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Joel Thayer

By John Howard Thayer and Tricia Muno

The following article about Joel Thayer is a product of collaboration. While I am the writer, other major information contributors are Tricia Muno, Thayer Family Historian, Pat Blackler, Village Historian, Skaneateles Historical Society, and historical writer and author Kihm Winship. Kihm's 2004 article on Joel Thayer article will be re-printed here in its entirety with the author's permission.

According to my father, The Thayer Park in Skaneateles, N.Y. was alleged to be named after one of our Thayer relatives. A few years ago, I contacted Thayer Family Historian, Tricia Muno, to determine the validity of my father's claim. The truth of the matter turned out to be something like, "Yes, you are related, but not so much!" The alleged relative, Joel Thayer, turned out to be a third cousin, four generations removed. This was enough though to pique my interest, and I began researching Joel Thayer. My research was put on a back burner for some reason for a couple of years. I picked the task up a second time in January of 2009. I contacted Tricia for some information and found that she was in the process of researching Joel Thayer as well. We decided to combine our notes and other materials, and I assumed the task of putting the materials together. As Family Historian, Tricia has many other "Thayer Family" tasks to work on as well.

Our story begins before the Skaneateles days. According to the NY Wayne County History "Early Settlers, Amos, Amasa and Levi Thayer removed from Rhode Island and located on the ridge in the west part of the town, but they soon went to Palmyra and engaged in merchandising." (1) www.rootsweb.com/~nywayne/ontario/cowlesontario.html

In the Federal Census 1810 - Ontario County Residents of What Would Be Ontario, NY, both Levi and Amasa Thayer's names were recorded. www.rootsweb.com/nywayne~/census/1810ontcensus.html

Amasa and Levi Thayer were the sons of Corporal Levi Thayer, a 1775 Mendon, MA Revolutionary soldier. (Thomas 1, Ferdinando 2, Isaac 3, Ensign Samuel 4, Levi 5, Amasa 6, and Joel 7.) Amos is believed to be the son of Samuel, b.18 Jun 1721 (Thomas 1, Ferdinando 2, Thomas 3, Samuel 4, Samuel 5, and Amos 6.)

Joel Thayer was the son of Amasa and Sally Trowbridge, and, according to Thayer Families Association records, was born on 18 July 1813 in Palmyra, NY. There is a bit of a question mark regarding the DOB because other Skaneateles, NY sources list the year he was born as 1812, not 1813. Joel's history is further skewed by the following recent discovery: In a document entitled, "Military Commissions of Early 19th Century Ontario County", we find the following: *Joel Thayer Captain 05/07/1811.* Very interesting indeed because the date was one or two years before Joel was born. This second Joel Thayer does not show up in any other Ontario, Wayne, or Monroe County records of that time. http:raims.com/milcom.html

Joel's parents, Amasa and Sally, are buried in the Palmyra Village Cemetery, Wayne County. The stones read; Thayer, Amasa, Aug 28, 1821, 45y, and Thayer, Sally, Wife of Amasa, May 4, 1833, 47y.
http://www.rootsweb.com~nywayne/cemeteries/palmyup7.html

Joel was seemingly involved in local Palmyra politics at an early age. The Palmyra Village was incorporated March 29, 1827, while the first village election was held at the house of Lovell Hurd, February 4, 1828, when the following officers were elected:

Trustees, Joseph Colt, president, *Joel Thayer,* Thomas Rogers, Nathaniel H. Beckwith and James White. (2)

If Joel was born in 1813, he would have been fifteen years of age at the time of the Trustee's election.
http://www.rootsweb.com/~nywayne/history/palpresb.html

Joel Thayer's history continued after his arrival in the Village of Skaneateles, NY in 1835. It should be noted that the Joel's future father-in-law, John Legg, was also the employer of artist Sanford Thayer, who had been painting sleighs for Legg.

Joel Thayer
By Kihm Winship

Joel Thayer was the picture of industry. He arrived in the Village in 1835 to clerk for John Legg in his carriage works, and within months married his employer's daughter, Juliette. To Legg's business interests Thayer married his business acumen, and made both of them wealthy. At various times, they owned a distillery, a farm, a saw mill, a paper mill and the flouring mill in the Village. Thayer served as Postmaster, President of the Board of Trustees of the Village, founder and President of the Bank of Skaneateles, and founder and President of the Skaneateles Railroad Company. In Syracuse, he was president of the Trust and Deposit Company, vice-president of Syracuse Chilled Plow and the Central City Railroad Companies, and a director of the American Steamboat Company that ran boats on Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River.

A civic-spirited man, Thayer was also a founder of the Skaneateles Library Association and president of the Lake View Cemetery Association, to which he provided a great service. In 1878, after the suicide of Charles Pardee, a villain straight out of Dickens, Thayer bought the Evergreen Cemetery lands that Pardee had hoarded, accepted the adjacent Lake View lands gratis from the cemetery trustees, and donated the combined properties to the Village the following day.

A good man, Thayer's monuments in the Village are many. His home at 77 E. Genesee Street was a showplace and still stands. Thayer acquired the house in 1862, adding a mansard roof and iron work, as well as an apiary, solarium and formal gardens. In the carriage house to the rear, iron grillwork separated the horses' stalls and hand-carved oak arches crowned them, each bearing the name of its equine resident. In 1866-68, across the street, Thayer built Legg Hall to honor his father-in-law. In 1874, he turned his attention to the shoreline next to Legg Hall, building a break wall and turning the land into a park, which he opened to the public. (His granddaughters, Eva and May Webb, formally deeded Thayer Park to the Village in 1922.)

To top it all, Joel Thayer had a sense of humor. Even the Village fussbudget, E.N. Leslie, was

moved to write, "His nature was genial and sunshiny." A neighbor, Elizabeth Barrow, recalled that on the half-landing of his stairs, Thayer had a pipe organ which he played in the morning to wake his household. Noted Ms. Barrow, "Many a time have I opened my eyes as the refrain of 'Old Black Joe' floated through my window."

