

A Sad Story out of DeWitt Co. The Bohne Family

Compiled and written by Stanley Miller

Fritz and Helen Bohne of Cuero were blessed with the birth of a son followed by the arrival of twin boys, all within three years of their 1897 marriage. The German immigrant bootmaker and his American born wife likely had a very active household as they watched their sons grow. The family added a daughter in 1909 and another son in 1911.

As America's entry in the World War became imminent, the U.S. Navy put out a call for volunteers. In response, the underage twins, Jesse and Joe, secured their parents approval to enlist. On March 25 they were given a rousing send off by their many Cuero friends as they headed to Houston to be sworn in the next day. From there, the boys were sent to Great Lakes Naval Training station to prepare for their role in defense of our country. Within a few days of arrival the Great Lakes camp, Jesse developed meningitis. He was placed in the Naval hospital there while his brother, Joe, was sent to the east coast to join the crew of the battleship Arizona. On April 16 Jesse succumbed to the disease while Joe was already at sea, training with his ship's company. When the parents were notified they immediately requested that Jesse's body be returned to Cuero for burial. The town's mayor ordered that all local businesses be closed during the hour of the boy's funeral. High school boys of Jesse's age acted as the pallbearers.

Joe only learned of his twin's death after the funeral, when the Arizona returned to port in Virginia. At that point, the second twin also developed meningitis and was sent to the Naval Hospital at Portsmouth.

Just six weeks after the boys departed, the grieving parents received a second telegram notifying them of Joe's death on May 9. Again they request his body be shipped home where it was buried beside his twin. Again the mayor closed all the businesses at the time of the funeral which was held on May 16. In August the parents received a letter from President Wilson expressing his sincerely condolences for the loss of their two sons.

The oldest son, Charles, was also underage and could not volunteer for military service without his parents consent. He finally obtained it and on August 13, 1918, also enlisted in the Navy at Houston. He was sent to the West Coast for training. In mid October, his parents received word that Charles was hospitalized at Mares Island, California, with influenza which developed into pneumonia. He lost his battle with the diseases on October 24, 1918, and the parents suffered the sorrow of losing a third son. Charles' body was also returned to Cuero for burial near his brothers.

Bohne Census Data

Fritz Carl Bohne was born on April 1, 1870, in Germany; death – March 14, 1930, Cuero, DeWitt County, Texas; Find A Grave Memorial# 127869339

Texas, Select County Marriage Index, 1837-1965 **Fritz Bohne & Helen Zedler, 12 July 1897, DeWitt County, Texas**

1910 DeWitt county census

Fritz Bohne - 40; b. Germany; [immigrated; arrival – 7 Sept 1887 via ship "America" arrival New York, New York, occupation – joiner] 1910 - shoemaker

Hellen Bohne - 41; b. U.S.

