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CORRECTED ISSUE

This is a transcribed issue in order to create a usable electronic format. The masthead information is of our current design; the articles below are what appeared when this issue was printed.

The Life of John Alden Thayer

by

Susan L. Thayer Hennon

John Alden Thayer was my great uncle; hereafter, I'll refer to him simply as John. As a child, I heard stories about one of my grandfather's brothers being killed by a bear in Alaska, but it wasn't until my husband and I moved to Alaska that I began to discover the details of John's death.

Much has been written about John's horrific accident. If you are interested in the details of that fateful day, you will not find them here. I was motivated to write this biography because even though many have chosen to write in insensitive detail about John's death, little has been revealed about who he was as a man. I wanted to help preserve that piece of him which is far more important than the fact that he was in the wrong place at the wrong time at the end of a very long, wet, and arduous field season. With the help of several family members(1), I was able to piece his life together and present it here for you.

John was born on October 18, 1896, in Fredonia, New York, to Charles Gilbert Thayer and Susan Greene Thayer. He was their eighth child of nine and the last to be born in New York. Our line of Thayers is descended from both John Alden(2) of Southampton, England, and Thomas Thayer of Thornbury, Gloucestershire, England. One of John Alden's granddaughters, Sarah Bass, married Thomas Thayer's grandson, Ephraim Thayer; this is where the two family lines converge. John belongs to the tenth generation in both lines. His lineage is as follows: John[10], Charles[9], Darwin[8], Samuel[7-6], Uriah[5], Shadrach[4], Ephraim[3], Shadrach[2], Thomas[1].

John's father, Charles, made a dramatic decision to move west from New York in 1897. The railroad company for whom he had worked for many years had been taken over, leaving Charles either unemployed or forced to move. In search of new opportunities, Charles decided to move his family to Oregon where they would join his parents, Darwin Thayer and Harriet Eliza Thayer, and his brothers Will and Harry who had already moved there.

That September, Charles went ahead to Oregon, leaving his wife, Susan, and his children, to follow. Susan had to pack up and/or sell all their family belongings and say good-bye to all they had known in New York.

John Alden Thayer (1896-1929)

In November, Susan and her eight children, ages 1 to 17, traveled for five days by train across the country to Oregon. John was but a baby of one sitting on his mother's lap at the time of their move so could have no recollection of New York as did his older brothers and sisters. One of his sisters, Jessie Thayer Lewis, remembers Susan heating John's baby food on a little stove in the train coach. They arrived at their new home on a stormy, fall evening November 14, 1897. Susan (my namesake) turned 39 eleven days later. She had to learn the ways of a pioneer woman quickly. It must have been a very difficult and challenging time in Susan's life.

John's family settled along the Columbia River two miles upriver from Rainier, Oregon, on a piece of property Charles' parents had selected. The family has always referred to this property as the "Ranch", and a portion of the property is still owned by the family. It was rough, hilly land covered with both old and second growth fir trees. Their property had a half-mile of river frontage, a dock, a house (which had neither electricity nor indoor plumbing), a shop, a 'nil', a barn with a chicken shed, orchards and a spring. There were no roads to the Ranch in those days; the only way to get there was by boat. John grew up here.

Though it sounds like an idyllic location, the family was poor and often struggled for their very existence. They had left a life of gracious living in New York for one of isolation and primitive living conditions in the gray, damp northwest. Charles earned $10 a month by lighting a lamp for sailing ships down on the point, and with this bit of money, he was able to buy staples for his family. Despite the hardships, they were a close-knit family. Being devout Episcopalians, they held family services every Sunday in their living room because there was no formal church to attend in Rainier. The children were strictly, yet kindly, raised.

Charles and Susan always wanted the best for their children. As a result, Charles was motivated to move his family to Portland, Oregon, where he felt they would have access to a better education (there was no high school in Rainier) and develop a closer relationship with their church. Before they could move, however, Charles and his six sons had to build a house there.(3) This entailed doing everything themselves: from drawing up the plans and sawing and cutting the timber (which they had to transport from Rainier by boat to Portland), to the details of seeding the lawn. Through all these efforts, John was able to attend Washington High School, unlike his older brothers who had to attend college without the benefit of a high school education.

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In 1917, John was attending Oregon Agricultural College (OAC) (now Oregon State University) in Corvallis, Oregon(4). He was a sophomore in 1917 in the School of Forestry. But in April 1917, the United States became involved in World War I, and within weeks, John had enlisted in the Navy. John was 20 years old.

John attended the Navy's electrical school on Mare Island Naval Base near Vallejo, CA. In January 1918, he transferred to San Pedro, CA, where he was in the submarine service on USS H-Boat 9. He was promoted to chief electrician in May of the next year. His letters home reveal little about what he was doing because the military prohibited them from writing about their work. John missed his family and wrote to them often, no small task with such a large family. His letters of that time are filled with family news and about his adventures in the San Francisco Bay area with two of his older brothers, who were also stationed in the area. He also occasionally included with his letters clever and well-drawn cartoons dealing with his life as a "gob." Of Charles' and Susan's nine children, five of them served in the military during WW I. John stayed in the Navy until the war ended on November 11, 1918.

Alter the War, it isn't clear whether he returned to college. One sister wrote he didn't complete college. In 1921, he began working for the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) in Oregon, hut he was transferred to Alaska two years later where he first worked in the Chugach National Forest located in the Interior of Alaska in the Anchorage and Kenai region and later transferred to the Tongass National Forest in Southeast Alaska. He resigned from the bureau in September 1926, to enter OAC to take a special Forestry course. After taking a competitive examination on July 1, 1927, he was reinstated in the Forest Service and given the rank of Junior Forester.

John worked very hard for the Forest Service. His letters home during 1928 and 1929 reveal the difficult physical conditions that he endured but also describe in eloquent detail the breathtaking beauty and vastness of this remote land, the Last Frontier. They are of great historical interest to people here in Alaska, especially to those who do similar work today in the primeval forests of Southeast Alaska.

From 1927 to 1929, John worked in Alaska out of both Ketchikan and Craig, where everybody knew him as "Jack" Thayer. In the fall of 1928, he met Ruth Studley who was a schoolteacher in Craig. They fell in love and became engaged in June, 1929, just before she left Southeast Alaska to return to complete her schooling "outside."(5) On June 6, 1929, he writes to his folks (as he called them): "I may as well announce the glad fact that we are engaged to be married some time next Winter when I come outside. I hope this announcement gives you as much happiness as it does me. She is the teacher I met at Craig last Fall, what an unromantic place to meet, what? Now I presume you all are excited but try and calm yourself." They were in love and had big dreams for their future life together. I don't think John planned to spend the rest of his life in Alaska. He was too close to his family and missed Oregon. John's field season of 1929 was a rough one. It began in May, and they planned to work until they had the job done. Southeast Alaska is a temperate rain forest, so it rains a lot,(6) but the summer of 1929 proved to he particularly wet and dreary.

John Alden Thayer, USN

John worked with only one assistant that summer, Fred Herring. Their job was to cruise timber on Admiralty Island. A pulp and paper company was considering opening an operation in Southeast, and it was their job to verify the estimates made by the company of the volume of timber available in the region. In the 1920's, this meant taking a physical survey of the area. Aerial surveys were not commonly done in those early days. John and Fred worked hard that summer and fall covering many areas of this wilderness island. John and Fred camped out along the beaches much of the time. On August 18, 1929 he writes to his parents, "So far have seen no bear tho the island has a breed of brown ones that are famed for caring their grouches on their sleeve. We sometimes carry heavy artillery(7) but it has been put to no use so far except we had to shoot a deer to eke out a precariously lean larder on one of our trips into the hinterland."(8)

He writes on September 20, 1929, of a miserably wet and cold trip he and Fred took to a place called Poison Lake, near Angoon (a Native village), where they were doing some original work: "Am still hoping for some good Fall weather but so far see no evidence of it. Anyway the months are booming by so fast it seems just a short time since I got here but it will soon be three months. Not long now till I can fly south with the birds." No Forest Service employees had worked in that area before. In fact, John and Fred must have spent a good deal of time that summer in places where no man had ever set foot because the type of work they did took them to the most remote places on an already-remote island.

Even though that summer was fraught with frustration working in foul weather and with poor maps, John writes from Juneau on September 26, 1929, expressing his overall satisfaction with the type of work he did: "Am back in the capital again and feeling about as fit as when I went out and indeed would be glad to get into the field again. I guess woods trotting is a disease or a habit and incurable."

On September 30, 1929, John writes from Juneau to his parents: "The eve of my sail setting for the diagonally opposite side of Admiralty Island from where I worked last time hence the southeast side. Boss has chewed me off a great piece of work about enough for a field season and says "get it done so I can have the dope when I go to San Francisco in the Spring." How I'm to do it is a mystery unresolved but I got the last piece covered and will get this one finished so help me Hanner.

"Showed (my pictures) to "Heintz" (his boss) to see if he would shed sympathetic tears but he only laughed with high glee especially at my drafting layout. (See picture of John working included in this biography.)

"I shall write more fully in the field some evening. I will have time and as good a place as this on the boat (called the "Weepoose").

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Thank the lord we will have a real boat for warmth, a cook skipper and a place to dry clothes."

On October 2, 1929, John writes from the Weepoose: "Can't say when I'll be out to the states as yet. Told the boss I wanted to leave in December but I may not get it. Ruth writes she may not finish this semester as we hoped, but I hope not to delay the wedding till later if possible to avoid it. Of course I want her to finish her college work but that may necessitate my quitting here and going somewhere in the states for a job. As things are I would just as soon do that as the boss says I'll be out again early next Spring and it will be the old grind over again. Three very punk Summers have got me well "fed up" on this stuff. Then again I'm not being paid what other men on the same work are, so I shall discuss that matter with very pointed frankness with "Heintz" when I return to Juneau.... Too bad I haven't brains enough to hold a job like Don or Ed has, what.(9)

"I'm glad my family approves of my choice (of Ruth). A very remarkable thing I take it, as the Thayers are an awfully critical lot... She might make a pretty good Thayer, but too bad she's got the family fool and such a lazy cuss, isn't it?" On October 13, 1929, in his last letter to his parents, he writes from Petersburg: "Have been away from P.O. for twelve days and came here today. Rather blowy nowadays and a trifle rough crossing Frederich Sound. Rotten weather, gales, torrents of rain and each one colder than the last.

"Will return tomorrow and probably be out till Nov. 5. Hope for mail at Pybus Bay... Love, John. P.S. May write tomorrow if time permits."

