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# *The Livermore Roots Tracer*



*Livermore-Amador Genealogical Society*

P.O. Box 901, Livermore, California 94551-0901

<http://l-ags.org> & <http://facebook.com/Livermore.Amador.Genealogical.Society/>


# Membership Report

July 2022

## Patrons

Anonymous, Lois Barber, Susan Davis, Richard and Wanda Finn, Richard and Jean Lerche, Doris Matthews, Thomas and Natasha Mathews, Duncan Tanner and Shirley Terry

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Kristina Ahuja, Denise Barr, Matthew Berry, Ken Berdlau, Annette Breingan, Linda Driver and Walt Crawford, Barbara Hemphill , Cindy McKenna, Ileen Peterson and Peggy Weber

## L-AGS Members

95 active memberships and 110 members

## Meeting News –

All face-to-face meetings are suspended indefinitely due to Covid-19.

### General Meetings –

**Monday, December 12, 2022**, 7 p.m. via Zoom – site opens 6:30 p.m. Madeline Yanov: Ancestral Road Trips, Part 2: Go West Young Man

**Monday, January 9, 2023**, 7:00, hybrid both in person and via Zoom – site opens 6:30 p.m. Steward Traiman, MD: Excel for Genealogists—Using Analytics to Reveal Hidden Stories

**Monday February 13, 2023**, TBA

**Let's Talk AND Write Genealogy** — When: Sundays at 3:00 p.m. REMOTE via Zoom Chair: Debbie Mascot - Our theme will be the National Genealogical Society 2022 Conference 24-28 May 2022 in Sacramento. Stream from 1 July thru 31 December 2022. Location: Contact [talkgenealogy.chair@L-AGS.org](mailto:talkgenealogy.chair@L-AGS.org)

**The Master Genealogist Group** — Due to Covid-19 meetings via Zoom on the 2nd Friday and 4th Saturday of the month, from 9 a.m. to 12 noon. The Friday meeting is because the Roots User Group in Virginia meets on the 2nd Saturday. TV-TMG Forum Topic: Reports and Problem Assistance; Location: Contact TV-TMG Chair (Duncan Tanner):

<mailto:tvvtmg.chair@L-AGS.org>

**Pleasanton Genealogy Center** — is jointly supported by L-AGS, the Friends of the Pleasanton Library, and the Pleasanton Public Library. A L-AGS genealogy docent will be available by appointment, Wednesdays from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Pleasanton Public Library, 400 Old Bernal Avenue Pleasanton, California, request a mutually agreeable appointment via e-mail:

[docents.chair@L-AGS.org](mailto:docents.chair@L-AGS.org)

## L-AGS Leadership for 2022

President*	<a href="mailto:president@L-AGS.org">president@L-AGS.org</a>	Julie Liu
First VP & Program Chair*	<a href="mailto:program@L-AGS.org">program@L-AGS.org</a>	Tom Mathews
Second VP & Membership Chair*	<a href="mailto:membership@L-AGS.org">membership@L-AGS.org</a>	Denise Barr
	<a href="mailto:info@L-AGS.org">info@L-AGS.org</a>	
Corresponding Secretary*		Marilyn Glass
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Publicity	<a href="mailto:publicity@L-AGS.org">publicity@L-AGS.org</a>	Sandra Condreva
Queries Manager	<a href="mailto:queries@L-AGS.org">queries@L-AGS.org</a>	Richard Finn
Roots Tracer Editor	<a href="mailto:rootstracer.chair@L-AGS.org">rootstracer.chair@L-AGS.org</a>	Patrick Lofft

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## President's Message

Well it has been a fascinating year. As more of us have been vaccinated and the Covid virus becomes less deadly, the board has been looking at doing a Hybrid meeting. While the zoom meetings have been great, there is nothing like meeting people face to face. Of course, the cookies are a plus. We will be trying to do an in-person meeting Jan. 9<sup>th</sup>. Stewart Tremain has agreed to be our test subject, I mean speaker. Stewart will be in person but members who still wish to attend remotely will be able to via Zoom. Tom Mathews has been working very hard to get this hybrid version set up. We hope to be able to have members view remotely OR in person.

Another happening that the board is working on is a project with the Pleasanton Library. They have asked us to cut down our stacks of books from seven stacks to three stacks of six shelves per stack. That is essentially starting with 1000 books and weeding out 500. Patrick Lofft is our Library Liaison and has been very busy organizing us. There have been some difficult decisions to be made. Realistically, if a book has not been looked at for years or a better more complete source is available online, then it makes sense to put that space to better use.

The board decided that the culled books would first be available to any L-AGS member that wants them, then they will be offered to other libraries or possibly sold to a used book store. Patrick has been the most efficient about getting his books that he pulled inventoried and posted online to the members. Some of the other volunteers are not so fast. Right now, I have Kentucky, Tennessee, Ohio and soon I will have Pennsylvania. After I post the list, anyone who wants any of the books may pick them up from my home.

Board members nominations for next year will be

Julie Liu-President  
 Tom Mathews-1<sup>st</sup> VP Programs  
 Denise Barr-2<sup>nd</sup> VP membership  
 Sue Davis-Secretary  
 Marilyn Glass-Corresponding Secretary

The following members have been appointed by the president

Duncan Tanner-Business manager  
 Patrick Lofft-Roots Tracer Editor  
 Debbie Mascot-E-Bulletin  
 Richard Finn-Liaison with Tri-valley History Council AND Heritage families

Actually, all of the above have graciously agreed to stay on past their term limits and I am grateful to them all. Without their willingness to continue, we would not have a board. This has been a wonderful group of people to work with but we need some new members to step up. So think about what you could do that would help continue the L-AGS board past 2023. Thank you.

