

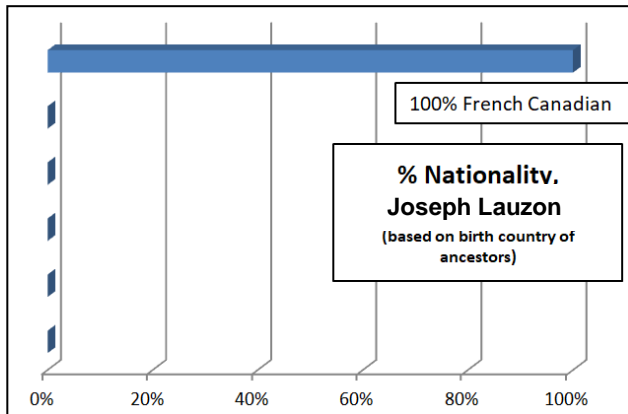
CHAPTER 5 – The 4th Child – Joseph

(April 14, 2021)

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Disclaimer: Although all genealogical and family information (names, spellings, dates, places, relationships, stories, etc.) has been gathered in good faith the nature of such information can never be 100% accurate due to variable reliability of documents. As a result, please be skeptical of any material that seems unreasonable and inform the author of such issues. The author

reserves the rights to update all information as more data becomes available.

JOSEPH LAUZON & FERN HEIDT













Joseph, circa 1912

Joseph Samuel Lauzon was sort of the "black sheep" of the Lauzon family. This was primarily because he was the only one to run-away from home and never returned. Blanche had run away to get married, but returned. Joe ran away because he couldn't get along with his father. What made it worse was that he rarely kept in touch with anyone.

Joe was born on December 2, 1910, when the Lauzon (See chapter 1) family lived in the little community of Northland, Michigan. The 1920 US Census showed that he was attending school in Escanaba.

Chapter

Children of John & Marceline Lauzon		Chapter
	Blanche M Lauzon (Wolters, Gellenbeck) 1906–1993	1
	Lucille Marie Lauzon (Kittson) 1908–1985	2
	Marie "Evelyn" Lauzon (Spielbauer) 1909–1980	3
	Joseph Samuel Lauzon 1910–1977	4
	Yvonne Marie Lauzon (Schmidling) 1911–1974	5
	Irene Marie Lauzon (Siefert, Brinkmann) 1914–2006	6
	JOSEPH "ALBERT" LAUZON 1915–1960	7
	Marie Olive Lauzon (Scoggins) 1917–2008	8
	Bernice Louise Lauzon (Jozwik) 1919–2012	9
	Dorothy Mae Lauzon (Lewandowski) 1922–2014	10
		11

Run-Away

The Lauzon sisters told the story that Joe left home at age 16 to join the Merchant Marine and Navy. He did not get along with his father. Joan Kittson Slama confirmed that she had been told by her parents that Joe and Grandpa didn't get along and that Joe left for the west coast and the Merchant Marines. [3] It was well known that Grandma was always sad that Joe just went off to join the armed forces and never returned. [2]

The Lauzon family knew little about Joe's life after he left home. Barb Wolters Reuss used to ask her mother, Blanche, many questions about him and about her childhood. Blanche gave mostly the same answer when she questioned about Joe, "I don't know". That was her standard answer. [2]

As best we can determine, Joe ran away from home in about 1926. This would have been around the time the Lauzon family returned to Escanaba, Michigan from a 2 year stay in Canada. The return trip may have been a particular strain on the relationship between a 16 year old boy and his 50 year old father.

1924 Border Crossing at Port Huron

A document from persons crossing the Canadian border into the United States in February, 1924, showed that a 16 year old named Joseph Lauzon came into the U.S. at Port Huron, near

Manifest of Persons Entering the U.S.A. at Port Huron, Michigan, Feb 24, 1924															
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR LIST OR MANIFEST OF ALIEN PASSENGERS APPLYING FOR ADMISSION Required by the regulations of Secretary of Labor PORT OF PORT HURON, MICH.															
1	2	3		4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11		12	13	
No. on List	HEAD-TAX STATUS	NAME IN FULL		Age	Sex	Color or occupation	Able to—	Nationality (Country of which citizen or subject)	† Race or people	* Last permanent residence		The name and complete address of nearest relative or friend in country whence alien came		Final destination (Shaded boxes permanent residents)	
		Family name	Given name	Yrs. Res.	Married to U.S. citizen		Read what happens (or if complete citizen, or what grade)	Yrs.		Country	City or town			State	City or town
17	319642	LAUZON	JOSEPH	16	M	Student			French	River Beaudette	Port Huron, Mich.	Mr. Margaret Giesmer Port Huron, Mich.		Ill.	Chicago

Detroit. He said he was a student from Beaudette River, and was traveling to Chicago. If this was our Joseph who was running away, we don't know how much of the information he gave would be true. If a person was running away, they probably wouldn't give traceable data.

Issue 1: The Age. Our Joe was born in 1910, and would only be 14 years old in 1924, whereas the Port Huron record says that Joe was 16. We realize that people might lie about their age, especially if they were running away. The Lauzon sisters all claimed that Joseph ran away when he was 16 years old, which puts the run-away date around 1926-27.

Issue 2: The Date. The date of the Port Huron crossing conflicts with information about our Joseph that we are fairly sure of. We know that Joe crossed into Canadian on June 6, 1924, at Sault Ste Marie with his family. This crossing record named his father, John B, and it matched the timing of when his family moved from Escanaba to Canada (see chapter 1). If the Port Huron Joseph were "our" Joseph it would mean that he ran away at a younger age and when the Lauzon family was living in Hull, Canada.