He never got the chance. John was attacked by a brown hear on October 16, 1929 at 2:05 p.m. deep in the forest off Eliza Harbor near Pybus Bay on the southern tip of Admiralty Island. Everything humanly possible was done to save him, but his wounds were too severe, and he was too far away from medical help. John died at 10:30 that night in the woods with Fred and the boat skipper by his side. Due to the rough weather, remote location and slow transportation in those days, they did not arrive in Juneau with John's body until 8:30 p.m. on October 19. His body was shipped back home to his grieving family in Portland. On the way, the ship carrying his body stopped in Ketchikan. He was given military honors there for his years of service in the Navy during WWI. John's ashes were buried at Riverview Cemetery in Portland in the family plot. He did not lie there alone very long; his father joined him in 1932.

Seated: Edward Sprague Thayer, Bill Gordon. Standing: Harold William Thayer, John Alden Thayer, 1917 Mare Island Navy Yard.

There was an enormous outcry by many in the public after John's tragic death to remove all protection on Alaskan bears. A recommendation was made in the 1929 Forest Service annual report to hire expert hunters to come in and kill all the brown bears on Admiralty Island. It was felt by many that man and bear could not peacefully co-exist, and the presence of the bear interfered with the development of Alaska. But others felt that bears were a priceless resource and should be protected. The debate raged on for many years, hut the annihilation of the bear never occurred. Instead, the Forest Service and the Alaska Game Commission worked out a bear management plan, which included setting aside certain areas on Admiralty as bear refuges.

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In honor of John's death, the Forest Service named several areas on Admiralty Island after him. Thayer Lake (formerly Poison Lake), Thayer Creek and Thayer Mountain, near Angoon are all named after John(11). Today, there is a fishing lodge on Thayer Lake (named Thayer Lake Lodge) that has been run by the same family since 1947. People can fly in and stay in rustic cabins and enjoy some fine fishing. Ironically, there is a 38,400-acre area surrounding Thayer Mountain, which is treated as a bear refuge. I wonder what John would think of all this.

Through reading all the letters saved by his family, I feel I've come to know John a little. He was of the finest character, and was a devoted son, brother and hard worker. He was humble, probably to a fault. Though serious-minded, he had a subtle and dry sense of humor, which was abundantly evident in his many letters. One had to pay attention to catch the joke in what he said because if you didn't know him better, you might think he was serious. People who knew "Jack," held him in the highest regard. Charles Flory, the District Forester at that time, wrote in his condolence letter to John's mother, Susan, "Everyone recognized in him a man of finest qualities, a man of character and integrity - he left not a single blemish on his record either as a forester or as a man."

On the other hand, Ray Taylor (one of the first Forest Service researchers in Alaska) writes a more candid description of John in his own memoirs and may remind you of a Thayer or two you might know: "Evenings with Ranger Thayer were not fun and games. He was serious-minded and was studying the slide rule. He had a habit of correcting one's English. Looking up from his book on slide rule operation he would inform me that the singular of data was datum; or that the word was idea, not idear. Being from New Jersey I sometimes slipped into the "doity Goity from toity-toid street" way of talking, mostly to arouse his ire... Not that Jack wouldn't give you the shirt off his back. He was very kind-hearted, but very sure he was right about most everything."

A quote from a letter to John's oldest sister, Harriet, from one of John's older brothers, C. "Gilbert" Thayer, after John's death helps summarize the feelings of John's family about him: "John was of course one of my favorite brothers, too... John got a kick out of smaller things...his philosophy was less dour than...mine, very possibly much saner.. John was a lad about to my specification -pretty tolerant and fun-loving but decent without priggishness nor sissiness." Harriet was 16 when John was born and probably loved him like a son, especially since she never had any children of her own.

John's death was keenly felt by the entire family and his memory has always been cherished. I hope this biography will help keep his memory alive.

John Alden Thayer working at a make-shift drafting table out in the field in Alaska. 1929

Endnotes

(1) I would not have been able to write this biography without the help of the following members of my family: first to Mary Lewis, one of Johns s nieces; my father, Harry E. Thayer; and my uncle, David S. Thayer, two of John's nephews. Thank you for your support.

(2) John Alden was one of the Pilgrims who came over on the Mayflower in 1620. He was one of the founders of Plymouth Colony; the first permanent English settlement in New England He married Priscilla Mullens in 1623. They are the subject of a famous poem by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow entitled "The Courtship of Miles Standish" (1858). In the poem, Alden, deeply in love with Priscilla himself, proposes to her on behalf of his shy friend Standish, whereupon Priscilla inquires, "why don't you speak for yourself, John?"

(3) The exact date of construction is unclear but it was likely between 1910-11.

(4) The earliest letters we have from John are from 1917. It is unclear when he started college.

(5) This is a term Alaskans still use to refer to places outside of Alaska, most often referring to the lower 48 states.

(6) Typical rainfall in Southeast ranges from 60 to 250 inches a year.

(7) John carried a .30-06 rife with government-issue ammunition; probably 150-grain bullets with the bullet points filed off to expose the lead so they better expand. These days, Forest Service employees are required to carry rifles for protection when working on brown bear islands and a heftier 220-grain bullet.

(8) It seems quite remarkable that they had seen so little of the brown bear that summer and fall. Admiralty Island has one of the heaviest concentrations of the species in the world; it's estimated that about 1600 brown bears lived on the island at that time. Brown bears are the same species as the grizzly bear; in S.E. Alaska, they tend to have dark coats and grow to enormous size (weighing anywhere from 300 to 1,000 pounds).

(9) Don was his younger brother, the family's last and ninth child (Donald Packard Thayer), and Ed was one of his older brothers and my paternal grandfather (Edward Sprague Thayer).

(10) Rakestraw, L. W., A History of the U.S. Forest Service in Alaska. 1981, pp. 114-115.

(11) It is interesting to note that there is a Thayer Basin, located at the head of Traleika Glacier, on Mt. McKinley in Denali National Park named for Elton S. Thayer, a NPS ranger who was the first to cross this basin while climbing South Peak Mt. McKinley in May, 1954, and who lost his life in the descent. There is an interesting biography about E. S. Thayer in the Winter 1996/97 Thayer Quarterly.

Thank you Susan for this terrific biography. I can well imagine John's life in the Navy as I too was a Chief Electrician's Mate in submarines. Jack would have spent the majority of his time watching over the lead-acid batteries used to propel the "boat" with electric motors when submerged. There would have been numerous battery charges after each submergence, requiring temperature, specific gravity, and level measurements of the acid in each battery cell.

I must also thank TFA Internet Chairman Rodney Lee Thayer who first sent me a story about Jack's death in Alaska, featured in Alaska Magazine, August 1971. I could not identify Jack from the article and ran a query in this newsletter which David S. Thayer, Susan's uncle, answered. Thanks to all. Editor

The Trail to Braintree

By
Harvey L. Thayer

Having spent the better part of a year tracing my lineage and attempting to obtain documentation back to my Revolutionary War veteran ancestor, I finally was granted membership in the "Sons of the American Revolution." Big deal, you say? Well it certainly seems like some sort of an achievement to me, although I haven't figured out just what as yet. During this effort I have accumulated a four or five inch stack of paper with only a small fraction of an inch of documents that pertain to anything. The rest are mostly forms of application to government and historical society organizations wanting fees to look up all of these obscure Thayers. However, most of these I was able to get around by going to other sources, which are fairly obvious to anyone setting his mind to it. Anyhow, now I'm setting out to join the "Order of the Founders and Patriots of America.." Wish me luck.

Having surmounted this tremendous task, I decided last Spring to attend the annual "Thayer Families Association Reunion and Annual Meeting" for 1997, in Braintree. Where is Braintree, you ask? Well, after consulting my son Mark who had been there, I found out it is just south of Boston, MA. Actually, I knew that all along, as I had heard my grandfather, Louis Luther Thayer, speak of the Thayer Academy years ago when we all lived together on the farm near Birchwood, WI. Now, after coming to this surprising conclusion, and finding just where Braintree is, I thought, how am I going to get there? Well, I figured, I do have a small pickup truck and I am used to camping, so, I think, maybe this is the best way to go. Well now, the matter of food on this journey could present a problem, and realizing the cost of groceries or eating out could be quite high in the East, I loaded my truck with enough MREs (Meal, Ready to Eat, or "K" rations) and other camping type foods to last six weeks, the estimated time I figured for the trip. These rations included scrambled egg and bacon pouches, and small cans of ham for breakfast, cans of Vienna sausages from Hormel and Amour, and small cans of assorted fruits for lunch, and various kinds of MREs for supper. All to be washed down with, best yet, vegetable juice. Fresh fruit and bread would be purchased at grocery stores along the way.

But first a short overnight trip to see that all was in readiness, and now, needing new moccasins, I decided a short trip up to Ely, MN and the Steges Mukluk store was in order. Ely is the home of Will Steger, adventurer and polar explorer. Loading up my camp stove and water can I speed up north on US-169, past Mille Lacs Lake and the Grand Casino and on North through Grand Rapids, birthplace of Judy Garland, northeast through Hibbing, birthplace and boyhood home of Kevin MacHale of Boston Celtics Basketball fame, and on past Eveleth, home of the Hockey Hall of Fame, and on northeast to Ely where I located the moccasin store and purchased a pair of Apache moccasins. The Steger Mukluk store is an outlet for the factory located in Ely. Their products are sold world-wide by catalog.

Harvey L. Thayer

I then traveled South on MN-1 and US-61 to the North shore of Lake Superior, past Silver Bay, Two Harbors, Duluth, and I-35 S to Cloquet, the site of the Frank Lloyd Wright designed service station. There I camped for the night at the local KOA, (Kampgrounds of America). Imagine my surprise that upon rising the next morning finding ¼ inch of ice in my cooking kettle! This was in early May! After breakfast I continued on South on I-35 and home.

Well, after finding everything in order for my trail experience, I took off down I 94 South past Hudson, WI, Fan Clair and Wisconsin Dells and camped overnight just north of Madison. Next morning I continued south on I-94 and US-12 to Fort Atkinson and the Fort Koshkonong Rendezvous. This is a pre-1840 camp in and around a reproduction of an 1832 Fort, featuring: fire starting, hawk and knife throw, fry-pan toss, tug of war, black powder and primitive archery, crafts, and stage rides. A very nice mother and daughter team won the hawk throwing contest. First prize was two pounds of bacon. I enjoy Rendezvous because it takes me back to the times our ancestors lived. I then camped overnight at the Pilgrims Progress campground on HWY C near Fort Atkinson.

Next morning I traveled north on WI-26 to Fond Du Lac, home of my cousin Faith Lory Schram, daughter of Pearl Thayer Lory, my father's sister. I hadn't seen Faith in about thirty years. We had a good visit, about four hours. Not being much for talk, and after lunch, I took off for the local KOA for a good steep).