*Julie Liu, President*

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### *The Livermore Roots Tracer*

*The Roots Tracer* is the quarterly publication of the Livermore-Amador Genealogical Society. The mission statement of the Roots Tracer is: **“Instruct. Inspire. Inform.”**

We encourage members to submit articles for publication. Material can be e-mailed to: [rootstracer.chair@L-AGS.org](mailto:rootstracer.chair@L-AGS.org) or mailed to L-AGS, P.O. Box 901, Livermore, CA 94551-0901. Want ghostwriting help? Just ask!

### *The Roots Tracer Staff*

**Editor**..... Patrick Lofft

**Contributors** Gene Block; Kathy S. Javdani; Victor S. Wheatman

**Composer**..... Andi Winters

**Printing and Distribution**..... Sue Davis,  
 .....Jean Lerche

## Thomas Matthew Twohey/Toohey/Tuohey Who Are You?

By Kathy Javdani

According to family lore, my great-great-grandfather, Thomas Matthew Twohey, immigrated to the US from Nicker, Ireland as a teenager with a teenage brother and settled in the gold fields near Marysville, Yuba, California. My family has always assumed that they came to America to seek their fortune. However, they didn't appear to come from a very poor family. In Griffith's 1853 Valuation, both Thomas' father Edmund and his uncle, John Tuohy, are listed as tenants each with a house and small garden (Edmund also had an office) in Nicker.<sup>1</sup>

From Thomas' obituary I knew "Thomas Twohey was born in County Limerick, Ireland, on February 20, 1831, making him 85 years, 3 months and 18 days of age in 1889. Mr. Twohey came to the United States in 1847 as a boy of 14 years. He first located in Terre Haute, Vigo, Indiana, but remained only a short time. He then went to Idaho and later to Washington, where he engaged in mining. He came to California in 1851 and settled in Laporte, Plumas County, when it was a center of mining activity. He followed mining in various parts of the Sierras until 1867. In that year he was married in Marysville to Miss Mary Wright, who preceded him to the grave about 21 years ago. After his marriage Mr. Twohey went to San Francisco and engaged in the wood and coal business which he followed about four years before coming to this (Livermore) valley. He settled on the farm in the eastern part of the valley which has been the family home ever since. Mr. Twohey was a very active man and carried on his own farming and business operations until after his eightieth year.<sup>2</sup> In addition, an announcement in the "Livermore Herald" newspaper on 24 Feb. 1906 noted that Thomas Twohey received a telegram informing



*Twohey, Thomas Matthew Twohey*

him of the death of his brother, Michael Twohey, of Virginia City, Storey, Nevada. According to his death certificate Michael was 59 years old when he died. If this age is correct, Michael was born in 1847, and thus could not have been the teenage brother of family lore.

Thomas' obituary aroused my curiosity about his life before he settled in the Livermore area. According to voter registration records Thomas Twohey was naturalized on Sept. 25, 1866, in Quincy, Plumas Co., California. Of interest during this period Michael, John and Patrick Twohey were also living in the area.<sup>3</sup> I assumed these 4 men were related because they all spelled their family name the same way and Twohey, the spelling used by all 4 for a time in Plumas County, is not a very common name. I noted that Thomas

<sup>1</sup>Heritage World Family History Services. Ireland, Griffith's Valuation, 1847-1864 OS Page24. [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2008. Original data: General Valuation of Ireland. Dublin, Ireland: Irish Microforms Ltd., 1978. National Archives, Dublin and Public Record Office, Belfast.

<sup>2</sup>"Another Old Settler Crosses Great Divide," Livermore Herald, 10 June 1916 p. 1, col. 5.

<sup>3</sup>Jann E. Garvis, Roar of the Monitors: The Quest for Gold in the Northern Sierra. United States: Graphic Publishers, 2004, 245.

later named his sons – Thomas Matthew, John Wright, Joseph Patrick, Michael Francis Edmund, James Dennis, and Cornelius. Were there 4 brothers who immigrated? Did they immigrate at the same time? Also of interest was that John was a business partner of John Wright. Was John Wright related to Thomas' future wife Mary? There are always more questions in search of answers but I believed that I had a good overview of Thomas and his family; so, I moved on to other projects. Also, at the time I was fairly new to genealogy research and when researching the "Twohey" family line I had found the spelling of their surname, the repeated use of the same first names, and various dates for the same event to be challenging.

Oh, but as I learned years later, there was so much more to Thomas' family story. Thomas was born on February 2, 1831, to Edmund Toohy and Bridget Conners in Pallasgreen and Templebredin, Limerick Ireland. He was the fifth of eleven siblings of which ten survived to adulthood. Within the decade following his birth, Thomas would welcome six more siblings and mourn the death of one of them. Sometime in the 1840s his family moved from Linfield to the nearby village of Nicker, Limerick. Around this time, according to his obituary Thomas and a brother sailed for the United States. Unfortunately, I have been unable to find exactly when they immigrated. Also, I have not been able to find a record of them in Terre Haute, Indiana or a reason for their stay there. It seems that by the late 1840s they were in Washington and Idaho when the area was still part of the Oregon Territory. Yet, I could not locate any official record of their sojourn in that sparsely settled area. Thomas' death certificate noted that he had lived in California for 65 years, so I assume that he was in the state by 1851 but neither his brothers nor he were listed in the 1852 state census. Were they out roaming the Sierras seeking gold? Did they find some?

By the 1860s Thomas (Tom Twoey) was living in Secret Diggings as was John Wright.<sup>4</sup> By 1890 \$3,000,000 had been extracted by miners from the area. In 1860 John Twohey was living with John Wright in La Porte. John, Mike and Pat Twoey were mining at Poverty Hill<sup>5</sup> which was

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 173.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 245.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 177.