Issue 3: The Ball Photo: We have a photo of Joe Lauzon and Jules Cholette throwing a baseball that is thought to have been taken in Canada when the Lauzons temporarily lived in Hull. Jules was a year younger than Joe and lived in Hull, Quebec in 1924. If Joe had run away and crossed at Port Huron, it would have had to take place only 2 weeks afterward the Sault Ste Marie crossing and is unlikely.



Joseph, circa 1927

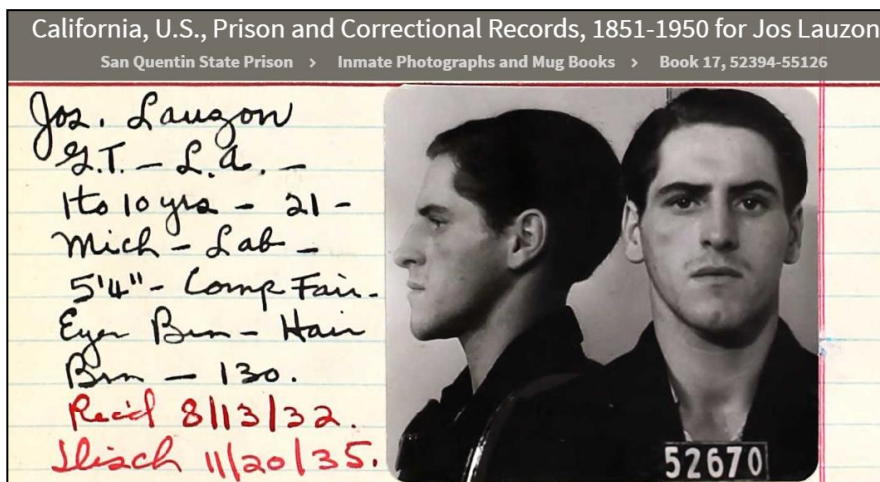
Issue 4: The Relatives. The Port Huron Joseph listed 2 relatives to vouch for him: Margaret Grenier of Port Louis, and Ernest Tanton of London, Ontario. A search for the Tanton family in London, Ontario, did not turn up anyone named Ernest. Google Maps could not find the community of Port Louis in Canada.

Issue 5: The Pose Photo. We have a photo of our Joseph that is estimated to have been taken in about 1926-27, when he was about 16. It was probably the last one we have until he resurfaced in California. This photo is could not have been properly dated if Joe ran away in 1924.

Conclusion: Although it is possible that the Port Huron crosser may have been “our” Joseph making his run-away attempt, it is not likely. There are too many issues to seriously consider the Port Huron Joseph to be “our” Joseph.

Serving Time in San Quentin Prison

Joseph Lauzon served time in the San Francisco, California prison from August 1932, to November, 1935, for grand theft. The mug shot photo of Joseph Lauzon at San Quentin was sent to the Lauzon cousins in 2015 and all who looked at it felt that it was a relative.



We could not locate any newspaper article that described the grand theft crime that Joseph committed.



DESCRIPTION of Prisoners Received at the State Prison at San Quentin During September 1932

Day	S. Q. No.	NAME	CRIME	County	Term	Nativity	Age	Occupation	HEIGHT Ft. In.
13	52670	Joseph Lauzon	Grand Theft	Los Angeles	1-10	Mich	21	Laborer	5 4
Complexion	Eyes	Hair	Pol. No.	Finger Print Classification	Bertillon Measurements	DESCRIPTION			
Fair	brown	brown		9 U OO 16 1 U OO 12	Wt 130 ft 6 hat 7	1923 Lansing mich Refty 11 1/2 mos Incurrigible Dis 1931 LA G T 6 mos			

Serving Time in Folsom Prison

Joseph was released from San Quentin on November 30, 1935, and within a month he was committing more robberies. He was known in the press as the "taxicab bandit".

He started robbing taxicabs and other places. When he was caught on December 21, put pulled out a gun and shot the arresting officer in the leg.

As a result he found himself sentenced to serving 5 years to life in Folsom Prison.



20171

No. 20171

Name LAUZON, Joseph

County San Francisco

Crime Robbery 1st & Pr

Term 5-Life Years

Received 2-13-36

Dec 22, 1935 – Oakland Express

INJURED IN GUN DUEL



Joe Lauzon, 26-year-old San Quentin ex-convict (left) who shot Patrolman Phil Fraher in the leg in an escape attempt within a stone's throw of Southern police station, San Francisco. The suspected taxicab bandit suffered skin lacerations in the exchange of four shots.—Tribune photo.

Holdup Suspect Who Shot Officer Faces 4 Charges

SAN FRANCISCO, Dec 21—Four felony charges were filed today against Joseph Lauzon, 26, San Quentin ex-convict, who shot Patrolman Phil Fraher in a gun duel in an escape attempt before dawn this morning.

Lauzon was accused of assault with intent to commit murder, violation of the State gun law, and two counts of robbery.

The robbery counts which Lauzon assertedly admitted, involve his alleged holdup of two taxi-cab drivers early today before his arrest by Fraher. He drew a concealed gun as Fraher was taking him into the Southern Police Station, and shot Fraher in the leg.

Fraher replied with two shots, one of which gave Lauzon a slight flesh wound. Lauzon was seized by officers who hurried out of the police station.

Lauzon was released from San Quentin Prison last month after serving a three and one-half year sentence on a grand theft charge. The fact that he has served a prison term makes it illegal for him to possess a gun.

S. F. OFFICER AND PRISONER SHOT IN DUEL

Gunman Taken by Patrolmen After Pair Battle in Front of Police Station

Suspect Picked Up at 4:30 A. M. on Street Conceals Revolver From His Captor

SAN FRANCISCO, Dec. 21.—A gun duel between a patrolman and an alleged taxicab bandit early this morning climaxed the asserted desperado's capture.

Patrolman Phil Fraher, 35, was shot in the leg and Joseph Lauzon, 26-year-old ex-convict released from San Quentin only a month ago, suffered a skin laceration from a shot from the officer's gun.

