Thayer Quarterly

A QUEST FOR YOUR HERITAGE

December, 2017 | © 2017 - Thayer Families Association, Inc. | Volume 25, Issue 4
thayerfamilies.com | 1327 Lavanham Court, Apopka, Florida 32712-3069 | WINTER

Featured Articles:

In Every Issue:

Top left: Illustration from Thayer Christmas advertisement. Right: Christmas card illustrated by Ellen Bowditch Thayer Fisher. Above: Paper Doll Patent; Inventor: Matilda Payne "Mattie" Thayer Basinger. For her lineage, see page 4 at this link: https://tinyurl.com/y9emkvpe

A Letter from our TFA President

As I reflect upon my three quarters of a century on this planet, I recall a kinder era when nearly everyone got along and helped one another as the opportunities arose. I remember the wonderfully poignant paintings by Norman Rockwell and the Christmas Season with its special meaning, going door to door singing with a group of carolers. Occasionally we got invited inside to warm up and have a cup of hot chocolate! There were ice skating parties on a neighbor's pond, playing "snap the whip" and seeing who could outdo the other by jumping farther or skating faster. It was a time when families stayed together no matter what and the work ethic was alive and well. I realize that not everyone had the opportunity to grow up in a rural environment. As they say "your mileage may vary" and sadly many other folk were not so fortunate.

This is the season when more than ever the next person you meet may need to see a smile on your face or your helping hand. Let's strive to not let those opportunities pass by being too busy to notice someone in need. We're all part of the same human race and we need to put aside petty differences and treat one another with respect, love and care.

Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from the Thayer Families Association. We hope to see you in Minneapolis June 28 - July 2, 2018!

In TFA-ship, Jim

Notes from the Editor

I received a nice note by way of our Secretary, Nancy L. Thayer, from John Howard Thayer: "Hi Larissa, The June 2017 edition of the T.Q. included a short piece on the U.S.S. Constitution's return to Boston Harbor. Reminded me of the fact I wrote a piece for the June 2002, Vol. 10, Issue 2 Summer T.Q. titled James L. Thayer, The Mysterious Medal of Honor. I have enclosed a copy for you so you might read about the Thayer connection with the ship, brief as it was. I received a great amount of assistance from Raymond Alexander Thayer, who dug up most of the important dates."

For the story, please visit this link (starts page 7):
https://www.thayerfamilies.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/05/Summer2002.pdf

A Merry Christmas

This postcard was sent to my grandfather, Frederick Daniels Thayer Jr., by his Aunt Marian, circa 1911 (when he was about 4 years old).

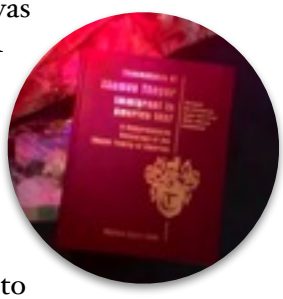
Cheers to the Season!

Larissa Thayer Cullen, TQ Editor

Historian's Report

THE GIFT THAT FITS ALL THAYERS!

Volume VII of A Comprehensive Genealogy of the Thayer Family of America went to press November 2017! This volume follows the descendants of Isaac Thayer (about 1672 – Dec 1745) of Mendon, Worcester, Massachusetts. Isaac was the son of Ferdinando THAYER (1597/1598 – 1642/1643) and grandson of Thomas THAYER (1559-1623), the 1637 immigrant to America. Isaac Thayer was married three times; volume VII represents the descendants of Isaac's first wife, Mercy ROCKWOOD. The descendants by his second wife, Mary (maiden name unknown) will follow in Volume VIII. NO children were born to Isaac's and his 3rd wife, Hannah WINTER.



Volume VII contains the genealogical and biological information of over 3,800 Thayers, and over 300 photos and illustrations! FOR THE FIRST TIME, this volume will also include the ancestral families of Thomas THAYER the immigrant – From 1500 in Thornbury, Gloucestershire, England – to the present generation.

As I wrote this, I was in the final stages of editing Vol. VII; the projected number of pages close to 1,000! More information on this work appeared in the Autumn issue of the Thayer Quarterly newsletter, and contains a more complete glimpse into the contents of the sixteen interesting addendums.

If you have questions regarding Volume VII, feel free to call my editor (A.K.A. hubby) Donald Muno at 801-675-9262.

Merry Christmas! and Happy New Year - Patricia

Three Bevoved Thayers Lost Too Soon

by TFA Historian, Patricia Thayer Muno

One of our first TFA Directors, Garland Jeffrey Thayer (from 1992 to 1994). He was just a young man when he took on the task, and he married shortly after becoming a director (September 1994).

MISSOULA — Garland J. Thayer, 48, of Missoula, passed away unexpectedly on Wednesday, Aug. 23, 2017. Garland was born on May 6, 1969, in Charleston, West Virginia, to William and Brenda [Smith] Thayer. After growing up and recreating in the mountains around Charleston, he went on to attend Culver Military Academy, and graduated with a bachelor's in economics and political science from the University of Montana in 1992. He loved the Missoula area for the outdoor recreation opportunities and warm community. It is here that he chose to raise his three children with his wife Molly.

Garland was a self-employed investment advisor from 1992 until his death. He served as a deacon and elder in the Missoula First Presbyterian Church, in addition to serving on numerous boards and organizations including the Missoula Art Museum, Missoula Ski Education Foundation, Downtown Lions Club and Ducks Unlimited.

Garland loved being in the mountains and surrounding areas of Missoula, and enjoyed mountain biking, fishing, skiing and camping with his family and friends. He also enjoyed painting and writing poetry, with much of his inspiration coming from the above-mentioned activities and locations.

Garland is predeceased by his brother Cameron and his father William. He is survived by his wife Molly, and their three children, Todd, Erin and Seth, of Missoula; his mother, Brenda Thayer, and stepfather Tom Ross, of Missoula; half-brother, William Thayer, and half-sisters, Annette Thayer, and Elizabeth Thayer-Young, all of Charleston, West Virginia.