## Twohey Family Lineage

Thomas Matthew TWOHEY

b. 20 Feb 1831 Linfield, County Limerick, Ireland

d. 7 Jun 1916 Livermore, Alameda, California

m. 19 Aug 1867 Marysville, Yuba, California

Mary K WRIGHT

b. 4 April 1849 County Clare, Ireland

d. 22 Dec 1895 near Livermore, Alameda, California

Elizabeth G TWOHEY

b. 11 Jul 1870 San Francisco, California

d. 28 Dec 1956 Livermore, Alameda, California

m. 28 Nov 1894 Livermore, Alameda, California

Daniel Alexander SMITH

b. 8 Dec 1869 Hawaii

d. 11 May 1948 Livermore, Alameda, California

Joseph Thomas SMITH

b. 11 Aug 1895 Livermore, Alameda, California

d. 27 May 1965 Oakland, Alameda, California

m. 1 Mar 1918 Guam, Mariana Islands

Rita Marie LEWIS

b. 23 May 1896 Concord, Contra Costa, California

d. 20 May 1935 Oakland, Alameda, California

Joseph Thomas SMITH Jr.,

b. 18 Jul 1919 Oakland, Alameda, California

d. 8 Dec 1994 San Jose, Santa Clara, California

m. 17 Jul 1943 Oakland, Alameda, California

Elizabeth Ann CHRISTEN

b. 23 Jun 1919 Butte, Silver Bow, Montana

d. 10 Apr 2019 Danville, Contra Costa, California

Kathleen SMITH JAVDANI

neither poor nor on much of a hill. By 1865 there was a Twoey, Kingdon & Company<sup>6</sup> which had already taken out \$150,000 in gold. There were four Kingdon brothers. Were there also four Twoey brothers in the Company? At least one Twohey was a successful miner. John Twohey had to pay federal

Income tax. In 1865 John Tuohey's valuation was \$1,355.<sup>7</sup> And, in 1866 his income was \$2,047.63.<sup>8</sup> Thomas, Michael and Patrick were not listed as paying any income tax, so each probably earned less than \$800 (income minimum to be taxed) for each of these years. John seems to have done well. By 1867 he had married Johanna and had a one-year-old son though they had already lost two children. John and his family moved down to San Francisco in the spring of 1867. Sadly, on May 12th he passed away from an aortic aneurysm at the age of 43.

In the meantime, Thomas Twohey had been courting Mary Wright, another Irish immigrant. They were married on August 14th in Marysville with Michael Touhey as a witness. Note: Thomas' last name was spelled Tuohey in the church register. Sometime in 1867 Thomas moved to San Francisco. In the city directory he was listed as a laborer. However, by October 26<sup>th</sup> of that year, a notice in the Daily Examiner advertised his Wholesale and Retail wood and coal business at 326 Third Street. In the 1867 San Francisco City Directory a Joseph Leveque is listed as a wood and coal merchant at the same address. So, it appears that sometime in 1867 Thomas assumed control of the business.

From 1867 -1871 Thomas Toohey and Mary settled into a successful life in San Francisco. By 1870 Thomas had a personal estate of \$1,600 with two horses valued at \$420. Their first son, Thomas Matthew was born on September 3, 1868. His sister Elizabeth "Lizzie" followed on July 11, 1870. They lived near his widowed, now financially comfortable sister-in-law, Johanna who had an estate valued at \$8,000 and her son, John Joseph. The 1870 census lists a fifth Toohey brother, Edmund living with her. This is curious

<sup>7</sup>National Archives and Records Administration; Washington, D.C.; Internal Revenue Assessment Lists for California, 1862-1866; Series: M756; Roll: 24; Description: District 4; Annual Lists; 1864-1865 and Special Lists; 1864; Record Group: 58, Records of the Internal Revenue Service, 1791 - 2006. Ancestry.com. U.S., IRS Tax Assessment Lists, 1862-1918 [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2008.

<sup>8</sup>The National Archives and Records Administration; Washington, D.C.; Internal Revenue Assessment Lists for California, 1862-1866; Series: M756; Roll: 25; Description: District 4; Annual Lists; 1866 and Monthly Lists; Jan.-May 1863; Record Group: 58, Records of the Internal Revenue Service, 1791 - 2006. Ancestry.com. U.S., IRS Tax Assessment Lists, 1862-1918 [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2008.

because Edmund states in the 1900 U.S. Census that he arrived in the United States in 1881.

For some reason before March 6, 1872, when John Wright Twohey was born in Alameda County, Thomas, Mary and their young family moved to the Livermore Valley. In 1873 on his voter registration Thomas listed his occupation as miner while living in Livermore. Later, in November 1873, the family expanded again when Mary Ellen Twohey was born in Livermore.

Thomas prospered in the valley. On June 30, 1875, he purchased 160 acres east of Livermore from the federal government and worked to establish a successful farm for his growing family. By November 14, 1875 a fifth child, Joseph Patrick, was born. The farm was not totally without challenges. According to family lore, when Lizzie was about six she was left at home to mind her little brothers and sister. When she observed some horsemen riding up to their home, she grabbed the rifle that was leaning by the door. She went outside and aimed it at the riders. The leader looked at her and commented that she was a very brave little girl before the men rode off. Our family story states that the man was Joaquin Murietta. Who knows for sure. We just know that Lizzie was definitely a brave little girl.

Three months later Mary Twohey delivered her sixth child, Michael Francis born on November 9th. He was soon joined by brother Edmund on November 12, 1879.

By 1880 Thomas could view himself as a successful, self-sufficient farmer. (Note: He was listed as Thomas Tarhey on the 1880 U.S. Census.) According to the Agricultural Schedule of the 1880 U.S. Census, he presided over a ranch valued at \$7,220 producing \$1,800 worth of production with \$650 of livestock including ten horses along with \$300 of machinery. The previous year he had mowed fifty acres and harvested forty acres of hay. Mary and he could now observe their seven children scampering around the acreage. Life was good though in 1880 his father Edmund passed away in Ireland as did his mother in 1883. In the next few years, the family welcomed their final three children: James Dennis on 31 October 1881, Margaret Teresa on 15 June in 1885 and Cornelius on 10 April 1888.

