

Who is Lum Andekin? And where is George?

I have a family Bible which belonged to my great grandmother, Ann Rebecca Wade. The first entree is her marriage to Benjamin Sedicum on the 17th May 1855. Below that is written "George Earnest Christopher Sedicum. Born 1794. Died 1844. Father of Benjamin and John Sedicum." No mention is made of George's wife, Elizabeth, but my guess is that was because George had died before Ann Rebecca married Benjamin in 1855, while Elizabeth was alive and remained so until 1882.

From census and naturalization records, I knew that Benjamin Sedicum was born in Hanover [Germany] in 1828 [actually 1829 as I later discovered] and his brother John was born in Maryland in 1832. Consequently, at least their mother, Elizabeth, must have come to the United States between 1828 and 1832. The earliest census records I have as yet found for the Sedicums are in 1860. I found no records in the 1830 or 1840 census, but the Sedicum family may have lived with another head of household, perhaps other German immigrants. Why I have not found the family in the 1850 census, I do not know, but I shall continue to search. [I did later find the 1850 census.] In 1860, Elizabeth was living with her son, Benjamin, and in 1870 she was living with her son, John. I had no record of the father, George, in the United States. I found a published work, Mt. Olivet Cemetery Baltimore, Maryland, Caretaker Records, Volume 1: Sections A through D, compiled by John J. Winterbottom, Westminster, MD: Family Line Publications, 1989. In this are the records for a lot owned by John Sedicum, Lot 371, Section A. Listed are John, his wife Matilda, two males whom I believe were children, and Elizabeth Sedicum; but no George. Also listed in this lot is: "Lum ANDEKIN". The capitals are in the publication. Seemed like a strange name, but irrelevant as it was not Sedicum. I visited the cemetery and found the grave site with some difficulty. There I found a single head stone on which was engraved SEDDICUM. This is a new, and another, spelling; but there is no other inscription. No names, no dates, and no little nearby foot stones. Not much help. I continued on

with my research for the Sedicum family and other lines, and wondered what had happened to George. If he was not buried with his wife, the family must have lived somewhere else in 1844 when he died, but where? Or, did he not come to the U.S. at all? The idea of a pregnant woman with a son under 4 leaving Hanover for Maryland and leaving her husband behind was difficult to imagine, but the immigration stories are of difficult times for people looking for hope. As part of my efforts, I have written to individuals named Sedicum and have established contact with a few who are descended from other children of Benjamin and Ann Rebecca. While they had information on their particular lines, I, thanks to the family Bible, had the earliest and only information about the original family. In February 1998, I received a call from one of those cousins who said he had been contacted by a man also descended from a Sedicum. He put me in touch with this cousin, and in preparation for our scheduled get together I started to pull together a package which I could photo copy for him to go along with a computer printout. As I went through my Sedicum file folder I saw once again the Mt. Olivet Cemetery record and the unknown Lum ANDEKIN. Only this time I also saw something I had not previously noticed. After the name it reads, "b. 1794, d. 1844", the birth and death years of George Sedicum. So, off to rule 1, don't rely on published versions of data, check the original sources. Here I suspected the compiler had run into a handwriting problem, as I had found on various other occasions. I visited the cemetery and asked to see the original caretaker's book for Section A. The staff person graciously brought out the book and turned to Lot 371, and there in the right hand most grave in a diagram of the lot reads, "Lum ANDEKIN, b. 1794, d. 1844". So much for George!

The diagram also indicated that there is a head stone and a second stone in the right hand corner of the grave with Lum. I did not find a second stone on my prior visit. As I had brought a camera with me, I figured I would find the lot and take pictures. I did again find the lot and the head stone inscribed SEDDICUM, but nearby lying flat on the ground, and perhaps it had always been that way, I found a second stone partially covered by soil and grass and in the process of sinking into the ground. I

got an ice scraper with a brush on it from the car and made some attempt to uncover the stone. All I could determine was that there was an inscription which appeared to be in German, and a large date 1794 above which it seemed to read Geboren, born. I thought I could decipher George, but not clearly. I returned home and looked in my German dictionary for Andekin, where I found zum Andenken meaning “in remembrance of.”

This, I figured, I would find inscribed on the stone—if I could read it. I arranged to buy some rubbing paper for transferring grave stone inscriptions and made another visit to the grave site accompanied by Chuck Myers, the son of the new relative I had met. I dug out the surface of the stone with a spade and used a scrub brush to clean it off, then we did the rubbing. At home we looked at our miracle. The pertinent genealogical data was there followed by a pious saying.

ZUM ANDENKEN AN GEORGE J. E. SUEDEKUM

Er ward Geboren ANNO 1794 und starb im Jahr 1844 im Alten von 51 Jahren

Hier ruhen wir, Dein helles Auge [–allel or –attel] Dein sind wir, Herr
Im Leben und im Tod Mit ruhe —s– [am?] Grabe uns entschlafen Und
wecke uns [—] neuen Morgenroth

In Memory of George J. E. Suedekum

He was born in the year 1794 and died in the year 1844

He was 51 years old [or in his 51st year]

Here we rest In your site We are yours, Lord In life and in death Cause
us to sleep in peace in the grave and wake us to a new dawn.

So much for Lum. What have I found by all of this? I already knew his birth and death years, so no new information of that kind was added. I do know, however, that George Sedicum did indeed come to America and is buried where he belongs next to his wife, Elizabeth, and as he is buried in Mt Olivet Cemetery in west Baltimore, he probably lived somewhere on the west side of town. That may help the further search,

as I do not have to look in every county in the state. I also have still another spelling for the family name, Suedekum, which may help further searching. It isn't all that much different, however, so it may not make much difference. In 1844, German seems to still be the family language, or at least it seemed appropriate that George be buried in German, so to speak. Sometime digging is literally what we have to do, so poke around those cemetery lots, there may be a stone sinking below the ground. Beyond that, check original sources and don't rely on caretaker's notes of information which was originally in a language the caretaker didn't speak. I guess the stone, to him, recorded the burial of someone named Lum Andekin. That is now in the published records where it may be picked up and added to computer files for the world to search and ponder over. For all I know there may be an Andekin family somewhere who will come across Lum and take him for a long lost ancestor. There he is in the original source.

This was published in Maryland Genealogical Society Bulletin, Fall 1999, Volume 40, Number 4, pp. 540–543. Mt. Olivet Cemetery now has an on–line search of people buried there and it includes Lum Andekin.

Further reflections: I later learned that Mt. Olivet Cemetery opened in 1845, therefore George could not have been buried there in 1844. The earliest grave in that plot was for a child who died in 1859, so that is probably when John, the son of George, bought the lot. When George was moved there, I do not know. Benjamin apparently lived at the same place in Baltimore County where his mother had lived through the 1870 census after which he relocated in Baltimore City. George may have been moved at that time in the 1870's.

The crucial bit of information however was the German spelling for the family name. It was that spelling that enabled me to trace the family back.

Information courtesy: David H. Pardoe