

A Guided Tour of Our Ancestors and Their Worlds: Messages for Our Lives

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Acknowledgements

Ushering this paper to its completion was a great joy. The desired information about my family was pouring out of my resources with amazing speed and nearly perfect timing. The original plan was to gather some genealogical facts about a few relatives and organize them into a 25-page paper. I was in awe at what the LORD did to turn this paper into a much larger document with remarkable detail about my relatives who were present at the beginnings of the American experience in the early colonies.

Every step of this genealogical adventure guided me through diverse layers of people and cultures that informed and intrigued me beyond my expectations. This knowledge of my ancestors' lives and times has given me a better sense of who I am as a person and a family member. I continue to process the lessons learned from their lives. I hope you are similarly blessed. I am grateful for this knowledge, and I give credit and praise to God for sharing this with me and my family.

When the enormity and complexity of this writing job became clear, I solicited help from family members. Our eldest son, Doug, was interested in helping with the work of taking a massive amount of raw data from dozens of sources and converting it into flowing and edifying prose. Doug spent a few months going over my first efforts to get the information in chronological order and create an interesting and thoughtful storyline. Although Doug was trained in computer science and never showed much interest in language arts, he told me he had done considerable work as a "wordsmith." My wife, Alice, was as confused as I was with this self-description so she looked up his resumé and found Doug did, indeed, identify himself as such. When I read his suggestions for this paper, it was clear that this moniker was appropriate. If you like the way the words are put together, it was probably Doug's work.

Alice, proofread this document numerous times with a good eye for detail. Alice's greatest contribution, however, was her ability to read the horrible handwriting of my 4th great-grandfather, Abner Cheever, and other ancient documents. I marveled every time she could decode the mysterious scrawl that was beyond my reach. I am grateful for her willingness to help with this important job because the many letters of Abner Cheever are the highlight of this document, as you will discover.

Finally, our youngest son, Jeff, also took an interest in this project. Even though Jeff earned a college scholarship in writing and majored in professional writing, he was interested in the technical work of putting this genealogical document online as a PDF file. The process for doing that with such a long and complex document was beyond my ability. He purchased the web domain, made a name for it, and created a beautiful and professional document that is easy for anyone to read on-line. Also, the document is now easy to edit as more family history emerges.

With gratitude,
Bruce Stevenson

Introduction

This paper is my attempt to provide useful genealogical and historical information for those of us who descend from the union of Ada Mae (Burgess) Stevenson (1927-2022) and Robert Glenn Stevenson (1926-2011). It is not only offered to my children but to their children and all subsequent generations. The following questions will be addressed: Where did our ancestors come from? How did they live their lives? What were their families like? Were they people of faith? It is hoped that the information learned from the lives of our ancestors provides a lens through which we can view the contexts we currently face, the future challenges that will appear, and the ways we can address our personal and family circumstances.

Part I of our story begins with a detailed description of the Cheever family which was prominent in the lineages associated with my mother. First, we will look at the Cheever ancestors who developed from an English immigrant, Ezekiel Cheever, who made his appearance in colonial Massachusetts circa 1636. The colonial era Cheever generations have been written about in some detail by historians and genealogists, so the information is more detailed than is typical for this historical period.

Part II presents information about another immigrant family from England named Hammond. They, too, were part of my mother's ancestral lines and immigrated to Massachusetts colonies in the 1630's. The Hammond immigrant in which we are most interested is a widow named Elizabeth Penn Hammond. She and her four children were early colonists from the extensive Hammond family of London. She travelled to America with others from her Puritan church including her pastor. There were other parts of the Hammond family that came to the same area of Massachusetts both before and after her, which made for a relatively large clan in the Boston and Watertown areas. We will follow her descendants for a few generations until the Hammond family intersects with the Cheever family through the marriage of Rev. Samuel Cheever and Thankfull Hammond in 1781. The Cheever/Hammond union opened a genealogical pathway that takes us to other interesting early colonizers in New England.

Part III marks the transition from our New England Cheever/Hammond roots to the Indiana Cheevers that lead to my mother. From the Cheever/Hammond union (1781) it appears that 5 children resulted. The child of primary interest is Abner Hersey Cheever (1787), who decided to leave New England with his wife and young son to head west. Abner, like many from his family, was well educated and enjoyed the status of coming from an influential line of educators, theologians, and ship captains. The mariners of the Cheever family do not appear in my lineage. Abner documents his journey to the Midwest and his eventual settlement in Jennings Co, Indiana through letters written to his sister, Thankful Cheever Webster. Abner's sister had the same first name as their mother but spelled with one "l" instead of two "l's." Abner's 18 letters to Thankful were written between 1816 (the year Indiana achieved statehood) and 1837. This written account provides a dramatic depiction of Abner's material and spiritual journeys during this time frame. Abner's journey is deeply emotional and profoundly memorable.

The remainder of Part III is about Abner's descendants who were linked to Sand Creek Township in Jennings and Decatur counties in Indiana.

Abner's Indiana descendants who constitute my direct lineage are:

- Abner's son, William F. (1814)
- William F.'s son, William A. (1841)
- William A.'s son, Clifford H. (1877)
- Clifford's daughter, Neva Etta Cheever Burgess (1902)

- Neva's daughter (my mother), Ada Mae Burgess Stevenson (1927)

All were born in Indiana. All lived in Sand Creek Township. The lives of these Cheever descendants will be explored.

Part IV addresses the lineages of those people who constitute the Stevenson side of our family. A summary of several Stevenson generations in rural England is our starting point. Our first English relative to immigrate to America was Stephen Stevenson who arrived in America in 1852 and worked as a miner and, eventually, as a farmer in Ohio. Two of Stephen's male offspring (William and Moses) eventually moved to rural Indiana where their offspring intermarried with other farming families in Clay County. The family surnames most directly associated with William Stevenson's son, Ernest (my grandfather), and Ernest's wife (my grandmother) are: Moss, Long, Jeffers, and Barber. Following these family lines back in time yielded little reliable genealogical information. Thus, focus was placed on known and easy to track relatives who were farming families near the Clay County location of my grandparents' farm. Some of these families still have a presence in Clay County and some do not. During my father's generation, my dad was one of several who left their family farms to pursue other careers. Part IV documents the tethering of our Clay County Indiana relatives to the land and the eventual untethering from the land of my family line. Attention is also paid to indications of religiosity among my paternal ancestors.

In a search for people from my Indiana clan who had distinguished themselves on a larger stage than Clay County, Indiana, one gentleman, known as Major Charles Wesley Moss (1820-1900), emerged. The details of his exciting life will be shared.

Part V of this paper contains personal recollections of my paternal grandparents and my parents. These are the relatives I knew best when I was growing up. Some of the stories are recollections of tragic situations and some are mundane. Some are experiences relevant to my understanding of the religious influences in my life. As you read Parts I through V, you will be occasionally asked questions as a way of encouraging reflection on the challenges and possible meanings to be found in our relatives' lives. You will be asked to consider the purposes and activities of you own lives, and how they relate to your various relationships.

Part VI uses the letters of Abner Cheever as a beginning point for the closing thoughts and questions about the dilemma of living between the demands of the material and spiritual worlds. This is a tension experienced by all people in all places and times. The stories provided in this paper about our ancestors may be able to inform and unite us as families, and encourage us to honor God in our efforts to live according to our callings. This paper closes with a quotation and a challenge: "A proper understanding of our family history may serve as a warning, a prescription, an encouragement, or a map forward; but it always serves as a blessing from God when our history is viewed as something worthy of meditation for the development of discernment and wisdom." This was one of my conclusions from the information that is reported herein. I offer a challenge for you to look for personal applications as you consider the questions emanating from the diverse personal and family experiences of our ancestors.

Bruce Stevenson

Part I: The England/New England Cheever Ancestors of My Maternal Lineage

James Cheever

Our story begins with the grandparents of [Ezekiel Cheever](#) in England. Ezekiel's grandfather was James Cheever. He lived in Mansfield, Nottinghamshire, England circa 1560-1616. Nothing is known about his parents. James died in Mansfield at the age of 56 and James was a "Yeoman." The classification of Yeoman originally referred to one who owns and cultivates land or to the middle ranks of servants in an English royal or noble household. The term was first documented in mid-14th-century England. These yeomen would eventually become a social stratum of commoners below the landed gentry, but above the husbandmen (non-owner farm hands who often lived on the property.) This stratum later embodied the political and economic ideas of the English and Scottish enlightenments, and transplanted those ideas to the early modern era. On September 14, 1582, when James was 22, he married Agnes Walker, in Mansfield, Nottinghamshire, England. They had four children:

- William Cheever
- Richard Cheever of Canterbury, Kent, England
- James Cheever
- Christopher Cheever

James Cheever is my 11th Great Grandfather

William Cheever

William Cheever was born circa 1584 in England to James and Agnes Cheever. They lived in London, Hampstead, England. The following description provides quotations from original documents which gives the readers an opportunity to experience the writing and terminology of the day. It is also an unfiltered way of presenting historical data so readers are free to make their own interpretations of the raw material. You will continue to see the old writing styles from original documents as we move through the history of our ancestors.

William Cheever was a "Skinner" by trade. According to public records, on June 26, 1605, William "... hath put himself apprentice with Ralph Hill citizen, and Skinner from the same feaste last past (St. John Baptist) for 8 years...." On June 4, 1613, "...William Cheever admitted to Freedom..." and became a skinner in his own right. On March 9, c. 1616. It was also learned that Christopher Cheever became an apprentice to his older brother, William, as a skinner.

On January 6th, 1613, when William was 29, he married Margaret Newman, in All Hallows Church, Lombard Street, London. A note with their marriage record states "not in the due place" indicating that they were probably married by license, but not in the Church of England. They were the parents of Ezekiel Cheever.

William Cheever is my 10th Great Grandfather

At this point in our history, you will notice a great influence of the Puritan church in the lives of the Cheever offspring. It is unknown when Ezekiel Cheever became a Puritan believer, but it probably happened after his parents were married because his parents were probably not married in the Church of England, which was unusual at that time in England. Ezekiel began a pattern of involvement in church affiliation which permeates the history of many Cheever descendants.

Headmaster Ezekiel Cheever

Ezekiel was born on January 25, 1614 in London, Hampstead, Middlesex, England.

Ezekiel is an example of how one could emigrate from England to America in the 17th century and rise far beyond what his station in life would have been had he remained in England. His grandfather was a yeoman and his father was a skinner. But [Ezekiel](#) was most noted as Headmaster of the Boston Latin School. All his sons graduated from Harvard College in Cambridge, Middlesex Co., Massachusetts, and some became noted ministers in the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Quite a rise in a single generation.

When Ezekiel Cheever was born, his family circumstances were good enough for him to receive a classical secondary education that prepared him for Emmanuel College, Cambridge University. One account says he attended a secondary school attached to Christ's Hospital in 1624. By another account, about which there is some doubt, he attended the well-known St. Paul's School in London.

The colleges making up Cambridge University attracted such future leaders as Oliver Cromwell, who headed the [Puritan Revolution](#) in England. Other Cambridge-educated Puritans who left England for the New World and became leaders in America included [William Brewster](#), [John Winthrop](#), and [John Cotton](#). Ezekiel Cheever entered [Emmanuel College](#), Cambridge University in 1633. Emmanuel College was founded as a Puritan institution in 1584 and was the model for Harvard College in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Ezekiel felt called by God to teach the Puritan children in the New England colonies. He arrived in Boston in June, 1637. He was 23 years old and single. In 1638, Cheever married Mary Culverwell, his first wife. Soon after marriage, he went to [New Haven, Connecticut](#) and taught school. His wife, Mary, died in 1649, leaving him with five young children. In 1650 he left New Haven after 12 years as its schoolteacher. It was probably while in New Haven that he wrote a Latin grammar textbook, [Accidence](#). It was a highly popular textbook in colonial Latin grammar schools and was used long after his death in 1708. The twentieth edition was published in 1838.

In 1650, Cheever moved his family back to Massachusetts and on November 18, 1652, he married Ellen Lathrop. Ellen is the sister of Captain Thomas Lathrop, a war hero who died during [King Philip's War](#) (a war with a coalition of native American tribes). Ezekiel and Ellen had five children. One of their sons, Rev. Thomas Cheever, graduated from Harvard in 1677 and is my direct ancestor in the line to Headmaster Ezekiel Cheever. More is reported about him below. Another of Ezekiel's sons, also named Ezekiel Cheever, was a resident of Salem Village during the time of the infamous [Witch Trials](#). His involvement in the trials is reported along with Thomas Cheever's history below.

On December 29, 1670, Ezekiel Sr. was invited to become Head Master of the [Boston Latin School](#). He taught in New England a total of seventy years, the last thirty-eight as master of the [Boston Latin School](#) (the most famous college preparatory school for young men for more than a century). Five signers of the Declaration of

Independence and four presidents of Harvard College attended the Boston Latin School. Its many famous pupils included [Benjamin Franklin](#), [Cotton Mather](#), [John Hancock](#), [Samuel Adams](#), [Wendell Philips](#), [Henry Ward Beecher](#), [Edward Everett Hale](#), and others. Ezekiel died in Boston, Suffolk Co., on August 21, 1708. He was 94 and was buried in the [Granary Burying Ground](#), Boston, Suffolk Co., MA. His death record in the Boston vital records reported this: "Cheever, Ezekiel, schoolmaster, b Jan. 25, 1614, in London, d. Aug. 21, 1708 ..." At his funeral, [Cotton Mather](#) gave the eulogy. In it, Mather praised Cheever for his "untiring abjuration of the devil."

If you would enjoy reading material written by Ezekiel Cheever, he wrote three essays on scriptural prophecy entitled, [*Scriptural Prophecies Explained. In Three Short Essays. I. On the Restitution of all Things. II. On St. John's First Resurrection. III. On the Personal Coming of Jesus Christ.*](#) Printed in Boston in MDCCLVII (1757.) Also, this item is available on Amazon.com by searching for the above title. Finally, there is an appendix to this book which contains Cheever's poems. When I received the book, I immediately turned to the appendix to read them. Imagine my disappointment when I saw that every poem was written in Latin!

Would you like to learn more about the life of Ezekiel Cheever and his descendants? A genealogist named John Tyler Hassam wrote a book entitled, [*Ezekiel Cheever and Some of His Descendants \(Part First\)*](#) Boston: Printed by David Claff & Son 1879. It is available for loan upon request or can be purchased through Amazon.com. Search for [*Ezekiel Cheever And Some Of His Descendants \(1879\)*](#), or click on the link above. This book contains many details of Ezekiel's life including court transcripts of a 10-year legal battle over his second wife's inheritance at the death of her brother, Captain Thomas Lathrop. Captain Lathrop died in the [Battle of Bloody Brook](#) during [King Philip's War](#) (First Indian War.) Captain Lathrop had no children, and Ellen Lathrop, his sister, was the closest living relative. Ellen and Ezekiel believed they were entitled to the inheritance; however, Captain Lathrop's wife believed she was the heir. I won't tell you who won the court case. This book also contains transcripts from the church court charges against Ezekiel for improper conduct in church and the disciplinary action against him. Some of this story is quite humorous. It seems Ezekiel was observed covering his face and head with a handkerchief while laughing during a service.

The second (and final) part of Hassam's series will be used in the report on Rev. Thomas Cheever, Thomas Cheever, Jr., and Rev Edward Cheever. It is entitled: [*Ezekiel Cheever and Some of His Descendants \(Part Second\)*](#). Boston: Printed by David Claff & Son 1879. The document does not appear to be in print at this time; but while searching for it, I found a free copy to read online through Internet Archive. You can read the document online without charge by searching: [Ezekiel Cheever and some of his Descendants : part second : Hassam, John T. \(John Tyler\), 1841-1903. Free Download through Internet Archive](#)

If you prefer easier reading, there is a wonderful 6-page scholarly article written by Franklin and Betty J. Parker in January of 1996. It is entitled: [*Ezekiel Cheever \(1614-1708\), New England Colonial Teacher.*](#) You can read or download it by searching for the above noted title; or click the link below to get a readable copy on your computer. [*Ezekiel Cheever \(1614-1708\), New England Colonial Teacher.*](#)

For Your Consideration

Consider Ezekiel Cheever as a young man in a barely settled New England colony, far from family, friends, and country. Additionally, Ezekiel was left with five young children when his wife died in 1649.

- Ezekiel felt called of God to educate the Puritan youth in a foreign country. Would you be willing to leave your country and your family to fulfill your calling from God?
- Why do you think the calamity of losing his wife and having to raise 5 young children without her did not derail Ezekiel's faith and mission to educate the Puritan youth?
- What evidence do you see that God was with Ezekiel throughout his life?
- Can you name an experience that testifies to God's guidance and support in your life?

Headmaster Ezekiel Cheever is my 9th Great Grandfather

Reverend Thomas Cheever

Thomas was born on August 23, 1658 in Ipswich, Essex co., MA. He graduated from [Harvard College](#) in 1677. Circa 1681, when Thomas was 22, he first married Sarah Bill, daughter of James Bill, Sr. and wife, Mary {surname not known}, in Boston, Suffolk co. or Lexington, Middlesex co., MA.

Thomas Cheever's First Ministerial Appointment

Rev. Thomas Cheever was admitted a member of the First Church, Boston, July 1680, and took the oath of freeman Oct. 13, 1680. The "[Oath of a Freeman](#)" was a loyalty pledge required of all new members of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. He began to preach at Malden on February 14, 1679, and was ordained there July 27, 1681, as colleague of the Rev. Michael Wigglesworth (Harvard College, 1651).

The Charges Against Rev Thomas Cheever and His Dismissal

On March 11, "Seven or eight days before the Assembly broke up, a libellous paper was dispersed in Boston. It was verily believed that one Cheevers, a young, hot-headed minister, was the author of that paper." Judge Sewall in his diary, under date of March 15, 1686, writes: "Mr. Wigglesworth here, speaks about a Council respecting Mr. Thomas Chiever," and again March 28, 1686, "Letter read from Maldon directed to the three Churches in Boston, desiring Council respecting their Pastor Mr. Tho. Chiever, who is charg'd with scandalous immoralities, for which hath not given satisfaction." Sewall was himself a member of the Council called to consider these charges, and he

has left an account of the trial which took place in Malden, April 7, 1686. Ezekiel Cheever, schoolmaster, the father of the pastor, "desired to be present, was admitted and bid wellcom, except when Council debated in private all alone." The Rev. Mr. Cheever denied the truth of the charges. The Council in their report complained that they had not seen "that humble penitential frame in him when before us, that would have become him." They advised the church to suspend him from the exercise of his ministerial function for the space of six weeks, "and that in case he shall in the mean while manifest that Repentance which the Rule requires, they should confirm their Love to him, and (if possible) improve him again in the Lord's Work among them." When the report was read in public the following day by the moderator, the [Rev. Increase Mather](#), "Mr. Chiever the Father [Ezekiel Cheever], stood up and pathetically desir'd his soul might speak, but Mr. Moderator and others judg'd it not convenient, he not having by what he said given the Council encouragement." The result was that the Council which adjourned to meet in Boston, where meetings were held May 20th and 27th, and June 10th, 1686, advised the Church to grant him a "loving dismission."

Rev. Thomas Cheever as School Teacher

Thomas "removed shortly after this to Rumney Marsh," then a part of Boston, but which was incorporated in 1739 as a distinct town under the name of Chelsea. The inhabitants of Rumney Marsh had succeeded as early as 1701 in obtaining a vote of the town authorizing the establishment of a school there, but nothing appears to have been done until the following vote was passed by the selectmen of Boston. January 24, 1709, "That in case Thomas Cheever do undertake and attend the keeping Such School at his House four dayes in a weeke weekly for space of one year ensueing, and render an accoun to the Selectmen once every Quarter of the number of Children or Schollars belonging unto district, which shall duly attend the School, he shall be allowed & paid out of the Town Treasury after the Rate of Twenty pounds p annum for his service." The REGISTER for Jan., 1864, contains his "account of schollars attending School in Rumny-marsh for reading, writing, and cyphering, in the last quarter: ending February: 8th 1709-10."

Rev. Thomas Cheever is Offered a Position at Rumney Marsh

Upon the formation of the church in Rumney Marsh, October 19, 1715, Thomas was ordained as its first minister. Regarding Thomas Cheever's history of church removal, it was noted by those at the Rumney Marsh church that at the time of Cheever's disciplinary dismissal, it was more common for a church to exercise this type of disciplinary power. The leader of the Rumney-Marsh church made this statement about the type of power used against Thomas Cheever: "But I know not that we have any reason to think, that this mode of exercising power contributed to the advancement of the true interest of the church. That it gave occasion for the indulgence of bad passions, is as certain, as that it availed in any instance to the correction of evil. It grew, however, out of the spirit of the time, and is now almost unknown in this section of our country."

The [Rev. Joseph Tuckerman](#), who was ordained in Chelsea, November 4, 1801, in a sermon preached to commemorate the completion of twenty years of Cheever's pastorate, said: "I am told that he was much respected at home; and his records bear ample testimony to the regard which was felt for him by neighbouring churches."

Thomas Cheever's Retirement Process and Death

"In consequence of his age and infirmities, it was determined that the 7th of October, 1747, should be observed as a day of fasting and prayer, for the purpose of imploring the direction of Almighty God in the choice of a minister as colleague with the Rev. Mr. Cheever. It does not appear that he preached after this time;" and, "he died in November, 1749, retaining the unabated affection of those to whom he had dispensed the word and ordinances of the gospel." "He lived," says a Harvard scholar, "to be the oldest surviving graduate of the college (Harvard); Samuel Andrew, of the Class of 1675, the next oldest before him, having died in 1738."

Thomas died in Chelsea, November 27, 1749 at the age of 91 according to the inscription on his gravestone. He was buried in Old Graveyard in Revere, Suffolk co., MA.

A Note About Thomas Cheever's Brother, Ezekiel

Thomas Cheever had a brother named Ezekiel (born 1655). He was reported as a tailor in Salem Village and was one of the original members of the Church of Salem. Ezekiel gained notoriety as having a part in the infamous Witch Trials (1692) in Salem, Massachusetts.

Historians view the Witch Trials as being the product of myriad sociological forces of the day, but driven by the Puritan religious concern with witchcraft as a manifestation of an alliance with the devil. Odd behaviors and accusations by a few females (ages 9-20) led to suspicions of several adults, mostly women, who were thought to be endowed with Satanic power to cause human affliction and magical apparitions. The Puritans felt a duty to repair their relationship with God by ridding Salem of evil spirits that had taken over some of the residents' souls, and get back on the path to righteousness. The trials admitted evidence that was widely considered to be of no legal relevance.

Ezekiel Cheever's name is used in the play, [*The Crucible*](#) (1953) by Arthur Miller. Ezekiel was depicted in the play as the obsequious clerk of the court that held the Salem witch trials. In fact, Ezekiel's role in the trial was more significant. He gave deposition and testimony regarding three defendants: Sarah Good, Sarah Osborne, and Tituba (a Caribbean slave woman). He and others gave eye-witness testimony about their witchcraft activities. Tituba confessed to witchcraft and testified in court that Osborne and Good participated in witchcraft with her. Osborne died in jail on May 29, 1692 at approximately 49 years of age. Sarah Good maintained her innocence to the end and was hanged along with four other women convicted of witchcraft. Tituba was imprisoned for over a year but never went to trial because she testified against Good and Osborne. The people participating in the trials relied on faith-based evidence to prove the guilt of the defendants. Their faith is what dominated their lives and their actions went hand in hand with events that they tried to explain but, likely, did not understand.

Rev. Thomas Cheever is my 8th Great Grandfather

Ezekiel Cheever is my 8th Great Uncle

For Your Consideration

Consider Pastor Thomas Cheever's call to the ministry and subsequent dismissal from ministry based on charges he believed to be unfair.

- How do you think God might use the experience of a job loss in your life?
- What might God be teaching us through circumstances that seem to move us away from our callings?
- Do you think Thomas becoming a teacher was part of God's plan for his life? Why?
- What was your feeling when Thomas returned to church ministry?

Consider Ezekiel Cheever's role in the Salem Witch Trial.

- Are there current day examples of religion being used as a basis for a moral position or action that might be viewed as improper when given more historical context and greater amounts of insight into the issue?

Thomas Cheever, Jr.

Thomas was born in Rumney Marsh (now Chelsea), Suffolk co., MA.

Thomas bought a farm in the "Pan Handle" of Rumney Marsh/Revere called Cogan Farm. He bought 24 acres of land from Lydia Paul and her daughter Sarah on October 17, 1701. He bought 27½ acres from Mrs. Paul's heirs and on June 22, 1703, he bought 60 acres more from Richard Pratt for 100 pounds. Mr. Cheever was known as the Representative for the town of Lynn in 1726-1727 and 1740-1742.

Thomas was first married to Mary Boardman, daughter of William Boardman and Sarah {surname not known} in Rumney Marsh {now Chelsea}, Suffolk co., MA as "Thomas Chever junr. & Mary Boman {by} Mr. Thomas Chever."

Children:

- Mary Cheever: born November 3, 1702 and died before April 10, 1722. Less than 19 years of age.
- Thomas Cheever: born on February 25, 1704 in Lynn, Essex co., MA. Died when he was 30 years and 17 days old.
- William Cheever: born May 21, 1708.
- Abner Cheever: born on February 19, 1709 and died young.

The second marriage was to Mary Baker in Lynn, MA. Mary died on May 10, 1753.

Children:

- Ezekiel Cheever: born March 25, 1714 in Lynn, MA
- Joshua Cheever: born October 4, 1715 in Lynn, MA
- Rev. Edward Cheever: born May 2, 1717 in Eastham, MA and died on August 16, 1794 at age 77. Like the other men in his family, he went to Harvard and graduated in 1737. Edward's biography is reported below as another direct ancestor to Ezekiel Cheever.
- Abijah Cheever: born December 11, 1718 and died circa November 6, 1775 which was the date his brother John was appointed administrator of his estate. He was 56.
- John Cheever: born June 13, 1720 in Lynn, MA. He died at the age of 54.
- Mary Cheever: born April 10, 1722 in Lynn, MA and died on May 4, 1787 at the age of 65.
- Sarah Cheever: born February 14, 1723 in Lynn, MA
- Abner Cheever was born on January 24, 1725 in Lynn, MA and died on April 22, 1797 at the age of 71.
- Elizabeth Cheever: born on August 16, 1727 in Lynn, MA

Thomas Cheever's third marriage was to Mary {surname not known} on October 19, 1753.

Biography of Thomas Cheever, Jr.

Public records indicated the following: "Thomas Cheever, gentleman;" was of Rumney Marsh as late as 1702, and "in that year removed to Lynn". "He is styled in earlier deeds 'cordwainer' [shoemaker], yeoman, and tanner." Historian and genealogist, John Tyler Hassam reported: "With Ebenezer Merriam, Thomas built in 1723 the first mill on Saugus River, at Boston Street crossing. He was an enterprising man, and the Church, Town, and County records give ample evidence of his ceaseless activity. He took the foremost part in the formation of the church in the third parish of Lynn, of which his son, Edward, was the first 'settled minister.' This parish was incorporated as the district town in 1815 and named Saugus. He was also one of the directors of the [Manufactory Company](#) in 1740." Thomas Cheever, Jr died on November 8, 1753 in Lynn, Essex, MA.

For Your Consideration

- Do you see evidence of faith in the life of Thomas Cheever, Jr. even though he was not a pastor/teacher like his father and grandfather?
- What behaviors suggest he was a man of faith?
- What behaviors in your life give evidence of your faith?