Four shots were fired in the fight, which took place in front of the Southern Police Station. Lieut. Charles Pfeiffer and eight officers inside, hearing the shots, dashed out, surrounded Lauzon, and prevented his escape.

Lauzon was taken into custody by Fraher at Sixth and Howard Streets about 4:30 a. m. when Fraher recognized him, he said, as the bandit who earlier had held up and robbed two cab drivers. The description had been broadcast by radio.

TAKES PRISONER TO STATION IN TAXICAB

Fraher handcuffed his prisoner, and made a hasty search of him without finding any weapons. He took him in a cab to the police station, and was leading him toward the door when Lauzon suddenly fired twice at him.

The officer drew his gun and likewise fired twice, then grabbed Lauzon as the other officers came to his aid. He said the prisoner apparently had concealed his revolver under the waist band of his trousers.

Officers said that Lauzon will be charged with assault to commit murder and with two counts of robbery.

He was tentatively identified, they added, as the bandit who at 2 a. m. held up Edward Miles, cab driver of 317 Leavenworth Street, robbed him of \$4.50 and his cab, and at 3:30 a. m. robbed Achille Cortolassi, cab driver of 1554 Greenwich Street, of \$10.

CAB ABANDONED AT SIXTH AND HOWARD STS.

Miles' cab was abandoned near Sixth and Howard Streets, only a few blocks from where it was taken. It attracted the attention of a third cab driver, George Cohelan of 760 Geary Street, and Cohelan reported to Patrolman Fraher he thought the cab had been stolen.

Fraher was riding in Cohelan's cab en route to the abandoned cab when Lauzon signaled Cohelan. Fraher recognized Lauzon from the broadcast description as Cohelan slowed down, and directed Cohelan to permit Lauzon to enter the cab. It was then that he handcuffed him.

Fraher, who is married and has two children, lives at 214 Curtis Street. He was taken to the San Francisco Hospital, where physicians said his wound was not serious.

Lauzon was held at the Southern Station after his skin wound was dressed at the Central Emergency Hospital.

San Mateo Times
Sat Eve, Dec 21, 1935

S. F. Officer, Bandit Duel

SAN FRANCISCO, Dec. 21.—(UP)—A policeman and a maniacal gunman who robbed two taxicab drivers engaged in a gun duel at arm's length today and both emerged without serious injury.

The policeman was the more seriously hurt. He was Patrolman Philip Fraher, 35, San Francisco Hospital attendants said he was shot in the thigh and that his injury would not prove serious.

Police identified the "taxicab bandit" as Joseph Lauzon, 26, who reportedly admitted he was released from San Quentin prison on November 20 after serving a 41 months' term from Los Angeles for grand theft.

Lauzon was "crossed" in the side by one of two bullets fired by the officer, after he had been shot in the leg.

Lauzon's short-lived crime spree began, police said, when he robbed two taxicab drivers and attempted to rob a third.

As the cab door opened, Fraher sprang out, handcuffing Lauzon. The three then drove to southern station, where the suspect jumped from the machine behind the policeman, firing the weapon he held in manacled hands.

Berkeley Daily Gazette
Sat Eve, Dec 21, 1935

S. F. OFFICER SHOT BY TAXICAB BANDIT

By United Press
SAN FRANCISCO, Dec. 21.—An alleged "taxicab bandit" shot a policeman in a last-minute escape attempt today, but was subdued by other officers attracted by the sound of the fusillade of shots.

The wounded officer is Patrolman Phil Fraher, attached to the southern station. He was shot in the leg. San Francisco Hospital attendants reported his injuries were not serious.

Police said Fraher was shot by Joseph Lauzon, 26, whom he had arrested as the gunman who engaged two taxicab drivers and held them up.

When Lauzon was brought to police headquarters he had in addition to his bullet wound, a lacerated scalp, cut lips, bruised stomach and groin, and bruised shins.

"Yeah, a street car ran over me," he told reporters, at the same time casting a wary glance to the group of policemen surrounding him.

Lauzon's short-lived crime spree began, police said, when he stopped into Achille Cortolassi's taxicab, pushed a .44 caliber revolver in the man's side and ordered him to drive him several blocks. Relieving his victim of \$10, he jumped out of the cab and returned to a spot near the original holdup.

The second victim was Edward Miles, whom Lauzon assertedly forced out of his taxi, robbed of \$7 and a wrist watch and then knocked unconscious with a blow from his gun butt. Dragging the man into a vacant lot, Lauzon allegedly kicked him into semi-consciousness and told him: "Listen, punk—you stay here for 20 minutes. Don't move or I'll come back and knock you off."

He took Miles' cab and drove away. George Cohelan, another taxi driver, saw him abandon the vehicle and suspecting it was stolen, called Officer Fraher. The policeman was in the rear of Cohelan's car when Lauzon, apparently looking for additional prey, hailed the driver.

As the cab door opened, Fraher sprang out, handcuffing Lauzon before he could draw a gun or offer resistance.

The three then drove to southern station, where the suspect, who had been given only a cursory "frisk," jumped from the machine behind the policeman, firing the weapon he held in his manacled hands.

Fraher was struck but returned the fire.

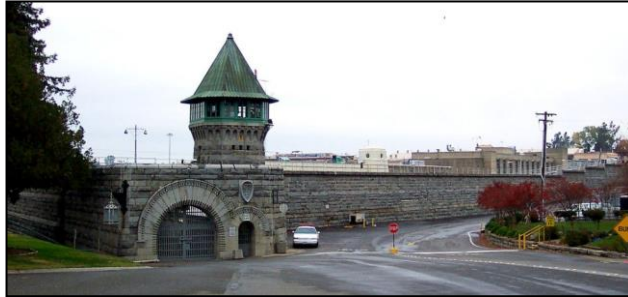
Policemen scrambled from the station and subdued the man as he grappled with Fraher.