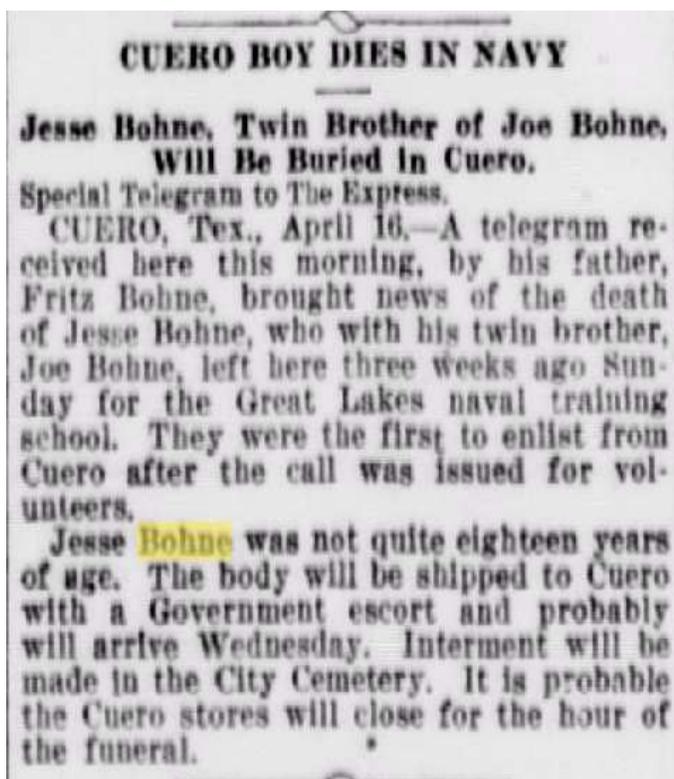
Chas Bohne- 11

Jessie Bohne -10

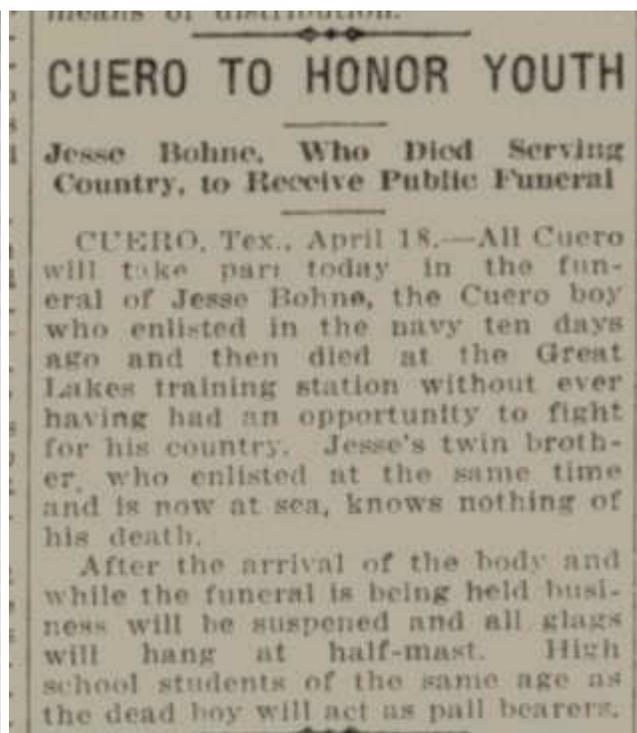
Joe Bohne -10

Francis Bohne - 1

1920 DeWitt county census – Fritz Bohne – 49, cobbler, naturalized 1894; Helen Bohne 51, Francis – 11; Floyd -9



Apr 17, 1917 San Antonio Express



Apr 18, 1917 San Antonio Light

Funeral of Jesse Bohne Held.

Special Telegram to The Express.

CUERO, Tex., April 20.—The body of Jesse James Bohne, whose death occurred at the Great Lakes training camp Monday, reached this city at 3 o'clock Thursday afternoon and the funeral took place from the home of his father, Fritz Bohne, at 5 o'clock. By proclamation of the Mayor flags were flown at half mast and the places of business were ordered to close during the hour of the funeral.

Jesse had enlisted with his twin brother, Joe Bohne, three weeks previously, but when he went to the hospital with pneumonia, Joe was put into service on the battleship Arizona and has not yet been notified of the death of Jesse.

Apr 21, 1917 San Antonio Express

points in the new army bill.

SECOND BOHNE SON DIES IN THE NAVY

Cuero Home Saddened by Second Death Within Few Weeks After First.

CUERO, Tex., May 3.—A telegram this morning notified his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Fritz Bohne, of the death of their other son, Joe Bohne, at the naval hospital at Portsmouth, Va., where he had been ill for the last week.

Joe Bohne and his twin brother, Jesse, left Cuero on March 25, for Houston, where they enlisted for the United States Navy.

They were sent to the training station at Great Lakes, Ill., where Jesse was soon after taken sick and died. His body was sent here three weeks after he left, but his brother, Joe, had "shipped" on the battleship Arizona, and did not know of Jesse's death.

The brothers were not quite 15 years of age. The body of Joe Bohne will reach here for burial Sunday.

May 9, 1917 San Antonio Light

CUERO BUSINESS HOUSES WILL CLOSE FOR FUNERAL

Second Son of One Family Dies Shortly After Enlisting in Army.

Special Telegram to The Express.