There will be a private memorial for family and close friends. Those who wish to share their condolences may contact the family at: thayer5family@outlook.com or P.O. Box 5581, Missoula, MT, 59806.

Lineage: Garland Jeffrey11 (William Edwin10, Garland Todd9-8, Otis Adonijah7, Job6, Abel5, Zachariah4, Nathaniel3, Richard2-1) THAYER.

Virginia Ellaree Thayer
9 Oct 1925 – 11 Oct 2017

Virginia Ellaree Thayer was born on October 9, 1925 to Clinton and Lola (Broyles) Thayer, and she passed away peacefully on October 11, 2017, at Abingdon Health and Rehab where she ha spent the last three years. Ellaree lived in the home place for eighty-nine of her ninety years. Preceding Ellaree, in addition to her parents, were brothers Edward, James, William and Garland; sister Hazel (Thayer) Orfield; four nephews and a niece. Survivors include two brothers, Donald (Eleanor) of Abington, and Kyle of Hopewell, VA; eight nieces and eleven nephews. Ellaree was an active member of Mountain View United Methodist Church for most of her life, serving as treasurer for 37 years, children's Sunday School teacher for more than 30 years, and had perfect Sunday School attendance for 45 years. She loved working on the farm, helping to milk the cows, rake the hay, and raise garden produce to can for family members. She also enjoyed doing needlework and crafts over her many years. The family extends many thanks to Linda Crane and Eleanor Thayer as well as others who did so much for the care of Ellaree. The funeral service for Ellaree Thayer will be conducted at 3:00 p.m. Sunday, October 15, 2017 at Mountain View United Methodist Church with the Rev. Barbara Farmer officiating. Interment will follow in Mountain View United Methodist Church cemetery with nephews serving as pallbearers. Visitation with the family will be held from 1:00 p.m. – 300 p.m. prior to the service. In lieu of flowers, the family invites anyone who desires to do so make a donation to Mountain View United Methodist Church Memorial Fund in care of Betty Beatty, 18970 Middle Drive, Abingdon, VA 24211.
Those wishing to share memories and express sympathy online may do so by visiting WWW.farrisfuneralservice.com. Ellaree Thayer and her family are in the care of Farris Funeral Service and Crematory, 427 East Main Street, Abingdon, VA 24210. To send flowers or a remembrance gift to the family of Virginia Ellaree Thayer, please visit our Tribune Store.
Lineage: Virginia Ellaree11 (Thomas Clifton Parks10, Thomas Jamerson9, James8, Thompson7, Baruch6, Ebenezer5, Uriah4, Ebenezer3, Ferdinando2, Thomas1) THAYER *Thank you to Ellaree's niece, Janice Thayer Rowland and sister-in-law, Jean Curtis Thayer for sharing this information with me – Patricia*

Dawning Of A Brighter Day (with comments by Andrew Hall)

Patricia's note: Sadly, Douglas Heal Thayer passed away just a short time after I met him, his wife, Donlu, their daughter Katie and family in person this last summer. I am grateful I had the opportunity to meet him. Here is his obituary as appears on Association For Mormon Letters web site:

We note with great sorrow the passing of author and educator Douglas H. Thayer. Born April 19, 1929 in Salt Lake City, he passed away on Oct. 17, 2017 after a battle with liver cancer. Thayer grew up in Provo, where he spent his boyhood largely running free and hunting, fishing, and hiking in the surrounding Wasatch Mountains. He swam naked in the Provo River, and the polluted Utah Lake. He later said that swimming in that poisoned lake gave a quick, cheap immunization against every known disease (if you survived).

Thayer dropped out of high school in 1946 to join the U.S. Army, serving in Germany. He came home, attended Brigham Young University for a year, and then returned to Germany for 30 months as a missionary for the Church. While on his mission he was called up to fight in Korea, but was allowed to continue his mission. He later said that while he had no desire to kill or be killed, he felt he missed his war, a great deprivation for a writer who liked Hemingway. After his mission Thayer returned to BYU, and graduated with a bachelor's degree in English. He applied to law school, but then decided not to attend and started a doctorate in American literature at Stanford. Finding that he had little interest in research, he left the program after finishing a master's degree.
Returning to Provo from Stanford, Thayer taught in the BYU English Department in 1957-1960, considered studying to be a clinical psychologist, and then started a doctorate in American studies at the University of Maryland. However, still not liking research, he decided that what he really wanted to do was write short stories and novels. He transferred to the University of Iowa, and finished an MFA in fiction writing. During these years, his work experience included helper on a uranium drill rig, construction laborer, railroad section hand, janitor, restaurant dishwasher, insurance salesman, and seasonal ranger in Yellowstone National Park.
After completing the MFA, Thayer returned to BYU, where he taught fiction writing and other classes until his retirement in 2011. He taught at BYU for a total of fifty-four years. He served as Coordinator of Composition, Director of Creative Writing, and Associate Chair in the English Department and Associate Dean of the College of Humanities.
In 1974, at the age of 45, Thayer married 26-year-old Donlu DeWitt. Doug and Donlu had six children in nine years–Emmelyn, Paul, James, Katherine, Stephen, and Michael. They have twenty-one grandchildren. Donlu attended Brigham Young University as an Honors Program Scholar and Karl G. Maeser Scholar, graduating in 1970 as co-valedictorian of the College of Humanities, magna cum laude, Honors Program High Honors with Distinction, with a double major in French and English. She received a master's degree in American Literature from BYU in 1972. She worked as an editor for BYU Press and was for many years volume editor for the New World Archaeological Foundation. She taught for the Brigham Young University English Department and Honors Program intermittently during 1970–2008. She is the author of two novels, In the Mind's Eye and The Wall, as well as writing a "Kellie", a companion piece to Douglas' short story "Greg," which was combined into a book and later made into a short movie. In 2004 she graduated from the BYU J. Reuben Clark Law School, where she received the Faculty Award for Meritorious Service. She is a member of the Utah State Bar, and she became a senior editor at BYU's International Center for Law and Religion Studies.
Douglas Thayer began publishing short stories in the mid-1960s. Later his writing, along with his colleague Donald R. Marshall, came to be recognized as the start of a new stage in Mormon literature, following the "home literature" which appeared largely in Church-owned journals, and the "lost generation" of Mormon and ex-Mormon authors who wrote for the national market in the mid-20th century. Some of Thayer's stories appeared in non-Mormon literary magazines, including "The Turtle's Smile" (Prairie Schooner Fall 1970), which was listed in The Best American Short Stories 1971.