(Note: It was years before I got the joke. "Old Black Joe" includes the line, "I'm a comin', I'm a comin', but my head is hanging low" -- an apt lyric for slow risers.)

Thayer died in 1881, less than a year after his wife's passing, and his last monument in Skaneateles was a real production number, paid for by his only child, Mrs. Mary Thayer Webb. The project started with the removal of the previous monuments on the Legg/Thayer plot in November of 1882, by Elias Fibben and William Cottle. The ensuing work was done by Francis & Duffy of Syracuse, quarry agents for the New England Granite Works at Hartford, Connecticut. James Goodwin Batterson was the founder of the New England Granite Works. His chief sculptor was Carl Conrads and his architect was George Keller. Batterson's quarry was in Westerly, Rhode Island, where he obtained hard, fine-grained granite.

In May of 1883, the new monument was in place. A low stone border surrounds the plot; the Legg Lions guard the steps. In the center of the plot, on a tall pedestal, stands a statue of a woman called "Memory" to crown Joel Thayer's last resting place. Although the piece is unsigned, it is most likely that the pedestal was designed by Keller and the statue designed and sculpted by Conrads.

The statue is easily the most prominent work of art in Lake View Cemetery, and, next to the tomb of Mary Norton Loney, it's most significant. It's also one of the most affecting memorials. A reporter for the Syracuse Evening Herald wrote, "Surmounting the whole is a beautiful granite statue of 'Memory' facing the east and overlooking the village and homestead as though loving to dwell upon the past with all its joys, triumphs and pleasures and lingering even upon its sorrows."

I invite you to visit, look up to the face of Memory, and honor a gentleman who made money and friends in the same lifetime.

Sources: The Skaneateles Free Press, November 4, 1882, and May 12, 1883. The Historic Homes and Buildings of Skaneateles, Paul K. Williams, 1994. Industries Around the Old Mill Pond, Helen Ionta, 1993. Pioneers and Prominent Citizens of Skaneateles, Barbara Spain & Karen Anklin, 1988. Skaneateles: History of Its Earliest Settlement and Reminiscences of Later Times, Edmund Norman Leslie, 1902. "History of the Town of Skaneateles" from Onondaga's Centennial, Dwight Bruce, 1896. The Web site of the Connecticut Historical Society (content based on David Ransom's "Civil War Monuments") and the Web site of Cedar Hill Cemetery. Lake View Cemetery photos by Kihm Winship; scans by Jon "Johnny Scantastic" Cammarata.

Faithful Readers

Note: This article was re-printed with the full approval of the author, Kihm Winship.

Additional materials about Joel Thayer and his family have been graciously supplied to us by Pat Blackler, Village Historian, Skaneateles Historical Society. I will try not to be redundant in what follows with no strict guarantee that nothing will be repeated.

Some excerpts from an extensive obituary from an early Skaneateles newspaper of May 1881 are:

"The citizens of our village were greatly surprised Thursday morning to learn of the death of Joel Thayer (19 May 1881), one of the most prominent residents of Skaneateles. Mr. Thayer has not enjoyed really good health since the death of his wife the 4th of December last, and while in New York about two weeks ago, he was suddenly taken seriously ill, and was brought to his home in this village, arriving here on Thursday, May 5th. He was attended by Dr. Boyce

of Auburn, who found his patient suffering from general prostration, and he steadily continued to grow weaker until Thursday morning last, expiring at 5 o'clock."

"Mr. Thayer was a continuous resident of Skaneateles for over forth-six years and his residence was one of the most beautiful in our village. He was a man of regular, methodical habits, a good citizen, and while professing no positive religious creed, was tolerant in respect to the opinion of others. In politics he was a Democrat, not so strict however, but he often voted for the candidates of the opposite party he deemed more worthy.

Mr. Thayer leaves only one child, a daughter, the wife of Henry T. Webb. **He also leaves a brother, *Lyman T. Thayer* of Toledo, Ohio, and a sister, Mrs. Klugman of Paterson, NJ.**

To his family he leaves a large fortune, the result of many years of successful business life and fortunate investments. In common with all men he has his favorable and unfavorable traits of character, which can be best understood by those among whom he daily walked, lived and died."

Note: This was the first mention of Joel's siblings. Lyman Thayer's name does appear
In the "**BURNED-OVER DISTRICT, "NY** 1820 FEDERAL CENSUS INDEX.
http://olivercowdery.com/census/1820_T.htm
A records search found Lyman T. Thayer's name listed under the category of "Pioneer", in the document , HISTORY OF TOLEDO AND LUCAS COUNTY (Ohio), as well as local businessman who was involved in the hotel business. Of interest is the fact that three "Trowbridges" are listed as pioneers on the same list, Trowbidge being Lyman's mother's maiden name.
www.heritagepursuit.com/Lucas/LucalsAnnalsChap II-818.htm **and**
www.heritagepursuit.com/Lucas/LucalsAnnalsChap III-699.htm

Joel and Juliette Thayer's surviving daughter, Mary, was married to Henry Tiffany Webb (1829-1909) of Mexico, New York, in 1855. Henry Webb had worked as his deceased father-in-law's bookkeeper at the Stone Mill and as cashier at the Bank of Skaneateles.; he developed business interests of his own in Skaneateles, Syracuse and New York City.
http://kihm3.wordpress.com/2008/02/05/generations-of-generosity/

The Thayer Home photo courtesy of Pat Blackler,
Village Historian, Skaneateles Historical Society

Lorna Thayer Revisited

By G. David Thayer

Patricia's article on Lorna Thayer (Winter 2008 TQ, Vo. 17, #4) was most interesting. I wonder, however, how many readers of the TQ know exactly where her scene with Jack Nicholson in "Five Easy Pieces" was shot. The location was a Denny's Restaurant at 3652 Glenwood Road in Eugene, Oregon. Here is how I discovered that fact.

