

As I write this it is the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of US Official entry into World War I or Great War. I am aware of 5 Great-Uncles on my paternal side that were in the Army during the 1917-1919 time of our involvement. Many other male relatives in 1917 & 1918 had to fill out draft registration cards, one of these was a Great-Grandfather on my maternal side named Joseph Charles Podrasky. By the time he registered on September 12, 1918 he was 39, had 4 children and living in DesPlaines, Illinois and worked at Benjamin Electric Manufacturing Company. What is not indicated on the draft registration is that he previously had served in the U.S. Navy for 4 years, enlisting on December 20, 1899 until he was honorably discharged on December 19, 1903. During this time, he was active when the United States was involved in the Philippine Island or Philippine–American War of 1899-1902.

This is another forgotten and undeclared war the U.S. was involved with that history has not looked in great detail or wishes to remember. There are various places if one is interested in learning about this history on the internet and in books. One example is a source I found by doing a search for research theses done by graduate students. I found a good source by a Navy Officer in 2004 that has excellent information on the ships my great-grandfather stated in a letter he was stationed as a coxswain. [U.S. Navy Lieutenant Carlson, Dec 2004]

My purpose is to explain what I have learned about my great-grandpa's time in the Navy and not the 'possible' battles his crew and ships might have taken part in.

#### **Research: What Learned So Far**

At this point I have learned when he enlisted, the ships he was assigned to the possible dates he served on each ship, some information on these ships, pictures, a letter that my Great-Grandfather wrote to the Veteran's Administration in 1933 to explain his service and wound(s) for a pension application he had started in 1926. At end of this brief article, you will see one of many reported paintings he did years after his service, showing his love of the seas and ships. He must have loved the water and ships he saw on Lake Michigan as a child growing up in the last two decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century in Chicago, IL.



Joseph C Podrasky (right standing) in Hong Kong late 1900

#### **Chronology of Ship Service – 1899 – 1903 Joseph Charles Podrasky**

Enlisted December 20, 1899

Receiving Ship – **USS Franklin** (1864 – Launched) Naval Station Norfolk, Virginia

Sent to USS Dixie and **sail to Manilla, Philippines** arrive around May 15, 1900

Transferred to **USS Glacier** about May 20, 1900

Transferred to **USS Zafiro** about June 15, 1900

Transferred to **USS Oregon in Hong Kong about June 20, 1900\***

- Stranded on reef June 26, 1900 off Taku (located by the Hai River (Peiho River) estuary, in Tanggu District, Tianjin northeastern China
- Remained there for about a month
- Arrived in Kure, Japan about August 1, 1900
- Arrived in Woosung, China about September 9, 1900
  - The USS Oregon was a Battleship stationed in area for protection of U.S. interests (Lieutenant Carlson, Dec 2004)
- Left Woosung, China for Hong Kong about February 22, 1901

Transferred to **USS Zafiro** about April 15, 1901  
Transferred to **USS Princeton** about May 1, 1901\* (Injury to head)  
Transferred to **USS Buffalo** about August 1902\* (Sick list)  
Transferred to **USS Texas** about June 25, 1903  
Transferred to USS Hancock about November 1903 (came home)  
Discharged on Hancock on December 19, 1903

**Letter written on April 24, 1933 in Lyndon Station, WI to US Veteran's Administration**

Joseph Charles Podrasky  
Certificate No 154598,  
Lyndon Station, Wis  
April 24, 1933

Director of Pensions  
Veterans Administration  
Washington, D. C.

Sir I herewith respectfully submit all data in reference to my enlistment, and injury as far as I am able to do so.

Firstly I enlisted December 20, 1899 sent to receiving ship Franklin at Norfolk sent to USS Dixie around Manila about May 15<sup>th</sup> 1900. Transferred to USS Zafiro about June 20 1900. Transferred to USS Oregon about June 15 1900. Transferred to USS Tanager about June 26 1900. Stranded on reef about month. Arrived at Hong Kong about August 1<sup>st</sup> 1900. Arrived at Hong Kong Japan about August 1<sup>st</sup> 1900. Arrived at Hong Kong China about Sept 9<sup>th</sup> 1900. Transferred to USS Zafiro about February 22<sup>nd</sup> 1901. Transferred to USS Princeton about April 15<sup>th</sup> 1901. Transferred to USS Buffalo soon about May 1<sup>st</sup> 1901. Transferred to USS Texas about June 25 1902. Transferred to USS Hancock sometime in November 1903. Discharged honorably from USS Hancock on December 19 1903.

I have five days on the sick list on my discharge. The first three days were on the USS Buffalo enroute home in the China Sea near Singapore. The other two days were also on the USS Buffalo. but I just can't remember the date.

II

I also wish to state that I received an injury to my head, while serving on the U.S.S. Princeton. I was detailed to go down the ships sand locker, to dump cans in to sand bins, as it was lowered down the hatch in metal buckets, everytime I dumped the bucket I signalled to hoist as for some reason or other the bucket or hook on its way up and fell on my head making a gash on top of my head which required three stitches, the ships surgeon remarked that I had a close call of going west.

Now I don't know whether the surgeon still lives I have even forgotten his name but will try and locate him through the Bureau of Navigation, if possible, also any of the men in the ships crew that remember it. I have suffered terrific headaches off and on for the past 30 years. I have been suffering with rheumatism for the past ten years. And now I am afflicted with arterio sclerosis, Angina Pectoris, and high blood pressure. I go to the doctor about three times a month it costs me for medicine and train fare to the county seat five to six dollars per month.

1928 Painting done by Joseph C. Podrasky – My Great-Great Grandfather on my Maternal side



## References

- 1) Web search done on April 21, 2017 by Bob Rettammel found following:  
Graduate Thesis

### THE PHILIPPINE INSURRECTION: THE U.S. NAVY IN A MILITARY OPERATION OTHER THAN WAR, 1899-1902

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B.A., San Diego State University, 1999

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

**MASTER OF ARTS IN NATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS**

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\*Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited\*

<http://www.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a429668.pdf>

- 2) Research done by 4<sup>th</sup> Cousin of Author back in 1999.
- 3) Authors Family Archive

## Parent Tree of Joseph C Podrasky

**Joseph Charles Podrasky (1878-1934) (Great-Grandmother Maternal side)**