Thomas Cheever, Jr. is my 7th Great Grandfather

Reverend Edward Cheever

Edward was born in 1717 in Lynn, Essex, Massachusetts Bay Colony. Edward graduated from [Harvard College](#) in 1737. He married Martha Wigglesworth on December 11, 1739 in Ipswich, Essex, Massachusetts Bay Colony. Martha's father was Rev. Samuel Wigglesworth. They were the parents of at least 3 sons and 1 daughter. One of those sons was named Samuel (another direct line ancestor of mine). Edward became the pastor of the Third Church of Lynn in July 1739 where he remained for several years. I found only one account of his time at this church. He (Rev. Cheever) "carelessly neglected to keep records" during his ministry. His successor, the Rev. Joseph Roby, who was ordained August 2, 1750, formally complained that he was "unhappily disappointed" because his predecessor had left nothing in writing about "communicants." All he found was a copy of the church covenant and the names of persons who first joined. Little else could be found on Rev. Edward Cheever's professional and personal life.

The Third Church of Lynn (Puritan Church) reorganized as the First Congregational Church, Saugus, MA in 1815. By the beginning of the 19th century, Puritanism had both declined and shown its tenacity. At first, the Puritans' central themes recurred in the related religious communities of Congregationalists; then Quakers, Baptists, Presbyterians, and Methodists; and then a whole range of evangelical churches. Within the Cheever family the shift to another denomination occurred with Edward Cheever's son, Samuel Cheever. Samuel's story is next.

Reverend Edward Cheever died August 17, 1794, in Eastham, Barnstable, Massachusetts, United States, at the age of 77, and was buried in Bridge Road Cemetery, Eastham, Barnstable, Massachusetts, United States.

Rev. Edward Cheever, Jr. is my 6th Great Grandfather

Reverend Samuel Cheever

Information about Samuel Cheever is primarily taken from an historical study done by Virginia Sutherland Bail and published in 1962 by the Vermont Historical Society. It is entitled, *Two Hundred years in the Hartland Churches*. This scholarly document records Protestant church history in Hartland, Vermont from mid-1700's through the 1950's.

When Samuel Cheever was born on October 21, 1752, in Eastham, Barnstable, Massachusetts, his father, Rev. Edward Cheever, was 35 and his mother, Martha Wigglesworth, was 32. He married Thankfull Hammond who was born on September 7, 1754. Thankfull and Samuel were married on May 27, 1781 in Rochester, Plymouth, Massachusetts. Thankfull came from a prominent line of Hammonds who settled in and around Boston, Massachusetts early in the English colonization efforts. Samuel and Thankfull were the parents of 4 sons and 2 daughters. However, available public records show both to be the parents of the first three children, but only lists the father (Samuel Cheever) with no mention of the mother for the other children. Public records of Thankfull's death were not found. One unverified date and place of death was found for Thankfull: March 10, 1793 in Reading, Vermont. The person reporting this date identifies as a Hammond family member. If this date of death for Thankfull Hammond Cheever is accurate, it is likely that she bore the following children with her husband, Samuel:

- Thankful Cheever: 1782–1848
- Samuel Cheever: 1783–1867
- Edward Cheever: circa 1786–1799
- Rev/Mr. Abner Hersey Cheever: 1787–1853. It should be noted that some sites refer to Abner as Rev. and some do not. His clergy status will be discussed later in this paper.
- Joshua Cheever: 1789/90–1847
- Clarissa Cheever: 1792-1793

It also appears that Samuel remarried after Thankfull's death. The time and place of this marriage are not known, but on December 17th, 1814 (shortly after Samuel's death), one Abigail Cheever entered probate court in Castleton, Vermont and presented a lawfully executed will for her deceased husband, Samuel Cheever. Abigail brought three witnesses with her to verify their presence at the signing and sealing of the will. The will was approved by the court. This lengthy document specifically named the items to be given to his "beloved wife," Abigail, and his three sons, Samuel Cheever, Abner H Cheever, and Joshua C Cheever; and his daughter, Thankful Webster. The will was signed on January, 27, 1813. Nothing else was found regarding the history of Samuel Cheever's second wife, Abigail.

The first professional mention of Samuel Cheever was regarding his status as an elder of the First Congregational Church of Hartland, Vermont. His dates of service as an elder are not known but his service began prior to 1789 when one of his fellow elders was installed as Pastor and Teacher. In 1797, that title was bestowed upon Samuel Cheever. The church was located in South Woodstock and was referred to as the Church of Christ. The church and the leadership were deeply influenced by the teaching of the famous evangelist, [Jonathan Edwards](#). The church theology followed a [Calvinistic](#)/Reformed Christianity influence. Prior to Samuel's time with the Congregational Church in Hartland, there were reports of a previous preaching position at Townshend and earning "Doctor of Physic" status at Windsor. The meaning of this title is unknown but may suggest some type of medical training not provided by a formal school. He was viewed as "uneducated" according to diary records of church members from this time. The Congregational denomination was one of two Protestant churches to highly value formal theological education. The choosing of Samuel Cheever appears to have been a departure from the previous hiring pattern and the pattern that resumed after he left. Despite his lack of formal education in theology, one diarist (an elder) wrote, "This Doctor (for so he was cald) was a smart Preacher. He did not read and call it Preaching; but he Preached. And his words ware with power; he gained the attention of the People more than any that had been before him." Church records indicated a great ingathering of new members at the beginning of his ministry.

Within a few years, there grew a raging battle over theology in the city of Hartland. This same "Battle of Doctrines" was occurring in many New England areas among the protestants. The foundations of Calvinism were being challenged by other protestant denominations. Samuel Cheever was on the front line of that battle. The Methodists, Baptists, Universalists, and others were preaching against Samuel's teachings related to eternal security, election of the saints, total depravity of man and other basic doctrines of reformation theology. These contrary teachings found an audience among Samuel's congregation. Some were regularly attending other services and some changed memberships. Pastor Cheever was involved in confrontations with some of the pastors who opposed his teaching. For example, a Methodist minister preached on the possibility of falling from grace (losing salvation). At the conclusion of the sermon, a diarist wrote, "Doctor [Cheever] got up and opposed him testifying that there was no such thing as falling from grace...." These types of conflicts intensified and another confrontation with a Methodist preacher was summarized by another diarist. "I was surprised to see how

the Poor Doctor felt, he expressed a great concern lest the wild fire should spread all over the town. The Doctor, therefore, tried to get the church to vote that they would not go to any more of these Meetings. This hurt many good members of the Church.” Samuel later tried to put an “explanatory clause” in the church covenant that said members “will not hold religious fellowship or communion with the Universalists and the Methodists and that they will not go after them on the Sabbath or make a practice of attending upon their preaching on other days and that all such members as will not renew covenant with this additional explanatory clause we will consider them no longer of us.”

Efforts at conciliation through the establishment of three councils prompted Samuel Cheever to leave the church. By the end of 1804, the separation was completed and Samuel Cheever was next reported to be a pastor at nearby Bridgewater, Vermont. The next piece of available information indicated that Samuel Cheever was given a position at a church called "The [Congregational Church of Stillwater](#)" located in Stillwater, New York. According to an online history of this church: “About the year 1800 a revival took place in connection with this church. By 1814, the church was nearly extinct; but after a meeting, in which there was intense feeling and much prayer, Deacon Thomas Morey was sent as a messenger to seek ministerial aid. Rev. Samuel Cheever was obtained from Vermont. Samuel Cheever died in the midst of his valuable work, six months after his entrance upon his labors.” Samuel Cheever died in December of 1814 in Stillwater, NY. He was buried in the cemetery next to the church.



In addition to the genealogical and historical information on Samuel and Thankfull, modern technology is now able to use DNA testing to help establish genetic links to other modern-day persons who also claim to have a genealogical link to the kinship line I claim. An explanation of this DNA technology and the results of Ancestry.com’s “matching” procedure for all DNA matches referenced in this paper is [explained in the Appendix](#). This DNA matching explanation must be read as a prerequisite to understanding all future DNA references regarding matches between myself and my ancestors. Specific [DNA matching results for Samuel Cheever](#) are also found in the Appendix.

For Your Consideration

Consider Pastor Samuel Cheever's struggles with other church leaders in his community and his own congregants who undermined his orthodox Christian teaching.

- Have you seen this type of struggle in today's churches? Have you experienced it?
- How might church leaders and the laity respond to doctrinal differences?
- Do you think Samuel made the right decision to leave the church during this conflict over theological orthodoxy?
- One of Samuel's sons, Abner, was ages 11-18 during the Hartland church assignment his father endured. Abner, like his father, was engaged in similar disputes with those who taught false doctrine in his community. See [Abner's letters in Part 3](#).

Rev. Samuel Cheever is my 5th Great Grandfather

At this point in our story, we will pause our following of the Cheever Line; and begin an examination of the Hammond line that intersected with the Cheever line upon the marriage of Samuel Cheever and Thankfull Hammond. This will allow us to reveal the remarkable ancestors that Thankfull Hammond brought to our genealogical picture. After the Hammond roots are revealed, we will return to the Cheever line. I am indebted to Roland Hammond, M.D., who compiled an amazing text named: *A History and Genealogy of the Descendants of William Hammond of London and His Wife Elizabeth Penn; through their son Benjamin of Sandwich and Rochester, Mass. 1600-1894*. Boston: David Clapp & Son Printers, 1894. The rights to this book are in the public domain and available in digital form from the Yale University Library and [Internet Archive](#). You can [read it online or download the entire 390 pages as a PDF file](#). Also, I have a paperback version of this text which may be borrowed.

Part II: The Hammond Ancestors of my Maternal Lineage

Elizabeth Penn Hammond

Our Hammond story begins with a widow in London, England. Her maiden name was Elizabeth Penn. She was the wife of William Hammond; the sister of the admiral and politician who sat in the House of Commons, Sir William Penn; and the aunt of another [William Penn](#), who oversaw the founding of Pennsylvania as a refuge for Quakers and other religious minorities from Europe. William Penn of Pennsylvania was a father of Democracy in the United States, who Thomas Jefferson called “the greatest lawgiver the world has produced.”

Elizabeth Penn was born circa 1586 in Suffolk, England and married into a very large Hammond clan in England. Many other Hammonds came to colonial America before and after her. According to "*A short Record of our Family*," by Elnathan Hammond, Elizabeth and her four children, “all young, left a good estate in London, and with several godly people came over to New England in troublesome times in 1634, out of a conscious desire to have the liberty to serve God in the way of his appointment. They had with them the [Rev. John Lothrop](#), their minister.” Church records show that Elizabeth joined the church in Scituate, Massachusetts. She became its 33rd member on April 16, 1638. Her date of death is inconsistently reported, but the best information suggests it is September 27, 1670. She was buried in Boston. She had an “honorable burial and the character of a very godly woman.”

Benjamin Hammond (1621), Elizabeth’s only son, “removed to Sandwich, and there married Mary Vincent, daughter of John Vincent.” They married in 1650. Benjamin, Sr. is my direct line ancestor to Elizabeth Penn. Benjamin and Mary’s 6 children were named:

- [Samuel](#) (1655-1728) Would become my 8th great-grandfather
- John (1663)
- Nathan (1760)
- [Benjamin II](#) (1673-1747) Would also become my 8th great grandfather
- Rose
- Mary

Samuel and Benjamin II are also my direct line ancestors to reach Elizabeth Penn.

Samuel married Mary Hathaway circa 1680. They had 11 children. Their seventh child was named Josiah (1692). Josiah married Mary Barlow (date unknown) and had children. One of their children was named [Charity Hammond](#) (June 5, 1718 - July 27, 1803).

Samuel’s brother, Benjamin II, married Elizabeth Hunnewell; and [Roger Hammond](#) was the 7th and last of their children. Roger was born in 1722 and died in 1758.

Benjamin II was noted in the book *A History and Genealogy of the Descendants of William Hammond of London and His Wife Elizabeth Penn; through their son Benjamin of Sandwich and Rochester, Mass.* as “a man of superior

abilities.” Benjamin II was “Selectman and Assessor 14 years”; “Representative in the Legislature two years”; “held commission as Justice of the Peace under [Queen Anne](#)”; and was a noted “land surveyor” who “laid out many of the towns in Plymouth and Bristol Counties.”

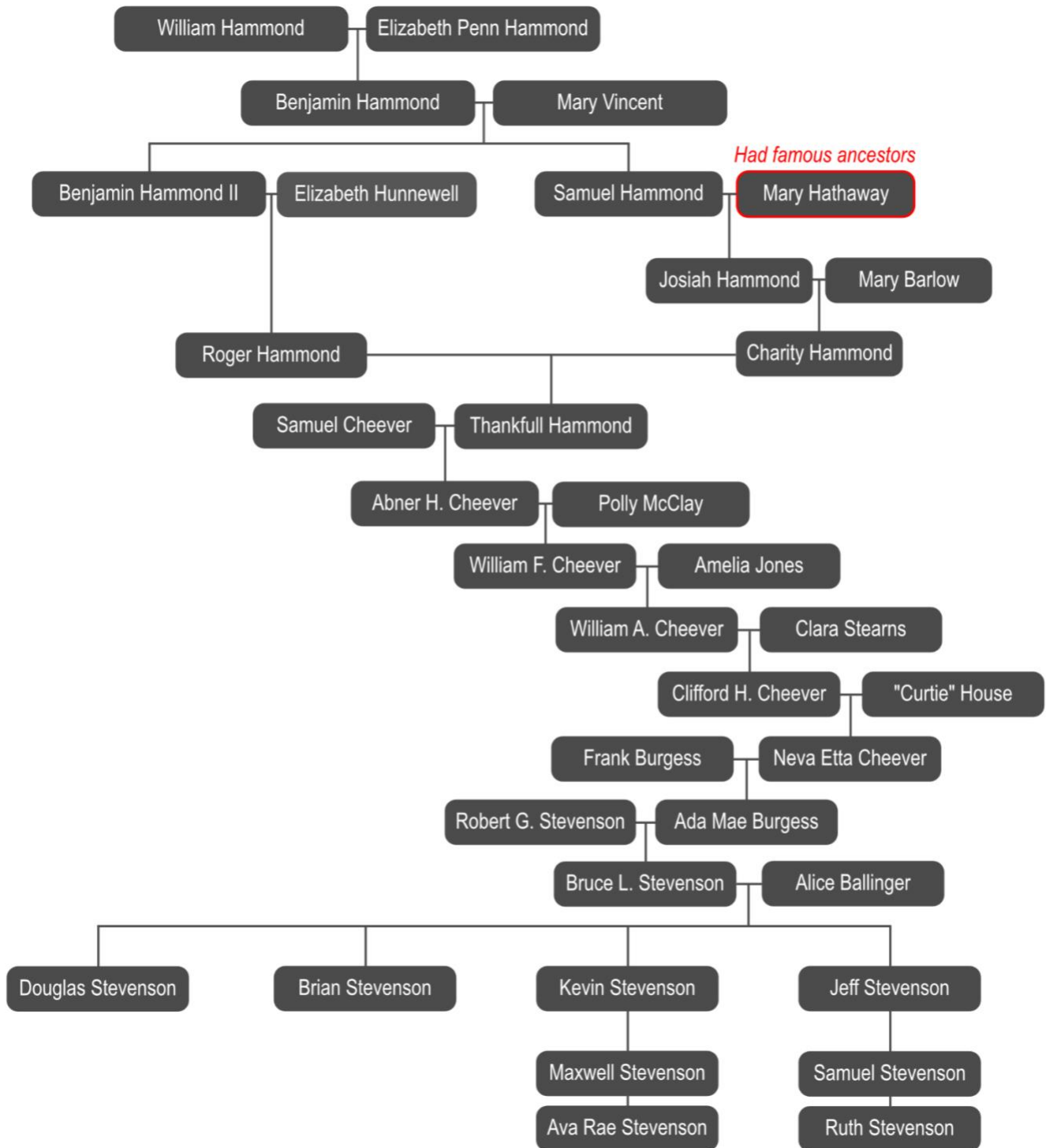
Charity Hammond and Roger Hammond were cousins and married on April 15, 1744. They had at least four children; the fourth was named Thankfull Hammond (1754-1793).

In summary:

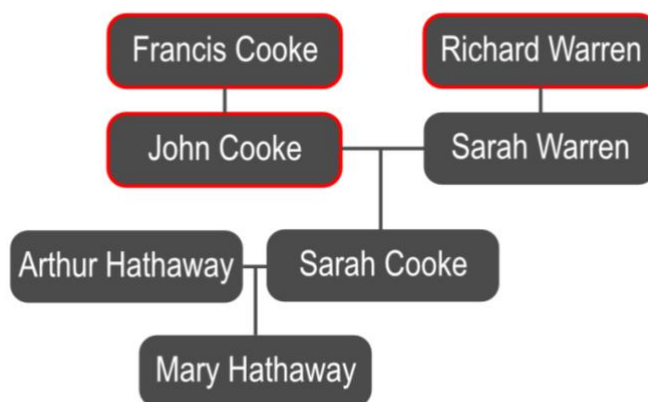
- Elizabeth Penn Hammond is my 10th Great-Grandmother
- Benjamin Hammond is my 9th Great-Grandfather
- Benjamin Hammond II and Samuel Hammond are my 8th G-Grandfathers
- Josiah Hammond is my 7th Great-Grandfather
- Charity and Roger Hammond are my 6th Great-Grandparents

To make these connections easier to understand, the following “Tree” is offered:

Our Family Genealogy from the Perspective of the Hammond Line



To find out who the **famous** Hathaway ancestors are, we start our search with Samuel Hammond's wife, Mary Hathaway, and these ancestors emerge:



The names **outlined in red** are historically important. They were not familiar to me when I found them, but they have something in common. They were all on the [Mayflower](#) that sailed from England to the area now known as Plymouth, Massachusetts in 1620. This ancestral line from Thankfull Hammond back to [Francis Cooke](#) has been confirmed by the Mayflower Descendant's Society as accurate. Although I am not interested in submitting a formal application for membership, my children and grandchildren and siblings are also eligible to apply. The [Mayflower Descendant's Society](#) sent me a [letter regarding my lineage](#) which is in the Appendix.

Historical Background: There were two groups within the Church of England who had disagreements with the church: [Puritans](#) and [Separatists](#). The Puritans wanted to “purify” the church by working within the church to reform it; they stayed in England and some experienced persecution. The Separatists, however, saw no hope in reformation of the Church of England. They were inclined to break ties and move to Holland, which was tolerant of religious diversity. They moved to Holland and started a church in Leiden. The church flourished and grew to a congregation of about 400. A major problem the Separatists had with living in Holland was their belief that Holland's secular culture was not appropriate their children.

[Francis Cooke](#) (1582-1663) was one of several Leiden, Holland church members who preferred the more religious culture of England to the secular culture of Holland. Francis was part of the first group of church members to immigrate to America to create their own Christian culture and continue to worship as they saw fit. Francis Cooke left his wife and younger children in England, but took his 13-year-old son, [John Cooke](#) (1606-1695), with him on the Mayflower.

Another Mayflower passenger, [Richard Warren](#) (c. 1585 – c. 1628) left his wife and their children in England and sailed alone. Richard was not a church member, but had interest in traveling to the emerging colonies as an “adventurer” in search of business opportunities to open new markets with England. Francis, John, and Richard were among the 52 pilgrims who survived the first winter that claimed half of these Mayflower passengers. Two or three years later, the wives and children of Francis and Richard joined the emerging colony.

Francis Cooke and Richard Warren are my 11th Great Grandfathers

John Cooke is my 10th Great Grandfather

Consider reading [*Mayflower: Voyage, Community, War*](#), written by a prize-winning author, Nathaniel Philbrick. It is a good way to learn about the pilgrims' experience in England, their frightening ship ride, and their tribulations during early colonization for 2-3 generations after the Mayflower landing. [It](#) is available from Amazon books or can be borrowed from me.

Also, the General Society of Mayflower Descendants has published several volumes about the Mayflower families. [*Mayflower Families Volume 12*](#), published in 1996, is a 716-page volume regarding the families descending from Francis Cooke. Volume 12 documents genealogies of the first five generations of Francis Cooke's ancestors. My copy bears a 2014 copyright date and contains an Addendum which notates all corrections and changes through 2016. You may borrow this volume from me or obtain your own copy by clicking of the link above.

Finally, there is a museum in Leiden, Holland known as the [American Pilgrim Museum](#). It has several interesting resources for the internet traveler. One available on-line resource is a ten-chapter book which details the life of the separatists/pilgrims during their time in Holland, and includes information about their many concerns with Holland's secular culture.

For Your Consideration

A primary reason the Separatists left Holland for America was because of the secularism of Holland's culture and the negative effects of that culture on themselves and their children.

- How can parents today protect their children from cultural influences that may be harmful?
- How powerful is culture in the shaping of children's lives?
- Are there any factors more powerful than culture in the formation of our worldviews? What are they?
- How is the Christian "baton" handed to the next generation? Is there a guaranteed method of Christian transmission? What is it?

The Separatists who landed at Plymouth in 1620 had few material belongings and were unprepared for the first winter that claimed half of their number.

- Why did this calamity not compromise their faith and destroy their mission to establish a faithful colony, as many other early colonial efforts were destroyed?
- What can keep our present-day spiritual missions alive during times of severe trials and tests?

It is now time to return to our Cheever family line. Through the union of Samuel Cheever and Thankfull Hammond, their 4th child, Abner Cheever, was born. A major part of Abner's story is reported by Abner, himself, in several letters written to his sister (Thankful Cheever Webster) between 1816 and 1837. His life marks the transition from the New England Cheever line to the Indiana Cheever line.

Part III: The Indiana Cheever Line

Abner Hersey Cheever

Birth: December 7, 1786

Date of Christening: January 14, 1787 in Brockton, Plymouth, MA

Spouses: Abner's first wife was Polly McClay Cheever. They married July 25, 1813 in Woodstock, Windsor, Vermont. Polly's ancestors came from Scotland in the mid-1700's.

Abner's second wife was Amy Wilson. Amy was probably born in Virginia in 1801. She married Abner on May 5, 1822.

Children: Polly McClay had a son, William Franklin Cheever (my direct line ancestor to Ezekiel Cheever), on September 26, 1814 in Vermont; another son was born on August 16, 1816 somewhere in Ohio as this young family traveled from Vermont to Indiana. They named him Horace. He died circa 1836. A daughter was also born to them on July 19th, 1818, while in Indiana. They named her Mary Ann. More about her later.

Abner's second wife, Amy Wilson, was 14 years younger than Abner. She gave birth to David Cheever on April 19th, 1823. He died in October of 1824. On June 1, 1825, they had a daughter, Clarissa. More about her later. Twin sons were born on December 2, 1827; one died instantly, and the other was named John Strange Cheever. John died on October 4th 1831.

Several of the following stories about Abner; his son, William Franklin; and his son William Abner, are made available from a self-published book written by Loralyn Reynolds. It provides some of the information about Abner's children and his children's children. The book is entitled, [*On the Banks of the Wyalloosing*](#) (2014.) This book is part auto-biography, part historical narrative, and part genealogical research. The primary focus is on five farm families who settled in Jennings County, Indiana shortly after Indiana achieved statehood in 1816. The families featured are: Thurston, Reynolds, Renn, Cheever, and Jones. Note that our author, Loralyn Reynolds, is from the Reynolds clan. This helps explain her interest in doing this historical and genealogical research. Loralyn reported doing interviews with the descendants of Abner Cheever. Her own relatives also had information about Abner and his descendants because one of her relatives married a Cheever. These informants shed some light on Abner's life prior to his decision to move out west. For example, it was learned that Abner fought in the [War of 1812](#), married shortly after returning, and moved to Vermont with wife and son. While in Vermont, he was living with his sister, Thankful Hammond Webster and her husband, Captain John Webster. Interviews with descendants of Abner's oldest son, William Franklin Cheever, (known as "Frank" in Jennings County) showed that Frank told stories to his relatives and descendants about the hard times he could *not* remember, but were told to him. And then Frank's stories turned into the hard times he *could* remember. Frank's perspective was that his mother, Polly, led a challenging life from the time her fiancé, Abner, went to war. This was followed by marriage and childbirth, an arduous journey to Indiana, and the unrelenting demands of "Western Wilderness." Frank believed that these experiences sent his mother, Polly, to an early grave in Indiana.

We are blessed to have a deeply personal account of these material and spiritual struggles as Abner reported it through 18 letters sent to his sister, Thankful Cheever Webster, between 1816 and 1837. It is a story that speaks in sharp contrast to the gentler life of an educated and affluent Cheever family in New England; and they document Abner's spiritual growth and struggles through physical and spiritual adversities.

I am grateful to whomever saved Abner's old letters. The University of Michigan purchased them from an undisclosed dealer. The Appendix has more information about [this collection of letters](#). The official citation is: Abner H. Cheever Papers, William L. Clements Library, The University of Michigan.

The Letters

The letters started in 1816 and document the "privations" of life in the "Western Wilderness", as Abner and family experienced them. Abner and his young family lived with his sister and her husband, Capt. John Webster, in Woodstock, Vermont before they migrated to Indiana. Abner and his sister, Thankful, appeared, from the content of the letters, to have a very close relationship. It is also clear that Abner's primary concern about living in New England related to the cold weather and the many health problems he had while living there.

Abner's first letter was written on June 28, 1816. Abner was located somewhere on the Ohio River about 80 miles from Pittsburgh. He had wagon trouble there and needed to replace both axles within a short period of time. He also reported purchasing a "navigation book" and commented that the "Ohio is indeed a very fine river." He also acquired a [flatboat] "sufficiently large to make a safe conveyance for ourselves, horses, and wagon down the river."

Abner's second letter was written on September 8th, 1816. He identified his location as Green Township, which I believe is a reference to an Ohio township near Cincinnati. There, his second "fine son" was born on the 16th of August, 1816. This was Abner's and Polly's second son. They named him Horace. It is interesting to note that Abner forgot to tell us the name given to his new son. He also commented that the land in the area was very productive when compared to Vermont.

Abner's third letter was written from [Gallatin County Kentucky](#) on December 22, 1816. He was in an Ohio River town called Port William (now Carrollton) which, he said, was 50 miles from Cincinnati. This is where he took a position as a school teacher. He was given free lodging (in the school) and some payment for his teaching based on the number of students he taught. He indicated that he had not decided whether this was the place he would settle, but he knew his final settlement would be close to this present location. He wrote, "The county is settling with great rapidity and the price of land is rising very fast indeed." It appeared that Abner would soon investigate the price of land in southern Indiana. He also commented that he was waiting for a return letter from his brother, Joshua, who had some interest in migrating west as well. He closed his letter with a poem. I cannot find this poem by searching for known poetry about guardian angels, so this may be an original.

*May Holy Angels all your way attend
And virtue be your constant friend.
May peace and plenty cheer you with their ray
And Heavenly peace never from your bosom stray.*

Abner's fourth letter was written again from Port William, Kentucky on April 17, 1817. In this letter, Abner reported good health for his wife, Polly, and the two boys. However, he was having serious problems with his ability to swallow which led to loss of weight and weakness. In the next letter he said he was feeling much

better. Abner described the religious situation in his area as being at “low ebb.” The two largest groups of church going people were the Baptists and the Methodists. Traveling preachers were most common in his area, but “settled ministry” leaders were found in larger towns. His final report was about the good weather in this area of the country.