It's unclear how closely Thomas was in touch with his own siblings during these years. I have located a few men named Patrick Twohey and Michael Twohey in the San Francisco City

Directory, but I can't verify that these are our Patrick and Michael. In the meantime, Thomas' sister Margaret appears in the gold boomtown of Bodie, California. Margaret was born in 1834 (baptism)/ 38 (obituary) in Ireland. In Bodie on 3 September 1883 Maggie Twohey married Patrick Melley. (Her husband Patrick over the years was to be listed as Patrick Melley/Malley/ O'Malley.) Where had she been all these years? Why had she come to be in remote Bodie? Was she there with brothers Michael, Edmund and, or Patrick as they pursued another gold rush?

In the 1890s Thomas took on three new roles: father-in-law, grandfather, and sadly widower. On Nov. 24, 1894, his oldest daughter, Elizabeth, married a local boy, Daniel Alexander Smith. By the next August they welcomed their first son, Joseph Thomas Smith. Fortunately, Thomas' wife, Mary was able to witness both these events before she passed away on December 22, 1895 following an eight-year-old long illness. In the year following her death, their oldest son, Thomas, married Elizabeth Doolan in Dublin, California. The couple welcomed their first of six children, Lauretta in August of 1898. Thomas welcomed his third grandchild, Daniel W. Smith near the end of the century on November 23, 1899. In all Thomas would enjoy the company of twenty-seven grandchildren all of whom lived nearby. Through marriage the Twohey family was soon joined with numerous other old valley families including Callaghan, Kelly, Croak, Seeband, Doolan, Smith, and Sweeney.

One wonders how much Thomas shared with his children and grandchildren about his adventures in the gold fields. For some reason in March 1899 his son John headed north to Dawson with a few other Livermoreans to participate in the Yukon gold rush. Following two years in Alaska, John returned to live in Livermore for the rest of his days.

Tragedy struck Thomas early in the beginning of the new century when his son Edmond (1879-1900) died at his sister Lizzie's home from the result of a combination of the grip and diabetes. Two years later Thomas' brother Edmund passed away from pneumonia at the San Francisco Alms House. Later in 1902 Thomas' son Michael was electrocuted when he stepped inside a telephone station and touched the lineman. The lineman was grounded by insulation on the floor. Sadly, Michael was not. A few years later in 1906, Thomas received news that his younger brother

Michael had died in Virginia City. Two years later in 1908 Thomas invited his ill sister Margaret to leave her husband, Patrick Melley, an invalid, in Virginia City and join him with his children Margaret and Cornelius on the ranch. Sadly, she died on the ranch a year later. In 1911 his brother John's widow Johanna died in San Francisco. Fortunately, for Thomas there was also much joy in his life in the first decade of the century as well. He celebrated the weddings of three of his children: Patrick, Mary Ellen and James, and welcomed a dozen new grandchildren to the family during the same period.

In 1916 Thomas' focus turned to his youngest daughter, Margaret. In March she underwent a double surgery for a stomach ulcer and an appendectomy followed by a case of mumps probably caught while in the hospital. The concern may have been too much for Thomas. The retired farmer died from heart failure on June 7th.

"The funeral took place on Friday at 10:00 a.m. from St. Michael's Church, where a requiem high mass was celebrated by Rev. Father McKinnon. The services were well attended and the remains were followed to their last resting place in the Catholic cemetery by a long cortege of friends and neighbors who thus paid a final tribute to a man they had known and respected for many years."

Through all the variations of his surname, Thomas lived a full life.

#### **Author's notes:**

*I have written this article in hopes that it might be read by the numerous descendants of Thomas Twohey and that they might share more information about his life and that of his siblings.*

*I would like to thank my newly discovered fourth cousins, Mary and Neal, for their recent, detailed collaboration on our Toohy/ Tuohey/ Twohey line. Mary was born and raised near the Toohy family home in Nicker, Ireland. Neal's great grandfather, Denis Tuohy immigrated to the East Coast as the next generation of Touhy immigrants to the United States following that of Thomas and his siblings.*



## How Can Genealogists Discover Events That Have Occurred In Their Family In The Past That Have Not Been Passed Down As Family Stories.

By Gene Block

Andy Warhol, the late American Pop Artist, is credited with coining the phrase that in the future “**everyone will be famous for 15 minutes.**” It turns out that some of our ancestors in the past may have had their “15 minutes” of fame. If that event, is considered negative by older family members, there is a real possibility, it was subsequently never discussed and therefore never passed down as a family story. So how do genealogists who are compiling a history of their family discover whether such an event took place in their family in the past?

Obviously, the best source for information about such an event in your family would be from an older family member relating all the details of the event to you when you are interviewing them. But if the event has been suppressed by the family for a number of years, most likely older family members will not be willing to discuss it with you when you are interviewing them.

There is one way you can frequently discover for yourself if such events ever took place involving any of your ancestors. The best source of this information in my opinion is **old newspapers** from the area where your family members lived that have been digitized and are key word searchable. What makes this source so valuable is that you do not need to know the date any such event took place. You merely type in your family member’s name, and every time their name appeared in that newspaper, a copy of the article where the name was mentioned will be displayed. Additionally, if the individual was well known in the community or the event was considered especially newsworthy, there may be another article describing the event at the time your ancestor passed away in addition to the usual obituary notice in the local newspaper.

I have found events from the lives of some of my ancestors through newspaper research that were never passed down as family stories. My most recent and interesting discovery in the life of one of my ancestors involved a great-great-grandmother, Rebecca Stuart, which occurred in January 1905.