Next morning, back down HWY-26 S to I-94 and west on Jefferson County Road B to the town of Concord. At the Concord town hall I met with Cindy Arbiture, president of the Concord Historical Society, and others, for a tour of the town hall, and then a tour of the township by automobile. After visiting several small family cemetery plots we came upon the Thayer Cemetery on County Road B and just west of Pioneer Road on the north side of County Road B. This is a picturesque spot, nestled between farm fields, and seems appropriate. As you enter the area several headstones are visible. Luther Thayer, his wife Serviah and alt their family are buried here. Luther was born 30 MAR 1802 at Heath, MA (Luther[8], Rufus[7], Caleb[6], Jonathan[5-4], Ferdinando[2], Thomas[1]). He married Serviah Alby at Truxton, NY on 21 JAN 1827. They farmed for a time at a place called Sunset, VT, and moved on to Cleveland, OH in the Fall of 1833. They then moved to Concord, Jefferson County, WI, 20 JAN 1843, where Luther took up a homestead and farmed until his death, 8 APR 1855. Luther purchased at least 270 acres of farmland in Concord Township during his life. He was moderator of the first town meeting the new town. Serviah was born 25 JAN 1811, in Vermont, we think, and died 16 AUG 1894. She is buried here beside Luther.

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Also buried here are Luther Jr., age 19, who is believed to be a veteran of the Civil War in 1862, Reverend William Harvey Thayer, born 4 MAR 1832, died 15 OCT 1876. William was my great grandfather. William married Lavinia Hill of Medina, OH on 23 DEC 1854 at Concord. After William's death, Lavinia remarried. Their infant daughter Clara, Sarah Thayer Mathews, born 23 NOV 1834, died 27 NOV 1864. Mary Thayer Smith, born 1829, died 4 MAR 1859. Serviah outlived her entire family and in 1894 died at age 82.

After lunch at a local eating place we returned to the town hail. Another high-point of my stay was a visit to Luther's original homestead. I then took leave of Cindy and the others and spent the night at the Concord Center Campgrounds.

Next morning I motored south to Illinois, and to avoid tolls I took US-30 east, south of Chicago, which turned out to be quite a traveling experience. Keeping to US 30 eastward, I finally arrived at Gettysburg, PA and reserved a camping spot for two days at the local KOA. The next day was spent exploring Gettysburg Battlefield doing a self-guided tour. I guess the high point was observing the statue of General George Armstrong Custer, and buying some Civil War mini- balls from a local antique dealer. Many photos were taken. Observing the covered bridge near the Eisenhower Farm was also an experience.

Next day was spent heading north through Harrisburg and then north on I-81 to Courtland, NY and then northeast on HWY-13 to Truxton where grandpa Rufus is buried. Rufus was baptized Sep. 13, 1772 at the Congregational Church in Deerfield, MA, son of Caleb and Elizabeth. Rufus married Aletha Briggs in 1795, and settled at Heath, MA. Rufus farmed and was a harness maker. Four children were born to them. Aletha died of consumption in 18(i6. Rufus then married Huldah Watson and settled in Truxton, NY. Rufus and Huldah had three children. Huldah died in 1818. Rufus then married the widow Auston in 1822. They had five children together. Rufus died at Truxton in 1843 aged 71. I searched the cemetery in Truxton, but found no trace of Rufus' grave, but I did find memorials to the Watsons and the Austins, which was quite satisfying.

I then searched a smaller cemetery northwest of town, but found nothing. After spending the night at the campground in Coutland, I traveled on northeast to

Thayer Cemetery, Concord Township, Jefferson County, WI.

Ticonderoga. I had read somewhere that a Thayer was involved in the fighting there during the Revolution. Arriving at Fort Ticonderoga and making the tour, I obtained lists of the men under Ethan Allen and Benedict Arnold. No Thayers were on the lists. Fort Ticonderoga is very picturesque on the shore of Lake Champlain and boasts many cannon. Only two of the original cannon remain that were taken for the siege of Boston. Fort Ticonderoga boasts a fine restaurant and gift-shop that is well worth a look.

Leaving Fort Ti. I traveled east across Vermont and then New Hampshire and north to Dixville Notch where the six people, voting there get the first votes in, in the presidential elections. I had wanted to talk with some of these people, but none was around. I then headed back south and west and then south on I-91 in Vermont to Barnet and the site of Ben Threshers Mill. "Ben's Mill" was featured on a PBS television series years ago. They manufactured wood products there and waterpower was largely used. When I arrived the mill was locked and a for sale sign was in evidence. However, I did talk to a man, living across the highway from the mill, who said he was Ben Thresher's son. We conversed for about an hour and he showed me through the house he was building there.

I then moved on to the west and in to Shelburne on HWY-2 (Mohawk Trail) and searched the cemetery there for the graves of grandpa Caleb and grandma Elizabeth, but was unsuccessful.

I then continued on HWY-2 to Charlemount and set up camp there. Next day I moved on up to Heath and searched some more for the graves of Caleb and Elizabeth and also for grandma Aletha who died in 1806. None were found, but I did observe headstones of probable descendants of Captain Seth Chapinn, an ancestor of mine, and this did make the trip worthwhile. Caleb was my Revolutionary War veteran ancestor. Heath is a very rural town, mostly forested with one small store and a church. I did meet the pastor there, but he could give me no information. Caleb was much documented across Massachusetts during his misadventures across the state, but no death certificate or cemetery record is in evidence.

After leaving Heath and Charlemount I journeyed back east to historic Deerfield, encountering my first traffic circle. White knuckle time for me, until I got used to them! Deerfield was quite enjoyable and I did the walking tours. Driving south from Deerfield on I-91 and east on SR-20 I visited Sturbridge Village. Sturbridge was marvelous, with its village atmosphere and the five water mills there. I had a terrific meal there at the tavern. I then drove south into Connecticut to Terryville and the Lock

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Museum of America. There I had an enjoyable time going through the museum and observing the now closed buildings of the Eagle Lock Company.

Next day, heading back northeast, I checked in at Minuteman KOA, sometimes called Boston Northwest Campground. After a good nights rest I left for Minuteman National Historical Park. What a thrill to experience the site. The Concord Minuteman statue with his musket and plow and Old North Bridge, the wayside Hartwell Tavern, William Smith house, Paul Revere capture site, Fiske Hill and the battle green and the Lexington Minuteman statute. The peak at Concord was quite peaceful, quite the contrast to the heavy traffic in Lexington. I did not venture into Boston, with its Bunker Hill Monument, the USS Constitution (Old Ironsides) and the scene of the Boston tea party.

Next morning leaving Minuteman KOA near Littleton, I ventured out along and south on the beltway around Boston and eventually ended up at, what do you know, Braintree, the ancestral home of the Thayer family in America. Finding the only shady spot at the Thayer Academy parking lot, I left my truck there and wandered over to the "Thayer House," with it's flag and cannon, and waited on the bench in the back yard. After setting in the shade for some time, I could have sworn my oldest son Mark came out of the bushes near the yard. This turned out to be Verne Thayer from Milford, MA. After introducing ourselves, I mentioned the resemblance to him and he said yes, I reminded him of his dad. I guess the genes are still at work.

After a while we wandered over to the Academy and a got big hug from Tricia (Patricia Thayer Muno). After the luncheon some of us toured the Thayer House, which was now open, and then wandered back for the business meeting. The high point, I think, was the demonstration by the Thayer's Slippery Elm Co. There I met Rick Thayer (Editor) from Bremerton, WA, and of all people, Matt from Minneapolis, MN. After the group photo, and setting the place straight, I left for Boston southwest KOA near Wrentham and a good nights rest.

My thanks to Tricia, Verne, Matt, and Rick, for making me feel at home and smoothing a somewhat bumpy road for me. The road back from Braintree was very eventful and I will tell you a little of my experiences.

My next little jaunt was southwest to Valley Forge, and beyond to the Medal of Honor Memorial. There, at the Wisconsin Memorial, I found the posting of my great uncle, Horace Ellis. Horace's citation reads something like this: "21 AUG 1864 at Weldon Railroad captured flag of 16 Mississippi (CSA) Medal awarded 1 DEC 1864." Uncle Horace was my mom's uncle. He received a wound to the face while performing his duty. Only one Thayer is listed as a Medal of Honor winner. His citation reads something like this: "Thayer, James, Ships Corporal, U.S. Navy. For saving a drowning boy serving with him on the USS Constitution at the navy yard, Norfolk, VA, 16 NOV 1879."

The next leg of my journey took me south into Virginia and the Manassas National Battlefield Park. My grandfather, Pliny Ellis, was wounded at a placed called Brawner Farm near Gainsville where the Blue and the Grey infantry opened up on each other at very close range. Grandpa was a Private at the time, in Co. A, 7th Wisconsin Volunteers. I stood almost on the very spot he received his wound. He was in hospital for a time and then sent home with severe dysentery. Recovering, he received a reenlistment bonus of about one hundred dollars and was returned to his original unit.

I then moved on south to the Petersburg National battlefield, where grandpa Pliny and uncle Horace were again involved in fighting around Weldon Railroad, where uncle Horace won his medal and the Battle of Five Forks that caused General Lee to abandon Petersburg. Uncle Horace may have been wounded again at a place called Gravelly Run, which turns out, was a church I was unable to locate. Both Ellis boys did return home safely. Grandpa Pliny later received a disability pension because of his wounds.

I then pushed on to Appomattox Courthouse where General Lee surrendered to General Grant, ending the war between the states. Appomattox Courthouse is a National Historical Park and is truly a place to be visited. Admission to any of the National Parks and Monuments is free to anyone holding a "golden age passport."

Moving on northward, I visited Tom Jefferson's home at Monticello. Arriving early, I got in on the first tour of the day, which they say is best, to avoid crowding. Admission is eight dollars for seniors. Paying my admission with a ten dollar bill, I received a two dollar bill as change, with Tom's picture on it, of course, for a good souvenir. The house itself somewhat disappointed me because the rooms seemed so small. However, the grounds are extraordinarily beautiful and the cemetery and gardens are striking. Walking back to the parking and administration area, I reflected on how Jefferson would not have been able to do all this without the help of slave labor. Later portraits of Tom show him very red of face, indicating he may have been handling his wine bottles quite regularly.

Departing Monticello, I moved on down to historic Michle Tavern and Meadow Run grist mill. After a tour I enjoyed a meal of Colonial fried chicken, black-eye peas, southern beets, coleslaw, biscuits, stewed tomatoes, green bean salad, potato salad, and cornbread, at a restaurant called The Ordinary.

The drive north through Shenandoah National Park to Front Royal was breathtakingly beautiful, and then back south through the valley on I-81 south, and then west on US-60 and Humpback Bridge. This covered bridge, near Covington, is the oldest in Virginia, built in 1835 of oak and locust, with a rise of eight feet from each end to the center.

Staying on US-60 west, to avoid the tolls, I found it quite a twisting and turning route, but also quite scenic. I-64 west to St. Louis was quite uneventful and I found I-70 through town quite stressful. After sleeping over at the local KOA, I headed north on US-61, which took me all the way home. An interesting stop on US-61 would be the historic Pickwick Mill located a few miles south and west of Winona, MN in the village of Pickwick. Built of locally quarried limestone in 1854, six stories high, Pickwick Mill boasts a rebuilt waterwheel and supplied Union Troops with flour during the Civil War.