In July 1999 my wife and I were returning from my sister's wedding in Marin County, California, to our home in Salem, Oregon, by way of Interstate Highway 5. While passing through Eugene around mid-day, we spotted a Denny's Restaurant close to I-5 and stopped there for lunch. Our waitress was rather chatty and when we remarked that the restaurant somehow looked familiar even though we had never been there before, she informed us that this Denny's was the place where that famous scene was shot

on location. She even pointed out the table where the scene took place.

TQ readers can discern I-5 where it passes by the restaurant in the picture included with Patricia's article. The highway enters the picture on the right, about halfway from the woman's head to the top of the picture, and runs away from the camera (northbound) and under a bridge that can be seen in the background. The bridge carries Glenwood Boulevard (not Road) over I-5 from left to right.

Our waitress was not "putting us on," as every detail in the movie scene agrees with the location of the restaurant where we had lunch that day. Indeed, in the film heavy traffic can be seen traveling in both directions along I-5 while Nicholson is attempting to get his side order of toast. TQ readers may want to check this for themselves using Google Earth or one of the map services (MapQuest, Google Maps, etc.).

As Paul Harvey is fond of saying, now you know the rest of the story. *(Editor's note: Paul Harvey passed away in March 2009*)

Nattie's Story

By Marcia Thayer McGhee

This is the life story of Robert Nathaniel Thayer, Sr.; b. Nov. 20, 1907, in Charleston, So. Carolina.

Robert was the youngest of 13 children, born to William Lawrence Thayer of Charleston, SC. At age 20, William was already a skilled carpenter, and married to Theresa Jones of Charleston. They were a young couple who were happy and family growing steadily. They had 5 children, Willie Francis, Christopher Alonzo, Eloise Amanda, Wilhelmenia Lillian, and Ruth Genevia. Mother Theresa became very ill during her last pregnancy and baby Ruth was sickly as an infant and died at 4 months old. Theresa never fully recovered and died 4 years later at the age of 35.

Sometime later, William married Margaret Jones, Theresa's younger sister. They had 8 children, Julian Francis, John, Leonard, Mary Ella, Helen Genevia, Harold, Lillian Ruth and Robert Nathaniel (Nattie). It may prove important to note the 25 to 27 year difference in age between Nattie and his oldest siblings, Willie and Christopher Alonzo.

Nattie grew up knowing well his half-sisters, Wilhelmenia and Eloise, brother Julian, sisters Mary Ella and Helen and his brother Harold who was 4 years older. He attended the Burke Elementary School and the well-known Avery Normal Institute (later to become the Avery Institute of Afro-American History and Culture). In 1983, I had occasion to meet and talk with Ms. Mouzon, one of Nattie's teachers at Burke School. She readily remembered the name and the boy, saying "oh yes, Nattie was a very mischievous little boy, but basically good and well-behaved". My dad remembered Ms. Mouzon, the teacher who was "attractive and very prim and there was no playing around in her class."

My dad often recalled his young days in Charleston, being on the neighborhood baseball team as the catcher, with his dad always present watching his son help win the game! Nattie and his brother Harry played together and often "got into trouble" together too. They started working when they were ten or eleven years old, running errands for neighbors, (when older, they sometimes made deliveries for the grocery store or the pharmacist) Nattie had another special job, "Papa, the carpenter, made me a really nice wagon and I used it to deliver jugs of water from the artesian well near King and Calhoun St., to some of the older ladies who would give me a nickel or dime to bring them some of the Good Water." When at Avery Institute, Nattie maintained a paper route before school and sometimes deliveries after school. Mostly, he bought his own shoes and his school supplies. He was able to save a little money and help with his train fare to attend Hampton Institute (now Hampton University) in Virginia.

As you might expect, Nattie applied to enter the Hampton Trade School Department of Carpentry, with Plumbing as his second choice. But to his

dismay, both departments were full. He was advised to take the Horticulture classes and then at next term try again for the Carpentry Department. He said he really tried hard, but this just was not his interest, nor his ability! Until the day Daddy died, if you wanted to hear a quick "no thank you", invite him to go to the country and help plant some flowers and vegetables. By the end of the first semester in Horticulture, Nattie was ready to go home. He didn't have much money at school, only a few friends, didn't like his classes, or the food, and really missed his mother's cooking! By the way, by this time he is answering to his name of Robert (maybe a little more grown up than Nattie).

During the years Robert was at Avery and at Hampton, the economic conditions were deteriorating every month. This was during the mid to late 1920's. Where Papa had been able to provide fairly well for his large family, now even with only Robert and Helen at home he was hardly able to make ends meet. Some time earlier Alonzo had graduated from Fiske University and was now married and living in Pittsburgh, PA, working with the Urban League. Leonard had served in WWI and had been honorably discharged, was married and living in NY. Wilhelmenia had married Millard Eaton, a young businessman from Alabama and they relocated to Chicago, IL. Brother Julian Francis had found his way to Jacksonville, FL where he met and married Susie Witsell. Mary Ella married Nicholas Browne and they lived on Sullivan's Island, SC. Eloise had married Harry Rollerson of Charleston, SC, and their family lived on Sumter St. in Charleston. The old house is still there. By 1924 Robert's brother Harry was living with their sister Wilhelmenia and family in Chicago. Thus starts a whole new life for young Robert Nathaniel Thayer. He soon followed his brother Harry and moved to Chicago, of course staying with sister Wilhelmenia and her family of two teenage sons, a younger daughter and now her brothers Harry and Robert!

In 1925 Millard Eaton opened a Shoe Shine and Shoe Repair service at Union Station, the Railroad Depot in downtown Chicago. His teenage sons, Millard, Jr. and Robert Earl worked at the shoe shine concession. This family business has expanded, still owned and operated by family, with concessions including other aspects of Men's Haberdashery, at the Columbus Plaza Hotel Complex, five shoe stands throughout O'Hare Airport and three concessions in Midway Airport.