Rebecca’s friend and neighbor died of arsenic poisoning. Before she died, she told her doctor that Rebecca had given her some caraway seeds. When the doctor looked at the container which contained the seeds, he noticed some white powder which he identified as arsenic. He then called the police and Rebecca was subsequently arrested. The City of St. Louis, where this event occurred, hired a chemist to test the powder. At Rebecca’s trial the chemist testified that the white powder was not arsenic, but “*dust from a cereal*”.

Additionally, Rebeca testified that she lived with her daughter and son-in-law. She stated that her daughter had been seriously ill, and as she had been acting as her nurse during the daytime hours, she had not left the house for the past six weeks. Her son-in-law confirmed Rebecca’s story. After deliberation, the jury found Rebecca innocent and she was acquitted and released. In an interesting follow up article, the police department discovered the caraway seeds did not come from Rebecca. Additionally, the dead woman’s daughter told police she did not believe Rebecca caused her mother’s death. She said her mother had been using some cream for her complexion which contained arsenic , and her mother probably caused her own death.

The drawing on the next page of Rebecca Stuart appeared in the St. Louis Post Dispatch on page 2, Jan. 10,1905, attached to an article describing her arrest on being suspected of poisoning an acquaintance with caraway seeds. A doctor who tested the seeds found no poison. A jury subsequently found her innocent and she was released. NOTE: Rebecca's surname in the article is spelled Stewart. The correct spelling is Stuart.

Even though Rebecca was found innocent, this incident was never passed down as a family story. Two of the articles that appeared in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch contained sketches of Rebecca. These were especially interesting to me as I have never been able to discover a picture of Rebecca. But as a result of this incident and the





*This drawing of Rebecca Stuart appeared in the St. Louis Post Dispatch on page 2, Jan. 10, 1905, attached to an article describing her arrest on being suspected of poisoning an acquaintance with caraway seeds. A doctor who tested the seeds found no poison. A jury subsequently found her innocent and she was released. NOTE: Rebecca's surname in the article is spelled Stewart. The correct spelling is Stuart.*

newspaper sketches, I now have a good idea of what Rebecca looked like. Additionally, newspapers as far away as Pennsylvania and Kansas carried articles about this event.

There can be other reasons why family stories are not passed down.

My maternal grandmother told both my mother and me that her father managed a hotel in St. Louis after the grain mill in Illinois where he worked burned down. She also told us her father-in-law was a well-known grocer in St. Louis. These stories were true, but they were not the entire story.

After her father left his hotel job, and after her father-in-law closed his grocery store, both men opened and operated saloons for a number of years, which my grandmother neglected to mention for whatever reason. Both men were subsequently involved in events with their saloons that were news worthy, and articles were printed in local newspapers about these incidences.

In January 1908, a young man entered my grandmother's father's saloon and ordered a drink. Her

father, Leo Kipping, refused to serve the young man as he thought he was not old enough to legally buy an alcoholic drink. The young man left, but shortly afterwards returned to the saloon with a pistol and threatened to shoot Leo. At this point, my grandmother's sister who was working in the saloon as a waitress, jumped between her father and the young man and started screaming. Her screams brought neighbors into the saloon to see what was causing the disturbance. The young man then threw down the pistol and ran out. When the police arrived, they secured the pistol and shortly afterwards arrested the young man. It turned out he was old enough to legally purchase an alcoholic drink, but the newspaper reported "he appeared to be no older than 17".

Since both my grandmother and her sister were living at home with their parents at the time this occurred, I'm sure she knew about this incident. Several years later, after my grandmother was married, her father-in-law, Frank Stanze, was arrested for opening his saloon on election day before the polls closed in violation of a local ordinance. There was an article in the local newspaper about this incident, probably because her father-in-law had previously been a locally elected official. Again, I am sure my grandmother was aware of this incident but choose not to pass it along as a family story. Another reason incidences involving family members do not get passed down is because older family members are themselves not aware of them.

Consider the following example. My same grandmother and my grandfather named their only son, Stuart. Stuart was the surname of the divorced husband of Rebecca Stuart discussed earlier in this article. Even though Rebecca and John McD Stuart were divorced, John was well thought of within the family. When he passed away in February 1898 in St. Louis, there were four articles published in local newspapers about his death. Several of the articles mentioned that as a young man he had traveled to both Australia and California looking for gold. Other than that information, he was very secretive about his past according to the articles. Reading this of course made me think John was trying to hide something about his past life before he arrived in St. Louis. After doing some research I believe I have discovered his secret.

I have found John's name in a San Francisco newspaper in 1857, when a woman named Flor-

ence Stuart obtained a divorce from John McD Stuart. The problem with this is that by 1857 John had returned to Scotland where he was born, married Rebecca, and had a son, James, who was born in 1857. I suspect, although I will never be able to prove it (as the city building that held the divorce records from the 1850's burned down after the 1906 earthquake in San Francisco) that John abandoned Florence, telling her he was going off somewhere to look for gold. Instead, he returned to Scotland married Rebecca and had a son before Florence filed for divorce. Absolutely no one in the family knew that John had been married before and was a bigamist. I am certain if my grandparents knew this, they would never have named their son, Stuart. The above examples are all from my maternal side of the family.

But my father's side of the family also had their share of family stories that were never passed down.



*Coroner's Inquest Report*

One night about 8 or 9 years ago I received a telephone call from someone who identified himself as a descendant of George Ruffle, a paternal great-grandfather. He said he and his family lived in Kansas and he had started doing genealogy. He asked if I knew how George Ruffle had died. I told him that I knew that George had committed suicide by hanging himself from the rafters in his basement. I told him that my paternal grandmother had been the one who discovered his body when she went to her parent's home for a visit. I told him that I had a copy of the police report, the [Coroner's Inquest Report](#), and a newspaper article of this event all of which I subsequently sent him.