My profound apologies to readers of this article, my rambling on seems to reflect my personality. All in all, my venture down the road to Braintree was very enjoyable and quite satisfying.

Thanks, Harvey, for a terrific narrative of what I would cull a saga and a history lesson.

Harvey reports that many of the headstones in the Thayer cemetery feature a willow tree and he thinks this quite unusual. I call only take a guess at the meaning. We have oft en heard of the "weeping willow. " Could this imply weeping over the loss of a loved one? I defer to my readers. Someone in our membership of nearly 600 must know the answer. Please write me. Editor

Historian's Report Fall 1997

By
Patricia Thayer Muno

With the winding down of the Thayer genealogy compiling project, I wish to thank the hundreds of Thayer families and each of my wonderful Family Representatives who have been so helpful over the years in sharing the genealogical data on their respective lines. At present, my two combined computer files contain the data of near 53,000 Thayer-related individuals. The formatting of information which will be presented in the first volume of A Comprehensive Genealogy of the Thayer Family of America series will take place about the first of the year. This book will contain the descendants of the Immigrant, Nathaniel Thayer, who settled in Taunton, Bristol, Massachusetts in 1660. Some of the preliminary proof-reading is taking place now.

It is not too late to send your pre-1920 Thayer photos for inclusion in this series.

If you have photos you would like to share that are a few years after that date, I would be happy to consider them for inclusion in the final work.

We have just one Family Representative to announce this term. Roger Eugene Thayer will be serving in the line of his 3rd Great Grandparents, Richard THAYER and Elizabeth SINCEBAUGH of Orange, Tompkins and Sullivan counties in the state of New York. Many of the descendants settled in the city of Ithaca. Following, is Roger's "Biography" of Richard:

Richard THAYER was born in 1786 in Mass or 1785 in NY; Patricia Muno found parents fitting the former date and place: Elias THAYER and Rachael French in Westhampton, MA, near Braintree. [Patricia's NOTE: Is Richard possibly the son of Elias[6], Zebulon[5], Benjamin[4], Richard[3-2-1]?]

They had 11 children, including a Richard, b. 1786. I found Richard THAYER in the New York Census of 1810 stating he was born in New York State in 1785. This matches the Mormon Genealogical Library data and all we have in our family records. This Richard was married to Elizabeth Sincebaugh on 13 December 1808 in The old Red Brick Dutch Reformed Church still standing and in use today in Montgomery, Orange County, New York not far from the U.S. Military Academy of Thayer fame. General Sylvanus Thayer was commandant there and called "The Father of West Point."

First row: Roger Eugene Thayer, David II age 8, David age 1, David age 25, Second row: William H., Roger Eugene age 8, David age 4 mo., David age 20. Third row: John B., Paul E., Roger holding David.

Richard and Elizabeth had 13 children in Montgomery, NY over the years 1810-1830. The spelling of their last names varied in the several records available: Thire, Thayr, Sinsepaugh and Sensabaugh are some… They probably were farmers; most of their sons were according to census reports. They and their sons "migrated" westward, John MacBride Thayer, the oldest, then 30, was listed in the 1840 census with his first wife and son William Henry Thayer and daughter; Richard and Elizabeth were listed with their six other sons ages 10-23 all in a place called Mamakating in Sullivan County, New York. Their three daughters born in Orange County had all died, two in infancy.

In 1850 Richard and Elizabeth had moved farther west to Tompkins County, New York with their four youngest sons

continued

then ages 20-39 on a farm valued at $3,000 in the town of Danby. John MacBride Thayer stayed in Sullivan County and by 1850 had a second wife and two more children. His first son, William Henry, 16, was listed in Tompkins County as a laborer at a nearby Danby farm, having apparently "migrated" with his grandparents.

The 1860 census records Richard, 75, living with son Isaac on another Danby farm; Richard died there in 1862. Elizabeth lived with son William on still another Danby place and died there in 1869.

The graves of Richard and Elizabeth's Sons William, Isaac, Malachi and George Thayer are all well cared for today in the King Cemetery in Danby, New York. I have not found Richard and Elizabeth's graves; maybe they were buried in a family plot in Danhy.

--By Roger Eugene Thayer, great great great grandson of Richard and Elizabeth Thayer.

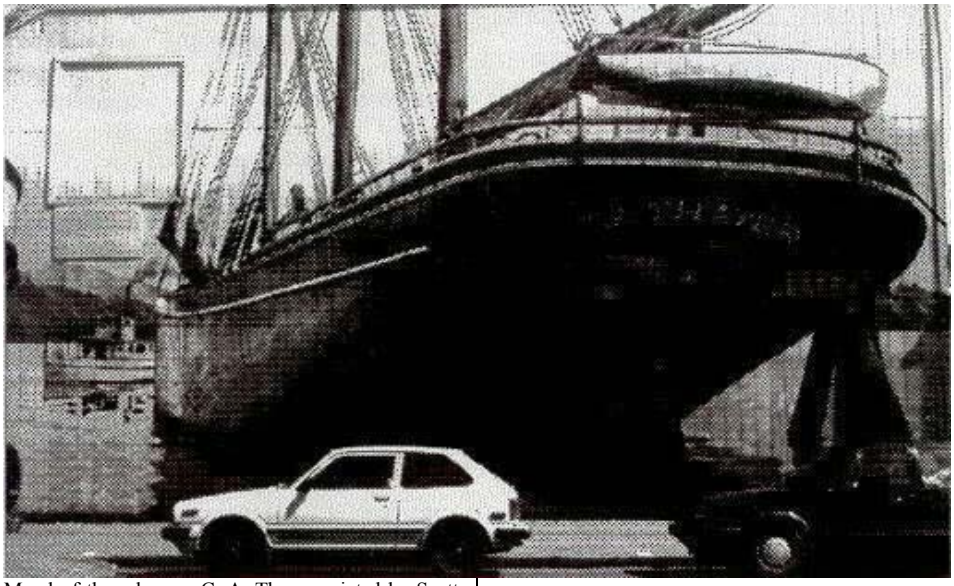
If you have information to share on this line, please contact Roger at the following:

Roger Eugene Thayer
RR #1 Box 476-H
Edgartown, MA 02539
e-mail: rlthayer@tiac.net

Randy James Thayer, Family Representative for the line of Willard Thayer and Amelia Near has a new change of address:

1560 Highview Pines Pass
Alpharetta, GA 30022
E-mail: RJThay@aol.com

Dan W. Perry of Inverness, FL has donated the family Bible of Mary E. Thayer, of Mill Creek, (Otsego county?) New York and husband, Francis E. Weatherly, of West Laurens, Otsego, NY. Mary was born 13 June 1862 and Francis was born 1 Sep 1858. They were married at the Thayer home in Mill Creek, NY on 22 Oct 1879. The Bible gives an account of the births and marriages of their three sons, Eugene, George and Hiram Weatherly. Dan tried unsuccessful to find living heirs of this couple so that he could present them with this family treasure. One of my alert Family Representatives spotted Dan's petition for the rightful owners on the internet and forward his message to me.



Mural of the schooner C. A. Thayer painted by Scott Kennedy of Walport, OR. Located on a building on Main Street in the old town section of Newport, OR. See TTQ Summer 1994 for the history of this ship. Photo courtesy Patricia Muno.

Says Dan:
"I came upon this old book in a second hand furniture shop in the tiny Florida town of Macintosh near Gainesville. As I recall, it must have been about 1975 and we paid $2.00 for the old Bible. It was in its present condition then. I originally bought the book with the intention of framing some of the engravings. As it were, I never got around to it and the book followed me from place to place. This year I became seriously involved in researching my family history. I happened to recall having once seen family records in the old Bible and it just began to seem wrong for me to have it. I have made this effort to insure that someday the Bible will find it's rightful home with a member of the original families whose records are contained in this Bible."

Our thanks to Dan for his efforts to share this heirloom. The book is here in my home in Beaverton, OR and I will gladly send it along (complete with its pressed four leaf clovers!) to the closest living family member. So far, I have found no record of Mary E. Thayer. The name of one of the witnesses to her marriage appears to read "Eli J. Thayer." But this could have been Eliza, Ellis, Elijah, etc. (P. Muno 14 Mar 1997)

To all our cousins around the world, have a wonderful holiday season! Patricia

Patricia Thayer Muno
6885 SW 161 Place
Beaverton, OR 97007-6336
E-mail: TriciaMuno@aol.com

Birthday-Reunion

Robert Nathaniel Thayer turns 90!

The family of Robert Nathaniel Thayer held a birthday-family reunion in Chicago this month for their large family. Special guest of honor was, of course, Robert Nathaniel Thayer who just turned 90. I had the pleasure of meeting Robert at this years TFA reunion and annual meeting. Folks, this family knows how to hold a reunion! On display at the "Thayeritage" (Thayer Heritage) was a display of reunion photos taken over the years. Many photos must have had over one hundred people! Other members of this family that will he honored for their November birthday arc:

Robert Nathaniel Thayer's 11 Nov 1907
Don R. Newman: 2 Nov.
Doris A. Perry: 6 Nov.
Lawrence E. Newman: 15 Nov.
Carol V. Siler: 6 Nov.
Caitlin McGhee: 13 Nov.
Julian Lazarou: 13 Nov.

As your editor I have a special request. I want to ask my 600+ readers to each send Robed a birthday card to mark this special birthday. You have all seen or heard of this sort of thing being done in other families. Let's show the world our numbers by sending Robert 600 birthday cards!

Robert Thayer
2631 S Indiana Ave. Apt. 22412
Chicago, IL 60616-2834

About a Life and the "Family Story"

By
Henry Jerome (Jerry) Thayer

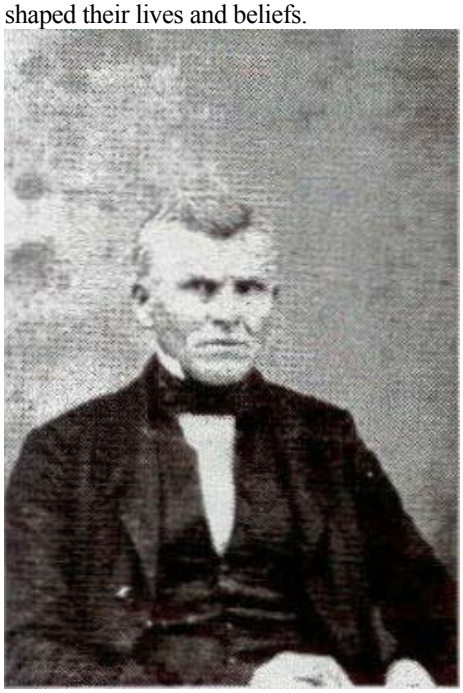
Daniel[7] Corbitt Thayer (Charles[6], Daniel[5], Samuel[4], Isaac[3], Ferdinando[2], Thomas[1]), according to the Town Book of Concord, Essex Co. VT, was born 23 Aug 1808. He was the son of Charles and Mehitable (Brown) Thayer. Daniel's father Charles moved from Vermont to Trumbull Co. OH about 1816 and settled on land which had been purchased by Mehitable Brown's brother Ephraim. The families were large in the early 1800s and Daniel was the 3rd child of the thirteen children of Charles and Mehitable. Daniel grew up in Trumbull County, OH and on 1 Oct 1835 married Sophronia Bartlett who had been born in Brompton, Quebec Province, Canada on 18 Dec 1814. Her father had emigrated to Quebec from the US in 1800 to take advantage of free land offered to US citizens who would settle there.