CUERO, Tex., May 10.—All business houses of Cuero will be closed and the entire citizenship will attend the funeral of the late Joe Bohne, whose body is expected to arrive this week from the naval hospital at Portsmouth, Va., where his death occurred Wednesday. News of the young man's death, followed closely that of his brother Jesse, which occurred three weeks ago, at the naval training station in Great Lakes, Ill. The young men, twin brothers, enlisted just six weeks ago.

May 11, 1917 San Antonio Express

Laid to Rest at Cuero.

Special Telegram to The Express.

CUERO, Tex., May 17.—The body of Joe Bohne, who followed his twin brother, Jesse Bohne, in death at the hospital in Portsmouth, Va., after the two had enlisted in the United States Navy, reached Cuero Monday afternoon and was laid to rest beside his brother in Hillside Cemetery here. Flags were flown at half mast by order of the Mayor and stores closed during the hour of the funeral. Rev. J. L. Green of the Presbyterian Church conducted the services.

May 18, 1917 San Antonio Express

PRESIDENT WRITES CUERO PARENTS WHO GAVE SONS

CUERO, Tex., Sept. 1.—Following is a copy of a letter received here Friday by Mr. and Mrs. Fritz Bohne, as a tribute from President Wilson to the sacrifice they have made for liberty, in the loss of their two gallant sons, Jesse and John Bohne, who were claimed by death while yet in training for naval service:

The White House.

Washington, August 27.

My Dear Mr. and Mrs. Bohne:

I have learned with the greatest distress of the death of your twin sons. You must have looked forward with so much pride to their service in the navy, and to have them taken away from you before they had even an opportunity to show their fine quality must be a subject of unusual and inexpressible grief to you. I want to say how warmly I share that grief. May I not take the liberty of expressing to you my profoundest sympathy? You will always have a very sweet memory in thinking of the character of these two fine Americans.

Cordially and sincerely yours,

WOODROW WILSON.

To Mr. and Mrs. Fritz Bohne,
Cuero, DeWitt County, Texas.

Sep 2, 1917 San Antonio Express

Young Bohne Ill.

The Eagle notes from the daily press that Charles Bohne, the youthful son of Mr. and Mrs. Fritz Bohne, of Cuero, is ill with pneumonia at the Mare Island Naval Training Station, in California. Young Bohne is a brother of the twin Bohne boys, who died in naval training camp at Great Lakes and Norfolk, respectively, in the spring of 1917, after having been in training about one month. After losing the two boys, who were only seventeen years old, the patriotic father and mother gave their consent for Charles to go and battle for the cause of liberty. The young man has not yet reached his majority. Here is hoping that he will regain his health ere long.

Oct 25, 1918 Moulton Eagle

W.S.S.

Youthful Sailor From Cuero Ill.

Special Telegram to The Express.

CUERO, Tex., Oct. 20.—Word has been received by his parents here, Mr. and Mrs. Fritz Bohne, of the illness of their son, Charles Bohne, with pneumonia, at the Mare Island Naval Training Station, in California. Charles is a brother of the twin Bohne boys, who both died with meningitis at Great Lakes and Norfolk, while they were in training for the navy, and after losing their other two boys, who were 17 years of age, his parents gave their consent for Charles to go and do what he could for his country. He has not yet reached his majority.

Oct 21, 1918 San Antonio Express

Cuero Parents Lose Third Son in Nation's Service.

Cuero, Texas, October 26.—Word was received here Saturday of the death of Charles Bohne in the hospital at the naval training station at Mare Island, California, his death being the third great sorrow that has come to his parents since the war with Germany began.

Jesse Bohne and his twin brother, Joe Bohne, died of meningitis at Great Lakes and Norfolk, respectively, where they were training for the navy, last spring, they being only a little past 17 years of age.

Notwithstanding the great grief occasioned by the death of their twin sons, Mr. and Mrs. Bohne consented for the third to enlist in the navy, and now he has passed away following an attack of influenza which developed into pneumonia.

Mr. and Mrs. Bohne both date their ancestry back to Germany, where their sons were going to fight, and they are bearing their burden bravely, but few mothers have had to suffer as has Mrs. Bohne, on this side.

Nov 1, 1918 Moulton Eagle