He was treated for the bullet wound, which only broke the skin of his side, and was booked on robbery and assault charges.

California, U.S., Prison and Correctional Records, 1851-1950 for Joseph Lauzon

Folsom State Prison > Prison Registers > Prison Registers, 1935-1943

NAME AND NUMBER OF CONVICT	NATIVITY	CRIME	WHEN RECEIVED			SENTENCE	
			MONTH	DAY	YEAR	Yrs.	Mo.
20171 Joseph LAUZON	Michigan	Robbery 1st. & Prior	February	13	1936	5-LIFE	
COUNTY SENT FROM	AGE	OCCUPATION	HEIGHT		COMPLEXION	COLOR OF EYES	COLOR OF HAIR
			FT.	INS.			
San Francisco	26	Seaman	5	6	Ruddy	Brown	Brown
REMARKS							
Feb 12 1936 None							



Dec 22, 1935 – San Francisco Examiner

Life Term for S. F. Ex-Convict

SAN FRANCISCO, Feb. 12—(INS)—Pleading guilty to assault with a deadly weapon, Joseph Lauzon, 34, ex-convict today had been sentenced to life imprisonment by Superior Judge Lile T. Jacks.

Lauzon shot and seriously wounded Officer Philip Fraher as the latter surprised him in the act of robbing a grocery store last fall. He had previously served a sentence at San Quentin prison for robbery.

Robberies Solved

Officer and Ex-Felon Wounded in Gun Duel

2 OTHERS ARE ARRESTED

Handcuffed Bandit Shoots Captor at Police Station

A blazing toe-to-toe gun duel between a handcuffed taxi bandit and his policeman captor yesterday led to the uncovering of a nest of ex-convicts responsible for scores of recent robberies in San Francisco.

The duel was fought out in front of Southern Police Station between Policeman Philip Fraher, 38, of 214 Curtis street, and Joseph Lauzon, 36, Los Angeles robber released from San Quentin just a month ago.

Fraher suffered a wound in the leg and Lauzon was creased by one of two bullets fired by Fraher, before policemen swarmed out of the station to end the duel, as Lauzon's gun jammed.

TWO OTHERS SEIZED.

Lauzon confessed to the hold-up of two taxi drivers which led to his capture by Fraher. His confession sent officers to 151 Jessie street, where Inspectors William McMahon and Frank McCann arrested two other ex-convicts.

They were Thomas Phillips, 27, San Francisco burglar released from San Quentin November 27, and Roy Budway, Salinas automobile thief, released October 25. They admitted participating with Lauzon in looting more than 50 automobiles, from one of which Lauzon obtained his gun, in several burglaries and some robberies.

Lauzon's night of crime.

GANG SEIZED AFTER FIGHT WITH TAXI BANDIT



ROUND-UP—Left to right, Joseph Lauzon, with bandage on head where he was wounded by Policeman Philip Fraher; Detective Inspector William McMahon, hold-

ing gun taken from Lauzon; Roy Budway, and Thomas Phillips, both ex-convicts seized in raid after gun duel.

—International News Photo.

Trouble with the Law in Michigan?

Another lead to follow up was about crimes that Joseph Lauzon committed in lower Michigan. We know that Joe's August, 1932, San Quentin prison record in California listed that he had a criminal record dating to 1923 in Lansing, Michigan. This would mean that our Joseph, when he was 13 years old, was into criminal mischief.

A research of criminal events in Michigan during the 1920s uncovered a Joe Lauzon, who was known as the "Million Dollar Thief". It made the front-page in many newspapers. He was finally arrested in Washington. It even made news in 1935 and 1950!

We couldn't find any other criminal doings by a Joseph Lauzon in respect to any 1923 Lansing criminal activities. The events seem to have been done by a person much older than "our" Joseph, who would have been about 13 years old. Conclusion: Our Joseph was not "Dapper Joe".

CALIFORNIA STATE PRISON AT SAN QUENTIN		Reg. No. <u>52670</u>
NAME <u>Joseph Lauzon</u>	Color <u>w</u>	
County <u>L.A.</u>	Received <u>8-13-32</u>	
Crime <u>B. & J.</u>	Sentence <u>1-10</u>	
Occupation <u>Laborer</u>	Disch.	
Aliases	Paroled	
CRIMINAL RECORD:		
<u>1923 Lansing, Mich. Reft. Incorr. 11 1/2 mos. Dis.</u>		
<u>1931 L.A. 6 mos. B. & J.</u>		

Joe Lauzon, The 1922 "Million-Dollar Thief"

Detroit Free Press, April 24, 1922

DETROIT CROOK, LAUZON, TAKEN

'Million-Dollar Thief' Held in Washington; Fled Jackson, After Sentence Here.

Joseph C. Lauzon, known in police circles as "the million dollar Jimmy thief," arrested Sunday in Washington, according to Associated Press dispatches, has been sought by the Detroit police for several months, following his escape from Jackson penitentiary. In the summer and fall of 1919, when scores of houses in Detroit were looted, Lauzon was suspected and, following his arrest in September of that year, the looting of homes decreased. He was sentenced to Jackson for from two and a half to five years, but escaped shortly after he was received in that institution.

Lauzon's police record here shows that he served two terms in Illinois and one in Ohio before he was arrested here. He traveled under the aliases of William Lauzon and Charles Johnson. He limited his operations to breaking and entering homes. He was considered by the police to be one of the cleverest burglars ever arrested here. He obtained thousands of dollars' worth of jewelry and a considerable amount of cash before he was captured.

Puts Detroit Loot At \$100,000.

Washington dispatches Sunday said that Lauzon had admitted that his burglaries had netted him \$1,000,000. The capital police reported that he said he obtained \$100,000 in Detroit and \$300,000 in Washington. John Reid, inspector of detectives here, said Lauzon had obtained large sums of money here but he did not believe the figure would run as high as that quoted in dispatches. He said that criminals usually exaggerate when telling of their burglaries.