The majority, however, appeared in Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought, which began publication in 1966, just as Thayer's career was beginning. The journal's founding marked the start of an independent Mormon literature community, which encouraged writing on Mormon themes, but largely without a devotional or missionary goal. The combination of new voices with new publication venues can be seen as the start of modern Mormon literature. Thayer has had at least ten stories published in Dialogue, as well as stories in BYU Studies, Sunstone, and Irreantum.

His first collection, Under the Cottonwoods and Other Mormon Stories (1977), was a key work in the development of a new realistic Mormon fiction. He has had two other short story collections, Mr. Wahlquist in Yellowstone (1989), which contained Western stories without any Mormon references, and Wasatch (2011), which was a mixture of older and newer stories. He saw four of his novels published, Summer Fire (1983), The Conversion of Jeff Williams (2003), The Tree House (2009), and Will Wonders Never Cease (2014), as well as a memoir, Hooligan: A Mormon Boyhood (2007). Thayer had largely completed another final novel, which is scheduled to be published by Zarahemla Books.

While an appreciation of Thayer's writings has yet to extend nationally, he is highly respected by Mormon literary scholars. Eugene England, the founding editor of Dialogue and later a colleague of Thayer's at BYU (and a frequent fly-fishing partner), had long been a fervent supporter. He wrote in 1992, "Thayer and Marshall benefitted in their pioneering efforts from two separate influences: they studied modern British and American writers, such as Joyce, Hemingway, Porter, and Flannery O'Connor, and they learned new approaches to Mormon history and culture from the nationally published writers of the lost generation. They also had access to a Mormon audience, critics, and outlets in an expanding intellectual community. They benefitted especially from Clinton Larson, a poet and dramatist who in the 1950s and 1960s became the first Mormon writer to combine excellent contemporary training and natural talent with an informed and passionate faith that he made central to his work . . . As John Bennion has said, "[Thayer] was the first to solve the major problem. He taught us how to explore the interior life, with its conflicts of doubt and faith, goodness and evil, of a believing Mormon."

England wrote in Dictionary of Literary Biography, soon before his death in 2001, "Douglas Thayer conveys the tragic in American experience that comes from what people and the wilderness have done to each other as well as any contemporary Western writer. From his early story "Red-Tailed Hawk" [England's favorite Thayer story] through two collections and a novel, and into his latest stories and essays, he displays insight into the particular history of the destructive relationship between mankind and the wilderness in the West, from the arrogant, self-defeating mountain men of the 1830s, intruding into lands and cultures they could not comprehend, to modern men and boys who try, at great cost to themselves and others, to recapture the primitive and merge with wilderness."

Bruce W. Jorgensen, another BYU colleague, tended to be a bit harder on Thayer than England had been. He wrote in the 1987 article "Romantic Lyric Form and Western Mormon Experience in the Stories of Douglas Thayer" (Western American Literature, 1987), "Thayer's craft is severe, his style deliberate, chiseled, almost mannered, his tone almost never humorous before the cowboy tall-tales of Summer Fire; his protagonists in the novel and stories alike are upward-mobile Provo boys or men nearly fanatic about righteousness and perfection. As a short story writer, Douglas Thayer seems to have adapted, consciously or otherwise, a major form of Romantic lyric poetry to western Mormon experience and consciousness, but in ways that also question and undercut this form. Thayer's characteristic strategy in the stories of Under the Cottonwoods, which is to follow the introspective and retrospective processes of a male protagonist through some brief, decisive interval in his life, seems to me a fairly clear translation of what M. H. Abrams has called "the greater Romantic lyric" into the terms of the short story, usually handled in a third-person limited-omniscient or "central consciousness" point of view. This strategy, which may derive most directly from such a story as Irwin Shaw's "The Eighty-Yard Run" (which Thayer admired and often taught in short story courses in the sixties), so consistently operates in Under the Cottonwoods as to become a sort of signature or hallmark that some readers have found irritatingly repetitive—here's another "Thayer story." Insofar as all the stories in the volume do play variations on that strategy, such a response is valid; but perhaps it is also rather like a partially-trained listener's reaction to a series of string quartets: large similarities of structure and treatment may seem to outweigh subtle differences in texture, key, motif, which only patient re-hearing may disclose . . . Thayer's later-published stories in Mr. Wahlquist in Yellowstone explore the seductive American myths of "wilderness" from a perspective implicit in LDS theology."

In his work Thayer treated such topics as pride, grace, redemption, war, hunting and fishing, perfection, materialism, and religious conversion. His stories focused overwhelming on men, particularly young men coming of age, frequently with the backdrop of the Western outdoors. MacEvoy DeMarest has written, "The mountains, rivers and elements of [Thayer's stories] are maybe more accurately described as characters than as settings. They shape and challenge his protagonists, and in some cases give them their very purpose."

In recent years, Scott Hales has become one of Thayer's strongest proponents. In 2012 he wrote, "Thayerian heroes [are] boys who learn all too quickly that the seemingly ordered and secure world around them can also be hostile and unforgiving—even with a loving God in heaven . . . [The stories collected in Wasatch] explore the fragile psyche of Mormon men—arguably Thayer's uber-theme—through the author's trademark concise, understated sentences. Absent, however, are the heedless, domineering patriarchs, those stereotypical brutes . . . so prevalent in fiction about Mormons. Thayer's men feel largely inadequate, wearing their prescribed gender role like an ill-fitting shirt. Or, they feel out of place and time, as if the most important part of their life has somehow slipped away from them, passed unnoticed, leaving them disoriented and nostalgic for the person they once had been . . . Thayer—eighty-three years old and counting—remains a vibrant, relevant force in Mormon fiction. Indeed, I recently had the opportunity to attend a reading where Thayer read and spoke about "Wolves," one of his finest stories. Hearing him speak about his work, listening to his insights, left me little reason to doubt why he enjoys the reputation that he does. He is twentieth-century Mormonism's greatest literary chronicler, and the Mormon people–particularly the men he so earnestly and honestly portrays–are better because of him."