Abner’s fifth letter was written on December 6, 1817 from Vernon, Ohio. Abner began by reporting the news that he fulfilled his one-year teaching agreement in Gallatin. He believed that teaching had been detrimental to his health and “not very lucrative.” Abner found his students (he called them “scholars”), difficult to “govern” and that those above him seemed “indifferent” to the problem. He reported that the “employers and I did not well agree” and they had “no difficulty separating.” He next reported that he and a friend went on a “tour” of land for purchase in Indiana. They found some land they described as: “fertile, sufficiently level, well-timbered, and well-supplied with excellent water.” The land was in Jennings County, Indiana, and known as [Sand Creek](#). He also noted that some of the settlers came from New England, something that was “congenial to ourselves.” The concern with this area was about the “Natives.” He described them as being “not so good citizens” and “not so agreeable neighbors.” Abner reported that the US government had recently purchased a large tract of “most excellent” land from the “Natives.” and that these parcels would be divided into tracts and sold. The tract that Abner had purchased was close to the [Natives’ land](#) that would eventually be sold to other white settlers. In other news, Abner reported that his younger brother, Joshua, and his wife had now moved to the same area and was working on a farm near him. Abner wrote: “It is a place we can call home.” Abner had fallen in love with the area called Sand Creek. It would be home for several generations after him.

Abner’s sixth letter was written from Vernon, Indiana on July 12, 1818. He reported improved health since his last letter and believed that his health had improved since he left Vermont; and that his brother, Joshua, and his wife were doing well. However, Abner reported that they continue to suffer from many “privations” and “afflictions never felt before” but believed he had the power to improve this situation with “constant persevering industry.”

Abner’s seventh letter was written in October of 1818. The letter had but one topic; the death of his “companion and friend,” Polly. “Polly is no more...torn from my pleading bosom.” He and his “three little children, the offspring of our mutual love, are left to mourn.” Polly suffered for “18 days of sickness with fever.” Abner saw her, “gasp and die.” The date of death was “September 26, 1818, a Sabbath evening.” Abner believed that God was chastening him because he showed too much “affection for the things of this life.” He had been neglectful of his, “duty to God...and to Christ.” God’s message was that Abner should, “hear my voice, harden not your heart.” Abner wrote: “I will humble myself before God and plead for pardoning grace and mercy...” He wrote, “all things shall work together for good to them that love God. Afflictions though for the present are not joyous but grievous, yet afterward yield the peaceable fruit of righteousness.” “God has done as He in His all-wise providence saw fit.” Regarding his three children, Abner wrote, “He who gave them to me is able to provide.”

Abner’s eighth letter was written on July 18, 1819. In this letter there were two birth announcements. His brother, Joshua, and his wife had a “fine son” (William) born in “September last;” and he finally gets around to announcing that Polly, Abner’s late wife, had a daughter born in July last. [July last means July of 1818.] The child was named Mary Ann. He also wrote at length about the difficulties the settlers from the “early states” are having. These settlers from the “early states,” which would include Abner, had difficulty adjusting to the “manner of living and the labour required without friends, acquaintances or even strangers nearby.” This makes their experiences “so different from the old settlements of New England.” He then spoke about the growth in his area.

Abner's ninth letter was written on July 2, 1822 (three years after the last letter). He wrote, "In my last letter (July 1819) I was living a lonely and unhappy life bereft of my greatest earthly treasure." Abner continued, "I have little ones languishing around me" ... while I, myself, near tortured with disease and unable to assure them any assistance or to take care of myself; my hard earnings at the same time going to waste and my cattle either dying from disease or straying from me. Misfortune seemed to beset me on every hand and to make my life worse." Abner then wrote that he had, "in some measure recovered my affairs." He was recently "honored with an appointment to be the Justice of the Peace in this place." Abner then announced more good news: he "exchanged his widowed life for the band of hymen (probably an idiom used to identify his new wife as young and not previously married) on the 9th of May last." I was married to a young woman named Amy Willson, a native of Virginia." He then noted she came from a "good family." She will be the one to "fill the place of the one I have lost."

Letter 10 was written June 14, 1823. Abner wrote, "Amy is a follower of the meek and lowly Jesus, the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. We have a fine son born the 19th of April last and call his name David." He continues, "I have nothing of which I may complain though in low circumstances I live very comfortably as much to my satisfaction as I ever did in my life." Later he wrote, "And I bless God for that after wading through deep water of afflictions and drinking deeply of the cup of woe, He has once more caused His face to shine upon me and peace and joy smile around my little board." He also reported having the "peace that cannot be taken away." His testimony continued, "I have a great sense of my own unworthiness. I do not live near to God. But I feel that God will in mercy, and, I trust, He, for Christ's sake, has forgiven my sins." He concluded his testimony with this: "I welcome the opportunity of hearing from Him whenever I have an opportunity. And when there is no preaching in the settlement on Sabbath days a few of us attend for prayer meeting in which session I have often known great comfort and sometimes not a little of heaven begun below."

Letter 11, written on June 9, 1825, was a continuation of the testimony given two years earlier. The letter is at least 90% biblical allusions, personal spiritual status, and information of church participation. The other information is about family. There is no discussion of weather, crops, prices, or any other mundane aspect of life commonly found in the earlier letters. He is now laser focused on all things spiritual. The children's news is sad because their son, David, whose birth was announced in the last letter, had died. However, a daughter was born on June 1st, 1825 and was named Clarissa. Abner's brother, Joshua, had twins, a son and a daughter. Regarding Abner's wife, he referenced her as, "walking hand-in-hand with me in the paths of piety, virtue, and devotion." He is pleased to say that there is evidence of a "reformation" occurring in their "little settlement." Abner announced that he considered uniting with the Baptists or the Methodists in his area. Two years ago, he decided to unite with the Methodists. Abner wrote, "I can assure you my dear sister it has been much for the prosperity of my own soul since I have taken the name of a Methodist." He found them to be a "self-denying, and praying" group of people. He has also taken classes and has been prepared to be an "exhorter" among the people. Abner stated, "I shall to my dying day lament living so long without the enjoyment I now find in the bosom of the church."

Letter 12 was dated September 10, 1829 (four years after the last letter). It was not written by Abner but by his brother, Joshua, who worked at a farm about 30 miles away. Joshua greets his sister, Thankful, and then explains that Abner cannot write due to illness. Joshua reported that Abner was licensed to preach by the Methodist Conference and then offered a position as a "[circuit preacher](#)." After completing almost two years of preaching his health required him to stop in August of 1828. In the fall of 1828, he was convalescing with serious lung problems. One could only hear him speak by putting one's ear to his mouth. His prognosis suggested that death was possible and that Abner was "reconciled to the will of God" on this matter. On a personal note, Joshua

mentioned that he had a meeting house about ½ mile from his house. It is a Presbyterian group, not the Congregational church he would normally attend. Joshua closed by giving a report on his own growing family.

Letter 13 was written on October 10th, 1830 (one year after the last letter). This letter addressed only three topics: health related issues, the challenges of being a minister, and family life. Some of the text is not readable. Abner reported that he has “not yet crossed the Jordan” and was still “living about the shores of mortality.” He had become so confident about the imminence of death he gave “directions about his temporalities.” Abner then mentioned, again, a group of people who are teaching a spiritual message that opposes the message of God [I believe Abner was writing about “[Universalists](#)”.] Abner spoke of “foes” who were “bold” and “cunning,” but that God was pleased to give the “cause of truth” a “complete and decided victory.” He also announced that after much “prayer and humiliation” he “listened to the call” and was “licensed to preach.” “After laboring for one year in a local capacity” he felt the desire to join a traveling convention and received a “circuit” where he labored one year. The Lord was pleased to use his “weak endeavors” to “convert sinners, to comfort mourners, to strengthen the feeble and in some degree edify the church.” His severe health problems, talking and swallowing, led to weakness and the use of “signs” to communicate. He reported that his wife, Amy, also had health problems through the summer and the “little ones” had “whooping cough.” His oldest son, William, is described as a “stout lad” of 16 years. Horace and Mary Ann were reportedly going to school, and he also mentioned Clarissa. Abner then announced that Amy gave birth to a “pair of twin sons.” One died “instantly” and was not named. The other was named “John Strange” after Abner’s presiding elder. They were born on December 2, 1827. Regarding other matters, he had “kept pretty clear from debt,” had “food and raiment,” and had “house and land, and some little stock.”

Letter 14 was written January 1, 1832. Here we get a view of Abner as an evangelist. The letter began with a review of his health condition he describes as “bad” and is also dealing with the “cares that press upon me.” Abner noted that it was snowing as he wrote this new years’ day letter. Abner then wrote about the concerns he had for the spiritual welfare of his children: “My little ones are grown to the years of accountability and though they enjoy the means of grace and have sometimes appeared to have their hearts touched by the Spirit of God, yet it makes no lasting impression.” It seems like “a morning dew that passeth away.” Then they seem inclined to forsake the admonitions of a father and “disobey the commands of God.” Abner then announced that, “his little son, John Strange, on the 9th of October last after a distressing illness of the day, took his flight from this world of woe.” Abner gave a lengthy description of his son’s new life in heaven, “forever safe from an ensnaring world and a tempting devil.” Abner rejoiced at having “another child in heaven.” Abner then made mention of a “camp meeting” recently held about 30 miles away. There, “140 professed to be happy subjects of the pardoning grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ.” Abner longed for the day when, “every knee” shall bow. At the end of the letter, Abner said his voice had returned, but is less useful than before.

Letter 15 was written January 19, 1833, and March 3, 1833. Abner continued to show his heart for evangelism even with his poor health. He rejoiced with his sister at the news that one of her children had become a believer. After a two-month break, Abner resumed the letter and reported that his family was healthy; however, he was “barely able to write.” His concern was related to the spiritual welfare of his children. Abner wrote: “There is yet no visible mark of serious concern among my children about their everlasting welfare, the salvation of their immortal souls---this is the desire of my soul, that I might see the image of the blessed Jesus enstamped in them before I die.” Abner then changed topic to a revival 29 miles away. It lasted 4 days, and the “power of the Lord was mightily displayed”. The revival was marked with “the awakening of many souls---the slain of the Lord were many.” The place was “truly sweet” and “awfully glorious” due to the presence of the almighty God. The meeting place was the “gate of heaven” to almost 100 souls who professed to be “saved through the redeemer.” Abner’s concern was then expressed for those who are “not laying up treasures in heaven.” Abner also addressed a

question his sister had asked about whether he would like to be back in Vermont with his old friends. Abner confessed a loss of words but then reported a daydream he had, in which he imagined being with his old friends and especially his sister. Abner thought the great distance and many barriers were too much for his frail body; and he was momentarily “unhappy.” Abner then pointed out other reasons for not returning. His family had become “naturalized” to the climate and economy of the country. His children have become “familiarized” with the habits and manners of the country. It seemed that Abner was not very pleased with that. But his present location is where his “lot is cast.”

Letter 16 was written March 9, 1834. Abner provided a lengthy passage about the humility he is acquiring by virtue of being able to do so little for the God who has done so much for him. He said that even though his voice is of little use any more, he can use his actions to advocate His glorious cause. Abner then reported that his health was a little better, fluctuating much over the past three years. His family was healthy and son, Horace, was working about 30 miles away and was intending to go to school. Returning to his life between the two shores of Jordan, he wrote, “I have not been permitted from [Pisga’s top](#) to look across Jordan and view the land of promise.” Regarding his children, he says, “none of my children except Mary seemed inclined to seek after God.” Abner hoped she was trusting in the redeemer’s merit. His sons, however, appeared to be touched by God, but then it seems they were “seeds sown by the wayside.”

Letter 17 was written June 28, 1835. Abner reported more “troubles and afflictions” and “fiery trials and deep waters.” However, Abner was consoled by the knowledge that God will never leave him or forsake him. He described his health as “feeble.” And, he was “preparing to go when the summons comes.” Abner mentioned his first son, William Franklin, and his marriage to Amelia Jones. They lived close to Abner and recently had a daughter they named Almira. William had built a house close to Abner, and William was planning to take over the work of Abner’s little farm. Abner’s second son, Horace, was also living nearby, working a job that paid \$45 per month. He was living in Hanover [a town in southeast Indiana on the Ohio River]. Horace was “safe at home” at the time of writing. Daughter, Mary Ann, was living with her uncle Joshua in South Hanover. Abner was hopeful that Mary Ann’s stay in Hanover will be to her benefit. In Hanover, she would have more opportunities to form the “tastes and education of young females;” opportunities that are “deficient” in Abner’s area. Abner then picked up a theme from his sister’s previous letter which expressed anxieties about raising her children. Abner commiserated with her anxiety. Abner had faith that “God will bless our feeble labors on behalf of our children.”

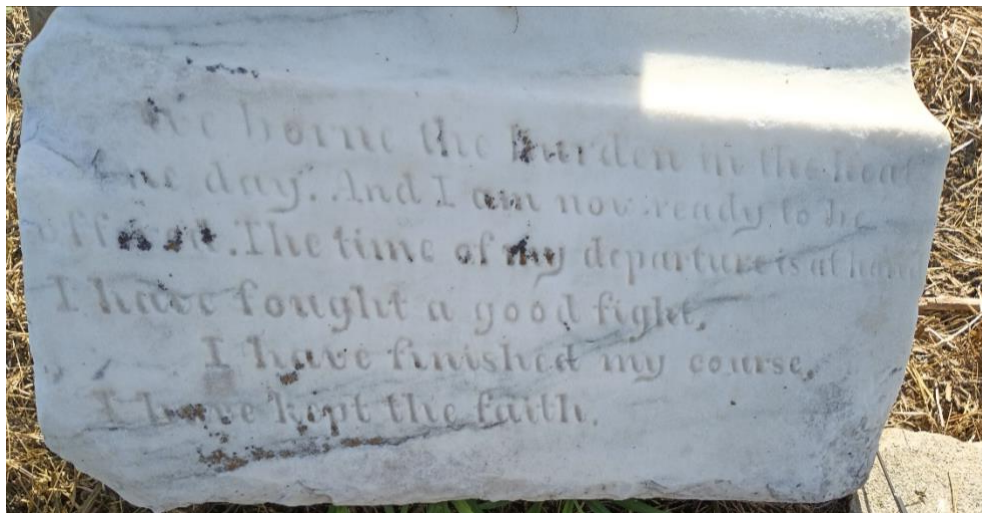
Letter 18 was written May 7, 1837. This letter is reminiscent of the Bible’s report of [Job](#)’s successive tribulations. First, Abner reported on a man and woman at church who were “bent on my destruction.” They had maligned Abner’s character by, “propagating egregious falsehoods” which resulted in formal charges of “slander and falsehood” being brought before the church tribunal. “Their efforts were unsuccessful.” The effect on Abner nearly brought him to the grave and caused him deep emotional suffering. In addition, he suffered the loss of three hogs. They were stolen and the thieves were identified. After struggling with how to address the situation, he chose to formally prosecute them in court. Abner’s claims against them were upheld. But before the trial was finalized, word came to Abner about the “death of [his] son, Horace!!!” Horace was preparing for winter and cutting wood. At some point in the process, Horace was “seized with cold or influenza.” Three weeks later, he died. Abner was deeply concerned about the state of Horace’s soul. But Abner did not complain or “murmur against the providence of God.” He gave himself over to “patient submission to His will.” Abner thought he was the recipient of more grief than most people. He wrote: “sorrow and affliction seem to tread in quick succession upon the heels of each other.” But Abner thought that even if this is true, he cannot think of it as unfair because God had prompted his “heart to seek after Him.” That fact, alone, “calls for my warmest gratitude and thanksgiving to the great author of all good.” Abner closed the letter with news of son, William F, and his wife, Amelia, having a daughter they named, Nancy Ann. He then noted that the “west is improving very fast in

population, wealth, and internal improvement, all in preparation to live and live well.” “But, not equal preparation to die and die well.”

The letters ceased, but Abner did not die as soon as one might expect. Though less is known about Abner's remaining years, it is clear Abner moved his family to Washington County, Indiana which is a short distance southwest of Jennings County. His oldest son, William F was probably the purchaser of Abner's farm in Jennings County. It is likely that Abner's two daughters came with Abner and his wife, Amy, because both these daughters were married in Washington County. It appears that Abner officiated at these weddings. Mary Ann, the oldest of the daughters, was born to Abner and his first wife, Polly. Mary Ann married Nathan Bradberry on December 27, 1841 in Washington County, Indiana. Nathan was a recent immigrant from England and worked as a tailor and a farmer. Mary Ann died on April 19, 1891 according to her grave stone. Mary Ann and her husband were buried next to her father, Abner, in Walton Cemetery in Hardinsburg, Indiana. Mary Ann's half-sister, Clarissa, was born to Abner's second wife, Amy Wilson. Clarissa was married to George Ritter in Washington County, IN on December 11, 1840. She died in 1857 in Red River Co, Texas.

There is evidence that while living in Washington County, Abner was part of the process of making their location, Hardinsburg, an incorporated town. On March 24, 1849 it was determined by election that Hardinsburg would be incorporated and that the first officers included Abner Cheever as President. In 1850, the U.S. Census of Washington County, Posey Twp. (Hardinsburg's location) showed that Abner and Amy were living in Washington County. Census data showed Abner to be 63 and Amy, 47. Abner reported his state of birth to be Massachusetts, and Amy reported her state of birth to be Virginia. The reported data is consistent with their known histories. It was further reported that Abner was doing work as a carpenter. They were living in the unit next to Abner's daughter, Mary Ann and her husband, Nathan Bradbury. Regarding Abner's date of death, I could not find a death certificate; however, there is a cemetery in Hardinsburg, Indiana named Walton Cemetery. In that cemetery, there is a gravestone marking the burial of Rev. A.H. Cheever. He died December 14, 1853. He was 67 years old. Abner's second wife, Amy Wilson Cheever, was shown on the 1870 census living in Brewersville, Sand Creek Twp., Indiana. She was living with a widowed sister named Sarah Wilson Riggs. Neither date nor location of Amy Wilson Cheever's death could be found.

Below is an older photo of Abner's gravestone. Beneath it is a recent photo (June 7, 2024) of a much newer, white, stone that had been placed at the foot of Abner's gravestone.



The engraving reads, "I've borne the burden in the heat of the day . . And I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." This sentiment uses words from the last part of Matthew 20:12 and II Timothy 4: 6-7 (KJV).

[DNA connections between myself and Abner Cheever](#) can be found in the Appendix.

Abner Hersey Cheever is my 4th Great-Grandfather

For Your Consideration

Consider Abner's transition from New England status as a well-educated pastor's son to the poverty and deprivation of first-generation frontier life, the loss of his wife and his health, the loss of access to his family and friends in New England, the responsibilities of farming and single parenting, and the loss of easy access to Church influences for himself, his family, and his larger community.

- How did Abner respond to these contextual challenges to his faith?
- What is your candid reaction to Abner Cheever's letters?
- What is your "take away" from his letters?
- What would you want to tell your children and others about Abner's life?
- If you can speak with Abner in heaven, what would you want to talk about?

Did you notice the change in Abner's letters after Polly died and he married Amy Wilson, the follower of Jesus? He seemed far less interested in "the things of this life" and deeply interested in the spiritual aspects of life within his family and his community.

- How might this radical transformation be explained?

Despite chronic health problems, Abner took classes to become an "exhorter," became a Methodist Circuit Rider, and took on deep concern for other rural people who had no access to the outreach of God through a minister's touch. He also endured the same type of conflict with false teachings as his father faced as a pastor in Vermont. It is easy to consider Abner to be a good example of one who persevered in adversity.

- How has God helped you persevere in adversity?

William Franklin Cheever

When William Franklin Cheever was born on September 26, 1814, in Vermont, his father, Abner Hersey Cheever, was 27 and his mother, Polly McClay, was 24. William Franklin married Amelia A. Jones (circa 1815) on June 15, 1834, in Jennings, Indiana. William's wife, Amelia, was a daughter of another early settler in Jennings County. William F. and Amelia were the parents of at least four sons and four daughters. Their children were, in order of birth:

- Almira Abigail Cheever (1835): Almira married Joseph I. Reynolds, son of another early settler and a neighbor. More about them in the next section.
- Nancy Ann (1838)
- Mary J. (1839)
- William Abner (1841) William A. is my direct-line ancestor to Ezekiel Cheever
- Angeline E (1842)

- James M. (1845)
- Amelia A. (1850)
- Horris S. (1852)

William Franklin, Frank, as he was called by the locals, grew up as the son of a first-generation immigrant to Indiana. Please take a moment to recollect what was written by his father, Abner, in the letters in the prior section. Consider how you think these experiences might affect Frank – he lived through all that was described. Frank began the journey from Vermont to Indiana when he was two. The death of his mother on his fourth birthday, was the peak of his chaotic early life. Frank also experienced the deaths of multiple siblings. His circumstances changed for the better when he met Amelia Jones. Amelia Jones' descendants came from England and initially settled in Virginia in the mid-1600's. Amelia's descendants, much like Frank's, lived in the same area (Virginia) for a few generations and then migrated to the Midwest. One account of Amelia's birth says she was born in January of 1815 in Western Virginia on the way to Indiana with her parents. Another account of her birth says she was born in Indiana in 1815 after her parents arrived in Indiana. Her parents considered settling in Kentucky and then lived in two other counties in Indiana; but eventually landed in Jennings County and in 1826, purchased 160 acres of land contiguous with Abner Cheever's property. Amelia was 11 and Frank was 12 when her family arrived. It is said that Amelia and Frank became immediate friends. Eight years later, June of 1834, they were married by a Circuit Rider. The Cheevers were known as hard working people who took care of their aging parents. Amelia's parents were known as Christians with "tenacious faith" and Amelia completely embraced the faith as well. She was active in the Fish Creek Society, a group of believers who began meeting in homes in 1829 until they could build a church. Their log church may have been erected circa 1840. In 1895, the Fish Creek Church was moved to nearby Brewersville and took the name, Brewersville Evangelical United Brethren Church. Amelia was a long-time member of the Fish Creek Church and lived four years after the church relocation to Brewersville. She was fondly called "Grandma Cheever." According to the *History of the Indiana Conference of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ* (1926): "Grandma Cheever was a member of Fish Creek Church for many years, and was a noted woman for her religious devotion to her church." Until his death, Frank continued farming the land that had been first settled by his dad. William Franklin Cheever died on April 11, 1874 in Sand Creek Township, Jennings, Indiana, at the age of 59. Amelia died on May 8, 1899 in Sand Creek Township and was buried next to her husband in the Fish Creek Cemetery, Jennings County, Indiana. Amelia outlived Frank by 25 years.

[DNA "matching" results between myself and Frank Cheever](#) are in the Appendix.

Below are photos of gravestones found in the old Fish Creek Cemetery which used to be near Fish Creek church when first built. The old log church is no longer there and the cemetery is unmarked, unkept, and unreachable by car. Below is an older photo of William F's headstone and a photo of Amelia's headstone, taken on June 7, 2024. Her first name (AMELIA) is positioned on the crown of the stone; and on the face of the stone is written, "Wife of William F Cheever."



For Your Consideration

Amelia Jones Cheever came from a family of “tenacious faith” and embraced a life within her church that was noticed by others.

- What do you think other people notice about your life at church?
- How would you summarize your feelings about your local church?

The eldest child of the Cheever/Jones union, Almira, married a neighboring farmer named Joseph Reynolds. Joseph is a relative of Loralyn Reynolds, writer of the previously cited book, *On the Banks of the Wyaloosing*. This book reported that at the time of the wedding, local wedding announcements and remembered conversations about Almira included a description of her as “pretty.” At that time, Almira’s parents were thought of as “well-to-do” farmers. Joseph and Almira had several children. Their offspring should have some genetically distant connection with mine. When the DNA of present-day people who are clients of Ancestry.com, and claim Almira Cheever Jones Reynolds as a relative is compared to mine, [some DNA significance was found](#) and is reported on in the Appendix

William F. Cheever and Amelia Jones Cheever are my 3rd Great-Grandparents

William Abner Cheever

A Bible was given to my mom, and my mom gave it to me several years ago. I looked at it briefly, noted the pages in the middle section had Cheever family documentation of births, marriages, and deaths, and stored it in a drawer. The Bible is a large book, approximately 12 inches X 10 inches, has a very worn and faded cover, has 1-2 inches of missing spine, has missing pages (introduction, Genesis, Exodus, and part of Leviticus), and the pages are unconnected to the spine. Shortly after beginning this project, I remembered the Cheever genealogy in this Bible. William A Cheever was the first entry on the [Birth](#) pages. The record shows he was born on Feb 20th, 1841. The Marriage pages show he was married on October 22nd in 1865 to Clara F Stearns. Clara died in 1915. In 1917, William remarried Alida Bell Starbuck (1857-1950). The Deaths pages of the Cheever Bible show Clifford died on Dec 7th, 1926. A [sample page from the "BIRTHS" section of this Bible](#) is in the Appendix.

William A was known as "Willie." Unlike his father and grandfather, Willie did not experience the chaos and loss associated with being a first-generation pioneering farm family. He lived in the same place his whole life and married Clara Stearns in 1865 when he returned from the Civil War. More about that later. It appears that ancestors of a Mahala Ann Tucker claim that Willie married Mahala in White County, Indiana on October 25, 1860 (before the Civil War). Mahala would have been 18 and Willie would have been 20. There appears to be some evidence of their marriage, but I could not easily access it. There was good evidence that Mahala gave birth to a son she named Joseph Crowder Cheever (born on 8-14-1862; died 1944). However, the 1870 census showed that Mahala, 26, was married to Martin V. Smith and they had two children living with them: Frances M. Smith, age 2, and Joseph C. Cheever, age 8. Joseph C. Cheever married Dorinda Stone and had 7 children with her. If Joseph C. Cheever is my relative from a relationship with my great, great grandfather, then there will likely be some evidence of my DNA having significant overlap with his descendant's DNA (if they are tested through Ancestry.com.) I was a little skeptical about finding a genetic relationship because 11 months passed between Willy's "muster" into the Union army (see below) and Joseph's birth. To date, no genetic "matches" have been reported to me by Ancestry. com. When Joseph was born, Willie was engaged in the Civil War so Mahala would have made a unilateral decision about what was put on the birth certificate.

During the [Civil War](#) (War of 1861-1865, as they called it), Willie had the rank of private in Company I, 33rd Regiment of the Indiana Volunteers. Willie's muster-in date was 09/16/1861 and his muster-out date was 07/21/1865. The 33rd regiment lost more men than any other regiment in the battle for Atlanta under General William T. Sherman. For the entire war, the regiment lost a total of 298 men during service; 4 officers and 112 enlisted men killed or mortally wounded, 2 officers and 180 enlisted men died of disease. More died of disease than combat injuries. It is also worth mentioning that Confederate troops under the command of [General John H Morgan](#) made a sweep through Indiana which included Jennings County.