Lauzon, according to Inspector Reid, is a very "smooth criminal." He never attempted street hold-ups or any other crime in which there was likelihood of his being arrested. He always wore good clothes, and did not frequent the rendezvous of criminals. He lived in exclusive neighborhoods and usually drove an expensive automobile.

Following Lauzon's escape from prison, Warden Harry L. Hulbert frequently received letters from him. In these he ridiculed the administration at Jackson for making it so easy for him to escape, according to the Detroit police. These letters always were sent from some city which Lauzon said he was leaving.

Stopped in Fashionable Hotels.

Previous to his operations in Washington Lauzon lived in Baltimore in an expensive apartment in an exclusive residential district. He patronized fashionable hotels and spent money liberally. He drove a large automobile. The Washington police expressed the belief Sunday that he had committed burglaries in the capital while living in Baltimore, driving over in his automobile and usually accompanied by a well-dressed woman. He left Baltimore about two weeks ago, following a quarrel with his wife, who left him.

When arrested he was accompanied by a young woman who gave her name as Virginia Carroll, of Baltimore.

Battle Creek Enquirer
April 26, 1922

ALREADY ESCAPED FROM PRISON TWICE. THREATENS TO DO ACT AGAIN.

(By the Associated Press)

Washington, April 26.—"Don't worry, sweetheart, I'll escape inside of two years," Joseph Lauzon charged with 200 burglaries here in the last 18 months, replied to the warm embrace of the woman who had gone into his cell to bid him goodbye yesterday. Arrested with him but later released, Miss Virginia Betty Carroll told Lauzon if "they give you 50 years I'll still be waiting for you when you're free."

Lauzon told the police on his arrest, they said, that he already had escaped from prison twice, once after serving about two years of a 20-year sentence at Joliet, Ill., where he was confined after a burglary record that had earned him, he said, the title of "The Million Dollar Jimmy Thief" in the underworld of a middle western city.

Lauzon escaped from Jackson prison about two years ago and since that time has written regularly to Warden Harry L. Hulbert ridiculing the warden because of the failure to apprehend him.

Detroit Free Press, June 3, 1922

LAUZON GETS 20 YEARS FOR THEFTS

'Dapper Joe,' Who 'Worked' Here, Convicted in Capital.

Special to The Free Press. Washington, June 2.—Joseph C. Lauzon, alias "Dapper Joe," the million dollar Jimmy thief, confessed ransacker of numerous homes in Detroit, St. Louis, Cleveland, Chicago and Richmond, Va., who fell afoul of the police here while carrying on his "jimmy operations," was sentenced Friday to 20 years in the penitentiary.

Indicted by the grand jury on four counts, Lauzon entered a plea of guilty when arraigned, asking consideration on the ground that his activities had been magnified by publicity.

"Dapper" Joe, who was immaculately attired, received the sentence with a smile, predicting he would escape from the penitentiary within two years. He escaped from Joliet, Ill., prison several years ago, where he was committed for "jimmy operations."

Georgia's Governor Refuses to Give Up Detroit Burglar

Gives Another Chance to 'Ethical Thief' Who Fled Prison

JACKSON, Nov. 16—Gov. Eugene Talmadge, of Georgia, has decided to give Joseph Lauzon, who earned notoriety in Detroit 16 years ago as the "ethical burglar," a chance to go straight.

Jackson Prison officials were notified Saturday that Talmadge had refused Michigan and Illinois requests for the extradition of Lauzon, who escaped from Joliet (Ill.) Penitentiary in 1919 and from Jackson Prison in 1920.

Prison officials said that there might be some connection between Talmadge's action and the refusal of ex-Gov. William A. Comstock to extradite Jesse Crawford, twenty-four-year-old Negro chain gang fugitive to Georgia in early 1933. Crawford, after winning his freedom fight, was sentenced to Marquette Prison in December, 1933, for an attack on an eleven-year-old girl.

Lauzon has just finished a thirteen-year term in the Federal Penitentiary at Atlanta for house-breaking.

A survey of Lauzon's record gave prison officials an indication of how he had managed to talk Talmadge—an ardent advocate of chain-gang treatment for criminals—into freeing him.

Lauzon, also known as "Dapper Joe," argued Judge Edward J. Jeffries, of Detroit, into reducing his term when he was sentenced in Wayne County Circuit Court Oct. 4, 1919. Jeffries had ordered Lauzon committed for seven-and-one-half to 13 years for breaking and entering. The burglar pointed out that he had not pleaded guilty to entering in the night time, and that his term could not be more than five years. The judge changed the sentence to two-and-one-half to five years.

Lauzon, sentenced as a house breaker from Chicago, escaped from Joliet June 10, 1919. Arrested as a burglar in Milwaukee, he escaped conviction. Then, he moved to Detroit.

Lauzon burglarized more than 100 homes. He was given the "ethical" title because no one was hurt in any of the thefts, although he always went armed.

He was credited by Detroit police



JOSEPH LAUZON

with being the first to use a device to pull the combination knobs from safes, and his burglaries were estimated to have netted him between \$10,000 and \$25,000.

An immaculate dresser, Lauzon never was known to associate with the rougher class of hoodlums, and worked alone on most of his burglaries.

Lauzon used to apologize when he entered a home for a second time.

"I rob so many places that I sometimes become confused," he would say.

Lauzon's weakness for liquor nearly trapped him several times. He would drink his victims' supplies, and more than once barely got away ahead of the police. He also wrote movie scenarios, none of which ever was accepted.

He escaped from Jackson Prison Oct. 14, 1920, climbing out a window of the old prison library, where he was a clerk. He was arrested in Washington and sent to Atlanta.