When asked where readers new to Thayer should start, Hales commented, "I'd recommend starting with The Conversion of Jeff Williams, which I think is Thayer's most accessible and contemporary work–and possibly his best work overall (if it isn't The Tree House). Hooligans has its moments, but it really is not his best work. The Tree House is excellent, but it has a slow start. Summer Fire is also worth reading, although some readers are put off by the self-righteous narrator. If you haven't yet read the short stories 'Wolves' and 'The Locker Room,' I strongly recommend them."

Thayer's prizes and awards for his work include numerous Dialogue prizes for the short story and essay, the P.A. Christensen award, the Karl G. Maeser Creative Arts Award, the Utah Institute of Fine Arts Award in the Short Story, a 2011 Whitney Award Lifetime Achievement Award, and six awards from the Association for Mormon Letters. The six AML awards included a 1977 Short Story Award for stories that appeared in Under the Cottonwoods, a 1983 Novel Award for Summer Fire, a 2003 Novel Award for The Conversion of Jeff Williams, and a 2011 Short Fiction Award for Wasatch. He also was given an AML Honorary Lifetime Membership in 1988, and the Smith-Petit Foundation Award for Outstanding Contribution to Mormon Letters in 2008. Thayer's papers were deposited in the BYU HBLL Special Collections in 2006.

The Deseret News reports that Thayer was diagnosed with terminal lymphoma and given six months to live in November 2015. He defeated the disease but was diagnosed in May 2017 with liver cancer. He passed away at the age of 88.

Lineage: Douglas Heal10 (Edward Allen9, William Shafter8, David7, Ellis6, Jeremiah5, Ebenezer4, Isaac3, Ferdinando2, Thomas1) THAYER.

C. M. Thayer and family: A Verbal History

by Steven Martin

My Great-Great Grandfather, Jesse Thayer, served under General U.S. Grant for the entire Civil War, except 6 months when his trigger finger was shot off. He was sent home to recover in Iowa, then returned for the duration. He died in Iowa in 1898, Jesse's son, my Great-Great Uncle Charlie, moved to Los Angeles around the turn of the century and purchased an orange farm. During that same period, my Great Grandfather Ernest Thayer took a train from Iowa to visit brother Charlie. During that trip, he had his first glimpse of California's Salinas Valley, where he would later purchase his own farm. For in 1905, Ernest Thayer saw a newspaper article in Iowa advertising land for sale in Clark Colony (now Greenfield), Salinas Valley, CA. He bought 50 acres for $1500, sight unseen, from the Spanish Land Grant. He packed up his family and went by train to Los Angeles. They stayed for a time with his brother Charlie, and Ernest worked alongside Charlie on his orange farm.That fall, Ernest packed a mule-drawn wagon and headed from Los Angeles up the coast to the Cuesta Grade by San Luis Obispo, over the grade to Jolon Valley and Mission San Antonio into the Salinas Valley. Great-Grandma Nora Thayer kept a short journal of the trip. (I have a copy). Once in Clark Colony, Nora wrote: "The wind was blowing fit to beat the band." Great-Grandfather tied a rag to a wagon wheel, measured the diameter of the wheel, and then starting from the old Catholic Church, measured north, east and west to find the boundaries of his new property. Each rotation of the wheel gave him a pretty accurate measurement. The newspaper advertisement he had read in Iowa showed an oak tree. Jesse asked for that lot pictured with the tree. My grandfather Morris later told of how someone had transplanted a dying oak on the property in place of the one pictured in the advertisement.

The Thayer farm was about one half mile from the Salinas River ,and in those days the land was covered with sand dunes and sage. All the neighbors got together with mule-drawn heavy graders and leveled out the land. The first thing Ernest built was a barn, built with Heart Redwood from Ben Lomond (a former logging town near Santa Cruz). They drilled a well, and then built a blacksmith shop, and finally a house. Right around this time Ernest and his neighbors started the Clark Colony Water Company. They built a small concrete dam across the Arroyo Seco River, about six miles from the farm. With mule teams and heavy equipment, they dug ditches from the dam down into each of the valley's farms. The Spanish land grant gave water shares to each landowner. They called this system "Gravity Water." During the spring, the salmon would migrate up the Arroyo Seco River to spawn. In those early days, salmon wandered into the Clark Colony canals, right up to the farms. My grandfather Morris reminisced about a very wonderful salmon dinner that "Mama" cooked in those early days.

One of my favorite stories Grandfather Morris would tell me was "The First Christmas Goose." In December of 1905, they were all working in the fields. It was evening-time and a flock of migrating Canada Geese landed in the field. Ernest got Morris to go back to the house to get the shotgun. As the story goes, Ernest got one of the geese. Mama cooked the goose with all the trimmings for the first Christmas supper in Greenfield. This story my grandfather would lovingly tell me many times as he treasured these memories. He always lovingly called his parents Mama and Papa, ("Nora and Ernest.") Another story of the early days was that of dismantling a church 20 miles up the Salinas Valley in Gonzales. They took each piece and carried them in wagons pulled by mule teams. Back and forth they went, from Gonzales to Greenfield, where they reassembled the Methodist Church. Morris Thayer helped the others, nearly a grown man at the age of 12. Morris Thayer loved mules and mule teams. When he told these stories it would include a detailed description of each piece of the wagon, each buckle, harness and belt and how to assemble them together. This included which mule was the lead mule. I saw the story through his eyes, peering into the past. In those early days, the farm was a subsistence farm. There were a wide range of animals, including mules, horses, cows, chickens, pigs and rabbits, and also fruit and nut orchards, and vegetable gardens with beans and other vegetables. Ernest Thayer was a jack of all trades. He worked for the Electric Company, the Clark Colony Water Company, and of course, he was a Blacksmith. What they didn't have, they would barter for. Mr. Borzini, a neighboring farmer, told me he recalled seeing Mr. Thayer (Ernest) visiting the area, pulled in his buggy by one horse. Mr. Borzini also recalled the Thayers dressed up every Sunday in their finest, piling into their wagon to attend the Methodist Church. Mr. Borzini reminisced that all of his own family members worked the fields, while the Thayers would take off each Sunday for church-going. Ernest's children, which included my grandfather, would always talk about Papa reminiscing about Iowa as if it was this side of heaven. At some point in the late 20's Morris Thayer took his mama and papa across the country by car. Grandpa Morris told me he had to load up an extra set of tires for the trip as they would surely wear out a set along the way on all those gravel and dirt roads. I have pictures along the way of them in the Indian ruins of Mesa Verde. They peer out the windows. One shot is of Morris standing in front of one of the mud buildings. They visited relatives in Iowa and up into the Great Lakes and Michigan. The trip took several months.