The caller told me that he always suspected something was unusual about George's death. But every time he asked his relatives about it they never answered and always changed the subject. I told him that since finding her father's body had been such a traumatic event in my grandmother's life, she discussed it with my father and his brother several times when they were growing up. But apparently my grandmother's other siblings would never discuss their father's death.

### **Catherine Sigmund Ruffle**

<b>BIRTH</b>	6 Jun 1854 Germany
<b>DEATH</b>	8 Aug 1943 (aged 89) Saint Louis, St. Louis City, Missouri, USA
<b>BURIAL</b>	Bellefontaine Cemetery Saint Louis, St. Louis City, Missouri, USA
<b>PLOT</b>	Block 270, Lot 6009
<b>MEMORIAL ID</b>	186250910

*Catherine Sigmund Ruffle*

My father told me that his maternal grandmother, George Ruffle's wife, Catherine, was the only grandparent he had ever known as his other three grandparents had died before he was born. He told me she was born in Baden,<sup>1</sup> Germany, but he did not know the name of the town in Baden. Recently I found his grandmother's Baptismal record on Ancestry which listed her town of birth as Kirchartt,<sup>2</sup> a small town in Baden. But I also found something in her Baptismal Record which I suspect my father was never told, that is that his grandmother's birth was listed as "*unehlich*". I looked this word up in a German dictionary and found it means "illegitimate". While I suspect that my father was never told this, it appears his mother and her siblings knew, because when his grandmother passed away, the family had her buried in Bellefontaine Cemetery in St. Louis. When I

<sup>1</sup>Baden was a minor margraviate which emerged in lower western Germany during the general political collapse which began in the eleventh century. Much of its territory had previously been within Swabia, and before that it had been occupied by Celtic and Germanic tribes such as the Latobrigi and Tulingi.

<sup>2</sup>Kirchartt and its constituent communities, like many cities and towns in Northern Württemberg and North Baden, was first mentioned by name in the Codex Aureus of Lorsch in 791.

Baden and Hesse Germany, Lutheran Baptisms, Marriages, and Burials, 1502-1985

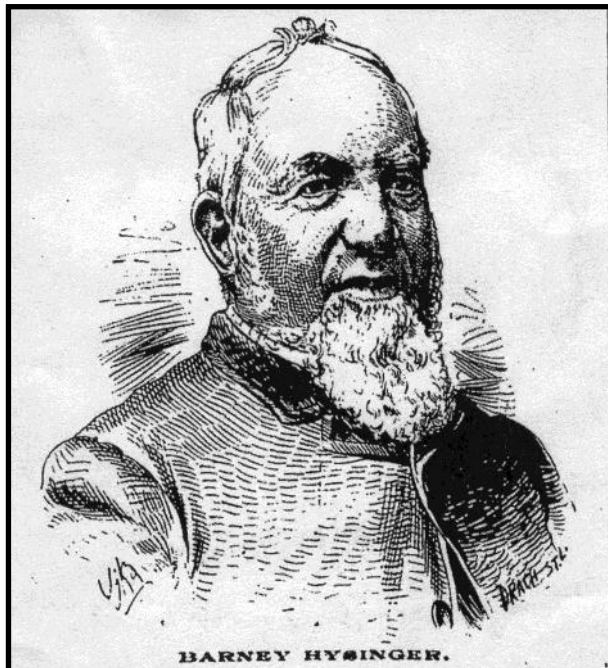
Detail Source

Name: Katharina Münd  
 Gender: weiblich (Female)  
 Event Type: Taufe (Baptism)  
 Birth Date: 6. Jun 1854 (6 Jun 1854)  
 Baptism Date: 18. Jun 1854 (18 Jun 1854)  
 Baptism Place: Kirchart, Preußen, Baden  
 Mother: Margaretha Münd  
 Legitimacy: Unehelich  
 Parish as it Appears: Kirchart  
 Page number: 314;315

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*“Unechlich” means “illegitimate”*

looked at the cemetery record for her burial, I noticed her mother’s name was listed, but there was no name listed for her father. So that was something that family members knew, but never discussed.



*Barney Hysinger*

I have also discovered an interesting event in the life of a paternal great-great-grandfather, Barney Hysinger, when he lived on the East Coast before the family moved to the Midwest that was never passed down as a family story. After moving to St. Louis, Barney became quite active in both civic affairs and those of his religious community. But before he moved to the Midwest, and while living back East, I discovered he and an associate had been involved in a legal issue. They had been in-

cluded *“for a conspiracy to defraud and thereby obtain a quantity of goods and were called to defend themselves”*. Neither he nor his associate appeared in court however, *“and their recognizances were declared forfeited”*. I suspect this was never discussed within the family and that my father, and possibly even his father, were never told about this event. I believe that all the above examples illustrate that probably most people growing up never hear about all the interesting events, good or bad, in our ancestors’ lives. I don’t start out looking for all the negative things that happened in my ancestors’ lives. I just try to research and find out as much information as I can about my ancestor’s lives, whether positive or negative. At least in my family, and I suspect in most families, most of the stories that are passed down are those that are positive events, rather than the negative events that didn’t work out so well for our ancestors. This only gives a distorted view of what their lives were really like.

I propose that if all we include in our own research and pass along to our children are names, dates, and places, they won’t be very interested in what we genealogists have spent years researching. But if we include all the stories we have discovered, both the positive and negative events, our offspring will be much more likely to keep our research rather than discard it after we pass away. And who knows, they might just be inspired to do some research of their own, to determine, if per chance, we have *“inadvertently”* neglected to pass along to them some of the less than flattering events in our own lives.