Brother Harry Thayer was working as a skilled carpenter at the Pullman Railroad Car Company located on the far South Side of Chicago. He had a good job and a girl friend and they were planning to get married.

Alonzo Thayer was transferred from the Pittsburgh Urban League Office to be Director of Unemployment Department of the Chicago Branch of the Urban League. His wife and children would settle and do well in Chicago.

On the other hand, Robert had come to Chicago, only to find that there were very few new jobs available. Finally, he found a job at a Standard Oil Gas Station. He envisioned that he would soon be able to get out on his own and not be dependent on his sister and brother. He worked hard and after several months, he felt confident to look for an apartment. He had worked and saved and was ready to move, when suddenly he was laid off. There were no new prospects. After a few weeks Robert conceded and returned to Charleston to regroup.

In October 1929, tragedy struck the Thayer family. Harry was killed in a head-on auto accident. He had been thrown from the "rumble" seat of the old Ford car as he and co-workers were on their way from work to a Bears football game. The driver and other passengers were not seriously injured. He left a widow, Naomi, and a baby daughter named Marcia.

Robert immediately returned to Chicago, representing his parents and other family in Charleston, and to help take care of Harry's funeral services and his young family. Robert asked Naomi if she and baby Marcia would return to Charleston with him. His mother and father

and rest of the family were anxious to meet Harry's family. After all, she was a Thayer, too. She agreed and went to Charleston with Robert. They stayed at Papa Thayer and Gran'ma's house. They stayed for several months and there developed a very close bond between Naomi and her in-laws. After a while, there was also a strong bond and relationship developing between Naomi and Robert. When telling their story they have both said "it was fate or destiny that brought them together. They were married in Charleston, SC, but ultimately returned to Chicago to build their future together. Naomi's mother was still living in Chicago and there was no denying that Robert really liked the big city and felt he could find work and support his family there.

Now, in the 1930's, times were hard everywhere. Robert worked a few odd jobs and finally at a low point he decided to go back to the Standard Oil Company. The receptionist did not hesitate to say there were no jobs available. Daddy told me that he didn't know what happened to him, "persistence, stubbornness or desperation, but I just calmly told her that I would have to just sit there and wait for a job to come in. I only have enough money for streetcar fare to a job and then home. I cannot go home without a job." He said he sat there for more than 30 minutes before the lady told him that a job had come in but it was on the far North Side. Daddy said far or near was not important.

The gas station Robert was assigned to was indeed on the far North Side, but it also was a station frequented by professionals and businessmen from downtown and the north suburbs. The hiring practice at the time was the white service attendants would take care of filling the gas tank, washing windshields and other outside care of customer and car. For the most part, the black service men worked in repairs, change of oil and "under the car". This meant the blacks earned a straight salary from the company, the whites earned a salary plus "tips" from the customer. Robert was a good worker and usually a pretty jolly and friendly person. Mr. Gavin was a regular customer, who on occasion had conversation with Robert about his car. He took a liking to Robert Thayer and one day asked him if he would be interested in a real long-lasting job. Of course he would.

Mr. Gavin encouraged Robert to consider learning about working in the boiler room or heating department of one of the new Chicago Housing Authority's subsidized housing projects. He gave Robert material to study for a test and an application for the Stationery Fireman and Engineer's Union. Robert and Naomi studied hard (she was an excellent tutor and study partner). Robert made the grade, joined the union and soon started a new job as Fireman at the Ida B. Wells Housing Project. He was head of the family, a wife and 4 children, Marcia, Audrey, Shirley and Robert Jr. and he was the provider. He had a strong work ethic and mantra that he passed on to his children and any family who would listen: "Whatever your job, do it to the very best of your ability and by all means with a pleasant attitude!"

Now that Robert had a stable job and a decent income, things in general were good for him and his family. The War was over and there were a lot of social changes going on in the world. The children were growing up and doing well, but the family of 13 Thayers was dwindling. Robert's brother Julian died in 1934 in FL, Alonzo died in 1936 in Chicago, Leonard died in NY in 1930, Papa Thayer died in Charleston in 1940. After Papa's death, Gran'ma Thayer wanted to be closer to her son and family and came to live with us in Chicago. She died at "home" in 1946. Mary Ella died in 1948 in Portsmouth, VA where she had lived with her son. Wilhelmenia died in Chicago, IL, in 1953. Now there was only Robert and sister Eloise, who died much later in 1975.

The 1950's and 60's seem to go by fast. The children were all grown and married and Robert and Naomi had 9 grandchildren. There were a lot of family gatherings, birthdays, anniversaries, graduations, recitals, sports activities and of course, the Holidays. Robert enjoyed every minute of it. He had been promoted to Chief Engineer at one of the newer housing projects

and did well. By this time, he had several aliases: in addition to Nattie and Robert, there were Daddy, Honey, Gran'pa, Pom Pom, Pops and Chief! Robert and Naomi were very active members of the Woodlawn A.M.E Church and later at the historic Quinn Chapel A.M.E. then closer to where they lived.

By 1970, Robert was thinking about retiring from The Housing Authority. He and Naomi had plans and were looking forward to going back to Charleston for a "real visit". In 1971 Naomi became very ill and could not make that trip. She insisted "Honey" and their daughter Audrey make the trip to Charleston anyway.

What a great time Robert and Audrey had meeting up with family and old friends and places Daddy remembered from his young days. This trip stirred up a desire to re-connect with all of the family across the country and have a reunion in Charleston in 1972. Naomi and Robert started with the letters and phone calls and plans were set for July 1972 in Charleston.

Naomi did not get to make the trip back to Charleston. She died in January 1972, 7 months before the Reunion and 11 months before Robert's retirement. After 33 years of service with The Chicago Housing Authority and membership in the Engineer's Union, Robert was honored at a Grand Retirement Dinner. As great as the occasion was, there was a void without Naomi.

Robert became extremely diligent about keeping up with family, something Naomi had started years ago. Our first Family Reunion was held in Charleston, SC, in July 1972. We came from everywhere and we have been going strong ever since, meeting every 2 years. Robert never missed a Reunion.