After the war, Willie married Clara Stearns (circa 1865). Clara's ancestral records suggest that they immigrated to the US in the mid-1660's and probably settled in the Salem, Massachusetts area. The next generations continued in New England until the late 1700's when one ancestor settled in Ohio. The next generation (Clara's parents) came to Jennings County, Indiana to farm. Willie and Clara had several children:

- John (1866)
- Emma Belle (1868-1935)
- Olive (1870-1961)
- Cora A. (1872)

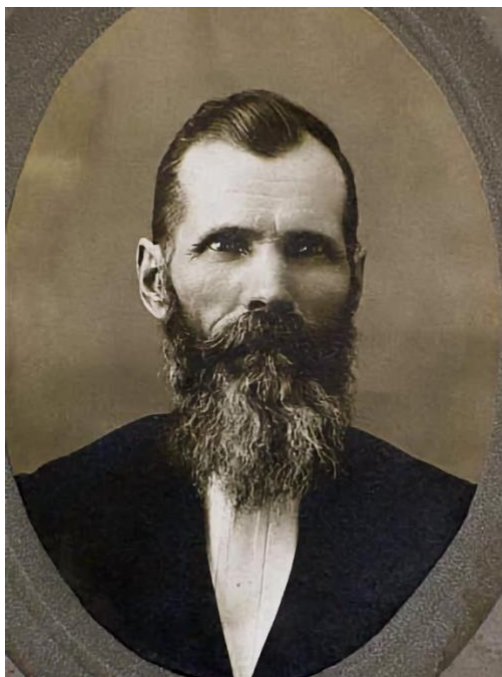
- Clifford Hayes (1877-1955); Clifford would become my great-grandfather
- Eldo H (1879-1911)
- Elde H (1880)
- Everett Otis (1881-1960)
- Ellen (1884-1930)
- Lettie Alice (1888)
- Blanche (1901-1987). The Cheever family Bible added the following information about Blanche: “legally adopted by the court June 24th, 1910.”

At some point while his family was growing, Willie bought his own farmland which was near the Jennings County and Decatur County border. Willie’s health began to fail and farm work became too difficult for him. Sometime in the 1890’s, Willie applied for and was approved for a government pension. Between 1907 and 1933, he and his survivors collected a Civil War pension due to a, “rupture sustained while serving in Atlanta, Georgia and rheumatism as a result of chronic diarrhea.” Willie died on December 7, 1926 in Jennings Co, Indiana and was buried in Day Cemetery, Sand Creek Twp, Jennings, Indiana. Clara died on July 9, 1915 in her home. She was 67 years old. According to her obituary, “All of her children were at her bedside during her recent illness. She was meek and gentle in disposition, a great lover of home and very devoted to her family. She united with the U. B. Church when quite young and was faithful to the church cause until her death.”

Below is a photo of William Abner Cheever with his wife, Clara Stearns Cheever, and their dog.



Below is another photo of William Abner Cheever, my 2nd great-grandfather.



William Abner Cheever is my 2nd Great-grandfather

Here are some additional readings about Jennings County during the historical time frame that Abner Cheever, William Franklin Cheever, and William Abner Cheever lived through:

Jennings County Indiana 1816 – 1999: This book was commissioned by the Jennings County Historical Society and M. T. Publishing was chosen to publish this book. It is 336 pages long and provides information about the beginnings of Indiana and Jennings County and its history up to 1999. It is skimpy on the early years and early settlers. For example, it identified Frank Cheever as an early settler, but did not mention that Frank's father, Abner, was the first-generation settler of the Cheever family. The book's strength is in the documentation of more recent historical events and more modern families living in Jennings County through 1999.

A Glimpse of Pioneer Life in Jennings County by Alice Ann Bundy. Alice was a graduate of the University of Chicago and Peabody Institute at Nashville, TN. She was a teacher. Alice wrote this manuscript in the 1930's with much assistance from her father's fireside stories of his early life, and stories he was told by his father, who was an early pioneer from North Carolina. Her mother told stories of traveling with immigrants from Ohio in 1859 and her girlhood days. Alice interviewed numerous others and did very solid academic research that is well documented. In 1987 her manuscript was rediscovered in the files of the Indiana State Library. The Jennings County Public Library took it upon themselves to index the complete manuscript and to provide a curriculum supplement for local schools. Copyright 1992 by the Jennings County Preservation Association, Inc. Vernon, Indiana. This is a well written book with insightful and fine-grained descriptions of the way the pioneering people lived daily life, worshipped, got educated, developed transportation, fought the Civil War, and grew up their towns between 1813 and 1875. This book is a great read if you appreciate learning about very interesting people living very interesting lives during a time and place in history that is difficult to imagine.

Our Heritage: Written by Millie Leathers. This is a series of historic articles on the city of Vernon and Jennings County. Printed in 1976 by the North Vernon Plain Dealer. This 44-page booklet is a testimonial to the patriots who founded and developed Jennings County and their God who graced their efforts. This book is strong in revealing fascinating details about the abolitionist movement in Jennings County and its important role in the Jennings County Underground Railroad which was in existence 40 years before Lincoln's emancipation proclamation in 1862. It is also strong in giving very specific information about the Shawnee, Potawatomi, Miami, Kickapoo, and Delaware tribes inhabiting Jennings County when the pioneers arrived. Millie portrays Jennings County as having a history of valuing human freedom. She sees this freedom as given by God and points out the wealth of great churches and church leaders that have kept faith alive in Jennings County.

These books may be borrowed from me, if desired. They are also available for purchase through the [Jennings County Historical Society](#) in Vernon, Indiana.

Clifford Hayes Cheever

According to the Cheever Family Bible, Clifford was born August 7th, 1877. His educational attainment was the 8th grade level. It was common for rural boys to stop at this level and start working on the farm. He was married to Curtis "Curtie" B. House on September 1st, 1898. Here is their wedding picture.



Curtie House Cheever was born in Decatur County, Indiana. Her parents and grandparents were originally from Virginia. Her parents, John House and Polly Dabney House, moved from Virginia to the southern part of Decatur County (bordering Jennings County) and started farming. After Clifford and Curtie got married, it appears that they did not live on the farm for very long. In piecing together 1900 census records with other public records, it appears that Clifford had a non-farm job as a “day laborer” in Alexandria, Monroe County, Indiana. This is where my grandmother was born. I am not sure what happened and why, but by 1910, they were living back on a farm in Sand Creek on the Jennings County side of the line. By 1920, they were living on a farm within Sand Creek on the Decatur County side of the border. On the 1920 census, the family included Clifford and Curtie plus 4 children: Neva, the first born, became my grandmother. She was 17 at the time of the census, her brother Londa was 16, her brother Harry was 12, and her sister, Norma, was 5. William and Curtie lived in Sand Creek (Decatur County) for several decades according to census information. They lived on Cheever Road. Curtie died on May 6, 1944 in Decatur Co., Indiana. Clifford Cheever died in 1955 at the age of 57 in Westport, Sand Creek Twp, Indiana. He was described in his obituary as a “retired farmer” and a member of the Westport Methodist Church where he was a member of the “Men’s Bible Study.”

I am not sure if my mom said very much to me about her grandparents. I have little memory of what she may have said. The only thing I clearly remember is that she liked her grandma Curtie. Thoughts of her made my mom smile. This brief announcement was printed in the Greensburg, Indiana Daily News on Thursday, May 15th, 1941: “Mr. and Mrs. Howard Harris [sister of Neva] of New Castle, Mr. and Mrs. Clifford Cheever were Sunday guests of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Burgess and daughters.” My mom (age 13 at this time) and her sister, Dorothy, were the daughters mentioned. I trust mom smiled when Grandma Curtie arrived for dinner.

The photo below shows my great grandparents, Clifford Hayes Cheever, and Curtie House Cheever. They are with their three children. From left to right the children are Londa, Harry, and Neva, my grandmother. A fourth child, Norma, was born after this photo was taken.



Clifford Hayes Cheever is my Great Grandfather

Neva Etta Cheever Burgess

Neva lived the beginning of her life in Madison Co, Indiana. She was born on February 21, 1902 in Alexandria, Madison, Indiana. However, most of her early life was lived on farms in Sand Creek Townships (both the Jennings and Decatur County sides). She was a farm girl and loved school. She was the first Cheever to obtain a high school education among the Cheevers who were born and raised in Indiana.

On October 21, 1926, Neva lost her Cheever name. She married Frank A. Burgess in Decatur, Sand Creek Twp, Indiana. Frank had a 9th grade education and easy to characterize as an outdoorsman; he loved to hunt and fish and work on houses. According to the 1910 census, Frank was the fifth of six children born into a farm family in Jennings County, Indiana. On September 23, 1927 Frank and Neva had their first child. That was my mom, Ada Mae Burgess. Three years later my mom's sister, Dorothy, was born. There were no subsequent children added to the family.



Neva's goal was to be a teacher. At that time in Indiana history, one could be a teacher with a high school education. Neva's first assignment was teaching in a rural one-room school that was a good distance away and had some difficult terrain to navigate. According to my mother, she rode a horse to get to her first school assignment. Eventually, Indiana required Neva to get a college education to continue teaching. Neva would be the first Indiana family member on my mom's side and my dad's side to get a college education! My mom said it took her a long time. Public records indicate Neva took some classes at Franklin College and classes/workshops for credit from a [Normal school](#) designed to provide continuing education for teachers. In 1940, Neva was living in Westport, Sand Creek Township, Indiana. She had been married for several years, had two daughters, and had completed three years of college (probably enough under Indiana law to get her permanent license). This is a great accomplishment for a married farm girl with kids in the 1930's. I am confident that Neva would have been proud to say both of her children became teachers, also.

In approximately 1943-1944, Frank and Neva's family moved to [Columbus, Bartholomew County, Indiana](#) and lived a life that was not rural. Bartholomew County is west of and contiguous with Decatur County. The reasons for moving are unknown, but after the move it appeared that Frank was doing carpentry and he eventually became a building contractor. Later, Frank and Neva moved into another house in Columbus, Indiana; maybe one that my grandfather built. My mom, like her mom, was a country girl from Sand Creek Township up until she neared the end of high school.

About the time I was aware enough to remember things (probably mid-1950's), I can pull up sounds and images of my grandparent's first house in Columbus, Indiana: a relatively small and modern house made of limestone on a large section of well-manicured yard. While living there, they owned a hyperactive Chihuahua and a noisy parakeet. These visits were relatively brief because we were living in Iowa and only had a couple of weeks to split between the two sets of Indiana grandparents. Most of the allotted vacation time in the summer was spent with my dad's parents on their farm in Clay County, Indiana. I do remember that the visits with the Burgess family were an opportunity for me to see some things I had not seen before. There were Christian type things in their house including visible Bibles, there was prayer in the house (meals), and there was a lot of quiet in the house (except for dog and parakeet). The most shocking of my observations was my mom and grandmother on their knees in the darkened living room, praying. I had seen people pray at meals, but not on their knees in the living room. We did not pray at our house, and if we had a Bible in our house, I had no idea where it was. There was some type of disconnect between my mom and her parents regarding the outworking of religious belief. My grandparents were strict Nazarenes. And Neva was overly interested (my mom's perspective) in knowing people's sinful habits. My grandmother clearly subscribed to a very high bar of moral conduct and had much interest in correcting the moral failures of others; undoubtedly wanting to spare them the undesirable effects of sinful choices. I only saw their church when attending their funeral services. Both Frank and Neva died in 1972.

1961 Photo of the Burgess, Stevenson, and Greimann Families:



From Left: Robert Stevenson (father), Bruce Stevenson, Ada Mae Stevenson (mother), Rita Stevenson (sister), Neva Cheever Burgess (grandmother), Dorothy Burgess Greimann (mom's sister/my aunt), Frank Burgess (grandfather), and Tom Greimann (uncle).

Frank and Neva Cheever Burgess are my Grandparents

For Your Consideration

My grandmother Burgess had a passion for teaching. She worked very hard to achieve her dream during a time (the depression) and in a location (rural) that were not conducive to working, attending college, and raising a family.

- Why might some people be motivated to achieve a goal requiring large amounts of time, effort, and sacrifice, while others are discouraged from making this commitment?

A family tree of the genealogical lines presented so far and the extension to present day family is shown below.

Cheever to Stevenson Line

Hammond to Cheever Line

Mayflower to Stevenson Line



Part IV: Ancestors of My Paternal Grandparents

The origin of my paternal grandparents is a story of five farm families in Clay County, Indiana: Barber, Moss, Long, Jeffers, and Stevenson. These families settled on farmland in the areas known as Sugar Ridge Township which are near [Cory, Indiana](#) located in Perry Township. These families are woven into the lines that lead to my paternal grandparents. First, we will reveal the genealogical line that leads to my grandfather and then the line to my grandmother.

My Paternal Grandfather's Ancestry

The featured family is named Moss. The Moss family was difficult to document back to their beginnings in the U.S. in contrast to the more easily documented families on my mother's side. I will attempt to give a broad overview of the Moss family and other families noted in this section, based on information from a book entitled *Clay and Owen Counties: Historical and Biographical (1884)*. This book was edited by Charles Blanchard and can be read on-line, free of charge, through [Internet Archive](#). You may also borrow this book from me.

Some information was obtained from: *A History of Clay County Indiana (Volume 2)* by William Travis. It was published in 1909 by Lewis Publishing Company. This book can be read on-line, free of charge through [Internet Archive](#). I purchased a document from the Clay County Genealogical Society that provides an index to the contents of this book. You may borrow it.

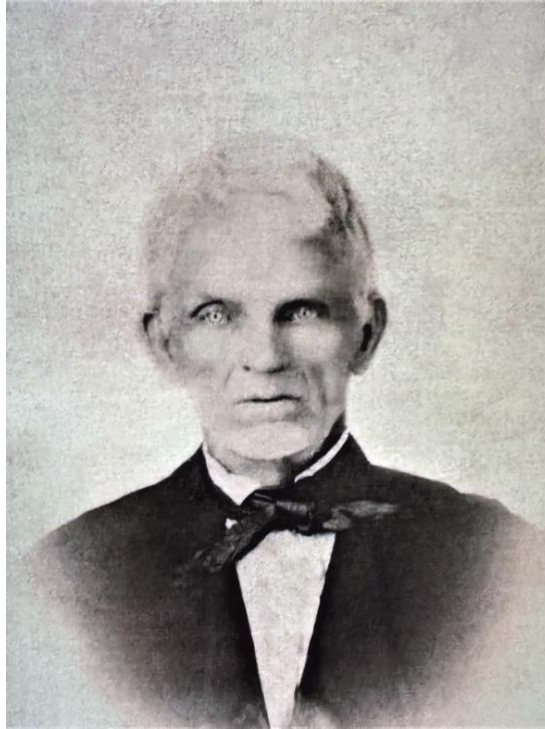
Some information was taken from, *The Cory Story* (1990). *The Cory Story* is available for loan upon request or can be purchased from the [Clay County Genealogical Society](#).

I also used some Wiki Genealogy articles, and Ancestry.com on-line resources.

George Moss was born on October 17, 1786 in Botetourt Co., Virginia. George's father was Triplett Moss who was married to Amy Norris and lived in Virginia. Triplett's father is difficult to verify, but it appears possible that all Moss ancestors were in Virginia going back to the mid-1600's.

George eventually moved to Kentucky and married Lydia Vuilderback/Bilderback (born March 23, 1789) in October of 1808 in Shelby, Kentucky. Both claimed Scotch-Irish descent. The young family moved to Indiana in 1823, settling in Monroe County near Bloomington, Indiana where they lived 7 years. In 1830, George and Lydia moved their family to Clay County and located about midway between the villages of Ashboro and Center Point. "One year later George purchased from a squatter named Eli Melton, a claim in Section 9, on which a cabin had been erected and a few acres cleared and fitted for cultivation." The property cost George "one two-year-old colt." George eventually became one of the large land owners of Clay County. He and Lydia had eight living children, to whom they gave farms. All of them were reported as being among the "substantial men and women of Sugar Ridge Township." The written history of Clay County credited George as being the settler who, "sowed and produced the first wheat grown within the territory of what was called Sugar Ridge township." Regarding religious convictions, George and Lydia were Methodists. A Methodist missionary by the name of Owens, organized a class at the residence of George and Lydia. Others members were added from time to time. The society grew into a strong organization and a house of worship was erected in 1858. Clay County history summarizes the life of George Moss as follows: "He was a prominent farmer and stock dealer, one of the enterprising citizens of the township, and possessed in a marked degree the qualifications of the honorable business man." George Moss died on March 12, 1871.

Here is a photo of George Moss:



A Word About Lydia Moss

A medical history booklet, *A Centennial Medical History of Clay County, Indiana from 1825 to 1916*, owned by W. W. Woodruff and presented to the [Clay County Historical Society](#) by Miriam S. Torbet, noted the medical contributions of Lydia Bilderback Moss to the medical history of Clay County. This booklet reports: “Beginning in 1831, Lydia practiced midwifery and treated women and children for thirty years. Mrs. Moss was supplied with the medical library of her day and with the approved instruments and appliances when engaged in obstetrics. She is probably the only woman in Clay County to deliver a woman in childbirth with instruments. Her field of service covered a large area; extending beyond the borders of the county, as far west as the Wabash River and as far East as the White River. In diseases peculiar to her sex, she was an accepted authority by both the public and the profession, and is said to have treated, including cases of obstetrics, over twenty-five hundred. Much of the time to reach her patients, she traveled through unbroken wilderness, the roads being but bridle paths.”

George and Lydia had several children:

- Elizabeth (1809-1869)
- Mary Lydia (1811-1877)
- Jacob B (1817-1891) married and had a son name John Coleman Moss. John C. Moss served in the same Indiana Regiment as his uncle, Major Charles Wesley Moss.
- Charles Wesley (1820-1900) Charles Wesley would become my 2nd great-grandfather
- James E. (1822-1867)
- Caroline Edmonson (1826-1903)

- George M. (1832-)
- John (1838-)

Some of their children were born in Kentucky and the last two were born in Clay County. We will soon look in depth at the life of their son, Charles Wesley Moss. Lydia died December 19, 1871, nine months after her husband, George. George and Lydia are buried in the Ashboro-Moss Cemetery in Ashboro, Indiana.

Here is a photo of Lydia Bilderback Moss:



[The DNA connections between myself and George and Lydia's descendants](#) are found in the Appendix.

George and Lydia Moss are my 3rd Great-Grandparents

For Your Consideration

- What evidence is there to show that both George and Lydia were people of Christian faith and action?

Lydia's work as a country mid-wife and mother of many children is one of my favorite stories.

- How do you think her concern for the women and children with medical needs might impact those who could witness her devotion to the care of others?
- How might her son, Charles Wesley Moss, use his mother's interests and skills, and medical experience to help those with medical needs in his military environment?
- Keep reading to find the answer.

The Story of Charles Wesley (C. W.) Moss

My next direct-line ancestor to my grandfather is via a son of George and Lydia Moss, Charles Wesley Moss. Some of the information presented is taken from the previously noted source about Clay County History. I am now adding three primary sources about C. W. Moss. Firstly, a book entitled, [*The Forty-Third Regiment of Indiana Volunteers: An Historic Sketch of Its Career and Services*](#), published in Terre Haute, Indiana. CW Brown, Printer and Binder, 1903. This book is in poor condition and will not be loaned, but interested readers may peruse it in our home or borrow our new paperback version purchased from Amazon.com. If you only want to read [the pages about Major Moss](#), those pages are linked in the Appendix. Secondly, information also comes from a newspaper article about Major Moss at the time of his death. Thirdly, some information comes from a hand-written letter to my father in 1980 by a cousin, Leota Long Fitch.

Taken together, these sources reveal that Charles Wesley (C. W.) Moss was born in Kentucky on April 24, 1820. He would have been about 10 years old when his family arrived in Clay County, Indiana. As a child he was noted as differing from other children in that he exercised “laudable and persistent efforts to take advantage of every meager opportunity available to acquire an education.” Later in life he was known as an advocate and patron of the cause to expand public education opportunities for children.

After years of helping his parents with the many homesteading responsibilities, the [Mexican-American War](#) broke out in 1846. Shortly thereafter Charles Wesley enlisted in the 2nd Indiana Volunteers. He was part of a great victory at the mountain pass of Buena Vista even though they were outnumbered by [Santa Anna](#)’s troops. He returned home in 1847 after thirteen months service. On the year of his return, he was elected to the office of sheriff (independent ticket), and then reelected two years later in 1849 (Democratic ticket).

On April 11, 1850, Charles married Elizabeth Adams of Parke County, daughter of Samuel C Adams. They moved to Clay County two years later, locating in Sugar Ridge Twp. They had three children, Lewis K., Albert W., and Alice Josephine. The young mother died May 13, 1855. C. W.’s mother-in-law helped with the children. In 1857, he married his second wife, a Mrs. Eliza Ann Seybold Dunagan. She had two children from a previous marriage, Martha and Oscar Dunagan. Eliza and C. W. had nine children of their own.

After his work in law enforcement in 1851, C. W. devoted his time to farming and lumbering; and establishing a saw mill. During this time, his political preference changed to Republican based on his anti-slavery view. In 1854 Sugar Ridge Twp was named and the name is attributed to C.W. Moss who noted a large ridge in the center of the township that was covered with sugar maple trees. In 1858, C.W. founded the town of [Ashboro](#) in [Sugar Ridge Twp](#). He also established a cemetery named [Ashboro-Moss \(Moss\) Cemetery](#).

When the Civil War broke out in 1861, C. W. again enlisted in the service of his country in the 43rd regiment of the Indiana Volunteers, even though he had promised his family he would not go to war again. He enlisted as Captain of Company G of the 43rd regiment. In 1864, he was part of a wagon train headed to Pine Bluff, Arkansas for supplies. There were 400 wagons and about 1,200 men. “They were entirely surrounded by the enemy.” It was called the battle of [Marks’ Mills](#). Major Moss ordered his regiment to flee to the nearby woods. He followed in the rear on horseback. As he rode his horse toward the woods to find his men, his horse was shot out from under him. “He surrendered and was relieved of his firearms, watch, etc. The guards, in searching him, overlooked \$60 in greenbacks in his vest pocket. This proved a great blessing to him in his long march to prison and during the time in the prison at Camp Ford, Tyler, Texas” (April 1864-Feb. 1865). It was reported by C.W.’s

nephew (John Coleman Moss) that Captain C. W. Moss and “Major Norris (a physician) were assigned duty at the hospital” during their captivity. Later, Captain Moss and many others were part of a prisoner exchange, but there were 40 ill men unable to care for themselves if headed back north. “Charles volunteered to care for them until they could reach Shreveport, if the enemy would furnish wagons, which they did; 10 men to each wagon. One man died on the way.”

For Your Consideration

- I wonder if C.W.’s hospital services to the sick and injured and this extraordinary act of medical compassion for those too ill to travel by foot, were due to the example of his mother who engaged in the medical care of others in her sphere of influence. What do you think?
- What would you like your children and friends to emulate from your life?

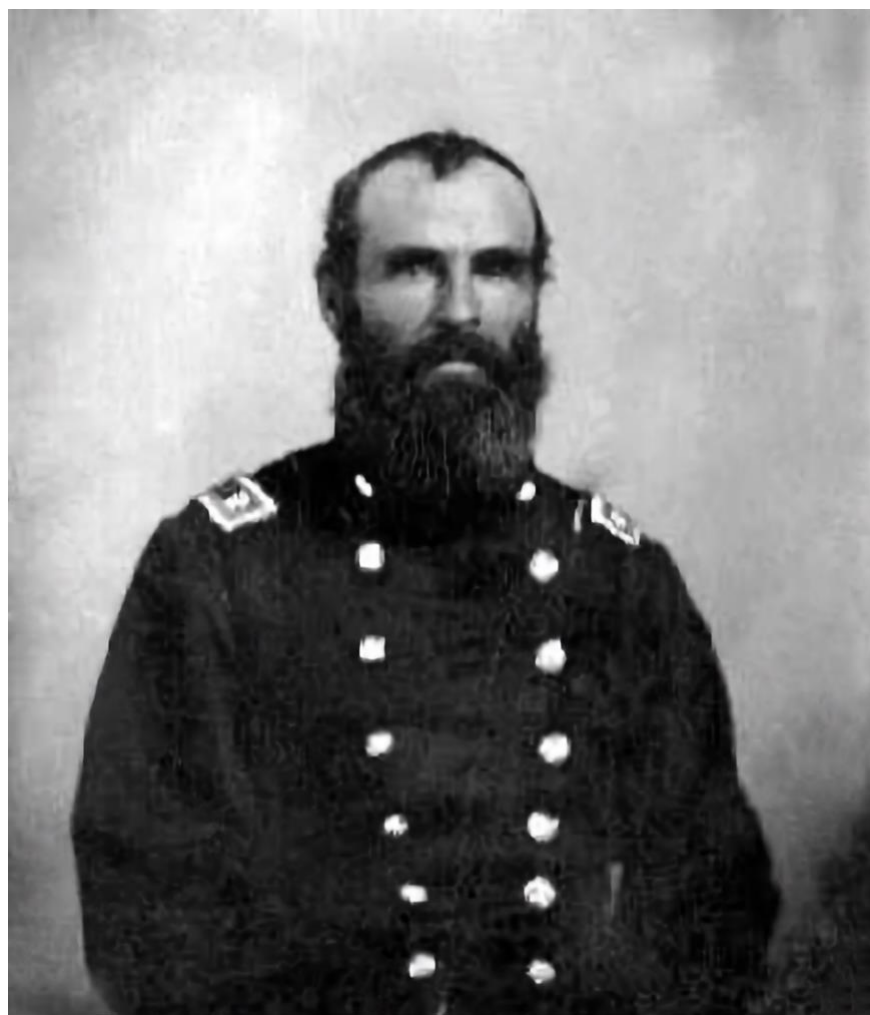
They reached their destination Feb, 26, 1865. C. W. eventually came home via St. Louis and, “stayed with his family, after which he reported to Indianapolis, having been absent about 40 months.” While in Indianapolis, he was officer of the day and, “had command of the troops that guarded the State Capitol while the deceased [President Lincoln](#) lay there in state.” On May 20, 1865, Captain Moss was commissioned Major.

After his discharge from the army (Sept. 1, 1865), he resumed the work of the farm until 1871, when he and his family went to Alabama and operated a sawmill for three years. He returned, again, to the farm in 1874 and occupied the old family homestead until the time of his death. In his obituary, the following was written: “An Octogenarian, Pioneer, Resident of the County Three Score and Ten years, Soldier of Two Wars, County Officer, An Intelligent, Upright, Christian Farmer Citizen. In his religious convictions and associations, Mr. Moss was a Methodist.” Charles Wesley Moss died at home on August 23, 1900.

C. W’s wife, Eliza Seybold Moss, died on May 16, 1904. Here is an excerpt from her obituary: “Mrs. Moss was a member of the Baptist church for more than fifty years. She was an invalid for many years and was confined to her bed since the 8th of January, 1904. During the last few weeks of her life her sufferings were intense, but she never lost hope in her Savior. She often expressed a desire to depart and be with Jesus. Truly a good woman has gone to her reward. She was a consistent Christian.”

There is a more [detailed account of Major Moss’s military career](#) linked in the Appendix. The Appendix also contains [the DNA “matching” information connecting Major Moss and myself](#).

Here is a photo of Major Charles Wesley Moss in his military uniform:



Charles Wesley (C.W.) Moss and Eliza Moss are my 2nd Great Grandparents

A Word About John Coleman Moss

As mentioned above, John Coleman Moss (born October 15, 1843) served in the Civil War in the same regiment and company of the Indiana Volunteers as his uncle, Captain C.W. Moss. Both had a muster date of September 20, 1861. John was almost 18 and C.W. was 41. Both were captured during the battle of Marks' Mills. John C. Moss wrote a chapter in the previously noted book, *The Forty-Third Regiment of Indiana Volunteers: An Historic Sketch of Its Career and Services*. His chapter is entitled: *FORTY-NINE DAYS IN THE WILDERNESS. A STORY OF THE CAPTURE AND ESCAPE OF FIRST SERGT. JOHN C. MOSS, CO "G," CAPT. W.E. WHITRIDGE, SERGT. JONATHAN FISK AND PRIVATE JOHN M. JONES, OF CO. "H," ALL OF THE 43D INDIANA VOLUNTEERS*. This is a riveting story of the 43D regiment's defeat at Marks' Mills, their capture, imprisonment, the escape of four prisoners, and their journey by foot from Camp Ford in Tyler, Texas to Fort Steele, Arkansas. When the "band of four" saw their flag above Fort Steele, John wrote, "Our hearts leaped for joy, and at the same time silent supplications were breathed forth to that Omnipotent Hand that had ruled our journey."

