 435.

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Ousler is unusual and is not a family name found in previous generations.<sup>43</sup> It is likely that Rufus Ousler Hart was named for Rufus Oursler of Jackson County, Kansas, with a minor corruption in spelling.

- Cousin Hugh See Hart was a business partner with Rufus Oursler,<sup>44</sup> establishing a relationship between the Hart and Oursler families.
- Rufus Hart's family is unidentified in the 1870 census.<sup>45</sup> This may be due to the family's in-transit status between West Virginia and Kansas during that enumeration.

The sharing of an unusual name combination, along with the relationships and associations in the small town of Circleville, Kansas circa 1870 possibly tie Rufus' father to Jackson County, Kansas around the time of Rufus' birth. The family's absence in the Randolph County 1870 census records suggests they were elsewhere in the summer of 1870. Strengthening the case for a Kansas birth are the multiple independent sources reporting Kansas as Rufus' place of birth.

The two source records conflicting with the Kansas birth have already been shown to have questionable credibility. The birth register is a derivative document, copied from assessor's records after the fact. An out-of-state birth could have easily been misconstrued and recorded as a local birth. The death certificate has multiple informants and provides an inaccurate birth year, making the reported birth place questionable as well.

The conclusion reached is that Jackson County, Kansas is the birth place of Rufus O. Hart.

### 2.4 Birth Information Conclusions

The conclusion that Kansas is the birth place of Rufus O. Hart despite its conflict with the birth register, makes the birth register less creditable for the birth date of 07 April 1871 as well,

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<sup>43</sup> Frame, *The Harts of Randolph*.

<sup>44</sup> Chapman Brothers, *Portrait and biographical album of Jackson, Jefferson and Pottawatomie Counties, Kansas* (Chicago: Chapman Brothers, 1890), p. 483; digital images, *Internet Archive* (<https://archive.org/details/portraitbiographjip00chic> : accessed 18 September 2015).

<sup>45</sup> 1870 U.S. census; database and digital images, *Ancestry.com* (<http://search.ancestry.com/search/db.aspx?dbid=7163> : accessed 18 September 2015); citing NARA microfilm publication M593. The following research was performed to find the Alexander P. Hart family in the 1870 census: database searches for Alexander Hart, Mary/Elizabeth Hart, Mabel Hart, individually with name variations, and by first name only as a family group did not identify the family. Author's line-by-line reading of the 1870 census in Randolph County, West Virginia did not identify the family. Author's line-by-line reading of the 1870 census in Jefferson Township, Jackson County, Kansas did not identify the family.

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especially with the potential for errors if recording an out-of-state birth that occurred in the prior year. The preponderance of secondary/undetermined information of independent origin for the 07 November 1870 birth date strengthens the case for the 1870 birth date. Until additional research can be performed to pursue this further, the conclusion is that Rufus O. Hart was probably born 07 November 1870 in Jackson County, Kansas.

### 3 MARRIAGE ANALYSIS

#### 3.1 Source Data Classifications

For the marriage of Rufus O. Hart

Data Type	Information	Source	Informant	Source Type	Information Type	Evidence Type
Spouse	Lucy Logan	Marriage record	bride, Lucy Logan	Original Copy	Primary	Direct
Spouse	Lucy	1900 census	undetermined	Original Copy	Undetermined	Direct
Spouse	Lucy E.	1910 census	undetermined	Original Copy	Undetermined	Direct
Spouse	Lucy	Death cetificate	John Hart, son	Original Copy	Primary	Direct
Spouse	Lucy E. Logan	Randolph County Pioneer Index	undetermined	Authored Narrative	Undetermined	Direct
Spouse	Lucy Emmert Logan	Harts of Randolph	Rufus' daughter	Authored Narrative	Primary	Direct
Date	12 Feb 1898	Marriage record	bride, Lucy Logan	Original Copy	Primary	Direct
Date	abt 1897	1900 census	undetermined	Original Copy	Undetermined	Direct
Date	12 Feb 1898	Harts of Randolph	Rufus' daughter	Authored Narrative	Secondary	Direct
Place	Beverly, Randolph, WV	Marriage record	county clerk	Original Copy	Primary	Direct
Place	Beverly, Randolph, WV	Harts of Randolph	Rufus' daughter	Authored Narrative	Secondary	Direct

#### 3.2 Marriage Information Conclusions

Record sources for Rufus O. Hart provide compatible evidence that he married Lucy E. Logan on 12 February 1898 in Beverly, Randolph County, West Virginia.