Suave Burglar's Loot Reported Over Million

(Riley Murray, veteran Free Press reporter, has covered scores of top-flight stories in his career. Gangland murders, spectacular fires, important trials have filled a major portion of his working hours. Here is another in a series of articles delving into the exciting events he has recorded in his years as a Detroit newspaper man.)

BY RILEY MURRAY
Free Press Staff Writer

Slippery Joe Lauzon they called him.

He was a burglar par excellence.

Strictly daylight jobs in homes. Slippery Joe didn't want to scare anybody.

The "Million Dollar Jimmy Thief," they called Joe, too. And sometimes it was "Dapper Joe." That was because Joe always was immaculately dressed—even to his shiny shoes.

Slippery Joe—or the Million Dollar Jimmy Thief or Dapper Joe—never pulled a job or appeared socially unless dressed in the height of the day's fashion.

HE ALWAYS worked alone.

Lauzon stayed in fashionable hotels—hostelries, he called them—drove expensive automobiles and burglarized the richer homes.

Primarily, Slippery Joe opened residential safes.

To do this, he invented a special device to pull the combination off safe doors quietly. Slippery Joe hated to disturb anyone.

Using his gadget, Joe stole more than \$200,000 in scores of Detroit burglaries.

Nationally, the take was \$1,000,000, he said.

ONCE, WHILE patiently trying to crack a safe in an East Side residence here, Slippery Joe damaged his unique instrument.

He left the home, went to a locksmith and had it repaired, then returned to finish the job.

Most of his burglaries outside Detroit, Lauzon confided, were committed in Cleveland, Washington, Richmond, Va., St. Louis and Chicago.

If Joe thoughtlessly happened to burglarize the same house twice, he sent a note of apology.

Faced by his victims, when arrested, he invariably said:

"I'll certainly try to get your property back for you, sir. If I can't, I'll pay you."

SOMEHOW, Lauzon would, too.

Slippery Joe many times escaped with 90-day sentences because he made restitution.

Once the late Recorder's Judge Edward J. Jeffries sentenced Lauzon to 7½ to 15 years in prison for burglary.

Slippery Joe pointed out that he had not pleaded guilty to entering in the night time and that legally his term should not be more than, say, five years.

Jeffries concurred and set the sentence at 2½ to 5 years.

SLIPPERY JOE was received at Jackson Prison on Oct. 7, 1919, but escaped seven days later.

On June 10, of the same year, Lauzon had escaped from Joliet (Ill.) Penitentiary.

At Christmas time, 1919—and some years thereafter—the then Warden Harry L. Hurlbut, of Jackson, and Joliet's warden, as well as their wives, received expensive gifts from Slippery Joe.

He also wrote Hurlbut frequently, deriding Hurlbut's laxity in enabling him to escape.

In 1921, Lauzon wired Hurlbut that he was in Washington to attend President Warren G. Harding's inaugural ball.

HOWEVER, Slippery Joe missed the inaugural because he was arrested a few days earlier and sentenced to 20 years for burglaries in which he had taken \$300,000.

Slippery Joe last was arrested in Detroit on March 3, 1945. He was held several days for investigation, then freed.

One of Joe's victims was Police Commissioner Theodore F. Dorfner, of Milwaukee.

Lauzon stole Dorfner's police badge from his home. It was recovered when Lauzon was arrested later in Detroit.

SLIPPERY JOE, at 58, fell dead of a heart attack in Houston, Tex., March 19, 1947.

Nobody claimed the body. It was buried in a potter's field.

Slippery Joe was as immaculately dressed as ever when they picked him up off that Houston street.

They first thought he was one of the City's bankers.

Detroit Free Press
April 30, 1950

Always the Dapper Gent



SLIPPERY JOE LAUZON
Thief specialized in daylight home robberies

Joe Lived In Detroit?

Another lead was contained in the 1940 US Census which showed a Joseph Lauzon living in Detroit, Michigan. We can't verify that it was "our" Joseph. Let's evaluate each of the facts shown in the Census.

- Census record was dated April, 1940. We do not know if "our" Joe was released from Folsom Prison by that date or if after release, was he allowed to move out of California. He had been serving a 5 year to life prison term that started in February, 1936.
- This Joe was born in 1910 just like "our" Joe.
- This Joe was born in Michigan like "our" Joe.
- This Joe was married, and "our" Joe may have been (see below)
- This Joe was living with Noah and Delima Rosbury, who were listed as his uncle and aunt. In researching these persons, we discovered in her marriage record that Delima's maiden name was Lauzon. Going back further, Delima was found to be "our" Joe's 7th cousin because their common ancestor was Seraphim Lauzon from the 1700s, who was one of Gilles Lauzon's sons. If this was "our" Joe the relation was not aunt/uncle to nephew, but long distance cousins.
- This Joe had 2 years of college education. We don't know if "our" Joe went to college, but probably not, since he spent much of his time in prisons.
- This Joe worked as an auto repair driver for the City of Detroit. This is plausible work for our Joe.

Marriage to Fern

The family knew little about Joe's life, other than he lived in San Francisco and was married [1].



Joseph Lauzon, circa 1940
Is this the younger version of the person shown with Fern?
Different hair style; heavier;
different eyes

The earliest record of Joe's marital status was the 1945, San Francisco City Directory. There were 2 Lauzon families living in the city in 1945. Joseph lived at 2893b-24th Street, worked as a janitor, and had a wife named Fern. Joe married Clifferine ("Fern") Heidt in about 1944 in San Francisco. He sent a picture of the two of them to his Mom.