The following information about John C. Moss was obtained from: *A History of Clay County Indiana (Volume 2)* by William Travis. Published in 1909 by Lewis Publishing Company. This book is accessible free of charge through [Internet Archive](#). After returning home from the war in December of 1864, John C. Moss attended two terms of school at the United Brethren College in Westfield, Illinois. During this time, he became “totally blind due to his army service” and “spent two years in St. Luke’s Hospital in Cincinnati where his sight was considerably improved.” He married on July 3, 1868 to Melissa C. Buckalew and had several children. He saved money and eventually purchased 100 acres of land and settled into farming in Sugar Ridge Twp, Clay County, Indiana, his childhood home. John C Moss died on April 11, 1914. If you wish to read about John C.’s [Civil War and post-war experiences with vision impairment](#), you can access his story located in the Appendix. John is a good writer, and I recommend reading about his Civil War adventures.

Here is a photo of John C. Moss:



John Coleman Moss is my 1st Cousin 3X Removed

For Your Consideration

War is probably an unpleasant topic for most of us to think about. Thinking about our relatives fighting in a war is even worse. Our relatives who have fought in wars would probably agree that war should be avoided, if possible.

- What would you tell your friends and family members about your opinions if the topic of war is brought up?
- Have you thought about what it would be like for you to fight in a war? How do your imaginings play out? If you have fought in a war, was it the way you imagined it?

When C. W. returned from the Mexican American War, he assured his parents he would not go back to war again.

- Why do you think C.W. changed his mind and re-enlisted at the age of 41?
- Why do you think C.W.'s nephew, John, enlisted in the army at the age of 17?

When C.W. Moss returned from The Mexican-American War, his nephew, John Coleman Moss would have been 5 years old. When John was about 17 years old, it would have been at the time when many Americans were convinced that war between the states was inevitable. C.W. and John both lived and farmed in Sugar Ridge township of Clay County; and nearby relatives would often help each other with farm chores during busy times like planting and harvest. If John and C.W. were working in the field together and had a conversation about the likelihood of war between the states:

- How do you think their conversation would have progressed?
- What do you think C.W. would want to tell John about his experiences in war?
- What questions do you think John would have asked C.W. about whether and why C.W. was considering going to war again?
- How do you think C.W. would advise John regarding the possibility of John enlisting in the army?
- Do you think each of their personal opinions might influence the opinion of the other?

Both C.W. Moss and John C Moss mustered into Company G of the 43rd Indiana Regiment on the same day, both fought together in the battle of Marks' Mills, both were captured and walked together to their prison camp in Tyler, Texas, and both plotted John's escape from their prison camp. How do you think these experiences affected C.W.'s and John's relationship? What do you think their relationship was like when they met after the war?

- What would you want to ask John Coleman Moss and Charles Wesley Moss about their Civil War experiences and the nature of their personal relationship?
- What preparations would you make if war was inevitable during your lifetime?
-

The Stevensons from England

We will now depart from our usual sequence of information and present some historical and genealogical information about the English family ancestry of Stephen Stevenson who immigrated to the United States in 1852. Then, we will focus on Stephen's first child, William, who eventually moved to Clay County, Indiana and married a daughter of Major C.W. Moss. Before we digress into the historical and cultural aspects of the English Stevensons, it is appropriate to acknowledge the usefulness of the World Traveler component of Ancestry.com's search engine. It allowed searches of documents in foreign countries (England) that helped produce a wealth of information about the Stevenson generations in England before Stephen immigrated to America. Let's begin with some relevant English history.

The English government's official church ([Church of England](#)) was prominent in the lives of everybody in England for a few hundred years beginning in the 1530's. These ancient years of state church influence resulted in vast numbers of church records on citizens throughout the country. Because of these church records on our English Stevenson kin, we can trace back through several generations of English Stevensons and find that all Stevenson husbands and their wives were from Norfolk County in England at least through the 17th century. These ancestors could also be tracked by government census records for Norfolk County starting in 1841. Census records suggest that our Stevenson ancestors were farmers in Norfolk County. They typically had large families who stayed in proximity with their point of origination. If we trace back the family of my second great grandmother (Elizabeth Welsby), we find the same pattern of many generations of Welsbys who all came from Lancashire County of England as far back as the 17th century.

My third great grandparents were John Stevenson (1790-1878) and Ann (Whitesides) Stevenson (1794-1866) from the Carleton Rode Parish in Norfolk County, England. John's first wife died young, so he then married Ann Whitesides. On their marriage paperwork, John identified himself as a "widower." Marriage paperwork also showed, for both of John's marriages, neither John nor either of the wives could write their names. They all put their "mark" by the name that was written for them by a parish officiant. John was a farmer of approximately 47 acres. John and Ann had seven children, and had the occasional grandchild living with them at various times. Stephen was the second child of the family. Available information suggests that Stephen was the only offspring who ventured to America. It appears that when Stephen left for the United States, he never saw any members of his nuclear family again.

Are you now ready to learn more about the adventurer in the Stevenson family? Here is Stephen Stevenson's story.

Stephen and Betty Stevenson: Parents of William T. Stevenson

Stephen was born in a rural Parish named Carleton Rode in Norfolk County, England. This location is very close to where seven previous Stevenson generations had lived within [Norfolk County](#), England. [Carleton Rode](#) Parish's history and geography (with map) is described here. Stephen's age varies among the English and U.S. records (ranging from 1822-1824.) Stephen's wife was named Elizabeth "Betty" Welsby, and was born circa 1828 in the Lancashire County of England. The last known England residence for Stephen was found on the 1851 census. He was an unmarried 30-year-old living and working with his parents and siblings on the family farm. The distance between the Norfolk and Lancashire counties of England is large enough to make a person wonder how Stephen and Betty found each other. Using today's roads, 226 miles separate these counties. A marriage record for Stephen and Betty could not be found. However, their names were on passenger lists of ships headed

to the United States. “Betty Welsby” was on the passenger list of the “City of Washington” ship that departed from the [Port of Liverpool](#) and arrived in New York on April 21, 1857. It was common for ships during this time in history to take 10-12 days to complete the voyage from Liverpool to New York. Stephen’s name was found on the passenger list of the “DeWitt Clinton” ship. His ship also departed from the Port of Liverpool and arrived in New York on May 14, 1852. This port in Liverpool was a major gateway for trade between Britain and North America, including cargo, passengers, and emigrants in the 19th century.

It seems likely that Stephen came to America to engage in mining because his ship’s record showed that he declared himself to be a “miner.” Of course, he was originally a farmer; and his home county, Norfolk, had no coal mines and imported all their coal. Perhaps Stephen knew he wanted to go to America and knew a brief stint (mid-1851 to mid-1852) as a miner near Liverpool would provide the money for the voyage and locate him close to the best shipping port. There were many miners from England who were eager to be hired as American miners during this time in history. American mining companies actively recruited European immigrants at the New York and Philadelphia ports. Coal trains with a passenger car attached would shuttle the newly recruited immigrants to their mining assignments. Those with mining experience were often given better positions than the inexperienced miners.

But how did Betty end up in Ohio or Pennsylvania to meet Stephen? The answer seems related to Betty’s family. Betty’s father, Matthew (born 1806) married Mary Wallwork in 1827. The 1841 England census showed Matthew to be a “collier” (coal miner); and the 1851 census listed Matthew’s occupation as “coal miner” in Lancashire County. Their daughter, Betty (born circa 1828), was the oldest of 5 children according to the 1841 census. In 1850, Matthew’s wife, Mary, died; and Matthew remarried in 1851 after the census was taken. Matthew’s oldest offspring, Betty, was apparently not living with her family at the time of the 1851 census. In 1851, Betty was living in a boarding house (still in Lancashire County) and working in a cotton mill. Circa 1857, Matthew, his wife, Hannah, and the two youngest offspring (Ann/Anna and Thomas) immigrated to the US and settled in Franklin, Venango County, Pennsylvania; and Matthew became a naturalized citizen circa 1858. His son, Thomas, married a woman from Venango County and worked as a coal miner, but by 1870 Thomas was a farmer and by 1910 he was a farm owner. More about Thomas later. It appears that Betty and her father and her two youngest siblings arrived in the United States at about the same time (circa 1857) and had significant contact with each other. For example, the youngest of Matthew’s children, Ann/Anna (born circa 1841) showed up on the 1870 census as living with her sister, Betty, and Stephen Stevenson in Vienna, Ohio. The 1870 U.S. Census also showed that Matthew was still employed as a “coal miner” in Venango County at the age of 60! It would be a reasonable guess that the discovery of coal is a part of what attracted many people, including the Welsby family, to coal rich areas of western Pennsylvania. Coal mining prompted railroad construction, housing development, and the many supportive industries for these large enterprises. The mining positions were popular with lower socioeconomic class citizens and immigrants.

The best information available suggests that Stephen Stevenson and Betty Welsby were married in a far eastern Ohio county called Columbiana; a county known for significant mining for several decades. The names “Welsby” and “Stephen” were misspelled or hard to read on their marriage record. Since Betty reported herself as illiterate on the 1860 census, and Stephen came from an illiterate family in rural England, prior to mandatory schooling, these errors may be symptoms of difficulty with penmanship and/or spelling. The data, overall, supports the conclusion that the Stevensons were married in Columbiana County on October 15th, 1858.

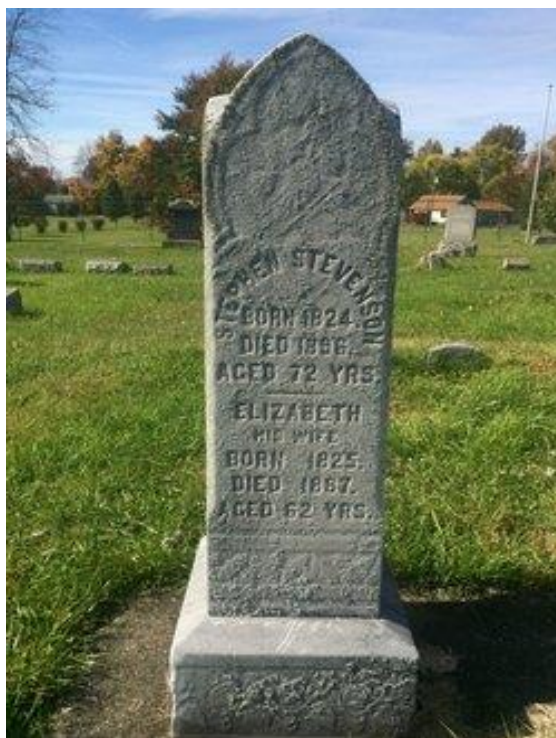
The newly wed Stevensons next appeared in Steubenville, Ohio, in coal rich Jefferson County. It was here that their first child, William, was born on August 17th, 1859. In 1860, the Stevensons were living in an area that is now part of Pittsburgh. At the time of the 1860 U.S. Census, William was 4 months old. His father, Stephen,

about 35 years old at the time, was listed as a coal miner in the coal-rich areas in Allegheny County near Pittsburgh. And all the adult males on several pages of this 1860 census form were also listed as miners. All were from England, Ireland, Scotland, or Wales. The vast majority of them were from England.

The large number of European migrants consecutively listed in one small geographic area on the 1860 census strongly suggests that the Stevensons were living in a “[patch](#)” community created by mine owners for use by the immigrant mine workers. These remote mining communities were characterized as tight-knit and reputed to be lacking in material possessions which promoted a communal approach to daily living tasks such as washing clothing, caring for the children, and food production by gardening. Patch communities typically had a company-owned store, and some coal companies only paid wages in company scrip which could only be used at the company store. Wages, however paid, were considered low. Modest houses were built by coal companies for miners and their families and then rented to them. Houses were typically located close to the mines. A school and a chapel were sometimes available to the coal mining families while they were employed.

Circa 1866, the Stevensons moved from this Pennsylvania mining community to Vienna, Ohio. The 1870 census showed that Stephen and Betty had four children: William was 10, his brother Stephen was 8, brother Moses was 6, and sister Mary was 4. Stephen was listed as a “laborer” at that time. Stephen also became a landowner in Trumbull County who engaged in farming. Betty died in 1887 and Stephen died in 1896 in Vienna, Ohio. Stephen’s death certificate listed his occupation as “farmer.” A probate court entry (Vienna, Ohio) showed Stephen willed 25 acres of land to his son, William (age 38 at the time.) Other portions of the land were given to other children.

Below is a photo of the gravestone for Stephen and Betty in the Vienna Township Cemetery.



Stephen Stevenson and Betty Welsby are my 2nd Great Grandparents

For Your Consideration

On my mom's side of the family, many of our ancestors were quite advanced in academic skills and educational attainment. Ezekiel Cheever was attending Cambridge University in England in 1633. The next several generations of Cheever men also had excellent educations, some at Harvard College. Do you remember those well written letters by Abner Cheever before the mid-1800's? In contrast, my dad's side of the family had very little, if any, formal education opportunity during these same generations. Educational options for children in rural Norfolk County, England were probably non-existent. Small, informal Dame Schools run by women in their homes during the 19th century could be found, but not in rural areas. There were National Schools established by the Church of England that targeted poor children. Sometimes local benefactors would fund schools for impoverished families. Even when a rural school was available, attendance was inconsistent. These rural schools were usually poorly funded and lacked trained teachers. In 1870 the Forster Education Act was passed that mandated state-funded school attendance for children ages 5-10.

- What are your thoughts about the historical inequity of educational opportunity in England and the U.S.?
- Are you the type of person who would leave family and friends to move to a distant foreign land, even knowing it was unlikely you would ever return home? What adjectives would you use to describe people like Stephen Stevenson?

William (Will) Thomas Stevenson

William Thomas Stevenson was born in 1859 in Steubenville, Ohio, with his parents living near many active coal mines at that time and place in history. In 1860, at the age of 4 months, Will was living in a "patch" community of coal mining families. Will probably spent the first six years of his life growing up in this environment. Will's next home location for many years was in Vienna, Ohio according to the 1870 and 1880 censuses. The 1870 census showed the known family members plus two people who are not part of the Stephen Stevenson family. One new name was James Stevenson, age 20, born in England, and working as a laborer. His identity is unknown but is probably one of Stephen's relatives, but not his brother, James. The other was Ann Welsby, born in England, and listed on the census as "insane." As noted above, Ann is a younger sister of Betty Welsby Stevenson who came to America with her father. By 1880, neither James nor Ann were found on the Stevenson census. Also, in 1880, Will was still living with his parents and siblings in Vienna. The census also showed that Will (age 20), his father, Stephen (age 56), and his brother, Moses (age 17) were all working as "coal miners." It is noteworthy that between 1866 and about 1900, Vienna was a bustling coal mining town. Later in adulthood, Will probably left his parents' home in Vienna, Ohio, but his whereabouts was not findable until he was 29 years old and living in Clay County, Indiana.

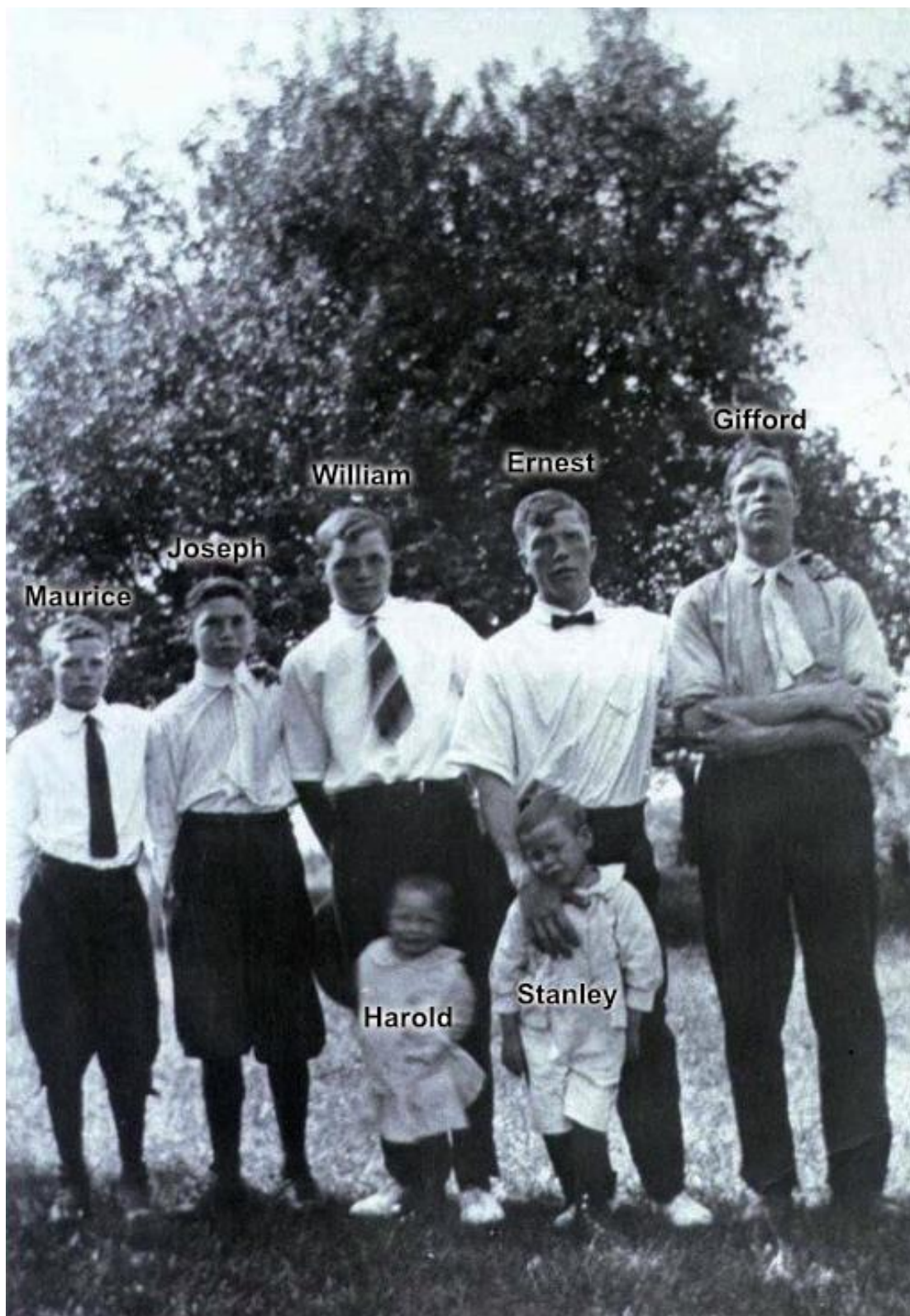
Interestingly, Will's brother, Moses Stevenson, apparently followed Will to Indiana. Moses and his wife also lived in Sugar Ridge Township of Clay County, Indiana by the 1900 census; and Moses was working as a coal miner through the 1920 census. Before Moses arrived in Indiana, he married Jane "Jennie" Welsby. Yes, another

Welsby married a Stevenson! Jennie was a daughter of Betty Welsby's brother, Thomas. Moses married Betty's niece.

In Indiana, Will worked as a coal miner and as a farmer. Will probably sold the Ohio land he inherited in 1896 from his parents' estate and purchased Indiana farmland with the money. The 1900 census in Clay County, Indiana showed Will was, indeed, a farm owner. I have an old photo of Will's family posing in a field with three horses and a wagon filled with hay.

As a young man in Indiana, Will met a daughter of Major Charles W. Moss, one Anna C. Moss (born May 28, 1869). Anna and Will Stevenson were married December 29, 1888. Their wedding was performed in their home in Center Point where the minister "tied the knot," as stated in a local newspaper. Anna birthed 12 children over 26 years and 10 children survived:

- Gifford (1889)
- Ruth (1891)
- Ernest (1893) My grandfather
- Mae (1898)
- Willie (1901)
- Joe (1902)
- Maurice (1904)
- Doris (1907)
- Stanley (1912)
- Harold (1915)



The photo above (1917) shows the seven Stevenson brothers born to William T and Anna C. (Moss) Stevenson. Ernest, my grandfather, is the second oldest of the brothers. He is standing second in line from right-to-left. Ernest's left hand is draped over his brother, Stanley.



The photo above is a Stevenson family photo (1917.) The seven Stevenson sons are shown and the two youngest sons, Harold and Stanley, are being held by their parents, William Stevenson (my great grandfather) and Anna Moss Stevenson (my great grandmother). My grandfather (Ernest) is standing on the far right of the back row. In front of Ernest is his wife, Sarah Marie Long (my grandmother), who is holding her first child, my aunt, Mary Ann Stevenson. Other people in this photo are too difficult for me to identify with certainty.

On the 1920 Census, Anna's younger sister, Kate Moss, was living with the Stevensons. On the 1930 Census, one Elsie Latham showed up as a live-in servant to the Stevenson family. Shortly after the 1930 Census was completed, William Thomas Stevenson died on June 10, 1930. Anna followed on April 19, 1934. They were buried in the Ashboro-Moss Cemetery.

When I checked for DNA “matches” with the descendants of Stephen Stevenson, 9 matches were found. 16 matches were found for William Stevenson. Detailed [DNA results for Stephen and William Stevenson](#) are in the Appendix.

The photo below is of an elderly William T. Stevenson:



William T. and Anna Moss Stevenson are my Great Grandparents

In summary:

- My third great grandparents are John and Ann Stevenson of Carleton Rode Parish, Norfolk County, England.
- My second great grandparents are Stephen and Betty Stevenson of Vienna, Trumbull County, Ohio.
- My great grandparents are William T and Anna Moss Stevenson of Sugar Ridge Township, Clay County, Indiana.

My Paternal Grandmother’s Story Begins with the Barbers

It is now time to report the genealogical roots of my grandmother, Sarah Marie Long. I am indebted to the genealogical history provided by the previously cited 1884 text about Clay County biographical and historical accounts, information from a hand-written letter to my father in 1980 by a cousin, Leota Long Fitch, and a book entitled *The Cory Story* (1990). This book may be borrowed from me or purchased from the Clay County Genealogical Society. Some older information about the Barber family was obtained in a book entitled Barber

Genealogy: Section II. Descendants of *John Barber of Worcester, Mass. 1714-1909*. This genealogy was compiled by Lillian May Wilson and Edmund Dana Barbour.

The Barber family history in America is somewhat parallel to the story of Abner Cheever (the fellow who left Vermont and wrote all those letters to his sister.) Like Abner Cheever, the early Barber generations in America were born and raised in Massachusetts until they moved to Vermont. From Vermont the Barbers migrated into Ohio and Indiana, as did Abner Cheever and his family.

John and Aaron Barber

John Barber lived most of his life in Worcester, Massachusetts. John was born on March 12, 1742 and was married in 1768 to Patience Experience Gleason Barber (1748-1821) and froze to death in 1776 while lost in the Green Mountains of Vermont at the age of 35. He was known as a farmer and shoemaker.

John's youngest child, Aaron, was born on October 21, 1774 in Guilford, Vermont and appears to be the last of four children. In 1800 Aaron married Mary Boutwell (1780 - circa 1840). The best available information suggests that Aaron Barber, as a young man, fought in the War of 1812, as Abner Cheever did. Aaron's date of death is not known, but the Clay County history of the Barber family reported that Aaron's wife was a "young widow" when she travelled to Ohio with her four children. Clay County history also reported that after Aaron's death, his widow, Mary Boutwell, and her four children joined a small band of people who had emigrated to New England from Holland, and were seeking a new homeland on the Western frontier. Like Abner Cheever's family, this small band of travelers eventually found themselves in a flatboat on the Ohio River that landed at Cincinnati. They then headed due north into Ohio until they reached an area that is now Troy, Ohio (Miami County) and took up 160 acres of government land.

Aaron Gleason Barber

One of Mary Boutwell Barber's four children, Aaron Gleason (born 1802 in Vermont), was considered mechanically inclined, and had learned several trades such as making barrels, plastering, and blacksmithing. He married Mary Ann Murphy on October 12, 1824 in Miami, Ohio. They had 7 children between 1825 and 1843.

- Mariah Francis – 1825
- John Henry – 1827
- Sarah Cordelia – 1831 Cordelia became my second great-grandmother.
- Mary Ann – 1832
- William White – 1835
- Aaron Coney – 1841
- Catherine Martha – 1843

While Aaron Gleason and Mary Ann were living in Ohio, one Henry Long (born June 6, 1831) from Lanton County, Pennsylvania took up residence in the same area of Ohio. Henry apparently met Sarah Cordelia Barber, Aaron Gleason's third offspring, and they married in 1849 in Miami Co., Ohio.

In that same year, 1849, Sarah Cordelia's mother, Mary Ann Murphy Barber died of [cholera](#), leaving Aaron Gleason with 7 offspring between the ages of 6 and 22. Aaron Gleason soon remarried Phebe Bennett Nelson (b.

1810) on January 13, 1850. Phebe and Aaron Gleason had one son, James Madison Barber (1850); and a daughter, Fanny, was born 6 years later.

In 1851, the Barber family (not including Sarah Cordelia, her husband, Henry, and their young child) moved to Clay County, Indiana; and in November of 1854, purchased 80 acres of land for \$600 from David Christie. Also, in 1854, Sarah Cordelia, husband Henry Long, and their first two children, joined the Barbers in Clay County near Cory, Indiana.

Aaron Gleason and Phebe kept busy with improving their property until Phebe's death in 1863. She was buried in the Deeter/Pleasant Grove Cemetery. Their son, Madison, was known as a blacksmith in Art, Indiana. After Phebe's death, I found little else about this family story that is reliable. Aaron Gleason Barber died in Saline City, Clay County, in July, 1883 at the age of 81. He was buried in the Barber Cemetery, 2 miles east of Cory and ½ mile south of S.R. 46.

[DNA evidence linking me to Aaron Gleason Barber and Mary Ann Murphy Barber](#) is significant and can be viewed in the Appendix

Here is a photo of Aaron Gleason Barber:



Sarah Cordelia Barber and Henry Long

Our attention now shifts to Aaron Gleason's daughter, Sarah Cordelia Barber, and her husband, Henry Long. Henry and Cordelia (as she was commonly called) had several children: William White and Alba were born in Ohio and the following were born in Clay County, Indiana:

- John Calvin He would become my great grandfather.
- Charles

- Sarah
- Louis
- Mary
- Frances Elizabeth

The 1870 census was notable because on the census taker's form, the farm that the census taker visited just prior to the Long's farm was owned by a family named Jeffers. Andrew and Jane Jeffers had 5 children and one of their daughters was named Mary. This paper will soon feature John Calvin Long and Mary Catherine Jeffers because they eventually got married and one of their children would become my grandmother, Sarah Marie Long Stevenson.

Regarding the deaths of Henry and Sarah Cordelia, there are cemetery records that show the death of Cordelia to be December 15, 1891. Henry's death was shown as April 21, 1876. They were both buried at Van Cleve Cemetery.