In 1997, Robert, along with daughter, Marcia McGhee, granddaughter Anna Siler, niece Theresa Tait, and nephews William and Matthew Thayer attended the Thayer Families Association Meeting in Braintree, MA. He was the oldest Thayer in attendance and TFA honored him with a TFA watch. Robert was one proud Thayer!

Robert Nathaniel Thayer, Sr. died May 5, 1999 in Chicago, IL. He is remembered with much love at every family reunion. Robert used to look around at our family reunions and say to us, "You are just beautiful" and we reply "and you are beautiful, too".

Oliver Thayer, Revolutionary Soldier

By H. Jerry Thayer, Assistant Genealogist

Recently I was reviewing the Revolutionary Pension record of Oliver Thayer and although he had no known descendants, his service is typical of the patriotic Thayers of his era, and I thought it would be of interest to our readers. Oliver had Revolutionary pension 24871 and following his death, his widow Deborah received Revolutionary widow's pension W22402.

Oliver Thayer was born 9 Jul 1758 in Mendon, Worcester County, MA [Vital Record], son of Peter5 Thayer [Thomas4, Thomas3, Ferdinando2, Thomas1] and Sarah Holbrook. Oliver Thayer married about 1780 Deborah Corrary, b. about 1759, daughter of Benjamin Corrary & Jerusha Thayer [Isaac3, Ferdinando2,Thomas1]. Oliver died about 6 Apr 1836 in Hampton, Washington County, NY. I do not know when his wife Deborah died but it was after January of 1844. I could not find her in the 1850 census.

Oliver Thayer served for 28 Months and 5 days as a private in the Revolutionary War, although on his pension document he was credited with only 21 months and 5 days.

Oliver Thayer's deposition was made before the Court of Common Pleas in Washington County New York in September 1832. He was a resident of the Town of Hampton in that County. He was applying for a pension authorized by the Act of Congress of 7 Jun 1832. His first enlistment of 8 months beginning in April 1775 was in the Company commanded by Captain William Aldridge in the Rhode Island Regiment

commanded by Colonel Hitchcock. He enlisted from Uxbridge, Massachusetts. He joined his Regiment in Smithfield, Rhode Island. They then marched to Jamaica Plains near Boston where they served for about two months. They then joined the forces of General Greene and marched to Prospect Hill, about a mile from Boston. He remained there until his term of service ended in December 1775 and he returned to his home in Uxbridge. During that first service he was in no large battle but his station was in full view of the Battle of Bunker Hill. He said the service could be verified by a man named Horton of Danby, Vermont and Gideon Thayer of Lima in Ontario County, New York, if they were alive. He had no documents attesting to his service.

On 6 Aug 1776 he took the place of Peter Thayer, his brother, and served another 4 months service with the Company commanded by Captain Woodbury in the Massachusetts Regiment commanded by Colonel Holman; this service was in New York and included the battle of White Plains. He was discharged at the end of his brother's service on 6 Dec 1776. Oliver's third period of service began in May 1780 in the Company of Captain Pillsbury in the Massachusetts Regiment commanded by Colonel Smith and lasted 6 months. His company was at West Point, New York and he was present at the execution of Major Andre at a place called "Orange Town." He saw General Washington there.

Oliver's fourth period of service was 9 months, beginning in April 1781 in the Company commanded by Captain Gager in the Massachusetts Regiment commanded by Colonel Hays. The Company was first at Fishkill, New York. That period of service was primarily in New Jersey. His primary job was to "travel from place to place as an express to carry letters." He was furnished with a horse and traveled to Mount Hope in New Jersey, Morristown, and Elizabeth Town in New Jersey, where he delivered a letter to Lord Sterling. He went back and forth between New York and New Jersey. He became sick after seven months and was allowed to "go into the country to regain his health." His term of enlistment ended during his period of illness.

Oliver's fifth and final period of service was in 1782, for one month and 5 days in the Company commanded by Captain Farrar. He said in his deposition that he had received only one written discharge in his five enlistments and that was from Colonel Smith on his third enlistment. He then testified that he was born in 1759, as recorded in the family Bible, and that since the Revolution, he had lived in Glocester, Rhode Island; Uxbridge, Massachusetts; Danby, Vermont; and about twenty years ago [1812] he moved from Danby, Vermont to Hampton in Washington County, New York. He said he is known in Hampton by Reverend Dinsmore and George C. Morris, William Morris and "many others" that could testify to his character. His signature was firm and clear.

Oliver Thayer made a supplementary deposition on 8 Jun 1833 to add additional information to his application. He said that Abel Horton, Esq. of the Town of Danby in Vermont could testify as to his service. Further that Abel Horton had represented his Town in the State Legislature and was a Justice of the Peace. He said that since he left Uxbridge he has lost track of previously known persons who could attest to his service. Although all of his service was in state troop units, he did serve under some Continental Officers. In his first service he served with his brother Reuben Thayer, who was an "Orderly Sargent." From his second service, both Captain Woodbury and Colonel Holman were Militia Officers and both resided in the Town of Sutton, Massachusetts, and they left service when he did. In his third service, both Captain Pillsbury and Colonel Smith were Continental Officers. Captain Gager, under whom he served in 1781, was a Massachusetts officer, but he thought Colonel Hays may have been a Continental Officer. In his final service, Captain Farrar was a Massachusetts Officer from Sutton. In that final service, he (Oliver) volunteered for Captain Reed's Company and went to the city of Providence, Rhode Island, then to Warwick, Rhode Island and back to Providence, where he and the whole company

were dismissed. He said that at the time of his first deposition that he had been sick and he did not remember a lot about his officers. His signature on this supplement was firm, but a bit more shaky.