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## Searching for a Great Uncle - and Finding Contemporary Family

By Victor S. Wheatman<sup>1</sup>

I spent some time developing a history of my father's family, drawing on memories, shared cousin stories and of course on-line research. The resulting document was published on JewishGen.org.<sup>2</sup> Some surprises did show up in the research, specifically some non-parental events involving troubled first cousins, but there was one mystery regarding a great-uncle. I took it on as a project with some passion.

My grandfather, David Wheatman, was born David Weitzman in what he called "Russia" but which we found out was Moldova.<sup>3</sup> He changed his name after he migrated to the U.S. after living in Canada for several years.

I had long heard of David's brother, Phillip, but there was some ambiguity about him as none of my contemporary cousins ever met him and there wasn't much knowledge about him or his

<sup>1</sup>Pleasanton California resident Victor S. Wheatman retired from a career as a technology analyst in 2012. Prior to working in high-tech, he was a public radio journalist and manager. Vic created the nationally syndicated program "Car Talk."

<sup>2</sup>The family history, titled "Think of the Gray" can be found at <https://www.jewishgen.org/Bessarabia/files/familyMemoirs/Wheatman-WeitzmanFamilyHistory.pdf>

<sup>3</sup>Moldova, officially the Republic of Moldova is a landlocked country in Eastern Europe. It is bordered by Romania to the west and Ukraine to the north, east, and south.



*Weitzman Family Portrait, taken in Montreal. Grandfather David is on the left, holding the infant. Phil Weitzman is seated on the right side. The author's Father Nathan is on the far right. The children are David's and his wife's (my Grandmother) Vella's.*

family. There was a rumor that he might have been a twin to David (he wasn't). And there were rumors of a third brother who supposedly went to Israel. This later story included a possible sighting by a first cousin on a visit to Israel as a child. The cousin believed she saw the proverbial "spitting image" of our grandfather there. Efforts to find this potential third great-uncle proved fruitless despite contacting the Kibbutz where he was seen and where he was said to be a founder.

Well, grandfather David's less-elusive brother, Phillip Weitzman, reportedly had changed his name to Phil White. The family migrated from Eastern Europe to Montreal and while David later took his family to New York City, Phillip stayed in Canada. Of course, looking for Phil White in Montreal was like looking for the proverbial needle in the haystack due to the commonness of the name.

So instead I looked for Phil Weitzman in the old country and found documents showing his European name: Favel Vaitsman. Other



Phillip Weitzman  
 BIRTH 5 Jul 1895 DEATH 1 Jan 1973 (aged 77)  
 BURIAL  
 Dawes Road Cemetery  
 Scarborough, Toronto Municipality, Ontario, Canada  
 MEMORIAL ID 191762538  
 Inscription  
 In loving memory of a beloved father and grandfather  
 Too well loved to ever be forgotten

*Phil White's Gravestone and translation.*

Phillip Weitzman Family Lineage	
Saul Weitzman	b. c. 1860 Kishinev, Bessarabia d. ??? Toronto, Canada
Anna Steinberg	b. ??? d 15 May 1912 Kishinev, Kishinev, Bessarabia
Phillip Weitzman	b. 5 July 1890 Kishinev, Bessarabia d. 03 January 1973 Toronto, Canada m. 14 May 1910 Kishinev, Bessarabia
Eva Balanski	b. July 19, 1895 Kiev, Ukraine d. July 16, 1968 Toronto, Canada
Claire Weitzman	b. January 17, 1925 Montréal Canada, d. November 7, 2014, m. 12 November 1946
Saul Weitzman	b. 1927, Montréal, Canada d. February 15, 2009, North York, Ontario Canada

documents showed that he was born 5 July 1890, and had died 3 January 1973 outside of Toronto, Canada. Obviously, that is not Montreal. I confirmed this was the person I was looking for since his parents and my grandfather's parents had the same names. But while I had their names as Saul and Anna, the documents showed them with their "old country" names as Shoil and Khana. Same thing. As a bonus, the documents gave me the names of Saul and Anna's parents. In addition to extracted data, I found original records of his birth and marriage and transcriptions of those records. But I digress.

The late Arnie Koslow, a member of the Livermore-Amador Genealogical Society (L-AGS) volunteered as a Docent at the Pleasanton City Library at the time I started digging into great-uncle Phillip. Through Arnie's efforts, we found Phillip's grave site outside of Toronto under the

name Phillip Weitzman -- not Phillip White.

There is some discrepancy in his birth date, which is recorded elsewhere as July 5th, 1890, exactly five years earlier than the inscription on his tombstone. We believe the stone was placed five years after his death and an error was made in fabricating it.

To continue the quest, with the hopes of finding Phillip's (and mine) Canadian decedents, I hired Toronto-based Bill Gladstone, a professional genealogist who I found through the genealogical society of Toronto. Gladstone turned up connections with living second and third Cousins - blood relatives. Ultimately, I contacted one of them, Phil's granddaughter, who had photos of Phil, his spouse and children, other relatives and most importantly, their story.

### What's in a Name?

Philip Weitzman's original Hebrew name was Shraga Favel (or Faivel) Vaitsman. He was the son of Shaul or Shraga Feivel. Shaul is Saul, same as his brother David's Father. Shraga Feivel is a common name pair. Both names mean 'light' or "fire." Another source reported that Shraga (Talmudic Aramaic: שרגא is a Jewish given name meaning "candle" and may originally refer to Samuel ben Uri Shraga Phoebus, a Polish rabbi and Talmudist who lived in the second half of the 17th century. Feivush is Yiddish for Phoebus, the Greek goddess of light. (Yup, a Yiddish name with pagan roots.) Feivel is the diminutive. Feivel became thought of as the Yiddish translation of Shraga, so typically the person was informally called Feivel, which could translate as either Phil or Paul.