[There were 25 DNA "matches" between myself and Henry Long.](#) Detailed results are on in the Appendix. The key points of genealogical significance in this section are summarized below:

Aaron and Mary Boutwell Barber are my 4th Great Grandparents

Aaron Gleason Barber and Mary Ann Murphy are my 3rd Great Grandparents

Henry Long and Sarah Cordelia Barber are my 2nd Great Grandparents

The Intersection of the Long and Jeffers Farm Families

In the previous section, I noted that Mary Catherine Jeffers and John Calvin long lived on adjacent farms and would eventually marry. However, there were some notable events in the life of John before that would happen. John was born on September 12, 1862. He undoubtedly had the typical farm boy life: complete a few years of school to learn some basic skills and then work on the farm with his dad and brothers.

He and a local Clay County girl found each other and married on February 8, 1888. Her name was Viola Ann Jackson, born on August 5, 1869. The marriage was brief. There were not documents to be found about their separation, but it must have ended quickly because John remarried on October 19, 1889. This time it was a girl from Owen County, the next county east of Clay. Again, there were no documents to tell us how long this lasted, but it was long enough for them to have a daughter before the relationship ended. The mother's name was Mary Elzora Nation or Nations (1867-1899), depending on the record.

On March 8, 1892, John found out he was living one farm away from the woman he would eventually marry. The U.S. Census records document the growth of John C and Mary C.'s family. In 1900 there were three children: Laura B (age 7; 1893), William R (age 4; 1896), Sarah Marie (age 1, 1898) who would become my grandmother.

The 1910 census showed 6 children: Laura (age 17); William Riley (age 14); Sarah M. (age 11); Russell (age 8); Stella (age 4); Chester (age 5 months). In 1911, the oldest son, William R, died of tuberculosis. By the 1920 Census, another son named Paul was added to the family. Paul M was born in 1916. The 1920 Census also showed the older children were starting to leave home. By the 1930 Census, Paul, was the only child still living with his parents.

On November 17, 1939, Mary Catherine Jeffers died. The 1940 Federal Census showed that Paul was still living with his father and a “servant” named Hazel Searcy was living with them. John Calvin died while he was visiting one of his married daughters, Sarah Stevenson, my grandmother. John’s body was taken to a nearby funeral home and then returned to Sarah Stevenson’s house for a brief service with final services at a nearby church with adjoining cemetery. John Calvin Long died on February 27, 1949 and buried in Van Cleve Cemetery.

[DNA “matching” data between myself and John Calvin Long](#) is in the Appendix.

Here is a 1902 photo of the John Calvin and Mary Jeffers Long family:

Left to Right: Laura Long, Mary Catherine Jeffers Long and baby Russell Long, Sarah Long Stevenson (my grandmother), John Calvin Long, and William Long



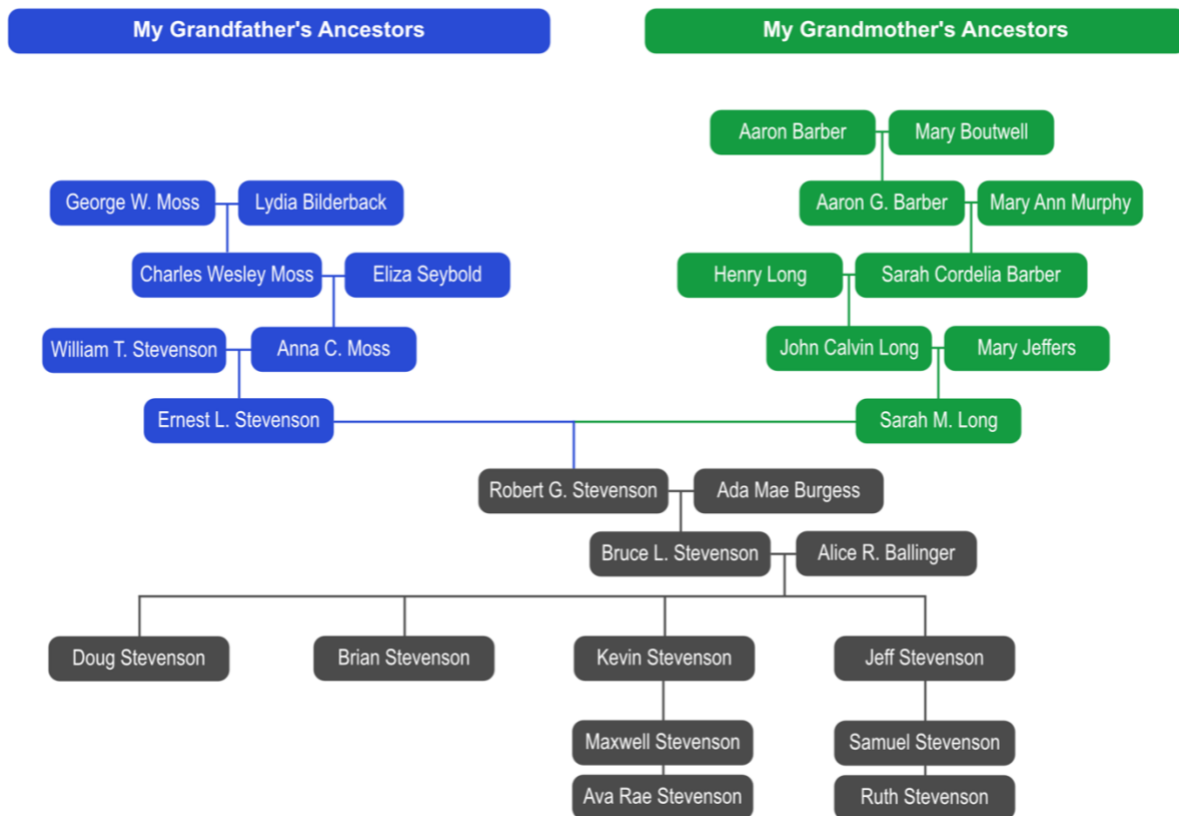
The photo, below, of the Long family was taken in 1930. The two seated adults are Mary Jeffers Long and John Calvin Long. One of the two babies in Mary's lap is Donald Stevenson, my uncle. The young child sitting on John's left leg is Robert Glenn Stevenson, my father. The child standing next to John and leaning on his right leg is Ernestine Stevenson, my aunt. The child standing behind Mary Jeffers Long is Mary Ann Stevenson, my aunt. Behind Mary Ann is Sarah Long Stevenson, my paternal grandmother. Next to Sarah is her husband, Ernest, my grandfather. I think the other people in the photo are siblings of my grandmother, their spouses, and their children.



John Calvin Long and Mary Jeffers Long are my Great Grandparents

Below is a “tree” showing the composition and the intersection of my grandparents’ ancestors.

The Barber, Moss, and Long Connections with the Stevensons



Part V: Stevensons I Remember

Ernest Stevenson and Sarah Long Stevenson

Having described the genealogical and historical roots that led to my paternal grandparents, I thought I would address my paternal grandparents as a couple. My grandparents were children who each came from a long line of large farming families in Perry Township, Clay County, Indiana. My grandmother was one of 8 children and my grandfather was one of 10. Grandpa, Ernest Stevenson, had an 8th grade education and my grandma, Sarah Marie Long, had a 6th grade education. They had a sexual relationship prior to marriage when Sarah was 17 and Ernest was 22. Sarah became pregnant. In addition, it was widely reported and believed that Ernest got another girl pregnant at about the same time. Her name was Cheryl Burger, also 17 years old. My grandpa married my grandma, Sarah Marie Long. The alleged offspring of Ernest Stevenson and Cheryl Burger was named Lennie Burger, and was raised by Cheryl's parents. Cheryl later married and had a family. Lennie also married and had a family. Interestingly, there is a daughter of Lennie Burger who had DNA testing with Ancestry.com. Our DNA samples show considerable overlap. Ancestry.com considers this person to be part of my "close family." The community chatter about my grandpa was correct.

Now, back to the Long and Stevenson union. First, the offspring:

- Mary Ann Stevenson (born 1916)
- Ernestine Stevenson (born 1923)
- Robert Glenn Stevenson (born 1926)
- Donald Stevenson (born 1930)
- Chester Stevenson (born 1932) died shortly after birth. His death certificate listed the cause of death as premature birth.

Ernest was born on November 3, 1893 and followed the career paths of his grandfather and father: farming and coal mining. Grandpa lived and worked on a small farm which necessitated working another job in addition to farming. He worked as a coal miner for a company called Victory Mine in Vigo County and retired in 1940. He then worked for the Clay County Highway Department as a grader operator while continuing his farming. Over the years his non-farm income allowed him to purchase more parcels of land near his small farm until farming could become a self-supporting business. When I knew him, he was only a farmer with substantial acreage with fields of various crops as well as several chickens, ducks, pigs, sheep, cows, and one peacock. He arose early every morning to milk a couple of cows and then had breakfast. Life was one farm job after another. He rarely smiled, was always calm in my presence, soft-spoken, and rarely initiated interactions with me or my sister. He enjoyed watching wrestling on TV when he got in from his chores. Grandpa was pleasant, somewhat distant, and very focused on the family farm. I admired his work ethic and perseverance.

My grandma, Sarah, was a fantastic cook and a most personable and outgoing woman. She impressed me as very bright, alert to everything, and socially skilled. As a teenager I saw an old journal she kept that contained poetry she had written over the years. I liked her poems because they were witty and humorous. I consider her a prime example of the difference between one's education (6 grade level) and one's intellect (clearly above average.) She loved a wren that lived in small tree behind the house, close to the old outhouse and family garden. I remember her talking to me about the beautiful song the bird would sing. She would often go outside in the morning and listen to the wren. She named the bird, Jenny. My mom liked Sarah and credited her mother-in-law with teaching her how to cook through her guidance and example. I only remember one time when there was something

resembling a disagreement between my mom and grandma. When my mom was pregnant with my brother, Mark, grandma suggested the name Opie. My mom thought he would be teased if given that name. Both agreed to disagree. Grandma did not like my name either, but never said so to my face. She liked my middle name, Lee; but she apparently decided that Bruce was not a proper country name. She changed my first name to Burr. I was henceforth known as Burr Lee while visiting in their home. Nobody objected.

Grandma and Grandpa were caught between two worlds. By the 1950's (or earlier) many rural people could see the advantage of modernizing their lives. For example, my maternal grandparents left rural life in Jennings County and had a modern home by the late 1940's located on a large piece of city property so there was plenty of room for a large garden. My Stevenson grandparents had two daughters (my dad's sisters) who lived and worked on farms in the same rural area; and both had lovely, modern homes. My grandparents would not modernize, so their 4 children put their money together to have the upper level of their very old country home refurbished to accommodate a modern kitchen and modern toilet. So, when you walked up the steps of their home, the first thing you saw hanging on the wall was an old, large, box-like telephone that had a crank on one side, a corded, hand-held earpiece that hung on the other side, and a place to speak in the middle of the phone. When grandma made a call, she would turn the crank a few times, lift the corded earpiece to her ear and wait for Saree to pick up. I assume the operator's name was Sarah, but it would be like grandma to pronounce it "Sair-ee." Sarah would connect you to whomever you wanted, and often provided local news (gossip) during the process. To the left of the phone was this lovely new kitchen and ½ bath. I never saw my grandparents use either. The refrigerator never had anything in it. The Stevenson children thought their parents would use modern conveniences in their old age. They were wrong.

The house was never well cleaned, as I understood it. The furniture was old but comfortable. The full bath downstairs had very little privacy (no door) and had an unreliable toilet. The procedure involved wiping yourself and putting the soiled toilet paper in a waste basket next to the toilet. The bathtub had "legs." The nearby "clothes dryer" was a crank operated wringer that got the water out in preparation for drying on the outdoor clothes line. The washer was a very large sink. I have no idea how it was used. The old gas stove was close-by and often being used for cooking, baking, and canning. The dining room table was very large and positioned next to a very old refrigerator. Storage spaces downstairs were filled with decades of financial records, canned goods, tools, and a freezer. The house was a metaphor. Downstairs is where people lived life the way life was to be lived, the old-fashioned way. You only went upstairs to ignore modernity and sleep (and answer the old phone).

The outdoor areas were like childhood heaven; a nearby creek where we fished, and animals in the chicken yard and barn yard that provided amusement. There were outbuildings that demanded to be explored; fields that led to places that seemed exotic and exciting; woods that hid a mysterious pond. I had ready access to a rifle and shotgun, so I learned to shoot at targets and went hunting a few times with the men of the family. Cousins were "nearby" when playmates were needed. When I say nearby, I mean "nearby" in the country sense of the word. My sister and I would get so excited to visit our grandparents and cousins, my parents would not tell us we were leaving until we were awakened very early on the day of departure. They did this hoping to avoid the high levels of activity that accompanied our excited anticipation. It was a long and boring drive from Iowa to Indiana, but well worth the time.

However, as I got older and able to do farm work, I understood that the farm was not heaven --quite the opposite. I began to understand what my dad meant when he told me he left home at 18 to join the Navy during WWII because he was sick of all the work. Now I understood. Working a family farm was hard work and important to America at that time. One of my grandparent's daughters ran a dairy farm, another daughter ran a chicken/poultry farm. Their husbands worked full-time non-farm jobs. I did some of everything there was to do on the poultry

farm, the dairy farm, and my grandparent's farm; and I enjoyed none of it except driving the tractor around. However, I now feel privileged to have had these experiences. They help me appreciate what is involved in getting produce to market.

My grandma was a member of a nearby Methodist church (Mt. Calvary United Methodist Church in Van Cleve.) It is now known as the Van Cleve Community Church. Grandma had the "Serenity Prayer" on a wall near their bedroom, but rarely spoke of faith issues in my presence. However, a first cousin of mine (Sara) reported going to church with our grandmother on several occasions. This same cousin loved being on the farm with our grandmother; and attended Vacation Bible School at our grandmother's church. Grandma died of heart problems while at home in bed on December 17, 1967. I never heard my grandpa talk about religion or anything other than the farm issues, the farming neighbors, family, and TV wrestling. Grandpa died on May 3, 1972; the same year that both of my maternal grandparents died. Grandpa and Grandma Stevenson taught me much about the realities of country life and farming. I am a better person because of it.

Before we leave the relatives from Clay County, Indiana, I wanted to share another resource you may borrow from me: *Journey into the Past* (2024). The information in this book began as articles in [The Brazil Times](#) newspaper. The Clay County Genealogical Society wrote weekly newspaper articles during the timespan surrounding the Indiana Bi-Centennial Year in 2016. There was so much information about the people, places, and events in Clay County that over 320 articles were published. The articles in *Journey into the Past* are in chronological order of events, beginning from the time before Indiana became a state in 1816, and followed by articles after Clay County became a legal entity in 1825. The book has 217 pages plus a 22-page index of people, places, and events in Clay County. There was minimal information about our ancestors; just a couple of additional details. Please let me know if interested in borrowing this book. It, and other genealogical resources, can be purchased from the [Clay County Genealogical Society](#) in Center Point, Indiana.

Here is a photo of my paternal grandparents and their adult children:



*Seated: Ernest L Stevenson (my paternal grandfather) and Sarah M Long Stevenson (my paternal grandmother).
Standing from left to right: Robert Glenn Stevenson (my father); Ernestine Stevenson (aunt); Mary Ann Stevenson (aunt); Donald Stevenson (uncle).*

Here are my grandparents on their farm.



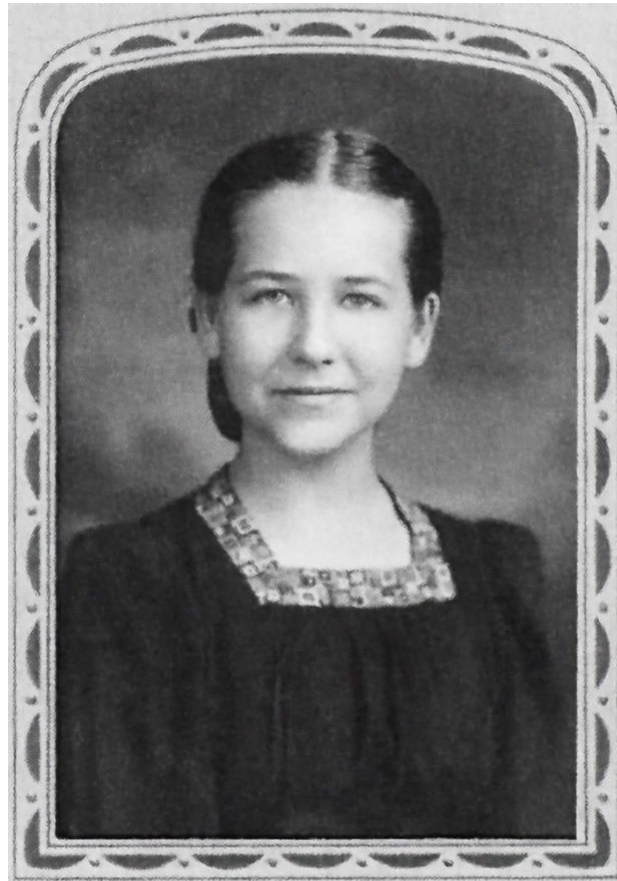
Here is my grandma at home in the dining area.



Ernest Lloyd Stevenson and Sarah Marie Long Stevenson are my Grandparents

Robert Glenn and Ada Mae Stevenson

Mom was a country girl born September 23, 1927. She grew up with very religious and morally strict parents in Sand Creek, Decatur County, Indiana, not far from the farmland that Abner Cheever, her great-great-great grandfather, worked. She and my dad experienced many sociological, economic, and technological changes spanning almost a century between dad's birth (1926) and mom's death (2022). My mom learned a strong work ethic, frugality, morality, and a family orientation that served her well amidst these cultural changes. I gathered from her comments about her childhood that she enjoyed being outdoors and playing with the animals, her sister, and their friends. Growing up, church was a very significant part of her life. Her first boyfriend was a fellow she met at church. Mom said he eventually became a minister. As she grew older, she had concerns about her church which had to do with perceived hypocrisy and church overreach into the lives of the people, especially as it related to church discipline. Here is a photo of my mom in high school (1945).



Mom started college somewhere in Florida but soon left because she did not like it there. It was a Christian school that was probably suggested by her parents. Mom apparently agreed with her parents that she could attend a Methodist school in Indianapolis. It was called Indiana Central. It is now called [University of Indianapolis](#). Mom worked to help pay her college costs. Dad attended college using the money available through the [G.I. Bill](#) (1944). While at Indiana Central, they met. Each came from a family line of several generations of farmers. Glenn (as he was called by his family) was a well-muscled and athletic young man who plowed the family fields with horses, wrestled in the Navy, and played football and threw javelin in college. His name was Robert Glenn Stevenson (January 6, 1926.) He was the first in his genealogical line to attend a college. Both of my parents were preparing to be teachers.

Here is a college graduation photo of my mom.



Their marriage was on October 15, 1949 at the Methodist Church in Cory, Indiana (the closest town to the Stevenson family farm.)

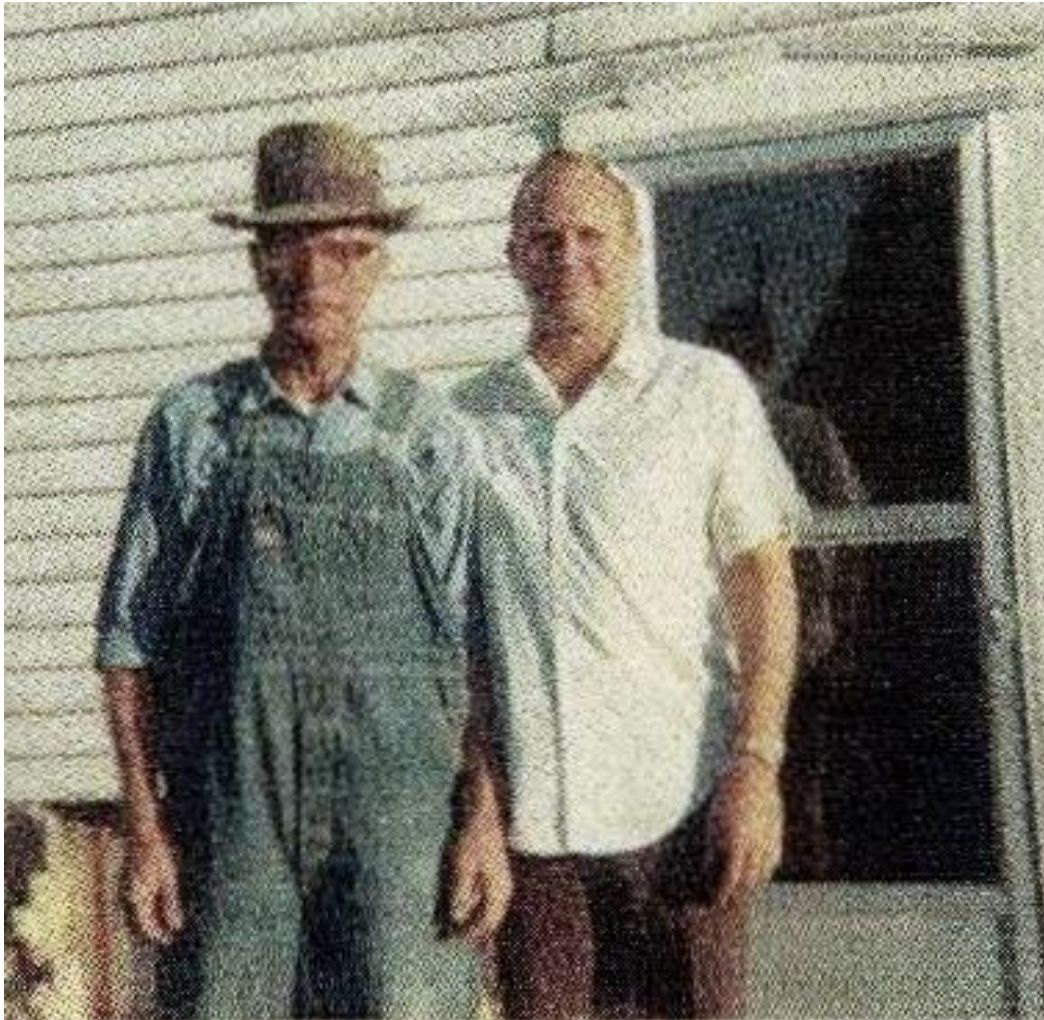
Below is a photo from their wedding day.



The newly married Stevensons got teaching jobs at a small town called Attica, Indiana.

Mom's duties were teaching High School English at Kingman. Dad's duties were mostly related to coaching. At some point, mom lost her connection with church and the outward expressions of Christianity, but on the inside, she retained keen moral sensibilities. My dad, in contrast, did not have the religious background but showed respect for traditional values.

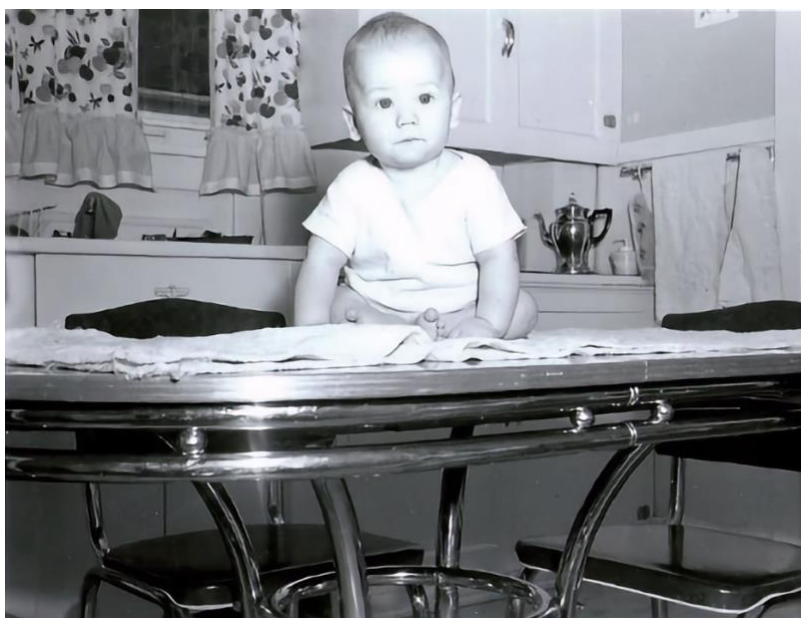
Here is a photo of my dad with his dad on the Cory, Indiana farm.



During my parents' teaching tenure, mom got pregnant with her first child. That's me. I was born on October 19, 1950. Dad decided he should make more money than teaching would allow, so he applied to be trained to be an FBI agent. This worked out well financially for the family, but many "transfers" are required of FBI agents.

First stop was Phoenix, Arizona. Mom's second child was born there and named Rita Ann (January 3, 1952.) The Phoenix assignment lasted a year. The FBI allows agents to make requests for geographical assignments. Mom and dad always wanted a home in Indiana.

The second assignment was in Illinois. It seemed that every two years, a new city in Illinois became home for us. Before Bruce and Rita started school, another child was added in Galesburg, Illinois. Mom gave birth to a boy named Douglas. We all called him Dougie.



He was born in 1954 and died in 1955.

One Sunday morning, I was playing on the porch attached to the kitchen when I heard a very loud noise, a lot of commotion, and loud voices. I looked through the doorway between the porch and kitchen but could not see what happened. When I walked into the kitchen, I lost most memory of what I saw for the next several hours. I only remember hearing Dougie crying and crying and crying. I do retain only one conscious image in my mind of that time between the accident that morning and several hours later in the back seat of the family car with Rita as we waited silently in the dark for our parents to return to the car from the hospital across the street. That single image in my mind was of Dougie, an image which is frightening; and has never been spoken. I cannot remember being taken to the neighbor lady across the street for babysitting, or my parents return home, what was said when

they returned, or the ride to the hospital that evening. My next remembrance while in the back seat of the car is Mom and Dad opening the front car doors and giving me and Rita fifty cent pieces, and being told that Dougie is dead. I have no memory of the funeral. This death changed my mom and dad as will be described later.

In our next Illinois city, I started school. A couple years later we were transferred to Davenport, Iowa. We were allowed to live in Davenport for five years. We rented a two-bedroom home that seemed spacious because it had a full basement and an upstairs attic. My mom volunteered to lead a Cub Scout group in our home during this time. I really enjoyed having her as our den leader. She was a good teacher for us. She also did some substitute teaching at a nearby orphanage. Here is a photo of my mom during the time we lived in Davenport.



When I moved from Cub Scouts into Boy Scouts, I remember Dad going with our troop on a canoeing campout. The canoeing part of the experience did not happen because the canoes flipped over during transport to our location. Strong winds did the damage. What I mostly remember about my dad in Davenport is playing ping pong with him in our basement. He was not a good sport when I was finally able to beat him. He impressed me as a strong and natural athlete who was not very familiar with losing, and found it unacceptable. Dad spent much time at work and often came home late. I did not see much of him except on weekends. I would wake him up on Saturday mornings so he could take me to the YMCA for “gym and swim.” I did this until I was old enough to take a bus to and from the YMCA. It was in Davenport that my folks joined a square-dancing group. My mom and dad looked happy when they returned. I don’t understand why it was short-lived. Another difficult event to understand was when my mom took me and my sister to a large Methodist Church in Davenport to take classes, about which I remember nothing. When the classes were completed, we were each given a Bible and showed up on the following Sunday morning to be sprinkle baptized. My mom was present. I remember seeing my mom pray for the first time during the baptism. I don’t remember returning to that church again.