U.S., City Directories, 1822-1995 for Joseph S Lauzon
California > San Francisco > 1948 > San Francisco, California, City Directory, 1948

Lauzon Fern B r2893 24th
" **Jos S (Fern)** jan h2893 24th
" Rita Y clk r237 Northridge rd

The same information was shown in the 1948 San Fran City Directory, except there was a different "other" Lauzon family,

Joe's sister, Blanche, used to always say, "Poor Joe" when speaking of him. [5] Blanche would tell her daughter, Barb Wolters Reuss, about family members regarding divorce and illicit children. She did tell Barb once though that Joe's wife's name was Evelyn, but that doesn't seem to be right [4]. Barb used to think it was a 'funny' thing that her mom had a sister the same name as her brother's wife. That stuck with her all these years. [5]

Sometime between 1950 and 1953 Joe and Fern were divorced. Joe, or more likely his wife, would contact Grandma a few times over the years but no more was told and no one knew much about them. Marceline didn't talk about it. Joe and Fern did not have any children. [2]

Seaman in the Pacific

Records showed that Joe Lauzon frequently worked on merchant ships in the Pacific Ocean. He was shown on his 1936 Folsom Prison record with the occupation of "seaman" so he probably was sailing in the early 1930s or before. This supports the family rumor that he joined the merchant marines.

His 1943 Draft Registration Card showed him employed in the National Maritime Union in San Francisco. During the late 1940s and into the 1950s there were numerous records that showed him making multiple trips across the Pacific Ocean between various US west coast cities and Asian ports. He usually was listed as an "oiler".

REGISTRATION CARD—(Men born on or after January 1, 1922 and on or before June 30, 1924)			
SERIAL NUMBER N 7584	1. NAME (Print) Joseph LAUZON		ORDER NUMBER 155-A
2. PLACE OF RESIDENCE (Print) NATL. MARITIME UNION, 91 Drumm St., SAN FRAN. CALIF.			
3. MAILING ADDRESS SAME			
4. TELEPHONE	5. AGE IN YEARS 34	6. PLACE OF BIRTH ESCANABA	
7. NAME AND ADDRESS OF PERSON WHO WILL ALWAYS KNOW YOUR ADDRESS NONE		8. EMPLOYER'S NAME AND ADDRESS NATL. MARITIME UNION, SAN FRANCISCO. CALIF.	
9. PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT OR BUSINESS SAME			
I AFFIRM THAT I HAVE VERIFIED ABOVE ANSWERS AND THAT THEY ARE TRUE.			
D. S. S. Form 1 (Revised 6-1-42) (over) 016-21030-3 Joseph S. Lauzon			

Joe's ocean-travels occupation probably put a lot of stress on his marriage with Fern and may have been a major cause of Joe's divorce in 1952.

Interlocutory Divorce Decrees Granted
ADAMS—Jessie R. from Verdell Henness.
CAMARGO—Josephine M. from Frank A.
FARNAM—Gretchen C. from Austin Francis.
FARRIS—James N. from June I.
FLEMING—Raymond G. from Bertha Irene.
JAMES—Nina M. from Willard I.
LAUZON—Fern from Joseph F.

The San Francisco Examiner (San Francisco, California) • 25 Mar 1952, Tue

REGISTRAR'S REPORT					
DESCRIPTION OF REGISTRANT					
RACE	HEIGHT (Approx.)	WEIGHT (Approx.)	COMPLEXION		
White	X 5'6"	150	Sallow		
	EYES	HAIR	Light		
Negro	Blue	Blonde	Ruddy	X	
	Gray	Red	Dark		
Oriental	Hazel	Brown	Freckled		
	Brown	Black	Light brown		
Indian	Black	Gray	Dark brown		
		Bald	Black		
Fillipino					
Other obvious physical characteristics that will aid in identification					

The Merchant Trips of Josphe Samuel Lauzon

(extracted from the government required log of aliense employed on the vessel; from Ancestry.com by Bill Lauzon, Jun 2015)

Arrival Date	From	To	Vessel*	Ship Job**	Start	Start Date	Calc Length	Age	Height	Weight	Phy Marks	Yrs of Svc
7/16/1944	San Francisco, CA	Noumea, New Calendonia	SS Canada Victory	Wiper	San Francisco	6/24/1944	22	33	5'-6"	140	none	6 mo
1/1/1945	Saipan, Marianas Islands	San Francisco, CA	SS Matthew Thornton	Fireman/WT	San Francisco	9/28/1944	95	34	5'-6"	128	none	6
8/10/1945	Okinawa	San Francisco, CA	SS Yugoslavia Victory	Fireman/WT	San Francisco	2/12/1945	179	34	5'-6"	blank	none	blank
6/23/1947	Yokohama, Japan	San Francisco, CA	SS President Madison	Fireman/WT	San Francisco	4/29/1947	55	37	5'-6"	blank	none	blank
10/29/1947	Manila, Philippines	San Francisco, CA	SS President Madison	Fireman/WT	San Francisco	9/5/1947	54	37	5'-6"	140	none	5
12/31/1947	Shanghai, China	San Francisco, CA	SS President Madison	Oiler	San Francisco	11/6/1947	55	37	5'-6"	140	none	blank
2/28/1948	blank	San Francisco, CA	SS President Madison	Oiler	?	1/11/1948	48	37	5'-6"	140	none	8
3/26/1949	Kobe, Japan	San Francisco, CA	SS Luxembourg Victory	Oiler	San Francisco	1/21/1949	64	38	5'-6"	133	none	4
6/25/1949	Bankok, Siam	Portland, OR	SS Luxembourg Victory	Oiler	San Francisco	4/6/1949	80	38	5'-6"	135	none	4
8/27/1950	Yokohama, Japan	Port Allen, Kauai, Hawaii	SS Ventura	Wiper	San Francisco	7/15/1950	43	39	5'-6"	135	none	10
11/21/1950	Vancouver, BC	Warrington, OR	SS Sonoma	Fireman/WT	San Francisco	11/7/1950	14	39	5'-6"	155	none	6
5/31/1951	Pusan, Korea	San Francisco, CA	SS Belgium Victory	Fireman/WT	San Francisco	2/16/1951	104	40	5'-6"	135	none	8
6/30/1951	Vancouver, BC	Tocoma, WA	SS India Mail	Fireman/WT	Longview ***	6/26/1951	4	40	5'-6"	135	none	14
1/12/1952	Sasebo, Japan	San Francisco, CA	SS Queen's Victory	Fireman/WT	San Francisco	12/11/1951	32	41	5'-6"	135	none	14
4/12/1952	Pusan, Korea	San Francisco, CA	SS Queen's Victory	Fireman/WT	San Francisco	1/15/1952	88	41	5'-6"	135	none	41?
7/2/1953	Pusan, Korea; Shimisu, Japan	San Francisco, CA	SS Shooting Star	Oiler	San Francisco	5/10/1953	53	42	5'-6"	135	none	blank
8/26/1953	Vancouver, BC	Portland, OR	SS Mormagalf	Wiper	San Francisco	8/19/1953	7	42	5'-6"	135	none	14
1/1/1955	Yokohama, Japan	San Francisco, CA	SS Japan Transport	Fireman/WT	San Francisco	10/16/1954	77	blank	blank	blank	blank	14