Ernest and Nora (Forsyth) Thayer on their wedding day, August 31, 1893.
https://tinyurl.com/y9pnqoyr

When I was a boy, my Grandfather Morris would spark up the forge in the original black smith shop. He taught me basic blacksmithing. I would make knives out of raw pig iron. I enjoy these memories spending those days in my great grandfather's shop. I've retained all the tools, and hope someday to assemble a new Thayer blacksmith's shop.

My mother, C. Patricia Thayer, told me of going to Grandpa and Grandma's house, (Ernest and Nora) for family get-togethers. These were huge gatherings as they had 12 kids, plus grandchildren. They would play games in the barnyard, then later they would have a lunch or dinner on outdoor tables. At this time my mother lived with her parents (Morris and Erma Thayer), and brother Bob, in King City 12 miles away from Greenfield.

Ernest Thayer & family

During the Great Depression, Ernest and Nora came upon hard financial times. Thus Ernest offered the farm to his son Morris Thayer. Morris paid his father month by month as he could afford it. My mother recalled there were several times when Grandpa Ernest would show up in King City asking Morris for a late payment. My grandmother Erma Thayer told me that these days were very lean days. They just didn't have much.

Uncle George Thayer told me three stories about the Greenfield Farm. In 1906 the great earthquake occurred. They felt it and heard it in Greenfield. In a large water holding reservoir the water swayed back and forth all day and night. Uncle George also showed me where the original house was constructed on another 20 acre plot. They moved it into the highest sector of property where it now sits, it was moved by mule team of course! The house was constructed of upright redwood planks; it had two small rooms upstairs where the kids slept. In the late 30's the upstairs caught fire and burned the upper floor. Ernest was in the barnyard in front of the house and heard a large pop sound. Then he called the volunteer fire department. Three fourths of the original wood was used to rebuild the house on the same spot but now with just one floor; all done with volunteer help, the kids and neighbors. In the attic you can see the original wall paper from the original living room. A modern addition was an indoor flush toilet. I have family pictures of the original redwood house.

Ernest and Nora died within two days of each other in 1944, a true love story. At this point Morris and Erma Thayer took up residence at the family farm in Greenfield. My Uncle Bob and my mother finished their high school years living in Greenfield. My grandfather Morris lived there until he died at the age of 92 in 1989, Erma Thayer would live there another couple of years, and then she moved near my parents in Davis, CA.

In 1991 Grandma Erma mentioned the notion of selling the Greenfield farm. This blew my mind. I wrote an impassioned letter, begging her not to sell the farm as the best memories of my life occurred there. My grandmother relinquished the responsibilities to my father, George Martin. At this point I told George I would pay a very high rent for the house in Greenfield to support my grandmother. I would also move to the Greenfield farm and would take care of everything, and pay any other additional costs that grandmother needed. The farmland was leased to a local farmer. So in 1991 I moved my wife and two children from Davis, CA to rural Greenfield, CA. I taught elementary school during the day, and after school and night I would preserve old buildings and dump a 100 years' worth of debris, cut down a grove of 100 foot eucalyptus trees--too much to list. I lived there until 2016, at which point I retired from teaching and moved to Washington State. After 26 years there, two hernia surgeries, and destroying both knees from the work that the property entailed, I could no longer do the work. Given the changes in the area which included a lot of gang crime, we no longer felt safe there. I threw in the towel and moved to Leavenworth WA. My father put my sister in charge of the property. She lives in Northern CA. It is currently being leased to a local farmer, but remains in the family.

I could tell more stories in the future about my grandparents, Morris and Erma Thayer.
- Steven Martin, great grandson of Ernest Thayer.

Steve's lineage: Steven MARTIN13 (Clarabelle Patricia12, Clarence Maurice "Morris"11, Ernest10, Jesse D.9, Isaac Tucker8, Isaac7, Isaac Reuben6, Isaac5-4-3, Ferdinando2, Thomas1) THAYER and George C. MARTIN. Steve's Thayer family will appear in Volume VII of A Comprehensive Genealogy of the Thayer Family of America, NOW available!

Don't forget to check your mailing label on this newsletter for your membership's expiration date. We hope to see you in 2018 at the Thayer Family Reunion, and for many years to come.Thank you for your membership!

Richard James Thayer – An Autobiography †

The fourth in a series of stories written in 1990 by the father of James Loren Thayer

Let's go back as far as I can remember, to the days of my childhood and youth as I grew up on – what would now be considered – a very small farm, in Guilford, Vermont.

In the meantime, (back at the farm!) Mama, brother Leon (5 years younger than I), and I were struggling to keep the farm intact. I would work on the town highways during summer vacation from high school and could usually earn enough to pay the taxes. Wages were $2.00 per day, and the work was physical labor, shoveling gravel onto dump trucks (no motorized loaders at that time) and leveling off the loads of gravel after being dumped on the highway. I also worked in the construction of bridges and culverts, making wooden forms, mixing concrete, etc.