Deborah's declaration for her widow's pension was made on 26 Aug 1842 in Washington County, New York, before the Judge of the Court of Common Pleas. She testified that she was a resident of the Town of Hampton in Washington County and that she was "84 years and upwards." She claimed to be the widow of Oliver Thayer who began service from Uxbridge, Massachusetts, although she could not swear to particulars because they "had married late in the war." She said; however, that in one period of his service he "rode an express for General Washington bearing letters and his dispatches from one post to another." She testified that she was married to Oliver Thayer "on or about 2 August 1779" in Uxbridge by "Rev. Mr. Russell, a Presbyterian clergyman." She testified that her husband Oliver had died "on or about the 6th day of April 1836" and that she had remained unmarried since then. Her signature was a bit shaky but very readable. The deposition was not taken in the Courthouse since Deborah was unable to go there due to "old age & bodily infirmity."

Oliver's pension commenced in March 1831 at a rate of $70.55 per annum; however, as was common in many government actions, his pension certificate was not issued until 17 Mar 1834. It is recorded in Pension book E, Volume 4, page 82. Deborah's pension was approved to commence 4 Mar 1843 at $70 per annum with certificate issued 30 Jan 1844. It was recorded in Pension book D, Volume 1, page 262. The delay was due to the widow's pension act of 7 Jul 1838.

As most know, the pay of soldiers in the Revolution was poor to nonexistent, and in many cases, especially for militia, in currency that was not recognized in many places. The food also was scarce and poor. The hardships were legendary, especially in winter. Here is a man from Massachusetts who served five enlistments for nearly two and a half years in that Revolution, even with all of the hardships entailed. He was not a hero nor did he serve in many battles, but serve he did and was witness to the events that made us a nation. He was a patriot and we should be proud of him as a member of our family.

Report of the Thayer-Witsell Family Reunion 2008

By Marcia Thayer McGhee

On July 16, 2008 a small group of people (adults and children) started checking in at the Doubletree Hotel and Suites at Dana Point, CA. They all registered under the name Thayer-Witsell Family Reunion. There was a steady flow all day Wednesday and spilled over into Thursday morning and afternoon.

Yes, I was there-and what a joy to stand on the balcony at our hospitality suite and watch my family gather, greeting each other hugs and "high fives", laughter and smiles, just glad to see each other. By Friday, June 18, we numbered 100 plus, including about 15 children under 16 years old. It is important for the children to be there --- to meet and know their kin and to learn their history.

This was the California family's 3rd time to host the Family Reunion. The setting was great, the weather was super perfect, sunny, clear blue sky and wonderful beach. The planned events were great fun and being with family was special, as usual. On Thursday morning, we held our traditional Heritage Meeting, a time when we review and update the family genealogy chart and announce new marriages and births and recognize graduations, special achievements, academic and athletic as well as other honors and recognitions. This time there were many applauds and accolades to go around.

Friday was a big event day------the family picnic at a beautiful park at the beach. The food was very good and there was plenty of it. The location was good for all age groups and within walking distance of the hotel!! Of course, there was a

water balloon fight, a three legged race and a volley ball game. We all had fun!

The Family Photo was taken at the park and we did indeed look good in our family t-shirts and big smiles. Later, in the evening some of us returned to the park for the Family Bonfire with s'mores and family stories.

Saturday was dedicated to our business meeting (discussion about budget and organization) and plans for the next reunion. The offer was made and accepted, Thayer-Witsell Family Reunion 2010 in Orlando, FL!

Our Dinner Dance on Saturday was very nice. This time the D. J. brought along 2 dance instructors and "callers" for the traditional line dance. The dance floor was full with family 80 yrs old to 3 years old, all in step and having fun. The hotel staff and other guests wanted to join us!

On Sunday morning we had a Memorial Service dedicated to family members who have passed on before us and special recognition of those who have died since our last reunion. We said our farewells and best wishes and big hugs until we meet again in Orlando, in 2010.

The Thayer-Witsell family is scattered across the United States. This was our 13th Reunion since our initial meeting in 1972. We have met every 2 years except missing 1976. We have gathered 3 times in Charleston, SC, 3 in California, 3 in Chicago, and 4 in Florida. Also, reunions have been held in Baltimore, Philadelphia, Atlanta, Houston, and Minneapolis. Family Reunion is a must on our calendar. Now, we are all looking forward to our meeting in 2010.

Tricia's Mailbag

By Tricia Muno, TFA Genealogist

Thayer Pedigree Referral Service brings new contact: Received December 2008 from John Phillip ("Philip") Thayer concerning his grandfather, Lt. Col. Allen Thayer:

Lt. Col. Allen Thayer Defends the Philippines in Battle of Bataan

Graduating in the West Point Class of 1928, Allen Thayer was proud of his commission and of his ancestor [sic] Sylvanus Thayer, who reorganized the military academy in 1817 as its fifth superintendent. After college, Allen found himself at Fort Benning where destiny introduced him to the daughter of a local eatery known for its scrambled dogs. At the Firm Robert's Café, Allen met Marjorie Louise Roberts, and their attraction was immediate. They married June 1934 at Marge's parents home on Benning Road, and eventually they had three sons – Allen, David and John. In 1939, the Thayers sailed for the Philippine Islands.

About the time Thayer advanced to the rank of major, the army issued a mandatory evacuation of the islands by all military dependants. Concerned for his wife who would now be raising his three boisterous sons alone, Allen sadly sent them on their way. Later, when Allen received a photograph of his family, he wrote his wife: "Marge, you are doing a wonderful job in caring for these kids, and I never have seen any who looked more healthy. I tell you sweetheart my old heart swells with pride when I think of my family – a beautiful wife and three grand kids . . . You all look so much better than you did in Manila, but that is the only thank I can thank this forced evacuation for . . . I know life is rather discouraging at times, Marge, but keep hammering away sweetheart and never admit that you are whipped down." Living by example rather than by words, Allen would model this credo for his family and inspire them for generations to come.

In the weeks following Pearl Harbor, Allen was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel and made commander of the newly mobilized 62nd Infantry Regiment of the Philippine Army. In battle on 4 May 1942, Thayer's men were retreating when the Japanese surrounded them on three sides. Pursued in their retreat by small arms and artillery fire and strafed by low-flying aircraft,

Thayer's force was decimated, and he was taken prisoner.

