

# Sensebach Heritage

A family history newsletter for:

Sinsabaugh Sensibaugh Sensenbaugh Sinsebox  
Sinsapaugh Sencabaugh Sencenbaugh Sencerbox  
Sincebaugh Sencebaugh Sincerbeaux Sincerbox  
Sensabaugh Sencibaugh Cincebeaux Sensaboy  
Sensebaugh Cencebaugh Cincebox Senciboy

and other variations of the name

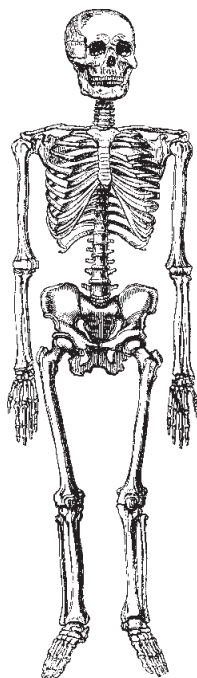
## Infamous, Notorious, or Scandalous:

### Whispered Stories of the Sensebach Families

Halloween is almost upon us. What better time to open the closet door and bring some of the Sensebach family skeletons out for an airing?

Oh, yes, we do have “skeletons.” It’s a rare family indeed that doesn’t have at least one questionable episode buried in its annals, or one relative whom the rest would just as soon not acknowledge. What, or whom, we hide in the back of the family cupboard, varies widely; and scandal, like beauty, is in the eye of the beholder. At one time families concealed mental illness and disabilities, medical conditions to which we now attach no shame. Laws and social standards change with time. Much of the behavior that scandalized our ancestors – divorce and interfaith marriage, for example – we now commonly accept. Conversely, we now deem unpalatable many things that our forebears accepted; the right of a man to discipline physically his wife and children, unquestioned for centuries, now constitutes the crimes of spousal or child abuse.

As a family, the extended Sensebach clan is probably average in its collection of skeletons. When we open the closet,



out pops the usual miscellany of hidden scandal, misdemeanor, and crime. Barred from family gatherings, mentioned only in whispers, and relegated to the proverbial closet, most of the offenders were guilty of some social peccadillo: a child born out of wedlock, an adulterous relationship, a divorce, a marriage outside the faith, or unpopular political leanings. If we looked hard enough, we would doubtless find the usual assortment of relatives who spent time in jail for criminal offenses ranging from driving without a license to embezzlement, generally crimes of local or contemporary interest only. With time, these transgressions fade away. On rare occasions, however, a family may find itself encumbered with a relative who has committed an act of such enormity that he becomes headline news or material for the history books; in short, he achieves lasting infamy. Those we have as well.

In this issue we present a selection of Sensebach skeletons, spanning three centuries and running the gamut from marital disaster to violent political protest. In honor of the season, we’ve also included a Sensebach ghost story from the hills of Tennessee. Now, let’s rattle a few bones... ☠

## Infamous: High Crimes from the Family Closet

by Kathie Sencabaugh

In this issue of *Sensebach Heritage*, we present two truly notorious kinsmen. Although one is a genetic shoot on the family tree and the other a graft by marriage, and although the better part of a century separates these two, their deeds, oddly enough, share certain similarities.

### A Woman Deceived: Leona Sensabaugh and The Mysterious Mr. Holt

In June 1941, Southern Methodist University mourned the death of one of its outstanding faculty members. Leona Sensabaugh Holt had been an instructor in

Spanish at the venerable Dallas institution for nineteen years, and was the university’s specialist in Latin-American literature. She had served as acting Dean of Women for two years, and had been active on the curriculum committee. The President of SMU himself conducted her funeral service, held at Dallas’ prestigious Highland Park Methodist Church.

Born on November 15, 1887, in a Methodist parsonage at Saguache, Colorado, Leona Caroline Sensabaugh was the youngest child of the Reverend Oscar Fitzgerald Sensabaugh and his first wife, Eugenia Caroline Faucette. She was an intelligent, educated woman who had already graduated Poly College with Highest Honors when,

on May 27, 1910, she married Frank Eugene Holt. In 1916 she received her Masters of Arts degree from SMU; and went on to do additional graduate work at the University of Mexico and the University of Chicago. She joined the SMU faculty in 1922, and remained there until her death shortly after the end of term in 1941.

Leona Holt’s obituary praised her many achievements; told of her birth in the parsonage; and listed her parents, four siblings, and a son as survivors. Completely absent was any mention of her husband. Nor did the *Recollections* of the Reverend Oscar Fitzgerald Sensabaugh contain any reference to his son-in-law Frank Holt, who turned out

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