The highlight of our time in Davenport was the birth of my brother, Mark. Here is a photo of my mom and Mark on October 21, 1962.



Next stop was Burlington, Iowa where the Stevensons purchased their first home. We lived there for five years, also. Mom kept busy with domestic chores and kept the house in lovely condition. Dad worked a lot and would occasionally take me to his office on Saturdays. I did secretarial-type work. He also took me and some of my boy scout friends to his office to earn our fingerprinting merit badge. That was fun, and messy. There was also the time that my folks heard about a Methodist church in town that was preparing for a pulpit exchange with a church in England. The youth group was invited to go along to England as part of the exchange. My folks thought this would be a wonderful experience for us so my sister and I were dropped off at the church on Sundays to participate in the youth programming and establish ourselves as part of that program so we would be allowed to go to England. I did not know anybody there and found the classes to have little religious content; and the religious material they presented was above my background, which was almost nothing. But it was a socially enjoyable time and the experiences in England were worth whatever money it cost my parents. After we returned, we had very little further contact with the church. I believe my dad attended the church on one occasion. Also, during this time, I played tennis with a very good high school team and remember being shocked one day to see my dad watching me play at an away match. It appeared that my dad approved of my engaging in sports and made clear that it was a priority that I get my varsity letter. He also wanted me to beat the best player on our team because that boy's father had beaten him at handball. That never happened.

Here is a photo of my mom and dad in Burlington, Iowa.



The next photo is me, Mark, and Rita. It was Christmas, 1965.



Next stop was the much-desired Indiana assignment in Indianapolis. We purchased a suburban home that I considered to be dream-like. After years of being told by my mom that we don't have enough money to buy things, it became clear that we did have money. My parents were frugal to the point of being compulsive about investing and saving. This was the first time we lived in a very modern home in a suburb and life continued as usual. Mom was good at taking care of house and family; and she did some substitute teaching for Greenwood schools. Dad worked a lot and I have very few remembrances of him in that location since I left for college a year later. Here is a family photo from Greenwood.



The next assignment was Bloomington, Indiana. I was in college during this time and living away from home. While at home on a college break, I tried to talk about Dougie with family members. I asked dad if he remembered giving me and Rita the fifty cent pieces when he returned to the car to tell us about Dougie's death. Rita said she remembered. Dad said he did not. He was telling the truth and seemed uncomfortable. Then there was silence. About a year after that, while home on a break from college, I noticed dad in a face down position on the couch. I had never seen him in that position. I walked toward him and found that he was crying. I had never seen my dad cry. I knelt beside the couch and stroked his head. He then told me that Dougie's death was his fault. Then silence. I quickly found my mom and told her what dad had said. Mom said nothing of significance and turned away. Then, silence. Mom acknowledged toward the end of her life that Dougie's death was not something she ever wanted to discuss. Then silence. Dear reader, if family tragedy strikes your family, please find ways of dealing with it other than silence, guilt, memory loss, and more silence. My way of getting personal closure was to name our first son, Douglas. That made me feel better. The nature of the accident is as follows: While my brother was learning to walk, he grabbed a coffee pot cord that was draped over the kitchen counter. Dougie pulled the coffee pot on top of himself and was badly scalded. A tragic accident, but we trust that in God's providence, all things work together for good if we love God and are called according to his purpose. Paraphrase of Romans 8:28.

After 27 ½ years of service in the FBI, my dad retired to the inherited Indiana family farm land he knew so well before entering the Navy. Mom was pleased to live on a farm again. She enjoyed the pet dog, the beauty of nature, the crops growing around her, the many fruit trees in the front yard and lovely flowers everywhere. Dad worked some law enforcement type jobs in retirement and paid other farmers to farm the land. Mom did some private tutoring, helped Mark finish up high school, and got him launched into college. Then they were empty nesters. Mom also taught English at a nearby vocational school for five years.

Here is a photo of my parents on the patio of their farm in Cory, Indiana. Their dog, Demo, is also pictured.



In 1979, while Alice and I were living in Ohio and expecting our second child, my mom stayed with us for a while to help. At that time, she and dad were still in Bloomington and transitioning to retirement on his inherited farmland. She told me that my dad had been seeing another woman. Apparently, it was common among the FBI agents he worked with to have sex partners in addition to their wives. These were not serious relationships. These were some women who thought it was cool to be with an FBI agent. When my mom told me about it, she was distressed; and I found the conversation too difficult to manage. She also said there were times in other locations when she suspected he was doing the same thing. This was the first time she had proof of his infidelity. Mom said my dad was genuinely remorseful when confronted. His solution was an offer to put some of his inherited Indiana farm property in Mom's name. That was not something my mom wanted, and it showed the difference in their value systems. It was always Dad's goal to be a millionaire. To give up monetary value was the largest sacrifice he could make. For Mom, money was not valued above committed love. I found it ironic when my dad finally reached his goal of having assets of a million plus dollars, he was suffering from dementia and had no awareness of his wealth. In his mentally compromised state, he believed he was poor and living in a house that was not his.

Dad was diagnosed with [Lewy Body Syndrome](#) and later, [Alzheimer's](#). Mom made super-human efforts to help dad stay safe and deal with his bizarre understanding of reality for a few years. Eventually, dad was entered into a Memory Care Unit and then transferred to another unit in Muncie, Indiana. Mom sold the farm to a neighbor and relative named Jeffers and moved to Muncie, Indiana where my sister, Rita, lived with her family. Mom had better offers for the farm when she put it up for sale, but she accepted Mr. Jeffers' offer because the Jeffers and Stevenson families are related and mom knew the Jeffers' could be trusted to take good care of the farm land. Mom visited Dad every day in the Memory Care Unit until he died in 2011. Mom entered an assisted living facility in Muncie, Indiana for the last few years of her life. It was hard on her when her assisted living facility locked down during the pandemic. Mom died on March 21, 2022 at the age of 94. My mom was a good woman and an even better mother. Dad was an independent, strong-willed, hard-working man with a keen sense of personal responsibility for his life choices. He would have agreed with the poem, *Invictus*, written by William Ernest Henley. The last line is as follows: "I am the master of my fate; I am the captain of my soul."

Below is a photo of my Mom and Alice on Mother's Day, 2021



For Your Consideration

We saw multiple examples of family tragedy in the lives of our ancestors including my own family of origin.

- How will you manage tragedy if it happens in your family?
- What will be your guiding principles to help yourself and your family through a family trauma?

Robert Glenn and Ada Mae Stevenson Are My Parents

Bruce Stevenson

At this point, it could be appropriate for me to write about my adult life. It would please me if my sons would do this at some point in the future. All I wish to say at this time is that I was raised by well-meaning parents who sacrificed for me and did the best they could to protect me and educate me in many important areas of life. However, regarding my spiritual education, we rarely attended church and never talked about God or Jesus. Sometimes there were many years between church attendance. I never learned to pray or value prayer because there was little opportunity to experience it. I knew my mom had a religious background, and as I got older, she

said things that indicated a positive view of church when she was a child. As she grew older, she saw hypocrisy and a type of overreach into the lives of people that could take the form of excessive church discipline. Thus, my mom turned away from the church and my dad had no church upbringing; so, I never heard the gospel and never had a friend with a solid church background. I was spiritually non-existent. That changed in the spring of 1970 when I was invited to a small gathering of people called “[Navigators](#)” who were meeting in a house that was near my college dormitory. I did not know the inviter personally, but he thought God wanted him to make the offer to me. On the day of the event, it was a beautiful spring day and I was tired of reading; so, I joined the meeting and heard the Gospel for the first time. I also clearly heard God speak to me for the first time, and left the meeting with the knowledge that God knows me and that I belong to Him. It felt as if I had stumbled onto a great secret and good news that allowed me to understand reality from a different perspective; a better perspective. I now had a spiritual life and everything began to change. I saw myself as a sinner. I read the New Testament. I immediately started talking to others about God. During the next school year, I started a Bible study in my dormitory and attended many Christian student meetings. I also regularly attended a church. I have been attending, initiating, and contributing to Christian outreach and ministry ever since. Now, at the age of 73 years, I could not stop even if threatened. Beyond this testimony to the grace of Jesus in revealing Himself to me and giving me peace of mind, I will leave it to others to decide how my life should be summarized. Interested readers are encouraged to do what I did not do, ask your relatives about their lives and find out directly from them the things that interest you. You will find that Alice and I are willing to chat about such things.

For Your Consideration

Jesus said, “All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” Matthew 11:27-28 (ESV)

If you would like involvement with other Stevensons (mostly from Indiana) who have stayed connected for at least seven decades, there is a private Facebook group known as: Stevenson Reunion (Descendants of William Thomas and Anna C Moss Stevenson.) I have an old Stevenson reunion photo with myself and few close family members among many other Stevenson families. I would guess the photo to be from 1959.

Below is a Stevenson reunion photo from 1976.



The annual Stevenson Reunion is now held on the first Saturday in August in the Community Room of the Volunteer Fire Department in Cory, Indiana. In 2024, there were 84 in attendance at the Stevenson Reunion. If interested in joining this Facebook group, let me know.

“A proper understanding of our family history may serve as a warning, a prescription, an encouragement, or a map forward; but it always serves as a blessing from God when our family history is viewed as something worthy of meditation for the development of discernment and wisdom.” Bruce Stevenson (2023)

Part VI: Living Between Two Worlds: Material and Spiritual

We all live in a world that is material. Some of us live in a spiritual world, also. Abner Cheever lived in both worlds. When Abner's wife died, he believed that God was "chastening" him because he showed too much "affection for the things of this life." He believed he had been neglectful of his "duty to God...and to Christ." Abner's response to Polly's death began with a commitment to "humble myself before God and plead for pardoning grace and mercy..."

Abner had analyzed his situation from a spiritual perspective. He was using a Biblical understanding of the dichotomy between the "world (flesh)" and the "Spirit." I John 2:16 (ESV) states: "For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world." Regarding the "desires of the flesh," Galatians 5:17 (ESV) says, "For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do." I John 2:15: "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (ESV). Romans 8:5-6: "For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace."

For Your Consideration

- What tension do you experience as one living between two worlds that are, at times, in opposition to each other?
- How can we assess the extent of our love for the Father as opposed to the extent of our love for the world?
- How might one "set his/her mind on the things of the Spirit"?

Abner began by seeking forgiveness for being neglectful of the duty of the spiritual world: the duty to God and Christ. After assurance of God's forgiveness, Abner worked diligently to align his affections and actions with a correct understanding of what God would have him do to fulfill his duty or calling in life. Consider these aspects of Abner's life:

- He took an interest in the spiritual well-being of others, especially his family.
- He took classes to become an "exhorter" among the people.
- He became a Methodist circuit rider.
- He helped promote orthodox theology in opposition to false teachings in his community. ([Do you hear echoes of his father's experiences as a pastor in Vermont?](#))

For Your Consideration

- Do you think Abner showed some behaviors you would like to emulate?
- In what ways might his life encourage you to seek a deeper relationship with God?
- Which people in your life may profit from your interest in their spiritual well-being?

It was said of King David that he “served the purpose of God in his own generation.” (Acts 13:36).

- What might be possible purposes of God for the various ancestors in our family tree?
- What do you think your own purpose is in your generation?

Jesus was directly asked in John 6:28, “What must we do, to be doing the works of God?” Jesus answered them, “**This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.**” In Ephesians 2:9-10 (ESV) we are told how to view ourselves and our mission in life: “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.”

- What do you consider to be the “good works” God has prepared for you to do?

Mark 12:30-31 ‘**And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.**’ The second is this: ‘**You shall love your neighbor as yourself.**’ **There is no other commandment greater than these.** (ESV)

- Based on this passage from Mark 12, what do you perceive to be your spiritual and material responsibilities to God, yourself, and others; including those who seem to be alive only to the material world?

Stories are Important

The ancient Hebrews and Jews lived in a culture that was held together by the stories found in the Hebrew Bible. Stories of [Abraham](#), Isaac, Jacob, [Moses](#), Joshua, the judges, [King David](#), and the promised Messiah (Jesus) were often mentioned throughout Hebrew scripture as a way of communicating the Jewish people’s understandings of the truth about themselves and God. Even though many of these stories cast the ancient Hebrews and Jews in a negative light, they were powerful connectors of the Jewish people for millennia.

Our ancestral stories, as limited as they are in this paper, may be able to serve as a modern extension of the successes and failures of the Hebrew and Jewish people; and with similar ability to provide a connectedness within our family.

For Your Consideration

- What family stories might be edifying to others?
- Which family ancestors could serve as role models in some respect?
- Which stories could serve as cautionary tales?
- The vast majority of our ancestors' stories are not reported in this paper. What other family stories might you pass on to your friends and your children to help explain who you are and what you have learned about yourself and God?
- If this "ancestral tour" has been edifying for you, what was most helpful?

Postscript

Part of the joy of writing this paper was learning about the variety of cultural contexts in which our ancestors lived. The culture of our Puritan ancestors, during the 1560 to 1660 time-frame, was most interesting.

Our Puritan ancestors during this time had a well-balanced and highly detailed theological perspective that was deeply Biblical and presumed nothing in life was impervious to the reach of their powerful God. One of their beliefs, which is little addressed in the modern church, is the idea of generational faithfulness. Our Puritan ancestors saw themselves as part of a covenant with God, not just as individuals but as families and communities. Their prayers often included petitions for their children and future generations, asking that they remain tenacious in the faith, and true to moral values. The early Puritans thought it to be their duty to ensure that future generations remained devoted. Some Puritan leaders warned against worldly distractions and expressed their hopes for godliness in those who would follow. The link below takes readers to many examples of Puritan prayers of many types: [Puritan Prayers](#). I would recommend reading the last brief prayer on the opening page of this web site. The prayer is entitled, *The Valley of Vision*. It reflects the spiritual insights of the Puritans put in the form of paradoxical statements.

Immediately below are three Puritan prayers for spiritual inheritance, family blessings, and future generations. If you deem them useful, perhaps you would consider praying them.

Prayer 1: "Lord, make them to be born under Thy covenant of grace by the Holy Spirit! I pray for my descendants throughout all generations. Be Thou their God as Thou art mine. My highest honor is that Thou hast permitted me to serve Thee; may my offspring serve Thee in all years to come."

Prayer 2: "Lord, make me a channel of generational blessings. Establish Your covenant in my life, bless me, and make me a blessing to others. May my family and descendants carry Your favour and be a blessing to the nations."

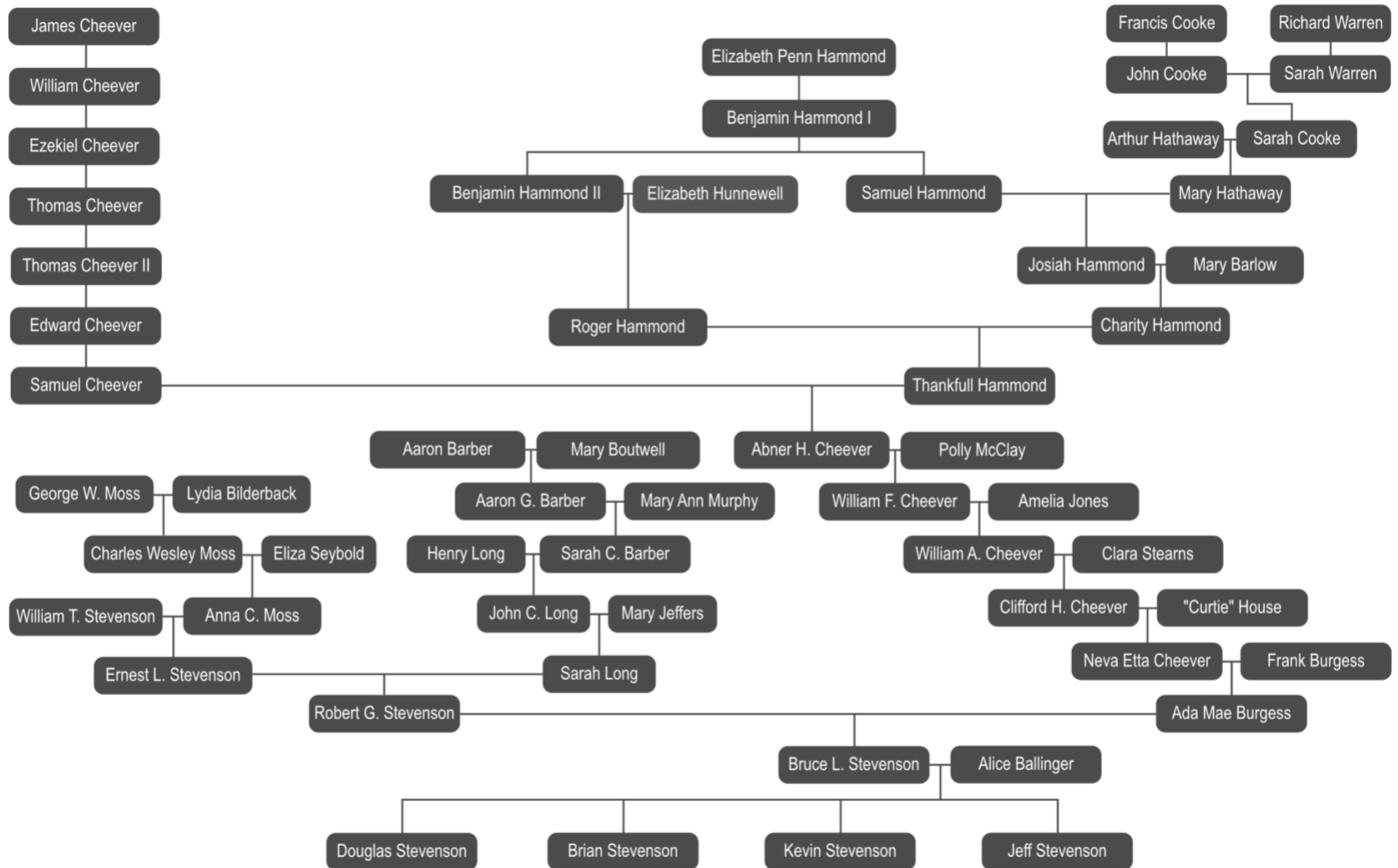
Prayer 3: "O Lord of all ages, Thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. As Thou hast guided our fathers, so guide our children's children. Let Thy truth be their foundation, Thy grace their refuge, and Thy Spirit their guide. May they walk in Thy ways, love Thy Word, and glorify Thy name, that Thy faithfulness may be known from age to age."

Theologian, D. A. Carson (co-founder of the Gospel Coalition), wrote: [*The Puritans: What They Have That the Moderns Lack*](#)." *Northwest Journal of Theology* 1 (1972): 75-92. If you would like to explore some Puritan theological understandings that may supplement our modern understandings, you may enjoy this insightful paper.