In the two cards he was able to send home, Allen described his health as "excellent" even though most other prisoners gave less sanguine assessments. He wrote that he looked forward to a grand family reunion when he returned and reminded Marge, "Remember my usual good luck and do not worry."

Two years passed, and Allen continued to "hammer away" and "never admit he was whipped." As the war in the Pacific turned in the Allies' favor, the Thayers hoped that Allen would soon be liberated, but the Japanese decided to move the POWs to more secure locations.

In December 1944, about sixteen hundred prisoners were loaded aboard the *Oryoku Maru*. The next morning near Subic Bay, U.S. Navy aircraft spotted the enemy vessel and fired on it three times, killing 942 Americans. Survivors, including Thayer, swam ashore only to be imprisoned again. When aboard a second ship, the US Navy attacked again. This vessel sank near Formosa. Once again, Allen was among the survivors, but this time he was seriously wounded. He died aboard a third ship on 23 January 1945 and was buried at sea.

Allen's sons grew up to be men who would have made their father proud. Allen made the army his career. John became a real estate developer in Columbus. David died in an army training accident in 1962. Allen's brother-in-law Firm Roberts erected a memorial to the POWs. This monument will soon be moved to the Memorial Walk on the grounds of the new National Infantry Museum.

Thanks to "new" cousin Philip Thayer for sharing this great information on his grandfather.
Philip (John Philip[12], Allen[11], Charles Allen[10], Henry Jarvis[9], Allen[8], Samuel[7], Ebenezer[6-5-4-3], Ferdinando[2], Thomas[1]) THAYER

Lt. Col. Allen Thayer
Photo provided by Tricia Muno

Does anyone know of the following Thayer family?

James M. THAYER was born 2 Aug 1842 in Ohio, the son of **James M. THAYER** and **Nancy JONES**. He married 24 Aug 1864 in Scioto County, OH to **Elizabeth HARR**. They were the parents of four known children:

J.E. THAYER, born 22 Jun 1865 died 6 Jul 1866.
Mae THAYER, died 20 Oct 1866.
Franklin Reeves THAYER, born 27 Aug 1868, died 2 Jan 1942.
Unknown son THAYER, died 6 Jul 1876.

Private James M. THAYER enlisted for service in the Union Army at Grayson, Carter Co., KY in October, 1861. He served in Company E, 22nd Kentucky Infantry. His left leg was shot off just below the knee at Vicksburg, Mississippi and he was in the hospital at Memphis, Tennessee. James died 27 Nov 1894 in Lewis County, KY. James' parents, James M. THAYER and Nancy

JONES were married 18 Feb 1841 in Lawrence County, Ohio.

Anyone having information on the parentage of James M. Thayer is requested to send information to Patricia at **TriciaMuno@aol.com**
or
Patricia Thayer Muno
Thayer Family H istorian
3618 North 225 East
North Ogden, UT 84414

The Thayer/Legg Connection

By John Howard Thayer

I recently wrote an article in collaboration with Thayer Family Historian, Tricia Muno, entitled "Joel Thayer." As I was putting that piece together, my memory went back to 2002 when I was writing another piece that was about the Mendon, Massachusetts Minutemen. On April 19, 1775, the day on which the Battle of Lexington and Concord occurred, the Mendon Minutemen's muster role had included both Thayer and Legg surnames.

The Mendon Minutemen were part of a very large contingent of New England Minutemen who marched on and surrounded the City of Boston following that fateful battle. I pulled some of the old material from that article and found that there were five Minutemen with the surname "Legg" and ten Minutemen with the surname "Thayer" serving in one of the four Mendon Militia companies.

This data made me wonder if Joel's arrival in Skaneateles, and his subsequent marriage to Juliette Legg after a courting relationship that lasted only a short six months before they were wed, was a matter of coincidence or design. I initiated an Internet study on http://www.rootsweb.com. I conducted a reverse generational search. The following is what I discovered:

Joel Thayer 18 Jul 1812/13 Ontario, N.Y.	Juliette Legg 23 Mar 1811 Skaneateles, N.Y.
Amasa Thayer 9 Nov 1776	John Legg 23 Mar 1783 Belchertown, MA
Levi Thayer 1752 Mendon, MA	Moses Legg, Sr. 6 Aug 1752 Mendon, MA
Ens. Samuel Thayer 1713 Mendon, MA	Aaron Legg 7 Nov 1731 Mendon, MA
Isaac Thayer 1672 Mendon, MA	John Legg, Sr. ABT 1678 Boston, MA
Ferdinando Thayer Christen 18 Apr 1625 Thornbury, England	Samuel Legg, Sr. 1640 Marblehead, MA ***Spouse was*** ***Deliverance Thayer*** **ABT 1647 in Boston**
Thomas Thayer Christen 16 Aug 1596 Thornbury, England	John Legg 1609 London, England

Joel and Juliette's grandfathers, Corporal Levi Thayer (4th Company) and Aaron Legg (1st Company) had served together in the Mendon Minutemen Militia. Both families lived in the Mendon, Massachusetts area and had been there for many years. Obviously they knew each other.
http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~danielsofmassachusettsbaycolony/4thmendonmilitia.html

http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~danielsofmassachusettsbaycolony/1stmendonmilitia.html

This data may infer that the Joel Thayer-Juliette Legg relationship may have been a product of the old Thayer/Legg connection, but there is no definitive proof that back up that theory.

I notified Tricia Muno, Thayer Family Historian, about this interesting relationship. Instead of patting me on the back because of my find, she

added more fuel to the fire by providing me with data on other Thayer/Legg connections:

Temperance THAYER (1698-1760/1761), daughter of Thomas THAYER and Mary POOLE, married **John LEGG** (1682/1683-abt 1760), son of Samuel and Deliverance (THAYER) LEGG on 1 Jun 1719 in Mendon, Worcester, MA.