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## 4 DEATH ANALYSIS

### 4.1 Source Data Classifications

For the death of Rufus O. Hart

Data Type	Information	Source	Informant	Source Type	Information Type	Evidence Type
Date	07 Apr 1928	Death certificate	undetermined	Original Copy	undetermined	Direct
Date	07 Apr 1928	Death register	undetermined	Derivative	undetermined	Direct
Date	06 Apr 1928	Gravestone	undetermined	Authored Narrative	undetermined	Direct
Date	06 Apr 1929	Randolph County Pioneer Index	undetermined	Authored Narrative	undetermined	Direct
Date	06 Apr 1928	Harts of Randolph	Rufus' daughter	Authored Narrative	Primary	Direct
Place	Elkins, Randolph, WV	Death register	John Hart, son	Derivative	Secondary	Direct
Place	Elkins, Randolph, WV	Death certificate	John Hart, son	Original Copy	Primary	Direct

### 4.2 Death Date Analysis

Record sources for Rufus O. Hart suggest three potential death dates:

- 06 April 1928
- 07 April 1928
- 06 April 1929

Both 1928 dates are supported by evidence from multiple sources. The 1929 date is documented solely in an authored narrative, *Pioneer Index of Randolph County, West Virginia*.<sup>46</sup> The author references her source as *Randolph County West Virginia Cemetery Headstone Readings, volume 1*, by the Allegheny Regional Family History Society. The 1929 death year is undoubtedly a typographical error, as the headstone clearly reports a 1928 date; therefore the 1929 death date is rejected.

The remaining two 1928 dates vary by only a day.

#### Support for the April 7 death date

The April 7 date is supported by Rufus' death certificate and death register.<sup>47</sup> The death register is in alphabetical order by the first letter of the surname, indicating it was copied from another source. Closer inspection of the death register suggests that it was copied from the death certificate, as it includes the date that the death certificate was filed by the registrar (01 May

<sup>46</sup> Ragland, *Pioneer Index Randolph County, West Virginia*, page 122.

<sup>47</sup> "Certificates of deaths (West Virginia), 1917-1973," West Virginia Archives and History, digital image, Rufus O. Hart, 1928, no. 5538. Randolph Co., West Virginia, Randolph County Deaths, 4, p. 73, entry for Hart, Rufus O.

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1928). If so, the death register is not a source of independent origin, but a derivative source of information copied from the death certificate.

The death date recorded on a death certificate is generally considered primary information. On this death certificate it isn't clear who reported the date of date. It appears that many hands were involved in the completion of the death certificate:

- Rufus' son, John Hart, listed as the informant
- The person who typed parts of the death certificate, including death date
- The person who later wrote in the missing birth year and age in months/days
- The doctor who attended Rufus
- The registrar who received and filed the certificate

The date of death on the certificate was not completed by the doctor, as the following section of the death certificate shows.

The image shows a section of a "MEDICAL CERTIFICATE OF DEATH" form. The title is "MEDICAL CERTIFICATE OF DEATH". Below it, item 16 is "DATE OF DEATH (Month, day and year)" with "April 7, 1928" typed in. Item 17 is "I HEREBY CERTIFY That I attended deceased from April 1, 1928, to April 6, 1928, that I last saw him alive on April 6, 1928, and that death occurred on date stated above, at 3:30 P.M." The cause of death is listed as "The CAUSE OF DEATH was as follows: (Primary or beginning cause) Wrenia".

Figure 1. Section of death certificate of Rufus Hart<sup>48</sup>

The date of death is typed while the information completed by the doctor is handwritten. It isn't clear which one was completed first. If the doctor completed his part first, then the statement, "death occurred on the date stated above," would refer to a death date of April 06, and the typed date would be an error. If the doctor completed his part after the typist, then that statement would refer to a death date of April 07.

Based on the burial date of 08 April 1928, it is more likely that Rufus died on the sixth instead of the seventh, particularly with the time of death listed as 3:30 pm. Burial and funeral arrangements generally are not completed in less than 24 hours.

There are too many informants and other questionable pieces of information on this death certificate to accept the date of death at face value. No other independent sources report the same death date.

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<sup>48</sup> "Certificates of deaths (West Virginia), 1917-1973," West Virginia Archives and History, digital image, Rufus O. Hart, 1928, no. 5538.

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## Support for the April 6 death date

The April 6 date is supported by Rufus' gravestone, and an authored narrative.<sup>49</sup> *The Harts of Randolph* was written by Rufus' daughter, Katherine Hart Frame, who was living at the time of her father's death, making her reported date of death for Rufus a primary source of information.

## Summary

Based on the multiple informants for the death certificate, along with other questionable details, the death date provided on the death certificate is less credible than the one provided by the other sources. The conclusion is that Rufus O. Hart died on 06 April 1928.

## 4.3 Death Place Analysis

Record sources for Rufus O. Hart provide compatible evidence that he died in Randolph County, West Virginia.

## 4.4 Death Information Conclusions

Rufus O. Hart died on 06 April 1928 in Randolph County, West Virginia.

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<sup>49</sup> FindAGrave.com, *Find A Grave*, photograph, gravestone of Rufus O. Hart (1870-1928) and Lucy E. Logan (1876-1926), Mabie, West Virginia. Frame, *The Harts of Randolph*, 244.