Daniel and Sophronia began their married life in Trumbull County on 100 acres that Daniel had purchased from his uncle Ephraim Brown in 1831, four years prior to his marriage. They lived on this farm until about 1849/50. During this time they had 8 children, 4 girls (Nancy Sabra, Pluna Allison, Maria Lucy and Sylvia S.) and 4 boys (Charles Franklin, William Quincey, Solon Cassius and Daniel Garrison C.). About 1849 they moved north a few miles to Wayne Township, Ashtabula County, OH where they lived until 1855. There they had 3 more girls (Sarah Persilla, Mary Arvilla and Olive Mehitable) and my great grandfather Parker Marius Thayer. Apparently the land in OH was not to Daniel's liking as he sold out in 1853 and 1855. In 1855 Daniel began purchasing land in Crawford Co. PA and moved onto the first parcel that he purchased in Sep 1855.

In Crawford County Daniel began to add to his initial purchase of 43 acres of land. In the 1874 Gazetteer of Crawford County he was listed as a "Collector and Farmer" with a 300 acre farm. Daniel and Sophronia's last child Henry Clark Thayer was born in 1860 in Pine Township, Crawford County PA. Daniel Corbitt Thayer died 27 Aug 1898 at 90 and Sophronia died 5 May 1903 at 89.

During the period from his marriage in 1835 and the move across the border to Crawford Co. PA, most of Daniel's family, except his brother Hiram, moved west to Indiana. Hiram remained in Trumbull County, OH during his lifetime. Daniel's sister Angeline, after the early death of her husband, Christopher Hoyt, did return to Ohio where she remarried and settled in Ashtabula County, OH.

What can we learn about our ancestors like Daniel who have been gone so long? Certainly you can follow the family with census returns and vital records to determine the size and composition of the family. I term this the "begats." Family history however is more and I feel we need to learn more about how our ancestors lived, what they believed, and what events of history shaped their lives and beliefs.



Daniel Corbitt Thayer 1808-1898

I have been lucky with Daniel and Sophronia. First I have a photograph of each taken in 1864/6, which was in my grandmother's album. I absolutely know the date period of the photo because first, it is a "Cartes-de-Viste" type mounted on a cardboard backing. This dates it between 1859 and 1914. The clincher that allows firm dating is that there is a tax stamp on the back of the photo that was only used during the civil war from Sep 1864 to Aug 1866. Many times early photos were made by itinerant photographers and people would be in ill fitting clothes that the photographer carried with him. Not so with Daniel and Sophronia. They are well dressed in well made clothes that fit properly. They are well groomed and from the photo we can assume that they are at least moderately successful in life. Are they happy? When one has to sit perfectly still for minutes while posing for a picture - there can be no evidence from that picture. They look stern!

How can we assess the success in a vocation? Daniel was a farmer. In 1874 he was also a "collector" but I am unsure of that meaning. He obviously planned his life. He bought land and farmed it for 4 years before he married. The land was obviously not good enough because he moved to another farm before he sold the first and then sold all his land in Ohio before he began to buy up land in PA. There are 12 land transactions in Crawford County where Daniel acquires his land and then sells most of it to his two eldest children, Nancy Sabra White and Charles Franklin Thayer. By the time he began to dispose of his property, most of his children had left home and had chosen occupations other than farming.

I was fortunate to find a number of letters written between Daniel and other siblings in the 1850/60 time frame that have been preserved at the Bartholomew County, IN Historical Society. There are several that tell us a great deal about life at the time and about Daniel and Sophronia. The first of these was from Daniel to his sister Beulah Corbitt Thayer and her husband William Norton. When quoting these letters I will use the as found spelling and grammar. He describes his trip back from visiting in Indiana in the fall of 1849. He had obviously considered moving there where the majority of the family located but due to various reasons discussed he did not and bought a farm in neighboring Ashtabula County, OH. I was surprised at the short time required to travel in 1849/50 even with Daniel walking the last 40 or so miles. He demonstrates his strong feelings on slavery and religion.

"Wayne Ashtabula Co. 24th Mar 1850
Dear William and Bulah

I was sitting by my stove a few moments ago and my wife remarked that the next Sunday after Daniel C. G. was born we wrote to you - to which I replied I will write today. So here I am Sunday 5 o'clock March 24. We are in tolerable health considering all things. After leaving you last fall I had a very good journey home by railway to the river, Boat to Cincinati, railway to Sandusky 240 miles, Boat on the Lake to Cleveland then afoot home. I believe I started from your Columbus Thursday at noon and arrived at home Sunday evening.

Continued

So you see it would not take you long to come and see us.

We had two daughters born yesterday about 2 o'clock in the morning - all well.

I ponder much upon the health of your Country and concluded that if I should take my little flock there they probably would be very much shaken by the fever and ague. I have therefore taken several very extensive rambles through this part of the State of Ohio and have bought a farm of one hundred and 23 acres at 16 dollars per acre amounting to 1900 and 68 dollars without buildings except a log house without doors, floors or windows. this farm is the South East corner lot of the Township of Wayne. we moved here the 2nd of this month.

It is now candlelight and Angeline sits by holding the twins.

On returning home from one of my neighboring farm tours last winter I stopped at New Lyme and herd that the smallpox was in green, on arriving home I found it to be the case. Some of the people died of the disorder but we escaped, did not take the smallpox. Joseph Hoyt working as an apprentice in green had it very bad. Was not expected to live for several days. Angeline was in town at the time but did not know how sick he was, did not see him until he was well, pretty much all business, schools and meetings seased for several weeks. Angeline says she has not heard from Benny since last fall when she was last at his uncle's and saw him in Pa.

I should very much like to know how you get along with your Slave holding, whiskey drinking, tobacco using, tea taking Methodism_____

Please write to me soon and tell me all about these things and whether Charles is blowing the bugle for you.

It is Monday about 11 o'clock. I have been out this forenoon with my little boys mowing elder brush and my right arm getting a little tired. I thought I would come in and finish my letter. It is now snowing fast, the weather this month has been very changable and good for making suger.

I should like to have Charles Norton write and tell me how much he would ask per month to come and work for me a year.

My religious admonitions to you to remember those in bonds as bound with them - and there are in our country at least about one in six in that situation. The friends in these parts all I believe are well.

Pleas write soon - Angeline sends her respects to you.

I shall somewhat hope that one or both of you will come into these parts this year. We shall think strange if some of the friends do not come into this state soon. I think that I shall come there to see you in less than eight years again.

The children send their respects to their cousins and say they should be glad to see them.

Sophrona says when the twins get old enough to leave them at home she is coming to see you.

Respectfully SS D.C. Thayer

P.S. It is Sunday 31st all well - the twins are growing fine - not named yet - pleas send us some names.

Angeline wants to say to you that James Brown's folks have a pair of twin boys 3 or 4 months.

D. C."

Sophronia Bartlett Thayer (1814-1903)

Note: Daniel C. G is Daniel's son. Angeline is his sister. Joseph Hoyt is Angeline's oldest son; Benny is her youngest son. Charles is Daniel's brother. Charles Norton is Bulah (Thayer) Norton's son. Sophronia is Daniel's wife. James Brown is Ephraim Brown Jr.'s son who is Daniel's cousin.

The next letter is from Daniel and Sophronia to Daniel's father Charles Thayer who is undoubtedly living with his daughter Beulah. The letter passes on news of the family and describes when Charles Thayer's brother Gardner Thayer arrives to find Charles. The letter indicates the sorrow of long separation for those families who moved west. Gardner has not seen his brother in 36 years and both are getting old.

"Wayne Oct 10th Ad1852

Father Thayer

Sunday evening I sit dow to write to you to let you know that we are all well and have been this summer. Hiram and Jonathan's folks are well. Hiram came over here last Friday and who do you think he brought with him. The children came in and said uncle Hiram and old Mr. Barb have come. I started to go out and meet them, on getting to the well I soon saw it was not Mr. Barb. I stoped and looked at him and thought it looked like Father Thayer. I soon saw it was not him. Hiram spoke to Daniel who was in the barn and asked him if he had sold all his cattle he had to sell and said here is a man that sometimes buys cattle. they both went into the barn. I went into the house and went to getting dinner. Hiram soon came in to the house and said here I come again without my wife to which I replied I dont like it much, why did you not fetch her, he replied dont you think I came to fetch Father. I said that is not Father, who is it. he then said that is uncle Gardner Father's brother, you may guess how much astonished we all were. He looks, acts and talks so much like you that he made me think of you a most all the time he was here. He started home from here this morning. Daniel went to carry him to Ashtabula where he will probably take the cars to morrow morning and thinks he will be home before he sleeps. he started from home last Monday morning and got to Bloomfield Tuesday in the afternoon. he lives in New York, Allegany Co., Hune Township only about two hundred an fifty miles. he has lived there 23 years. He told his folks he was a going to hunt up Charles Thayer. whether he was a going to hunt for the liveing or dead he could not tell. He had not herd any thing in particular from you since you left Vermont. When he was told how many children you have had and how many grandchildren you hav got he was very much astonished, his health is not very good. his wife has been troubled with the num palsy so he did not like to he gone from home long, he has had ten children, five of his oldest are dead, his oldest child liveing is 28 years old, he is married and lives at home. they have had two children. they are both dead so he has no grandchildren. his youngest child is 18. has but one daughter. two of his boys have gone to California. thay started last Continued

June. Your Mother died about six years ago. I asked him if he knew any thing about the gold nectlace she gave to Bulah. he said he did not nor any of the other property. he was very much disapointed when he found you had gone to the west. he says you must come and see him this fall. Angeline went to Pensylvania last June to help take care of Benjamin Hoyt. she came back four weeks ago. she said he died four weeks before she came away. she was here to day. she started back to PA to morrow morning. Benny still lives with aunt Fily. Tell Sarah, I can not write to her now for it is ten o'clock now and Daniel is gone and I am tired and must go to bed.

so good by SS Sophronia Thayer
Respected Father

It is Monday noon Oct 11th. Just returned from Ashtabula where I have been to carry uncle Gardner. He wishes very much that you would come out here this fall as you have talked and then come and see him, we tried to make him stay until you could be sent for but he is so much like you that when he had got his face set for home we could not make him stay.