Patience THAYER (1729-1812), daughter of Benjamin THAYER and Mercy WILKINSON, married **John LEGG** (1724-1803) son of John LEGG and Temperance THAYER on 1 Mar 1747 in Mendon, Worcester, MA.

Aaron THAYER (1758-1829), son of Aaron THAYER and Jemima COOK, married **Rosanna LEGG** (1758-1821), daughter of John LEGG and Patience THAYER on 12 Mar 1778 in Mendon, Worcester, MA.

Andrew THAYER (1778-1818, son of Silas THAYER and Lydia THAYER) married on 30 Mar 1803 in Mendon, Worcester, MA to **Abigail LEGG** (1777-) daughter of Benjamin LEGG and Abial HOLBROOK

Joel THAYER (1813-1881), son of Amasa THAYER and Sally TROWBRIDGE, married **Juliette LEGG** (abt 1814-1880), daughter of John and Emma LEGG, on 7 may 1835 (of) Skaneateles, Onondaga, NY.

Otis THAYER (1810-1873), son of Rufus THAYER and Hannah PARKHURST, married on 22 May 1838 in Milford, Worcester, MA to **Anna Maria LEGG** (1816-1896) daughter of Nahum LEGG and Anna CHAPIN.

Clarinda Mariah THAYER (1835-) of Milford, Worcester, MA, married a **Mr. LEGG.** She was the daughter of Ziba THAYER and Clarinda TAFT **William**s

Robinson THAYER (1808-1878), son of Artemas THAYER and Elizabeth JEWETT, married on 29 Oct 1840 in Milford, Worcester, MA to **Harriett LEGG** (1818-1889), daughter of Nahum LEGG and Anna CHAPIN.

Hannah THAYER (1819-), daughter of Henry THAYER and Uranah THOMPSON, married **Lyman LEGG** (1822-) (parents unknown) on 4 Jul 1845 in Blackstone, Worcester, MA.

Norma Juanita THAYER (1923-2007), daughter of Edwin THAYER and Julia Frances MC WILLIAMS, married **Cecil Eugene LEGG** (1921-1986) in Oklahoma.

The end product of this material clearly points out the fact that the Thayer and Legg families have been closely connected since both families arrived in the New World in the 1630's.

Confederate Thayer Soldiers

Tricia Muno, TFA Genealogist

James Loren Thayer is currently serving as our Thayer Families Association web master. He is doing a wonderful job of keeping up with all the news. In December he contacted me to verify the number of Thayers who served in the Confederate Army during the Civil War. I was glad that he did, as I had never actually stopped to take stock of the actual number. Below is a listing of those individuals currently in my computer files who were Confederate Soldiers:

John Bridges Thayer (1838-1907)
Kendrick Thayer (1840-1863)
Nereus Mendenhall Thayer (1845-1934)
Robert Brodie Thayer (1823-1864)
Sceva Thayer (1843-1880)
Sheldon Thayer (1938-1896)
William H. Thayer (1842-1866)
William Henry Thayer (1844-1922)
William Sceva Thayer (1844-1920)

These Thayer Confederate Soldiers are in my "Unplaced" file:

Albert Gallatin Thayer (1813-1880)
James Madison Thayer (1843-1897) (son of Albert Gallatin Thayer)
John R. Thayer (1842- died from wounds received in battle, no date)
Joseph Nathan Thayer (abt. 1843-)
Luther Calvin Thayer (1846-)
Luther G. Thayer (abt. 1840-) (possibly one and the same as Luther Calvin?)
Martin G. Thayer (1840-)
Stephen B. Thayer (1831-1904)

Thayer Families Association

Annual Dues, New Member & Member Renewal Form

Albert Thayer Morton, Membership Chairman Thayer Families Association 28 S. Main St., Box#313 Randolph, MA 02368-4821

Please fill out this form indicating if you are a New Single Member, New Family Member or Renewal Member and enclose appropriate check or money order made payable to the Association at the address above.

Please enter desired options:
Annual Dues: $20.00 **Single Membership:** _____ **Renewal:** _____

Annual Dues: $30.00 **Family Membership:** _____ **Renewal:** _____

Please note: A family membership consists of two adults of the same household (husband and wife; sisters and or brothers; or any combination of two persons. If you wish to pay dues for more than one year, just multiply the amount times the number of years chosen. Fill out the following and return this application form with your dues as indicated above.

First member name:_____
Second family member name:_____
Number of years desired:_____ X Appropriate Annual Fee ($20 or $30) = Total:_____
Most recent Thayer connection: _____ birth & death dates if known:_____
Earliest known Thayer ancestor:_____ birth & death dates if known:_____
Your Full Name(s) _____

Mailing Address: Number & Street:_____ City, State:_____ Country, ZIP/Postal Zip Code_____

Telephone number is optional:_____

Are you able to receive, open, and read downloaded files using PDF format? Yes_____ No_____

Preferred format for the Thayer Quarterly newsletter: Electronic in PDF format _____ Paper_____

May we communicate with you via email, for membership or other TFA business? Yes_____ No_____

E-Mail Address: _____

If this is a new application, how did you discover us? _____

Thank you for your membership!

If this is a NEW membership, name of person referring you:

_____

Please mail the completed form and dues to:
Thayer Families Association 28 S. Main St., Box #313 **Randolph, MA 02368-4821**

THE THAYER QUARTERLY
28 So. Main St., Box #313
Randolph, MA 02368-4821

CONTACTING THE TFA

www.ThayerFamilies.com

For all official business with the TFA, please write the Secretary, James Loren Thayer:
28 So. Main St., Box #313
Randolph, MA 02368-4821
Email: JThayer@ipapilot.org

For genealogical queries, or to find a Family Representative of a particular family, please write:
Patricia Thayer Muno, Thayer Family Historian
3618 North 225 East
North Ogden, UT 84414-2762
Email: HJThayer@aol.com
Please include an SASE if you need a reply.

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