

THE THOMPSON FAMILY

THE THOMPSON FAMILY

(A Search into History)

Compiled by Edward Thompson (1879-1970)

Written in 1964

- Returning to England after almost thirty years abroad, the only relatives left were:
- Brother Herbert, eleven years older, and Willie eleven years younger than I, both parents having died about twenty-five years earlier. The wife of Willie then began accusing me of being just like the rest of the Thompson's, my brothers and also my own sons. I inferred that this consisted in an indifference to public opinion and convention to a degree considered by her as eccentric, but could never obtain specific charges.

Having left England in 1898 with very short trips home because of father's death and mother's illness, I had no knowledge of family history and did not know even the Christian name of either grandfather, only that one of them had been a house painter and the other kicked to death by a horse. A few years after returning to Romford, I noticed in Herbert's house an engraving of a cleric in early Victorian costume and inquiring who it was, learned that it was Mr. Edward Thompson and had been in possession of our father, probably from his father, and Herbert had evidently acquired some details of which I was ignorant. He had been told by father that his grandfather had been taken to school on a pony accompanied by a manservant on horseback wearing breeches and similarly met and accompanied home and that his name was Nathaniel. This, of course, induced speculation on my part as to whether the family had lost their money or perhaps grandfather had quarreled with his parents and had been "*cutoff with a shilling.*" Later the picture was unframed and the inscription read "*engraved from an oil painting engraved by G. Hughes, St Johns Wood, and printed by G. Hughes, London, 1849*" The only other information was that the family had lived in Islington and that a grandfather had fallen off a ladder while painting a house and had died instantly.

The contrast between the plebeian house painter and the cleric made it expedient to trace the latter first on the assumption that they were brothers, although in fact there was no blood relationship but after all a very close friendship between the two families.

Another stimulant to research was the annual publication of the Catholic Record Society volume for 1934 which indexed several references to a Nathaniel Thompson and his offences by his printing and publishing books and news without obtaining the approval of the censor and the first obtaining the license to print. He was tried, fined, and imprisoned and put in the pillory for his exposures of the Titus Oates fraternity but persisted till his death in 1687. Later, in the September 1955 issue of THE LIBRARY, a quarterly issued by the Bibliographical Society of its members, a long article appeared, about twenty pages, dealing with his career.

For the search itself, the Reverend Edward of 1849 was investigated and much data obtained which did not help until his marriage entry showed that a Reverend William Thompson, who turned out to be the younger brother of grandfather, performed the ceremony.

Parish registers, wills, apprentice records, Oxford and Cambridge admissions, etc., and at last records found showing names and dates back to 1739 – and circumstantial evidence which seems highly probable that the father of the earliest authenticated ancestor was born in 1695 and died in Stepney on Wentworth Street, November 11, 1763. Sixteen ninety-five is only eight years after the death of the so-called "*papist printer and publisher*" Nathaniel, just mentioned, but there is nothing to connect the two. The issue for the month of July 1921 and the issue of April 1923 also refer to this printer.

The searching proved very interesting and afforded a lot of historical information. In the commonwealth period, weddings were not published in the parish church but announced in the marketplace and the ceremony

THE THOMPSON FAMILY

performed by any town official, butcher or blacksmith. In one of the Church of England's registers, there are entries of expenses for demolishing the altar and receipts for the sale of chalices, etc., later for rebuilding it under Mary and then cost of re-demolishing it under Elizabeth. The change in the calendar in 1752 is interesting. Before then a man would have been found to have married in April 1749 and a child born in March 1749. Actually, eleven months later because that year did not end in March until March 24. England had declined to recognize the change made by Rome and so was eleven days behind the rest of Europe except Scandinavia and Russia, which did not change until 1917. Our eleven days were dropped in 1752, therefore, the people refused to pay a years tax on 354 days income and so the government changed the date to April 5 instead of March 25 and this date is still the end of the tax year. Records of churches outside of the established are interesting, and varied. The Quakers are excellently kept, the Huguenots also; some of the others are now non-existent. Some towns have their rate sheets back to 1600 and others for a period of less than 100 years. Deaths show a huge infant mortality rate and sometimes a third of the entries on a page were deaths from smallpox. Twins were very rare, probably less than a quarter of the present percentage of the present rate.

The change in Christian names from middle 1690's: While William and John still predominated, Samuel, Amos, Zachariah, for men, and Ruth, Rachel, and Susannah came into favor. From around 1800 the old style phraseology of wills began to go out of style. They used to begin "*In the name of God, Amen*" and then the testator left his soul to the mercy of God, his body to be buried in some selected churchyard or church building and then worldly goods to the people of his choice. Also, in quoting the date it was followed by "*in the ---- year of the reign of----King of Great Britain France and Ireland, etc.*" France was not omitted until the time of the French Revolution and, as there was no capital "F" it was spelled "ffrance" as some names still appear in the telephone directories.