Enclosed I send you three dollars to pay for Sarah's Shall [shawl] and your meat barrel and we will make it right when you come.

We received Bulah's letter Monday Oct 4th. we should be excedingly glad to take that good sister and her loving husband by the hand again, we thank her for her honest exhortation because we are and hope ever shall be struck with awe and reverence at any exhibition of human honesty but to us her words are mostly without meaning.

We told uncle Gardner that if you should come out this fall, probably you would be to tired to go and see him and we would write to him and have him come and meet you here and I think he will.

Yours
SS D.C. Thayer
Charles Thayer"

Note: Hiram, Daniel, Beulah, Angeline & Sarah are siblings. Jonathan is Jonathan Barb a brother in law. Father is Charles Thayer Sr. and Gardner is his brother. Benjamin Hoyt is Angeline' s brother in law. Benny is her son Benjamin Hoyt. Aunt Fily is a Hoyt and may be the wife of Benjamin.

Daniel was apparently not happy with his farm in Ashtabula County and in 1854 was again looking for new land. In a letter from his daughter Nancy Sabra Thayer to her Aunt Beulah Corbitt Thayer, Daniel added a note concerning his trip to Iowa to look at land there. I am sure that one reason for looking was that there were at that time 18 persons in Daniel's house!

"April 9th 1854
Dear Aunt Bulah

I will write a few lines to inform you of our present circumstances. The friends here are all well as far as I know. We received your letter the 1st inst. we ware quite astonished to hear that Uncle Charles is married, we hope he has got a good wife and wish him mutch happiness. we ware no less supprised when we heard that Aunt Sarah was married. I would like to see her but I donot know when I shall. I hope she will live a hapy life. Mary Thayer is here to day. she is living to Mr. Colenss in Kinsman. Aunt Sarah would know where, she sends her love to you. Father has ben to Iowa since he come from Ind. he started the 20th of Mar and returned the 2nd inst. I believe he liked as well as he expected. whether we go there or not is uncertain. I believe I have no more news to write, give my love to all.

Yours with mutch respect
SS Nancy S. Thayer
Dear Sister Bulah

I have not much to write beyond what Nancy has writen. I think Iowa is as healthy a place as I have seen. it would not be strange if we should make it our home. Angeline and her family are living with us. We hope if we do find a good place in Iowa and settle there that you and all who love to follow in the ways of righteousness will come and settle around us. Angeline has just come into the room where I am writing and wants me to say that her children and mine make 18 in one family.

Yours SS D. C. Thaver"

Note: Charles, Sarah & Angeline are siblings. Mary Thayer is Charles Thayer Jr.'s daughter. Father is Charles Thayer Sr.

Obviously Daniel did not move his family to Iowa but bought a farm in Crawford County PA. We have a description of the farm and local environment in a letter from Nancy Sabra Thayer, Daniel's daughter, to her Aunt Beulah.

"Pine Township March 24th 1855 Dear Aunt

It is a cold stormy day and Father and Brother Franklin have gone to meeting.

The rest of us were sitting around the fire enjoying the company of our cousin Mary when I spoke of writing you. They all thought it would be best so I brought my pen, ink and paper to the table. We are all enjoying usual health. I will endever to describe to you our new home. Our farm is situated in the town of Pine and county of Crawford and state of Pa. It is 3/4 of a mile from a small vilage in which there is a one meeting house, lone schoolhouse, two sawmills, one grist mill, three stores and two shingle factories, one or two waggon wrights, one or two blacksmith shops, and a half dozen shoemakers. I nead not say that the inhabitants are generly industrious. But enough for that. I will now give you a description of the farm, there is from two to three hundred acres, the greater part of which is what is called "muck swamp" part of which is timbered with white maple and parts of it covered with elders. The house is situated on a hill. in front of it across the road is a cranberry marsh. beyond that is a tall fine woods. there is to be seen in every direction a few pines but the most of the timber has been cleared off leaving the land covered with stumps. We are very well suited here. We like the sciety as far as we have had an acquaintance verywell. I would like it if it had been convenient for us to have visited you last fall but it was not (?) We have heard that uncle Jonathan had visited Ohio but he did not visit us. We received a letter uncle Charles last week. he did not write anything special about the friends. I would like very much to hear from Aunt Clarissa and grandfather and especially Aunt Sarah. I wish you would ask her if she has forgotten me. I believe she has not answered my last letter. It was so long ago I have forgotten the date of it. I will close this my long diresome description. Please write to us as soon as you receive this.

From your niece
Nancy S. Thayer to Bulah C. Norton"

Sometime tragedy struck and medicine in the 1850s was crude and doctors were sparsely located in farming country. A letter from Daniel and Sophronia to the family in Indiana reported the death of their son William.

"Linesville Nov. 23, 1856 Dear Bulah I take pen in hand to inform you that William has gone to the land of spirits beyond our physical view but by faith we hope to see him again.

Continued

He died half past 12 o'clock yesterday morning, about two weeks ago he stabed his wrist accidentally which opened a blood vessel so as to bleed very fast. The blood was soon stoped however but we have since thought that probably he injured a considerable nerve which caused inaction of the bowels and their consequent inflamation.

Our health otherwise is as usual. Please write and tell how you got home and whether Father has returned to Bloomfield. Tell Joseph to write and all inquiring friends.

Daniel C. Thaver"

Sister Bulah - As Daniel has not given a very much of a description of William's sickness I will describe it more particular. As to the hurt on his wrist, he stuck a pen knife into it and cut a gash about one half inch long. he kept his hand still for a few days to keep it from bleeding and then was able to work. He did not complain of its being much sore. One week ago last Friday was the last day of school. At noon he had the nose bleed. He washed it a good while in cold water. When he went into the school his hand was numb that was hurt (it was his right hand) and he had quite a chill. The next morning he appeared well. Toward noon he complained of a pain in his right shoulder. it soon removed to his bowels and was very severe for a while. by means of warm applications he got easier. Sunday he was able to sit up some. Monday still better. Tuesday he set up all day. Wednesday he walked out door once or twice a few minutes at a time. I think perhaps he might have taken cold, he did not complain of feeling any worse untill Wednesday night. about 9 o'clock in the evening he was taken with extreme pain in the bowels and never had a minutes rest until he closed his eyes in death. We went to Newtime (Newfane?) for Dr. Wakefield at the water cur establishment but he did not get here until after he was dead. We called in the Doctors from the village but it was too late to do any good. I think he was past all cure when he was taken worse Wednesday night.

I wish you to forward this letter to Clarissa and the rest of the friends as soon as possible for we donot feel like writing another letter at present. Write to us as soon as possible.

Sophronia Thayer

We have got all the childrens likeness taken in pairs (?). William and Phades (??) was taken the day before school was out.

I send you a piece of his shroud, the thin is a piece of his neck handkerchief.

Note: William is Daniel & Sophronia (Bartlett) Thayer's son. Father is Charles Thayer Sr. Clarissa is Daniel's sister. Phades? is probably Pluna Thayer, Daniel's daughter, next in age to William.

A short note from Daniel in the late 1850s was in bad shape but it illustrates several points. First progress in a new rail line but Daniel adds to his enormous household with boarders. It appears that the family may be trying to preserve their father's independence by paying him for work done. Charles Thayer was born in 1782 so he is at least 70 and probably over 75 at the time of the note. Daniel's brother Joseph is indicated as experiencing Spiritualism which tends to validate another "family story."

"Linesville, Jan. 4th 185_.

Dear Sister Bulah

We are well. The workers are at work on the Railroad running past our door called the Pittsburgh and Erie.

We are boarding 8 or 10 of the workers and one foreman.

Tell (name unable to read) I received a request from him to send for Tiffanys monthly. I accordingly sent for it $5.00 for paper and 36 cts for postage. I should like to know whether he has _____ the paper. Tell him that we corded his ___ and I think their was from 50 to 55 cords. Sophronia says you may have the shall (shawl?) for 1.50. You may let Father have the money for chopping wood for us last fall.

Tell Joseph to write to us his experience to some extent concerning Spiritualism.

Please write all interesting items.

D. C. Thayer"

Note: Sophronia is Daniel's wife and Joseph, his brother. Father is Charles Thayer Sr.

During a lifetime, how do we learn what the ancestor was like. The most common way is the "family story." Sometimes though the "family story" is at odds with known facts. Before I became interested in family history my mother used to regale me with tales of various family members who died before I had the opportunity to know them. The story about Daniel Corbitt Thayer was that as many Thayers he was a "free thinker." One story was that on Sunday in Linesville, PA, he would stand in front of the Catholic church on the south end of town, in his stove pipe hat, black suit and tie with no shoes on, and pass out tracts criticizing the Catholic church. I had heard this story from a number of sources and tended to believe it. In the 1930s I had attended a number of family reunions in Crawford County at the home of Charles Franklin Thayer, son of Daniel, and there were definitely some characters. However when I began to research my family I found that many of the facts did not fit the stories.

First of all Daniel's apparent success as a farmer and a businessman did not fit the image of the story. Second, the photos of Daniel and Sophronia did not appear as people who would act as the story depicts.

I personally knew his son, Parker Marius Thayer, my great grandfather, who did not die until 1944. He was to my mind a very distinguished man and how could his father act so? How about obituaries? Granted, much of what is in obituaries is provided by survivors hut particularly in small communities such as Linesville PA, an editor would know the person involved. What does the obituary say?

The Linesville Herald of 30 Aug 1898 carried Daniel C. Thayer's obituary as follows:

"THE OLDEST RESIDENT

D.C. Thayer Dies at Age of 90 Years.

Saturday, August 27th, Daniel C. Thayer, ten days past the 90th year of his age, died at the home of his daughter, Mrs. George P. White, this place. He took severe cold a week ago which caused infiamation of the lungs which failed to afford him the breathing capacity of former years, owing to fatty growth. During his life he was sick once with fever and ague and experienced an accident culminating in a broken leg. Deceased was horn in Concord, Vermont, in 1808. His parents moved to Trumbull county, Ohio, in 1814 where he remained until 1854 when he bought the farm of 300 acres or more in Pine township on which he resided until he retired from arduous labor. While residing in Bloomfield township, O, he raised the first barn put up in that country without the use of liquor as a treat. He was an organizer of the Win. Lloyd Garrison abolition party which refrained from voting on the ground that in voting, by common consent one agreed to acquiesce in the will of the majority, thus believing that they would stultify themselves in exercising franchise, in case pro-slavery voters won an election. After Lincoln's Proclamation freeing the slaves was issued, Mr. Thayer voted for Lincoln. Afterwards he became a Greenbacker,

Continued

and in recent years an adherent of the People's party. He is survived by his wife who is 84 years of age and enjoying good health, and ten of thirteen children - Garrison C. of Chautauqua, N.Y.; Charles F., of Atlantic; Parker M. and Clark S. of Canton, O.; Solon C., of Newton Falls, O.; Mrs. Hart, of Roanoke, Va.; Mrs. G.P. White, of Linesville; Mrs. Brooks, of Kansas City; Mrs. Henry, of Battle Creek, Mich.; Mrs. Sarah Fonda, of California. Funeral was held yesterday, Rev. O.R. Washburn preaching sermon; interment in Linesville cemetery. The five sons and eldest grandson, Lewis, were the bearers."