Marriage to Louise Marie

One of Joseph's ship crew lists from June, 1956, showed Joe Lauzon as married to Louise Lauzon and living at 140 Julian Avenue in San Francisco. It also gave Joe's social security number as 563-30-9278.

From Yokohama Japan
AR June 16, 1956

644-923

CREW LIST
Secs. 4573, 4574, 4575, and 4576, Rev. Stat.—U. S. C.,
Title 46, Secs. 474, 475, 476, and 477
Title 33 CFR 4

United States Coast Guard

Upon departure of the American SS CHINA TRANSPORT (Insert name of vessel and method of propulsion) Official No. 252271
of SAN FRANCISCO, CALIF. (Home port) Owned and operated by PACIFIC TRANSPORT LINES, INC. 262 CALIF. ST. SAN FRANCISCO, CA, CALIF. (Insert steamship company and address)
of which AKSEL W. HANSEN (Insert name of master), of 1527 LAGOON AVE. WILMINGTON, CALIF. (Insert home address of master) is master, on Voyage No. 44
bound from SAN FRANCISCO, CALIF. (Insert port of departure), on APRIL 24, 1956 (Insert date of departure) to PORTS IN THE FAR EAST (Insert port of destination) the following compose the crew:

LINE No.	NAME OF SEAMAN	CAPACITY	Book Or Certificate Or Identification No.	BIRTH-PLACE	CITIZEN OF	DATE OF BIRTH	SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER	ADDRESS OF WIFE OR NEXT OF KIN
30	JOSEPH S. LAUZON ✓	Oiler	2431653D2	Mich.	"	12/2/10	563 30 9276	Wf. Louise 140 Julian Ave; San Francisco, Calif.

We do not know anything else about Louise, such as her birth, marriage, or death date or location. The San Francisco City Directories for 1953-54 showed that Marie Lauzon lived at 140 Julian Avenue. The Directories for 1955, 1957, 1958, and 1960 recorded a Joe & Marie that lived at 140 Julian Avenue. All of the above editions listed Fern Lauzon also lived in San Francisco. No Lauzons were listed in the next available edition for 1970.

We assume Louise Marie died or was divorced from Joseph prior to his death because there was no mention of her in his death record and she was not buried in the same cemetery as Joe.

Joe's Passing

Joe died in Colma, in San Mateo County, California in August, 1977 and was buried at Holy Cross Catholic Cemetery.

Joseph Samuel Lauzon	
BIRTH	2 Dec 1910 Escanaba, Delta County, Michigan, USA
DEATH	21 Aug 1977 (aged 66) San Mateo, San Mateo County, California, USA
BURIAL	<u>Holy Cross Catholic Cemetery</u> Colma, San Mateo County, California, USA
PLOT	SOS -27 --_

California, Death Index

Name	Joseph S Lauzon
Social Security #	568309276
Gender	Male
Birth Date	2 Dec 1910
Birth Place	Michigan
Death Date	21 Aug 1977
Death Place	San Mateo
Household Members	

CLIFFERINE "FERN" B HEIDT

Clifferine was always known as "Fern". She was born in April, 1904, in California to Clifford Charles and Oia (nee Compton) Heidt. Her parents were married in 1903 in Santa Barbara, California.



Cousins Lavine & Clifford Heidt
with Cliffern Heidt

Fern was the only child in the family since her mother died before 1910. The grieving father and Fern lived in her Uncle Fredrick Heidt's house in 1910, in Gilroy, Santa Clara County, California. By 1920 her father had married again to Matilda (nee Connelly). Fern's father was a dealer of produce.



Fern was married twice. Initially, starting in 1925, she was the wife of Reuben Meininger and lived in San Francisco. They were divorced by 1940 without any children of record.

Sometime in the mid-1940s Fern married Joseph. (see chapter 5). They did not have any children. Fern and Joe were divorced in the early 1950s.

In 1953, Fern worked as a maid at the Sutter Hotel and lived at 978 Ellis Street in San Francisco. In 1960 she worked as a maid at the Jefferson Hotel and lived at 440 Eddy Street.

We believe that Fern lived in St. Petersburg, Florida for a while, based on letters that Fern sent to her long-distance mother-in-law, Marceline Lauzon.

Fern died on Nov 9, 1994 in St Jose, Santa Clara, California, and still used her Lauzon surname.

SOURCES:

- [1] Obituary of John B Lauzon, Feb 1956
- [2] Barb Wolters Reuss E-mail, Jan 13, 2013
- [3] Barb Wolters Reuss E-mail, Jun 18, 2015
- [4] Barb Wolters Reuss E-mail, Jun 14, 2015
- [5] Barb Wolters Reuss E-mail, Jun 15, 2015