After graduation from high school in June of 1933 I continued to work on the town roads, loading the drilled holes in rock or ledge with dynamite, and wiring the detonators for blasting. I soon earned the nickname of "Dynamite Dick" as I continued on in that phase of road work. During the winter months I also worked on the highways, sometimes shoveling snow where it had drifted so heavily that even our lone town tractor plow could not go through. It was on this same Caterpillar tractor that I spent many long, cold, lonely nights standing on a metal step platform on the rear of the tractor and adjusting the chains that raised and lowered the wings on the sides of the "V" snow plow. How well I remember plowing out a country side road in Weatherhead Hollow about 3:00 a.m., and seeing lights come on in the farmhouse, the occupants being awakened by the roar of the tractor. The tractor driver, Joe Borkowski, and I were invited in to warm up, and for the first (and last!) time in my life I was given a glass of hot whiskey! At times I think I can still feel the internal heat it caused!

About this time President Roosevelt organized the C.C.C. (Civilian Conservation Corps) and the town of Guilford was awarded money to improve highways. This involved cutting back the trees and brush on either side of the road to improve vision, clearing ditches, and installing new culverts, etc. The brush cutting continued on during the winter months. We burned the brush as we accumulated it in piles, and well I remember sitting around a fire at lunch time and toasting our sandwiches over the flames with a forked stick. The older men of the group would spend the rest of the lunch hour playing cards – some sort of a penny-ante game where they gambled pennies – sometimes making or losing as much as 25¢!

In 1934 I went to work for Carl Sweet, whose father was head doctor at Sing Sing Prison. Theirs was a summer home and I worked with Carl, at first building a rail fence with beech poles around a field. They had several riding horses which I helped to care for, and two of which we harnessed and used as draft horses. We also cut firewood for the heating stoves in their house, and I well remember using a circular or "buzz" saw, as we called it, to cut the long lengths of firewood into chunks of 12 to 14 inches, and split them. This saw was powered by a Ford station wagon, the rear wheels of which sat on a pulley-shaft combination and was belted back to the saw arbor.

CARS

My first automobile was a 1927 Model T Ford touring car, for which I initially paid $17.00, but was later reimbursed about $2.50 for a coil I had to buy to get it to run. This was a vehicle in storage at the Sweet farm, and they had sort of "retired" it in favor of the newer Model A's, of which they had three. Many are the times in later years have I wished that I had cared for and preserved that Model T, but it eventually was sold for scrap metal.

When I came to Glenmont, NY in June of 1936 I left the Model T at home and brought the 1928 Buick, an 8 cylinder, 4 door sedan – the first car we ever had that we didn't have to put side curtains on in the cold weather to keep from freezing. It even had a heater – a relatively new idea at that time, and even as late as 1940, if one wanted a heater in his new car it had to be ordered special.

The Buick eventually was traded for a 1936 Ford, and the Ford for a brand new 1940 Chevrolet – my first new car, and for which I paid $843.00 – – and no tax! My recollection is that I got more in trade for the Ford than I paid for it, at an auction in Central Bridge. I believe I paid $200.00 for the Ford, and at that time was making $14.00 per week, plus my room and board, and laundry.

To keep things in proper sequence, we have to go back to 1935 when my brother Merrill was assigned to a bombardment squadron at Langley Field, Virginia, and wrote to Mama, Leon and me to come down to Virginia and live with him. He had rented a cottage at Buckroe Beach, Virginia which is near Newport News, a shipbuilding area. Since I still did not know what I wanted to do for a vocation, we decided to close up the farm house temporarily and give it a try. I can only assume that we had no livestock at that time. Upon arrival at Buckroe Beach, I soon made acquaintances with a carpenter who was building houses in that area, and soon hired on as an apprentice carpenter. I also had a short time of trying to sell Westinghouse vacuum cleaners, but soon learned that I was not gifted in that field of occupation. It was not long before Leon became bored with Buckroe Beach, and decided to come back to Brattleboro, VT, where he made his home with sister, Ruby and family. The next spring, April or May, Merrill got a temporary assignment to an airfield on Long Island (possibly Floyd Bennett), and rather than stay on by ourselves in Virginia, we decided to pack up our few belongings in our '28 Buick and came back to Guilford, at least for as long as Merrill's assignment on Long Island.

Enroute home to Vermont we came by way of the Heath's Shady Lawn Dairy in Glenmont, New York, where we found Mr. Heath planting corn. This was probably late May or early June. I recall riding on the planter behind the tractor driven by Mr. Heath – – little did I know that he would some day become my father-in-law. I remember him filling our gas tank at the farm pump before he would let us leave, and of my saying to him as we prepared to leave, that if I didn't find work at home, I'd come back and help him plant the corn. This was said more in jest than in being serious. A day or two after arriving back home, I received a letter from Mr. Heath, asking me if I would be interested in coming back and working for him. At that time he mentioned of how much he thought of Papa, and how they had worked together when he lived on the farm in Weatherhead Hollow. So, I soon repacked the Buick with a few belongings and my Governor Winthrop desk, which was given to me for my 21st birthday, and came to Glenmont – – never dreamed that this is where I would marry the boss's daughter, build a home, and raise a wonderful family of three boys and a girl. At this point in time, I don't know how life could have been any better for me – and certainly it has all been a product of circumstances (and not of advanced planning)... and God's plan!

For the first summer and winter of '36 and spring and summer of '37 I worked as a farm hand, milking cows, cleaning gutters, driving tractor and the usual activities of haying, silo filling, etc. At this time we still used horses on the wagons for drawing hay and well I remember trying to stop a runaway team when they spooked and took off without a driver! Luckily I only suffered a few bruises and broken glasses as I was toppled over by a wagon wheel. I expect the horses eventually ran out of energy and stopped of their own volition!

In September of 1937 I was offered the job of driving a delivery truck for a milk route – a job which I enjoyed and worked at for 33 years, before operating the milk processing plant for another 15 years. (All this before retiring in April of 1985, when we sold the farm and the business to N. Barry Dancy on April 3, 1985.)