Wait a minute - there are elements here that tend to support the fact that this man had STRONG beliefs and possibly could be the man of the "family story." He was against liquor in a time when it was common and prevalent. He was a strong willed abolitionist who even refrained from voting to protest. He was a Greenbacker and a member of the Peoples Party. We also find that he was extremely healthy when it is mentioned that in his life he was only sick once but did have an accident that broke a leg. Let's look further.

In a letter to his sister, Beulah, in 1855 Daniel again shows his very strong feelings for the abolition movement and his religious convictions. He is so incensed with the federal government that he urges his family not to vote at all as a protest. Here is a man who gives indications that the "family story" may indeed be justified.

"Linesville March 25, 1855
Dear Sister and Brother

I presume Nancy has told you of our health.

As you are persons who believe that scripture which says wo unto him that buildith his house by wrong and establish his chambers by oppression; I wish to call your attention to your connection with a proslavery church and government and especially the latter as I expect I can more easily convince you that the government supports slavery than the church does the same although I see them alike in this respect.

You have undoubtedly by this time become acquainted with the fact that this Nation has a law for the return of slaves who have escaped from their masters. this law is your law if you are voters under this government of majorities, if you as christians are opposed to oppression and can get a majority on your side you may seem doing well but if, on the contrary, you are found in the minority and the nation enacts a law giving aid and comfort to that vile system which the founders of the Methodists very justly called the sum of all villanies, then indeed are you found supporting a hideous immorality for this also is your law. Those who act in this government agree that the majority shall rule the minority.

You see that my sheet is full.
Yours respectfully D. C.

I feel I almost know my great great grandfather Daniel Corbitt Thayer. I think I can appreciate some of the concerns of his era and have a better understanding of the times by looking at the traces he left. He was a strong willed man with near radical beliefs. He was obviously successful in life but, by golly, the evidence is leaning towards belief of the "family story."

Thanks, Jerry, for a terrific story that gives us another insight to our ancestor's lives in their own words. What would we know of our ancestors without such letters being saved for so many years?

I had the pleasure of meeting Jerry and his wife Judy at the 1997 TEA Reunion and Annual meeting. Judy and Jerry made me feel right at home and provided all my transportation. With so many names flying around I must point out to my readers that this is the Judy and Jerry who have run our TFA T-shirt project for two years now, raising money for TEA. Also, Judy was kind enough to step in to fill the position of TFA Treasurer. Thanks to both of you!

Editor

THAYERITAGE 1998

Thayeritage, or Thayer Heritage, for 1998 will be headed up by Curtis Ross Thayer and his wife Donna. Thayeritage is a collection of all things related to our Thayer families both past and present. The 1997 display included many genealogical collections, pictures, objects, etc. One item I found particularly interesting was the hand made dulcimer that was made by Curtis's grandfather, Arthur Thayer.

Also on display were items for sale such as books by TFA Historian/Genealogist Patrica Thayer Muno, and TFA T-shirts.
I plan to lend Thayeritage a small wooden box used to mail eyeglasses years ago. This particular box was from optometrist F. L. Thayer, Oneonta, NY, my hometown.

If you have anything at all related to Thayer Heritage, please consider bringing it to the 1998 Thayer Families Association Reunion and Annual Meeting to be held in Braintree, MA in June of 1998. If you are not able to attend, but are willing to loan something to the display, please contact:

Curtis Ross Thayer
2900 Thayer Road
Freeland, MI 48623
E-mail:benji@bytethis.com

1998 DUES ARE NOW DUE

TFA dues for 1998 are now due. For only $15 you will continue to receive this newsletter and help support the publication of the comprehensive genealogy of Thayers in America. Can you send in a little more? If you send in more than the minimum $15, the additional money will go to our publication fund.

By paying now you will save TFA the expense of sending out a separate notice for dues. Please make your check payable to TFA and mail to:

TFA
P.O. Box 12
Braintree, MA 02185-0012

Walter Cronkite Receives Thayer Award

Retired newscaster Walter Leland Cronkite was the 40th person to be awarded the prestigious Sylvanus Thayer Medal this September at West Point Military Academy.

Mr. Crokite is in fine company with three former presidents who have received this award; Dwight D. Eisenhower, Ronald Reagan, and George Bush. (See TTQ Summer 1995 and 1997).

Rick Gunter, Editor, *The Daily News Leader* wrote:

"The newsman clearly did not need another award, but the Thayer honor, like the man whose name it bears and the man it honored Tuesday, is anything but ordinary. The West Point ceremony also reminds Americans that not all of our pathfinders wear uniforms. Some of them carry pencils ground to a sharp point to communicate the truth."

Materials submitted by Paul Goodwin Thayer, Staunton, VA.

David Manville Thayer

In a continuing effort to bring you information about those who are working so hard for the causes of TEA, I asked David Manville Thayer for a brief biography. Dave has been serving as a Director and headed up a very successful mailing campaign to recruit new members. I was very pleased finally meet Dave and his wife Lee at the 1997 TEA Annual Reunion. Dave and Lee ran our silent auction and participated in several business meetings. Here is Dave's story:

Here is a short biography of my 73 years. I was born in Cedar Rapids, Iowa 3/23/24 and for the most part attended public schools there. I carried papers for the money (with some help from my stepfather) and learned to fly in 1940 while still in school. Pearl Harbor found me in my senior year at high school and the following spring (1942) there would be little doubt that I would be going to service one way or another. That spring I took the Army Air Corps Aviation Cadet Program entrance exams and managed to pass. I was called in the fall and received my wings and brand new second lieutenant's gold bars August 30, 1943.

I was assigned to B-17s and after training my crew and I picked up a brand new B-17 at Kearney, Nebraska and flew it to Prestwick, Scotland via Manchester, New Hampshire and Gander Lake, New Foundland. I have a picture of the crew, taken for the Sunday paper in Manchester, NH on the way overseas.

I flew my first mission April 18, 1944. We flew out of England over Germany and occupied Europe. I was the first pilot, and the youngest one on the crew. We flew 28 missions with two of those to Berlin, one to the Kid Canal where the Germans were so desperate to defend the sub pens that the German fighters flew through their own anti-aircraft fire to get to us.

On a mission to Brux, Czechoslovakia I came back with the entire top of the bomb-bay missing. We lost many planes that day. On D-Day June 6,1944 my crew and I led the 45th wing and dropped our bombs on the German shore installations when the first Allied Landing Parties were 600 yards off shore. After the war, two things happened to me for which I will be ever thankful. Lee took a chance and became my bride July 10, 1949 and September 15, 1949, I was hired by Delta Airlines and flew a variety of

Front row: David Thayer, pilot, Cedar Rapids, IA, Ray Spencer, bombardier, Detroit, MI, Donald Kluth, co-pilot, Manitowok, WI, John Kotlarz, navigator, Syrscuse NY. **Second row:** DelRoy Perske, top gunner, St. Cloud, MN, Melvin Muth, right waist gunner, Sykesville, PA, Jack Clemmer, tail gunner, Roby, TX, Claude Rosson, radio operator, TX, Fred Mehan, left waist gunner, Niagra Falls, NY, Douglas Rice, ball turret gunner, Detroit, MI.

airliners from the DC-3 through 6 more airplanes to the Lockheed L-1011 for a total of 8. I stayed with Delta for almost 35 years to the mandatory retirement age of 60 and the marriage endures to this day. Lee and I have three children and five grandchildren. We are residents of Dundee, Illinois but spend as much time as possible at our lakeshore cottage in Northern Minnesota. My hobbies are: fishing, boating, swimming, snowmobiling, woodworking, radio-control model airplane building and flying, taking advantage of our airline pass privileges, and a brand new pursuit; snail-mailing TFA invitations to prospective members.

Thayer Family Reunion

By
J. Garland Thayer

On Sunday, August 10, 1997, the descendants of Thomas[10] Clifton Thayer (1900-1954), (Jamerson[9], James[8], Thompson[7], Baruch[6], Ebenezer[5], Uriah[4], Ebenezer[3], Ferdinando[2], Thomas[1]) and Lola Broyles Thayer, gathered for a first reunion at Mountain View United Methodist Church, Abingdon, VA. In attendance were 57 blood relatives, spouses, and friends, for a total of 84.

Thomas Clifton's children on hand were Hazel Thayer Orfield, Edward, Ellaree, Garland, Donald, and Kyle. Absent were James, and William. William has been bedfast from arthritis for many years.

Mountain View United Methodist Church, were the family met, was built with lumber donated by Clifton's father, Jamerson Thayer, who also supervised the church's construction in 1881. A story of that time says that one day while Jamerson was working at the church building a man came riding in, his horse wet with sweat, to get Jamerson to go settle a dispute between two neighbors who were arguing with guns in hand. Jamerson went with the man and arbitrated, then brought both men hack to the church to help him work. Thereafter the two enemies became very good friends. Since Jamerson's death in 1916, his descendants have provided many leadership roles in the church. Donald[11] Thayer, son of Clifton, is its present Pastor.

Jamerson, the founding father of the church, was a son of James--the most notable of the Abingdon Thayers. James descended from Thompson who came to Abingdon from Braintree by way of Vermont and New York sometime in the mid 1820's. James was the fifth child of Thompson and was born 5 SEP 1827. He was a farmer and married Mary Ann Grubb (1824-1904).

On August 27, 1872, James bought land from David F. Shupe and his wife, Levicey Permelia Shupe. For forty-nine and one-half acres, James paid $400 down on a $1200 sale. The land was located along present day Walden Road, about two Continued page 16

A Visit to Thornbury England

By
Clint and Connie Thayer

Our curiosity was sparked in June 1995 when we read Anne Salway's statement that, "Thornbury lands were granted to the Thayer family in 1325 and that the documentation to back this is held by the Gloucester Records Office", in our copy of *The Thayer-Tayer-Theyer Families of Gloucestershire, England 1500-1660* by Patricia Thayer Muno. In July 1995, we wrote to the Gloucestershire County Record Office, Clarence Row, Alvin Street, Gloucester, GL 1 3DW asking about documentation of a land grant to the Thayer family in the Records of the Manor of Thornbury in 1325.