At some point, Phillip changed his last name to "White" which is one of the translations of "weitz." He was buried as Weitzman, so this was likely an unofficial name change. Curiously, we found a hint that his daughter Clare used White as her maiden name. The reason for Phil's change is the familiar story about concealing his Jewish roots to help in business because of potential anti-Semitism. There is also the possibility that he did it to escape creditors. Phil won a lottery and although a hard working man, he unfortunately invested the proceeds poorly. After changing his name to avoid those to whom he owed money, he moved from Montreal, where my Grandfather David's family lived until 1921, to Kingston, between Montreal and Toronto. Phil and his wife Eva later moved to Toronto.

Phil and his son, Saul, were in the furrier business and may have had contracts to supply the Canadian military with uniforms. Philip at one time may have manufactured military uniforms. Phil was reported on his daughter's birth certificate as a manufacturer. Phil and Saul were also listed on other documents as peddlers. They had furrier shops in Kingston and later in Toronto at 3447 Yonge Street. Today, the building where he had his shop in Toronto is occupied by a submarine sandwich shop.

### Phil Learned Tailoring in England and a Murder Confirmed

At approximately age 9, Phillip was sent - alone - from Eastern Europe to Manchester, England to learn a trade as an apprentice tailor. He lived in a barn and slept on hay, but the experience served as a foundation for his later career and business.

Confirming a family oral history story, Phillip, as well as his brother, my Grandpa David, saw their Father Saul murdered in Kishinev, the capital of what was then Bessarabia<sup>4</sup> but considered a part of Russia. The story repeated in the family was they were killed for asking for higher wages as painter-decorators of a Synagogue. The story has the Rabbi, under duress, pointing out their Father Saul to Cossacks who then killed him, either by shooting or by sword - perhaps by decapitation, depending on who tells the story. This tragic event may have been a factor in shipping Phil off to England to apprentice as a tailor, and to protect him. The betrayal by the Rabbi, although he was under duress, may have been a factor in David forgoing his Jewish faith.

We found more information about Phil, his wife Eva (who was born in the Kiev Gubernia<sup>5</sup>) and their children Clare and Saul as we developed the story including birth, voting and death records. More information is in the referenced report posted on JewishGen.org and available on

<sup>4</sup>Bessarabia is a historical region in Eastern Europe, bounded by the Dniester river on the east and the Prut river on the west. About two thirds of Bessarabia lies within modern-day Moldova, with the Ukrainian Budjak region covering the southern coastal region and part of the Ukrainian Chernivtsi Oblast covering a small area in the north.

<sup>5</sup>Kiev Governorate was an administrative division of the Russian Empire from 1796 to 1919 and the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic from 1919 to 1925.



*Gerlock Family: Left to Right: Jessica Gerlock, Lauren Silver-Gerlock (Matt's bride), Lauren Routbard, Matt Gerlock, Steve Gerlock, Sheila Goldmacher-Gerlock.*

request from the author.

Some of the information unearthed was somewhat scandalous. For example Phil's daughter Clare divorced her first husband after he fell in love with the babysitter. It was the first Jewish divorce in Kingston where they lived, which had about 150 Jewish families at the time. Some of the family history was tragic. For example, an auto accident led to lifetime injuries for Phil and cognitive function problems for his son Saul. Through the family connection to living relatives in Toronto, we gained quite a few pictures, newspaper notices and obituaries, and details to their life stories.

### Meet the Family

Phillip's granddaughter is Sheila Goldmacher-Gerlock. She is contemporary with the first generation of Wheatman cousin's (i.e. the grandchildren of my grandparents) and is my second cousin. She is a real estate professional and formerly a speech therapist. Sheila is married to another real estate professional, Steve Gerlock and they have two children, one of whom married in 2018.

The search for the offspring of Phillip Weitzman, David Wheatman's brother, took a bit of time -- but we got there. Our blood relatives, the heirs of Phillip Weitzman and his wife Eva represent branches of my family tree of which we had little knowledge or awareness of -- until now.

## Renew or join L-AGS

There are four different membership levels available. "**Individual**" memberships are for an individual person. When two people living at a single address wish to join, a "**Family**" membership is available to include a spouse or co-member of the household. For those who wish to contribute additional funds to L-AGS, over and above the Individual or Family amount, "**Benefactor**" and "**Patron**" levels are available. *Benefactors & Patrons* are recognized in the *Roots Tracer* (our quarterly publication) for 1 year. The annual dues are due and payable on or before January 1st of each year. Those joining in October, November and December become members through the following year.

The IRS considers the benefits of L-AGS membership to be "insubstantial" for charitable deduction purposes. Therefore, subject to the recommendation of your tax advisor, the full amount of your dues can be claimed as a charitable contribution. (Section 501(c)(3)(public charity) of the Internal Revenue Code and California Taxation Code 2301g.)

You may download a copy of this membership application at: <http://www.l-ags.org/application.html>

## *Future General Meetings - via Zoom*

Zoom is a web-based video conferencing tool.  
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Visitors are always welcome.

<p>Monday December 12, 7:00 p.m. – via <b>Zoom</b> – site opens 6:30 p.m.</p> <p><i>Madeline Yanou      Ancestral Road Trips, Part 99: Go West Young Man</i></p>
<p>Monday January 9, 7:00 p.m. – hybrid both in person and via <b>Zoom</b> – site opens 6:30 p.m.</p> <p><i>Stewart Traiman, MD      Excel for Genealogists—Using Analytics to Reveal Hidden Stories"</i></p>
<p>Monday February 13, 7:00 p.m. – via <b>Zoom</b> – site opens 6:30 p.m.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>To be Announced</i></p>

*The Livermore-Amador Genealogical Society is exempt from Federal Income Tax under Section 501(c)(3)(public charity) of the Internal Revenue Code and California Taxation Code 2301g.*

### *Livermore-Amador Genealogical Society*

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