As a boy I seemed to enjoy tinkering on my bicycle and getting my hands greasy, and since I realized that everyone should have a goal or vocation they were to pursue, I got the idea that I would be a diesel mechanic. Consequently, I enrolled in an evening course offered in Albany and pursued it for several months, but soon found that the long days on the farm and the early 3:30 a.m. alarm clock was not conducive to staying awake in the evening to study. At that time I also learned that diesel engines were being used mostly in tug boats and heavy marine vessels. At no time did I ever think I wanted to spend my life on the ocean or waterways, so eventually I dropped out of the course.

My next dream was in aviation, and Jerold Heath and I enrolled in a ground course of aviation in Albany. We both finished and passed the exams and I took the free 1/2 hour flight of instruction in a Piper Cub. There was a temptation to continue with the with instructions but the cost was more than I could pay at the time, so that was the end of the flight instructions. However, still thinking I wanted to fly, I made application with several airlines for position as steward, but never got an answer to my requests.

My next idea was to sell insurance, and I studied under the tutelage of Morgan Bloodgood, took the exam in Albany, and was one of five out of the class of about 10 to pass the exam, and received my license to sell accident and health insurance. Theoretically it seemed that this would be an easy matter to make contacts since I was out on the milk route every day. However, I was successful in selling but one policy after several attempts. My thoughts went back to my Westinghouse vacuum cleaner days in Virginia, and I once again realized that I was not cut out to be the "high pressure" salesman that apparently one had to be to sell a highly competitive product.

About this time I decided that I had best concentrate on my job of selling milk – something nearly everyone used and needed. In all modesty, I have to say that I believe I was fairly successful at building up the routes, eventually to where we needed three delivery trucks, and before long realized that our limited production could not support further expansion. As the dairy store sales increased in volume, it became necessary to discontinue serving customers in outlying areas, taking a truck out of service and laying off the driver.

When I first started working on the milk route in September of 1937 I got up at 2:00 a.m. and, after a light breakfast, would load the truck and be on the road at 3:00. I well remember the load at that time – 19 cases pasteurized milk and 9 cases raw, plus heavy and light cream, and chocolate milk in 1/2-pints, which went into schools and gas stations. Later on we had chocolate in quarts and eventually in cartons of 1/3-quarts. I usually was back to the dairy by 10:00 a.m. when I would unload the truck and check out the sales for the day. After dinner I would sometimes help in drawing hay or working at some type of tractor work – or get a few hours sleep before getting up for supper, which I enjoyed with the entire Heath family, and other hired help which worked and roomed in the large farmhouse. I felt I was treated like a son! One afternoon each week, I would take my own car and go back on the route and collect for the milk sold that week. We also had milk tickets which we sold in advance, which financially was a great idea, but a problem in the winter as the tickets would sometimes freeze in the bottle, and one could not always determine how many tickets were there. Thus, there were occasional phone calls from customers who did not get all they had tickets for.

It is now April 5, 2003, and my guess is that my last entry was about April of 1985 when we sold the farm and business to a part-time farmer/minister on April 3, 1985. Strange as it may seem, I ran out of paper and only in recent months bought a new pad with the intention of continuing my "memoirs."

To continue in the somewhat "present" of years since 1985 – Margaret and I, as well as Jerold and Bill, donated our time for several months trying to help Barry Dancy make a success of running the dairy business. However, he was not the manager that such a varied business required, and within about 3 years sold out to Cumberland Farms. At this time we finally got paid for the sale. However, this also was a short term of activity, as the government soon closed the business because of the illegal activity of purchasing a dairy farm when he – a man named George Haseotis – had sold off cattle in Connecticut or Massachusetts and had agreed not to sell milk for a given number of years, because of a supposedly over production of milk. (The dairy had been bought in his nephew's name!) At this time an auction was held and all livestock and farm equipment was sold, and our dream of having Shady Lawn Dairy continue on as a working farm was shattered. As of this time, April 2003, the barns have been allowed to deteriorate, and land sold for a soccer field, a water reservoir and filtration plant, and housing developments have started in the fields behind our house at 291 Wemple Road. We feel fortunate that much of the land surrounding our 1.73 acres is classified as wet land and cannot be developed as housing.

June 1929.

Going back in time to when I graduated from School #2 Grade, or "Normal" school, as it was called – with the graduation ceremonies held at Broad Brook Grange hall at Guilford Center, VT. Four others graduated with me from the 8th grade – a brother and sister, Kenneth and Elizabeth Clark, Doris Boyd, and William Brunell. I believe that other grade schools in the town also had their graduation at the same time. In September of that year I entered Brattleboro High School – riding to school with a Mr. William Brunell, who took his son, William, Jr. to Brattleboro, the nearest high school. Tuition was paid by the town, but we had to furnish our own transportation. The next spring I bought a second hand bicycle and rode the 7 miles to school to save on the fare my mother was paying Mr. Brunell. In August 1930 I had my 16th birthday, and on that day got my driver's license and started driving to school, taking Kenneth, Elizabeth, Doris and Polly Castle with me, which helped in paying for gas and auto upkeep.

We were living in depression years at that time, and had to conserve in any way possible. I remember my mother making corn bead – or "Johnny Cake" as it was called – almost daily, which was a staple food as part of a meal, often with salt pork or tripe and boiled potatoes. The same Johnny Cake was sliced in half and served with maple syrup for dessert. Tripe is a salty, chewy product which is the lining of a cow's (or bovine) stomach, and I know it was frequently the meat part of a meal, and inexpensive. During these high school days we had a few cows and sold milk wholesale in 40-quart cans to the Windham Creamery in Brattleboro. Ralph Boyd would pick up the cans in mid-morning and return the empty clean cans. Ralph was full of fun and stories, and at one time after a flash flood which flooded a morgue, in which a body had been placed for later burial – the deceased was Burt Whittemore, a big man! My mother, being concerned about the flooded morgue, asked Ralph Boyd what they would do with Bert. He answered, "I understand they put boots on him and stood him in a corner!"

Stay tuned for the conclusion of this vivid series in our Spring 2018 issue!