We received a very prompt and specific response to our inquiry from Mr. P. R. Evans, Archivist (Searchroom). Mr. Evans wrote that, "there are no sources held here to connect the Thayer name with Thornbury before the state of the registers of that parish in 1550. Thus I cannot answer your inquiry about a possible land grant in 1325, but I do recommend that it would be worth contacting the Staffordshire Record Office. Records of Manor of Thornbury covering the 14th-16th Centuries are held amongst the Howard family papers there (their refs. D641/1/2, 1/4E and 1/4C), and these may include a record of this grant."

We visited the Staffordshire Record Office on June 17th, 1997 and asked for the Howard family papers using the reference numbers provided by Mr. Evans. We found that the land records of the Manor of Thornbury were located in the Stafford papers. We were presented with rolls of yellowed records, issued gloves required for touching the precious ancient documents, magnifying glasses to help us see the faded handwriting, and leaded weights to hold the scrolls flat while we read. The earliest records available were dated 1329 and included documents, which appeared to be records of the annual meetings at which the customs were rendered to the Lord of Thornbury Manor. We could only speculate about their contents because neither of us had the necessary paleographic skills to decipher the manuscripts which were written in the old hand and language of 14th century England.

For those who may wish to examine these documents they are held at the Staffordshire Record Office, Eastgate Street, Stafford, ST16 2LZ, Tel. (01785) 278-373, using the reference numbers as given above.

Another interesting thing we came across in Aberystwyth, Wales (say that fast three times, or even once!) was a snack bar on the boardwalk selling "Thayer's Ice Cream." Since we were under the impression that the Thayer name was virtually extinct in that part of the country, we investigated further and got the address of Thayer's Dairy Ice Creamery in Cardiff, Wales.

A couple of days later, right outside the Roman Baths and the Abbey at Bath on the plaza, we came across David Thayer's Ice Cream Shop selling Thayer's Ice Cream. I didn't think until later that David Thayer might be different from Thayer's Ice Cream.

When we got home I wrote a letter to the Dairy and asked it be passed on to anyone by the name of Thayer. A few days later (actually on the Sunday that Princess Diana died) I got a phone call from Cecil Thayer in Cardiff. I think that is his first name - I was a little taken aback by the call and the accent was a little hard to decipher even after spending two weeks there. He was the founder of the company and sold out a few years ago. He is eighty-two or three and has a wife under care for Alzheimer's. He made the point that he does laundry and maintains a nice home in Cardiff. He also made the point that he did well with the company, at one time having two Rolls Royces; now reduced to only one Mercedes. He assured me he was writing a letter to me. I don't know if he understood that I was looking for genealogical information, so we may have to get back and forth a little.

I asked about David Thayer. David is his son who bought up five of the shops, including the one in Bath.

Clint and Connie Thayer
10 Quinley Way
Waterford, CT 06385-4 128
E-mail: ClntThayer~aol.com

Thanks to Clint and Connie for report on their trip to Thornbury. Clint was kind enough to stand up and address members at TEA's 1997 Reunion on subject of this trip.

Thayer Family Reunion

(continued from page 15)

miles northeast of Abingdon. According to tradition, James permitted a brother, Bob Thayer, to live on the property in his own log house. Behind James' house at the base of a wooded hill was a distillery which had belonged to David Shupe's son, and it became a source of contention between him and Bob Thayer. Shortly after the land was purchased, Bob Thayer discovered Shupe attempting to dismantle the "still," claiming that it did not go with the property. The next day Shupe came to Bob Thayer's cabin with a gun and threatened to kill him. In self-defense, Bob killed Shupe. Shupe was buried on top of the hill above the distillery. According to Lucina Hardy, a daughter- in-law of Betsey Ann Thayer (James' daughter), the tombstone could still be seen in 1925.

From the time he was forty-five until his death, James farmed this land, and after his death the property came into the hands of his son, Andrew Jackson "Jake" Thayer."

To James and Mary Ann Thayer were born ten children: David Alexander (1849-1917), who married Florence Virginia Minnick (1851-1910); Thomas Jamerson Thayer (1851-1916) who first married Aura "Ora" Byrd Trigg, who died without children, then married Margaret Myrtle Smith (1877-1953); Catherine H. Thayer (1853-1865); Elizabeth "Betsy" Ann Thayer (1853-1936), who married Moses Carr hardy (1852-1915); Thompson McConnell Thayer (1855-~~1931~~1933)-a twin, who married ~~Nannie Cole Mullins (1866-1925)~~ Sarah (Sally) Owen Boyd (1855-1912); Andrew Jackson Thayer (1855-1925)-a twin, who married Nannie Cole Mullins (1866-1925); Amanda Jane Thayer (1861-1924) who married George Harris (b. 1882); Jacob Grubb Thayer (1864-1934) who married Annie Eleanor Hayter (1869-1943); Mary Eliza Thayer (1868-191)2) who married Noah W. Wimmer; and James Abner Thayer (1870-1947) who married Elizabeth Thompson Hayter (1871-1953), a sister of Jacob's wife.

Except for David Alexander, Betsey Ann, and Amanda Jane, all spent their lives in Washington County, Virginia, near Abingdon, where a great many descendants still live.

Another reunion, to include all Thompson and James Thayer descendants, is in the making for 1999 or 2000.

J. Garland Thayer
164 Taylor Mill Road
Limestone, TN 37681

Thanks Garland, for the news of your family's reunion.

Anyone holding a Thayer related family reunion is welcome to write me with your announcement or summary. Write the Editor at the address on the last page.

EDITORIAL

By
Richard A. Thayer

Few of us would doubt the value of the written word. We can see from the articles in this issue that much of what we know about our ancestors is preserved in the written word; letters. We also value oral history, but somehow it is not the same. To hold a piece of paper that our ancestor held, to see the characters formed by his own hand, to read between the lines and feel his pain and joy!

I lament the loss of this art-form, the letter. Yes, I too am guilty. I was taught cursive in grade-school but use it only to sign my name. And writing a letter? Only an occasional thank you note. I have written longer letters when angry, or thankful. I recall writing both of my pastors last Christmas with a long list for each of them of the things they had said and done that helped mc and my family over the last year. Such letters are written so infrequently that they make quite an impression today.

Many of us have been seduced by technology. No, not *just* computers in the 1990's. One could argue the seduction began with the telegraph, quickly followed by the telephone. I don't know what your family custom is, but in my family we all call home on Sunday afternoons. We share all our news by voice and no notes are taken, no record for our future generations.

And then the latest seduction; the personal computer and electronic mail (email). A marvelous machine, the computer. I love technology and I am a computer junkie. Any letter I write now is "word processed" on a computer that not only checks my spelling, but can also question my grammar! I print the finished product on a laser printer, including the envelope, with bar-coded zipcode. I will admit that this is at least written down, and I do sign my name at the bottom. I suppose someone could save such a letter, however impersonal.

And now the greatest evil; e-mail. Email allows a person to write a message on a computer terminal and transmit it almost instantly to anyone, anywhere in the world. The sender and addressee do not even have to own their own computer, only have an e-mail address. You're nobody without an e-mail address, don't you know?

Many of your TFA Directors and Officers have e-mail and use it to great advantage to conduct TFA business. I have commented in the past that I do not have to maintain a mailing list. Paul Goodwin Thayer maintains your mailing list and transmits it to me via e-mail just before each issue of the newsletter is mailed.

E-mail and the Internet is a fantastic tool for doing research. You can search databases all the world over. You can write and answer queries stored on electronic bulletin boards that can have general subjects, sir-names, or locality subjects as specific as Otsego County, NY. So what's my beef? E-mail is often too immediate for our own good. We can receive a message while on-line working on our computer and reply to it immediately. But wait, that's a good thing isn't it? Well, no, not always. We don't bother to print the message out on paper (notice I said message and not letter). We reply with a knee-jerk reaction. We do not take the time to savor the message. We do not sleep on it before we reply. How many of you have written a letter, put it in an envelope with a stamp, and set it on the table to mail the next day? And then, how many of you have woken up the next morning and destroyed that letter, or at least re-written it? I have done it more than once. With e-mail you loose that chance to "sleep on it."

Further, it is very easy to forward an email message on to persons that it was not addressed to. With only a few keystrokes you can pass on what was thought to be a private communication, to someone it was not intended for. True, you could photocopy a letter and mail it on to someone else, but somehow this just doesn't happen as often as with e-mail. Is this bad? No, not in and of itself, unless it is used in a hurtful manner.

Now what about a written record? Many of us that use e-mail do not print out a paper, or "hard" copy, of a message. If we are lazy we may allow messages to build up on our hard drive, but most often they are deleted. No written record. Yes, computers can be used to store information on a more permanent media than paper, such as CD-ROMs, those shiny plastic disks that have replaced the vinyl records in the music industry. But how many of us do that? No one that I know of.

So where is this sermon leading to? Write a letter! Write a book! Keep a journal that you can pass down to a child! Write an article for this newsletter! No, it does not have to be on paper, written in cursive. But invest some time in your correspondence. Write something you would be proud to have your granddaughter own and cherish. Have the courage to share your feelings. We take a risk when we do this. We risk being ridiculed, laughed at, and hurt. Take the chance! The reward can be far greater than the risk.

I now know something personal about John Alden Thayer. I can visualize him taking 'gravities on submarine batteries, as I did many times. I now know something of the religion and politics of Daniel Corbitt Thayer. Some may be offended by views on politics and religion. I am sure Daniel did not intend for me to read his letters. John and Daniel had no idea their letters would be read by so many! But think of it. What would we know of them, or any of our ancestors, without the written word?

And now the greater challenge. I may have prompted you to write a letter to a family member. I may have planted the seed of an idea for an article for this newsletter. But there is much more that we must do with the written word. We must record our genealogy and biography for our descendants. TFA Genealogist Patricia Thayer Muno is currently formatting her next book. This one will be the first in the series of our comprehensive genealogy of the Thayer family. If you have not sent Patricia your genealogy up to the current generation, shame on you! You are missing the chance of a lifetime to record your family in a document that we hope will last for hundreds of years.

Writing does not come easily for me. I struggle with each sentence. My training is in technical areas and all my communications are short, direct, and to the point. But I write. I do not write the best articles that appear in this newsletter. The best articles are written by you, about your own ancestors, and about where and how they lived. No attempt is made to correct spelling, punctuation, or grammar of letters appearing in this newsletter. Neither would I wish to censor the political and religious opinions of our ancestors. Did they worry about political correctness of their opinions? No! They spoke out against political oppression by the king of England and his governors. They left their homes seeking religious freedom. They gave their lives for these freedoms! What would they think of this generation, sitting idly by, wringing their hands, worrying about who they might offend with their written words? Editor

Pages 17 and 18 are T-Shirt and Patch order forms and have been removed from this electronic copy. END.