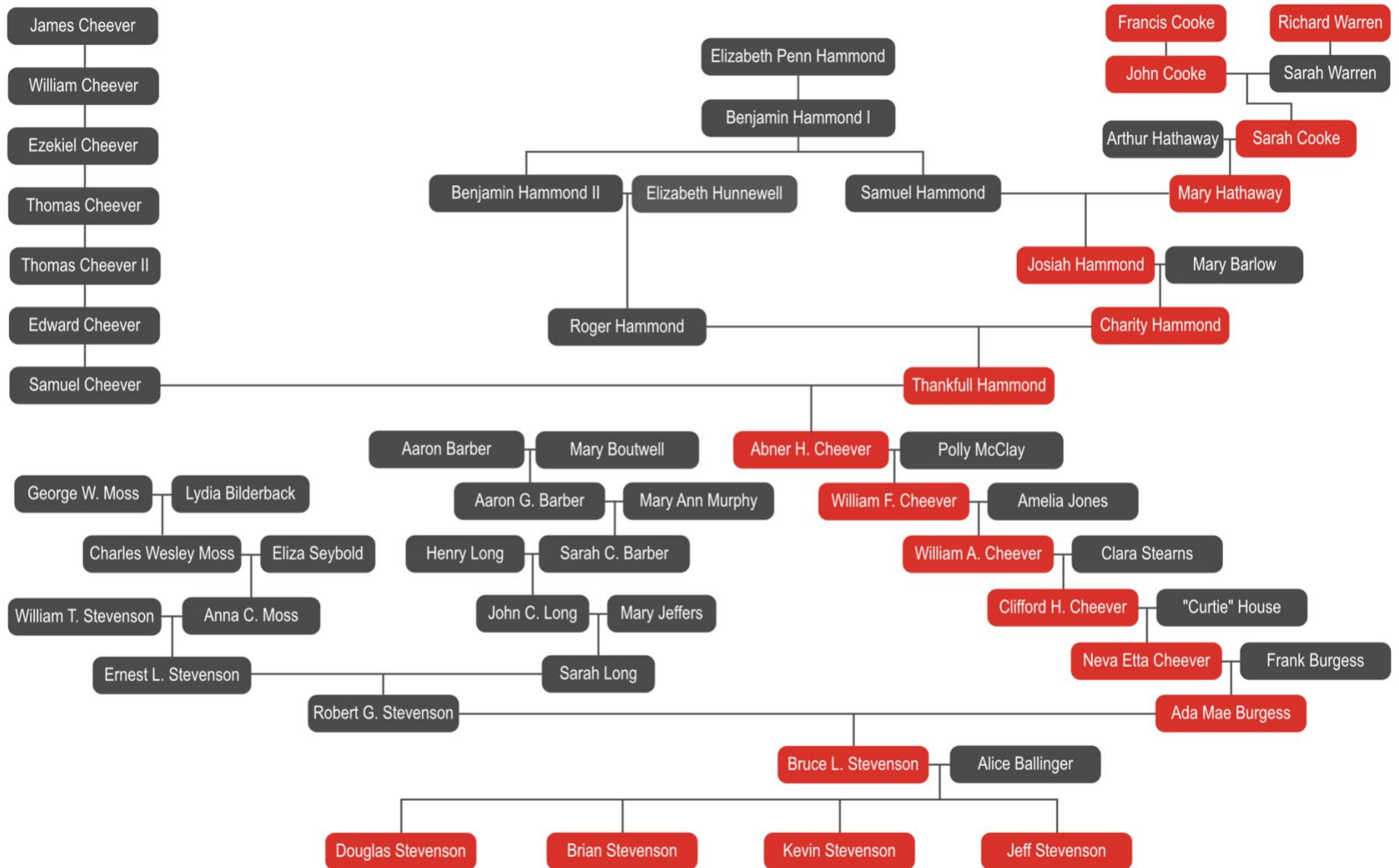
Bruce Stevenson

Appendix

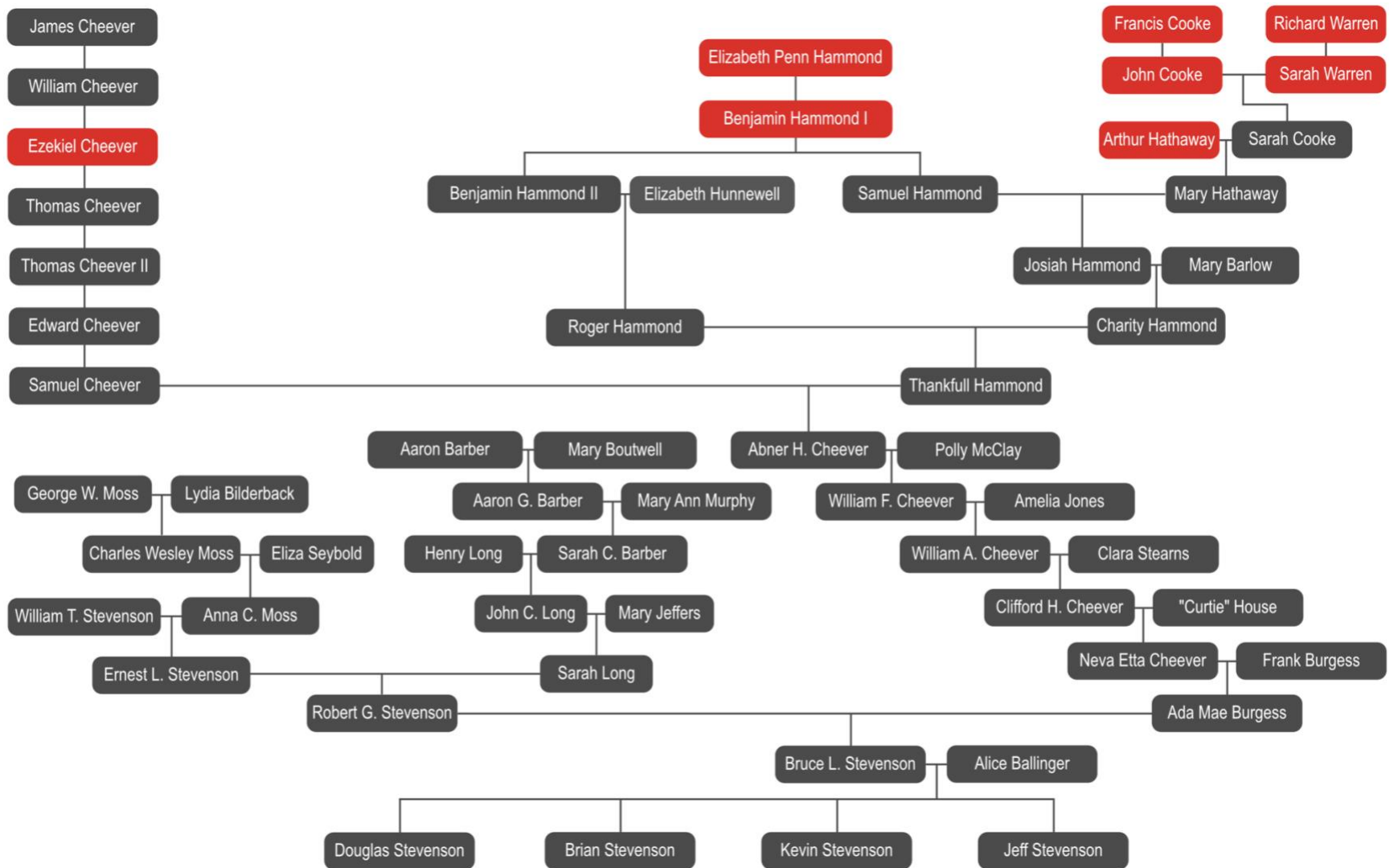
Ancestors Featured in This Report



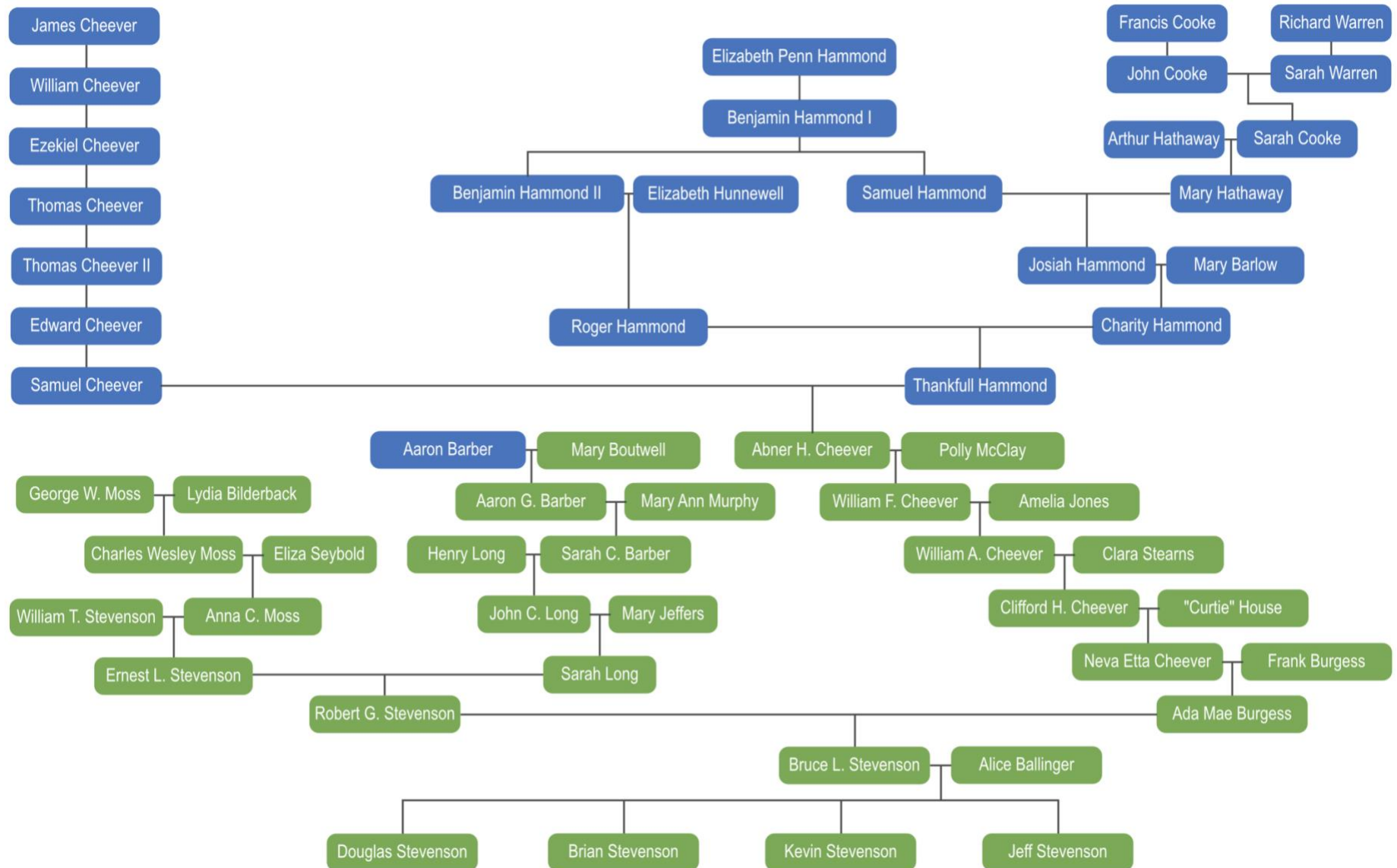
Direct Line to Mayflower Passengers



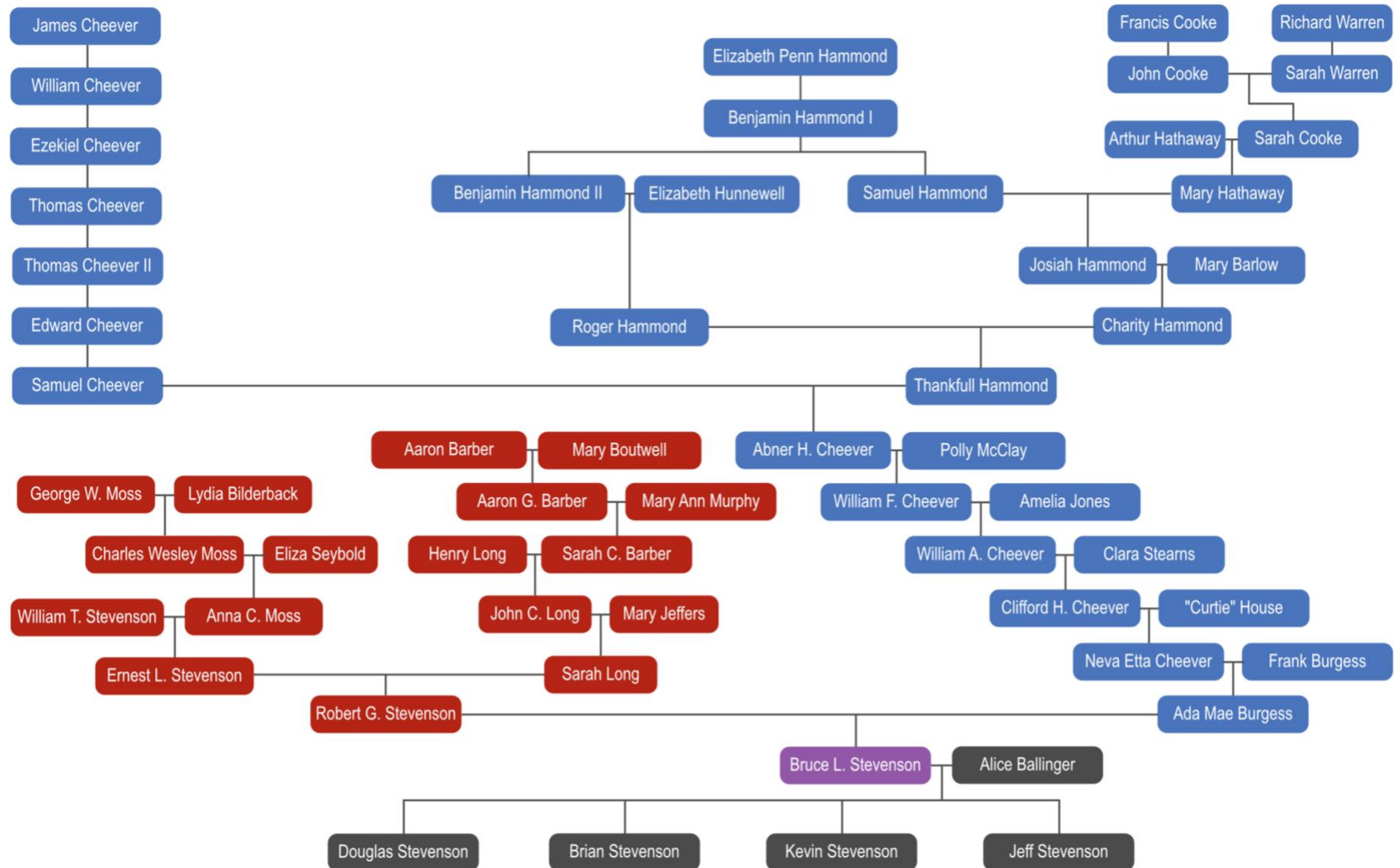
Immigrants from England



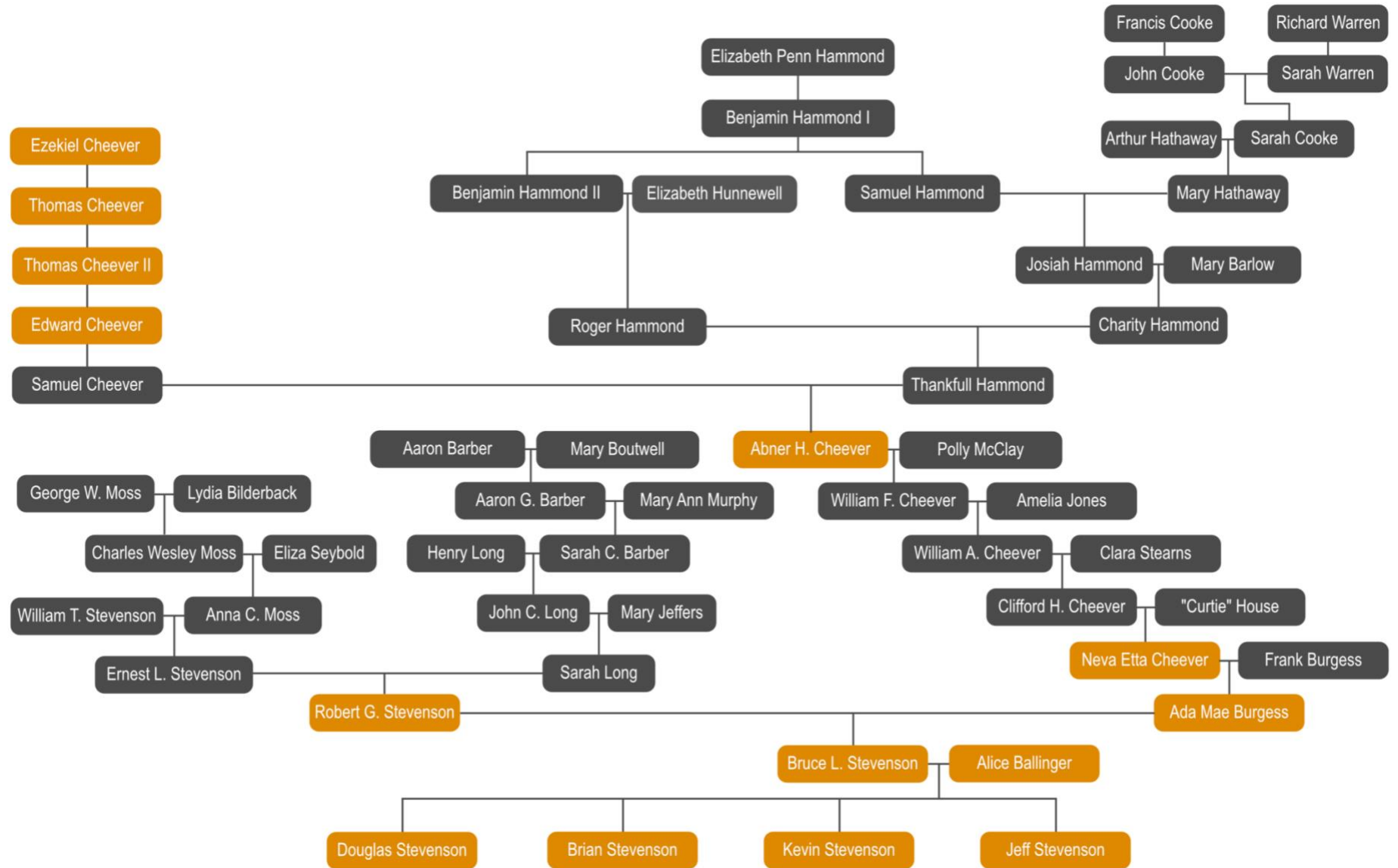
England / New England Ancestors vs. Ohio or Indiana Ancestors



Paternal vs. Maternal Ancestors Featured in this Report



College Education



DNA Ethnicity Results for Bruce Stevenson as of January 2024

Ethnicity	Paternal	Maternal	Bruce
Eng / NW Europe	29%	20%	49%
Scotland	11%	20%	31%
Germanic Europe	8%	3%	11%
Wales	2%	4%	6%
Cornwall		2%	2%
Spain		1%	1%

DNA Ethnicity Results for Alice Stevenson as of January 2024

Ethnicity	Paternal	Maternal	Alice
Eng / NW Europe	31%	15%	46%
Germanic Europe	6%	17%	23%
Scotland	5%	15%	20%
Norway	2%	3%	5%
Wales	3%		3%
Ireland	3%		3%

DNA Ethnicity Results for Brian, Kevin, and Jeff Stevenson as of February, 2025

Ethnicity	Jeff	Brian	Kevin
Eng / NW Europe	64%	53%	63%
Scotland	25%	29%	8%
Germanic Europe	9%	10%	21% (Belgium)
Netherlands		3%	3%
Cornwall	2%		
Ireland			2%
Sardinia		2%	
Wales		1%	2%
Norway			3%

DNA Test Results that Show a Genetic “Match” with Apparent Genealogical Ancestors

Process and Terminology: Modern genetic technology is now able to use DNA tests to help establish genetic links with other modern-day persons who also claim some genealogical link to the kinship line I claim. Ancestry.com identifies Reverend Samuel Cheever’s generation (Fifth Great-Grandparents) as the first generation to which my DNA data can be linked. Previous generations cannot be reliably used for genetic matching. The term, “match” is only saying that the genetic connection between the DNA tests is rare enough that it is probably not due to random genetic distribution. I claim no expertise in the science of genetics, so my reports of these findings will be directly from information provided by Ancestry.com. My DNA information is being continuously compared to DNA samples with other clients of Ancestry.com. If other people have a significant DNA overlap with me, it supports the claim that we have a mutual relative. If we have a “match” but don’t claim a mutual relative, Ancestry.com will encourage us to look into that likelihood. Ancestry.com is also able to predict the closeness of a relationship by measuring the number of centimorgans (cM) shared by two people. A centimorgan (cM) is a unit of genetic measurement used by experts to describe how much DNA and the length of specific segments of DNA you share with others.

These shared segments are divided up into centimorgans. The more centimorgans you have in common, the closer the relationship. Using Ancestry.com's *Thru-Lines* program, we can do that with any genealogical claim starting with Rev. Samuel Cheever and Thankfull Cheever. As this paper continues, we will now be able to insert genetic findings into the Appendix, as deemed helpful. I would like to close this DNA tutorial with a quotation from Dr. Henry Louis Gates, Jr from Harvard. He hosts the popular TV show called, Finding Your Roots. I heard him say to one client who was dubious about one of her genetic findings, "DNA don't lie!"

DNA: Reverend Samuel Cheever (5th Great Grandfather)

My DNA testing with Ancestry.com shows that there were 15 DNA "matches" between my DNA and the DNA of 15 other Ancestry.com clients who are claiming some genealogical connection to Samuel Cheever. I will share three of them. The most interesting finding is that of a woman we'll call JM. She is predicted by Ancestry.com to be my "second cousin." JM is claiming to be the offspring of the Cheever line that came from my grandmother's sister, Norma Edna Cheever. Norma's line to Samuel Cheever is nearly identical to mine. Our DNA's overlap by 217 cM's (centimorgans 217 cM is the normal overlap for 2nd or 3rd cousins and makes JM a "close family" relative according to Ancestry.com. Another DNA client, we'll call her JN, is claiming to come from the line of Samuel Cheever via my great aunt, Letta A Cheever. JN shares 59 cM over 2 segments which suggests she is probably my "third cousin" and is labelled "Extended Family". The last genetic "match" we'll call DO. DO is claiming to be the genealogical offspring of William A. Cheever's (my 2nd great-grandfather) daughter, Ella Belle Cheever. DO is identified by Ancestry.com as a 3rd cousin with 94 cM over 5 DNA segments. DO's relationship to me falls in the "Extended Family" category. When genealogical claims can be bolstered with genetic findings like those just presented, there is more certainty to the genealogical claim. Again, all the people noted are claiming a line of kinship that eventually goes to Rev. Samuel Cheever.

DNA: Abner Cheever (4th great grandfather)

In comparing my DNA with other AncestryDNA clients, 13 "matches" were found in reference to Abner Cheever. Most were "cousins" with varying levels of genetic proximity to me. The cM values were between 40 and 217. These numbers suggest these matches range from "close family" to "distant family."

DNA: William F. Cheever (3rd great grandfather):

When the DNA of present-day people (who are clients of Ancestry.com and claim William F Cheever as a relative) is compared to mine, Ancestry.com found 13 DNA "matches." Looking at the "matches" with people I do not know, the cM scores range between 133 and 217. They are labeled as second cousin or second cousin 1X removed.

DNA: Almira Cheever Jones Reynolds:

Five DNA “matches” were found. They came from the descendants of brothers Merritt and Mahon Reynolds, two of Almira Cheever Jones Reynold’s children. DNA comparisons showed these relatives to have a very distant relationship with me with cM values between 10 and 20. Two of the “matches” are labeled by Ancestry.com as 4th cousins, two are labeled as 4th cousins 1X removed, and one as 4th cousin 2X removed.

DNA: George and Lydia Moss (3rd great grandparents) and Charles Wesley Moss:

Overall, there are 50 Ancestry DNA clients who share significant amounts of DNA with me and claim a relationship with George W. Moss. There are four DNA “matches” found through daughter Elizabeth’s line; 21 DNA “matches” through daughter Mary Lydia’s line; two DNA matches through son Jacob’s line; 14 DNA matches through Charles Wesley’s line (my line); two DNA matches through son James E’s line; four DNA matches through daughter Caroline’s line; and two DNA matches through George’s line. Most of these “matches” are between myself and very distant “cousins” showing cM overlap of 8-31. Three “matches” coming from the line of Charles Wesley Moss (my line) showed much higher cM’s (330cM, 858cM, 383cM; a ½ first cousin, a nephew, a 1st cousin 1X removed, respectively). They are considered “close family.”

DNA: Stephen Stevenson (2nd great grandfather):

When checking for DNA “matches” with Stephen Stevenson, 9 matches were found. cM’s ranged from 58-558. A majority of the “matches” led Ancestry.com to predict that most of these “matches” are probably second cousins.

DNA: William Stevenson (Great Grandfather)

12 “matches” were found. cM’s ranged from 56-452. From my grandfather’s sister, Ruth, there were 3 matches with her descendants. From my grandfather’s brother, Willie, there were 6 matches with his descendants. From my grandfather’s brother, Maurice, there was 1 match with his descendants. From my grandfather’s brother, Harold, there was 1 match with his descendants. From my grandfather, there was 1 match with his descendants. That person is the granddaughter of the woman my grandfather impregnated out-of-wedlock. Most of these matches were labelled as extended family. Two were labelled “close family.”

DNA: Aaron and Mary Boutwell Barber (4th great grandparents):

There were 29 DNA “matches with cM values between 9 and 383. Most “matches” were thought to be third and fourth cousins.

DNA: Aaron Gleason Barber (3rd great grandfather)

There were 25 DNA “matches” with me through his ancestors. The cM overlap was between 8 and 181. Those relatives who came through two of my grandmother’s sisters had cM scores of 170 and 181. This suggests they are 2nd-3rd cousins and “extended family.”

DNA: Henry Long (2nd great grandfather)

25 DNA “matches” were found. 6 of them were through Henry’s daughter, Mary. 6 of them were through Henry’s son, Alba. 7 matches were through another son, Charles.

DNA: John Calvin Long (great grandfather)

2 DNA matches” with me through the sisters of my grandmother, Sarah Stevenson. They were both considered 2nd-3rd cousins and “extended family.

DNA: Mark Stevenson (brother):

DNA overlap is 2,511 cM’s! Yes, we are labelled as “close family.”

Abner H. Cheever papers, 1816-1837

Using These Materials [information from University of Michigan Library]

Restrictions: The collection is open for research.

ABSTRACT: This collection contains correspondence between Abner H. Cheever, an early migrant to Indiana, and his sister, Thankful, and brother-in-law, Captain John Webster, in Vermont. The collection includes letters written during Cheever's trip to Indiana via Kentucky in 1816-17, and contains accounts of the hardships the family faced when settling in Indiana.

EXTENT: 19 items

LANGUAGE: English

AUTHORS: Collection processed and finding aid created by Philip Heslip, September, 2009

SCOPE AND CONTENT:

The Abner H. Cheever papers are comprised of 19 letters to and from Abner H. Cheever, an early migrant to Indiana, his sister, Thankful, and brother-in-law, Captain John Webster, of Vermont. The collection includes letters written during Cheever's trip to Indiana via Kentucky in 1816-17, and contains accounts of the hardships the family faced when settling in Vernon, Geneva, and Jennings Counties in the southeast corner of the state. Cheever describes various misfortunes, such as family sickness, the death of his wife Polly, and personal vendettas waged against them by relatives. He often writes of God's role in his life; in an undated letter, Cheever writes of the death of his wife Polly: "I feel that God is Chastising me for my disobedience and hope and pray that I might not turn a deaf ear to His call."

BIOGRAPHICAL / HISTORICAL:

Abner Hersey Cheever, son of Dr. Samuel Cheever, was born in Brockton, Massachusetts, in 1787. Cheever traveled to Kentucky and Indiana in 1816-1817, and settled in Vernon (Jennings County), Indiana. As a resident of Jennings County, Cheever sold property in 1839 and 1841, and is listed as a resident of Washington County, Indiana, in the 1840 census.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR DUPLICATION:

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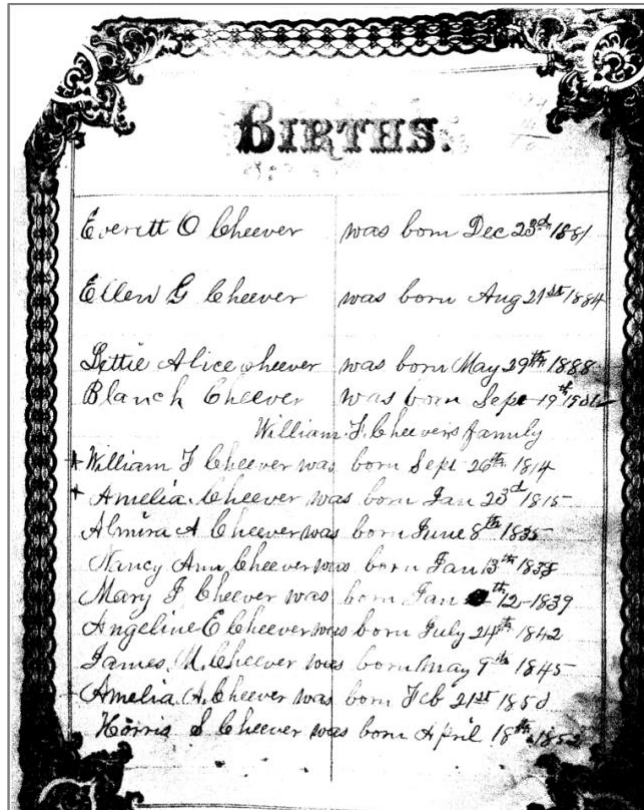
PROCESSING INFORMATION:

Cataloging funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and the "We the People" project.

ARRANGEMENT:

This collection is arranged chronologically with undated items filed at the end.

Sample Birth Page from the Cheever Family Bible



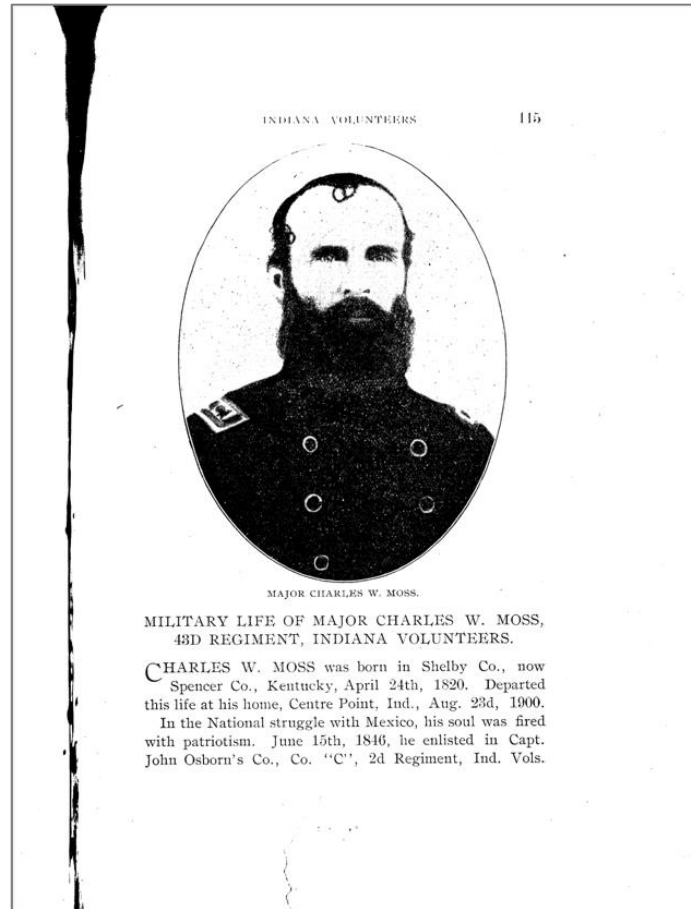
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Names you might remember from reading this genealogy paper:

- 3rd Great Grand Father: William Franklin (Frank) Cheever
- Wife: Amelia Cheever
- Oldest Child: Almira Cheever

Excerpt from *Forty-third Regiment of Indiana Volunteers: An Historic Sketch of Its Career and Services*

THE MILITARY LIFE OF MAJOR CHARLES W MOSS, 43D REGIMENT, INDIANA VOLUNTEERS (pp. 115-119)



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Excerpt from *Forty-third Regiment of Indiana Volunteers: An Historic Sketch of Its Career and Services*

FORTY-NINE DAYS IN THE WILDERNESS. A STORY OF THE CAPTURE AND ESCAPE OF FIRST SERGT. JOHN C. MOSS, CO "G," CAPT. W.E. WHITRIDGE, SERGT. JONATHAN FISK AND PRIVATE JOHN M. JONES, OF CO. "H," ALL OF THE 43D INDIANA VOLUNTEERS.



SERGEANT JOHN C. MOSS

FORTY NINE DAYS IN THE WILDERNESS. A
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VOLUNTEERS.

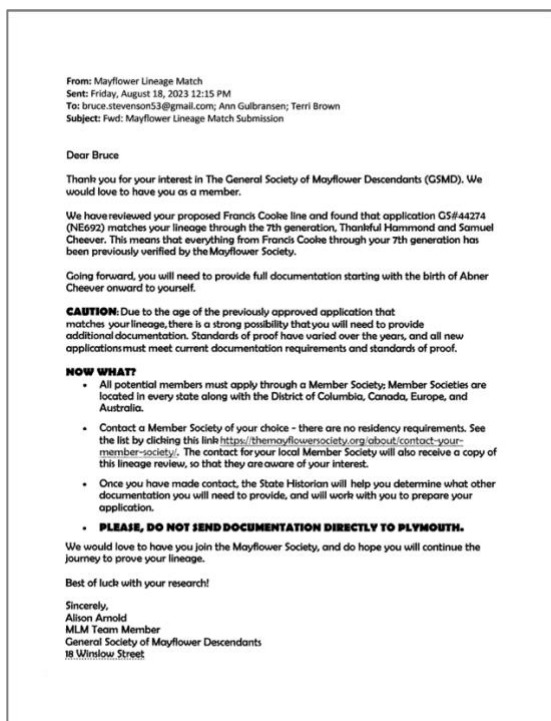
BY SERGEANT, JOHN C. MOSS

AFTER a lapse of a few short years, I again step upon the stage to greet my comrades. By request of the brave boys of the 13d and our gallant Commander, William E. McLean, I will travel once more the long weary marches in the wilderness, climb the rugged mountains, cross the desolate prairie, and press on to Little Rock, to greet the Stars and Stripes, which float so proudly over our Nation to-day. At each Reunion the roll-call shows some brave boy mustered out. The ranks are thinning, but the hand clasp is just as warm, the fire of patriotism burns just as brightly as in 1861. My life has plowed along like a river, but the ocean of oblivion is near, former scenes, incidents, and memories, will then sink beneath its billows, but the work accomplished by the "boys in blue," will live on and on forever.

In February, 1861, I, like many other boys of my age, (being then but seventeen), thought that I could learn more, see more, and, in short, could accomplish more among strangers than among friends. So, in accordance with these views, I informed my folks that I was going to leave my parental roof and obey the command of the late Horace Greely "Young man, go West." Hence with

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Correspondence sent to me from the Mayflower Descendants Society (dated August 18, 2023)



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Documents the first seven generations of linkage between myself and Francis Cooke and his son, John Cooke.