TFA Reunion 2018 Registration Form

YOU BETCHA, WE'RE GOING TO MINNESOTA

June 28 - July 2, 2018

EARLY BIRDS: JUNE 28-29

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS: JUNE 30 - JULY 2

Attendee(s) information (please PRINT)

_____DOB_____ First Name, Middle Name, Maiden Name, Last Name

_____DOB_____ First Name, Middle Name, Maiden Name, Last Name

Day you plan to arrive?_____ **Day you plan to leave?**_____

Mailing address:_____

BEST way to contact you (add your cell for contact information during the reunion): PRINT NEATLY!

Tel. number:_____ email:_____

Cell:_____ **May we share your info with reunion guests?** _____yes ____ no

Number attending: _____ Thayer 2018 Reunion T-shirt sizes and number of each size (your cost: $5.00 each, subsidized by the TFA):

Youth: Sm____ Med____ Large____ **Adult:** Sm_____ Med_____ Large_____ XL____XXL_____

Please tell us how many to include in the following; and send your payment check accordingly, along with your registration form (made out to Thayer Families Association):

DATE	ITEM	COST	TOTAL.
n/a	Thayer 2018 Reunion Family Registration Fee	$10.00	$10.00
n/a	Thayer 2018 Reunion T-shirts	$5 per person	$_____
Friday, June 30	Guided tour of Twin Cities and Mississippi River Cruise	$60 per person	$_____
Saturday, July 1	Luncheon*	$30 per person*	$_____
Saturday, July 1	Banquet*	$42.50 per person*	$_____
	* Luncheon and Banquet is half price for each child under 10	**GRAND TOTAL**	$_____

Please email marilynthayer@verizon.net or call 315.963.7021 with your questions and suggestions!

Please send checks made out to **TFA**, along with registration forms **AS SOON AS POSSIBLE** to:

Marilyn Thayer, 756 County Route 58, Mexico, NY 13114

TFA Membership Form

Please complete this form with information as you would like it to appear in the TFA Membership Directory, which will be published annually, and made available to participating TFA members.who have provided their information. This membership directory is strictly for use by TFA members for the purpose of contacting other members for socialization, for sharing of genealogical research and to establish closer family relationships with other Thayer families. This directory should not be shared or forwarded to any non member or be used to solicit business or personal fundraising.

Indicate if you are a New Single Member, New Family Member, or Renewal Member, and enclose appropriate check or money order payable to the Association at the address on the bottom of this form.

Annual Dues, New Member & Member Renewal Form
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 full name:_____
Second family member full 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:_____
Full Name(s) to appear on Mailings:_____
Mailing Address: Number & Street:_____
City, _____State:_____Country, _____ZIP Code/Postal Code:_____
Telephone number: (_____)_____-_____
Are you able to receive, open, and read downloaded files using PDF format? Yes_____ No_____
Thayer Quarterly newsletter preference: via Email (PDF format): _ _ _ _ _ _ _ via Snail Mail (booklet):_____

E-Mail Address: _____
If new member, how did you hear about TFA (include referring person if applicable):
_____
_____

Do you have any special talents or interests that would benefit the TFA?
_____
_____

Please mail this completed form, plus your check payable to Thayer Families Association at the following address:
THAYER FAMILIES ASSOCIATION, INC.
c/o Nancy L. Thayer
1327 Lavanham Court
Apopka, FL 32712-3069

From The Board of Directors

We would like to provide the future opportunity for members to contact each other via a Membership Directory. This is to be a listing of all members of the Thayer Families Association, Inc,, aka TFA, (a Massachusetts corporation), made available only to participating individual TFA members, .and would be published on an annual basis.*This directory will not be shared by the TFA with other organizations. Member use is limited to contact for the purpose of genealogical questions or member socialization. You can select which information you wish displayed. Please note: you have the ability to change or update your information at any time via the TFA's website (www.thayerfamilies.com), by email to jim@thayerfamilies.com, or by snail mail to TFA, 1327 Lavanham Court, Apopka, FL 32712-3069. For updates to take effect, please allow 24-48 hours for email confirmation, and 5-7 business days for mailed confirmation.

Managing Your Preferences

We will include your information only with your consent. By checking boxes below, you are consenting to provide your contact information to other participating TFA Members:

- ☐ First and Last Name(s)
- ☐ Mailing Address
- ☐ Home Phone Number
- ☐ Mobile Phone Number
- ☐ Email Address
- ☐ No thanks, I do not wish to participate in a TFA Membership Directory

* Note: if published online, the Membership Directory will be password-protected.

THE THAYER QUARTERLY
1327 Lavanham Court
Apopka, FL 32712-3069

Contacting Your TFA

For all general business with the TFA, please contact our TFA Secretary:

Nancy L. Thayer
1327 Lavanham Court
Apopka, FL 32712-3069
Email: nancy@thayerfamilies.com

For genealogical queries, or to find a Family Representative of a particular family, please write (and include an SASE for written reply):

Patricia Thayer Muno
Thayer Family Historian
3618 North 225 East
North Ogden, UT 84414-2762
Email: TriciaMuno@aol.com

Issues are mailed the first week of the month as follows: Winter (Dec); Spring (Mar); Summer (Jun); Fall (Sep). Back issues are available from 1994 to present; some may be a photocopy (Spring 2000 to present is available in electronic PDF format. Cost is $5.00 each for members, $10.00 each for nonmembers, checks only, payable to TFA.
TFA, 1327 Lavanham Court
Apopka, FL 32712-3069

ARTICLE SUBMISSION: Your articles, letters to the editor, and comments regarding content are vital to the TQ. Photographs with a light background are appreciated, and can be returned, undamaged, if requested. Digital photos sent via email are also welcome. Send typed articles to the TFA address or email the Editor with an attached file containing the article. Articles and submissions may be edited, respectfully, for length and readability. Please provide sources, if applicable. Any topics that are of general interest to members are encouraged, and articles written by the Editor at your suggestion or from material you provide, will be credited to you.
Now collecting your stories, photographs, recipes and treasured memories for our Spring issue. Children encouraged to send their stories, projects and artwork! **Deadline for submission to the Spring Issue is January 31, 2018. Please send via email to the editor: larissa@thayerfamilies.com**

Join us on Facebook
Thayer Families Association