- **Nathaniel Thompson (1695-1763)**

He is not proven but seems likely to have been the father of the earliest authenticated ancestor, who was Nathaniel Thompson, a weaver, married in 1760 at Christ Church, Stepney.

The baptism of a Nathaniel on August 10, 1739 at St. Botolphs, Bishops gate is likely his, the parents being Nathaniel and Rebecca. This church at that date included parts of Stepney, where our first authenticated ancestor lived and brought up his family.

The 1695 to 1763 dates are from the burial register of Christ Church, Stepney. Nathaniel Thompson, from Wentworth Street, buried on November 11, 1763, aged 68, which makes him as born between November 12, 1694 and November 10, 1695.

Baptismal records are in St. Leonard's, Shoreditch of children of Nathaniel and Rebecca.

- 1717 August 14, William
- 1719 December 30, Ambrose, and at St. Botolphs, Bishopsgate
- 1735 January 4, Esther
- 1739 August 10, NATHANIEL
- 1741 June 7, Elizabeth

Both of these parishes then included contiguous parts of Stepney, which became part of the new parish opened in 1729.

The books of the Weavers Guild show that one Nathaniel Thompson was bound apprentice on May 16, 1709, when the 1695 youth would have been fourteen, and could have married in 1716 and had his first child in 1717. If the above were the same couple, they could have lived elsewhere between 1719 and 1735, or had children baptized at a nonconformist chapel. Seventeen thirty-nine seems the likely year for the birth of the

THE THOMPSON FAMILY

first proved ancestor because if born later he would be less than 21 when he married in 1760, and if born earlier would be less likely to have children in 1785 which was the date of his last son.

From this we continue with the history of the Nathaniel whom we assume was born in 1739 and who married in 1760 and died in? (As a matter of fact no record has been found of his death, the records of burials at Bunhill cemetery very seldom record the Christian names or even the initials of the party buried, the only data given being infant, child, or sometimes Mr., which was for the gentleman class, or any title of rank). Sometimes the parish where they had lived was given.

- **NATHANIEL THOMPSON (1739-1817)**

While not positive that he was the one baptized in Bishopsgate, the year is about correct as, if he were born much earlier, would have been unlikely to have children in 1785 and, if born later, unlikely to marry before he was twenty-one, as most weavers had not finished their seven years apprenticeship.

We are now in the reign of George II that came to the throne in 1727. Legal documents of the time describe him as being “*by the grace of God, King of Great Britain, France, Ireland, etc.*” The title of King of France was continued until after the French Revolution when Napoleon began to displace the older French. Spitalfields (later a part of Stepney) was west of Bishopsgate, which was one of the gates of the old city of London and so was outside of London proper. It was the center of the weaving industry, which increased greatly by the influx of spinners from France caused by the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1686. They were mostly Huguenots with their own religion and not so very sympathetic to the Church of England, and with the coming of many Quakers from Oxford, nonconformity became very popular. It shows in the names of the streets: Quaker Street, Wheeler Street, (Wheeler was a free church and built its own chapel), Fleur De Lis Street, etc. There were several Quaker Thompsons in Oxford found later as weavers in Spitalfields, but without sufficient record to connect them with the family tree.

So our first official entry is the marriage of Nathaniel in Christ Church, Stepney, and dated September 28, 1760. (This register is found in the London County Hall, Waterloo.)

- **NATHANIEL THOMPSON**, bachelor, and **ANN SANDCROFT**, spinster, both of this parish, married by banns. F.K. Maxwell, curate. Instead of signature there are two half-inch squares, one containing the words “*Nathaniel Thompson, his mark*” and the other “*Ann Sandcraft, her mark*” in each a St. Andrews cross.

It is not important, but it looks as if her real name was “Sadgrove” as there were several baptisms and deaths recorded at that time in that parish but no such name as Sandcraft appears there, nor been seen elsewhere. The curate could easily have misheard and spelled it in himself and no one would have noticed the error. A William Sadgrove married a Martha nearby in January 1736 and could have been her father.

No evidence appears of his life except the baptism of his ten children, but he was probably thrifty and was able to give them more schooling than he had himself, and of his sons one only died before 1818 and the next one in that year; in 1821, his eldest son in his will mentioned four as still alive then. Considering the then rate of infant mortality, he did very well. Of his sons, the Philip born in 1776 is probably the one who appears in later directories as in the lighterage business later, and Robert is the one appointed as executor of the will of his elder brother, Nathaniel, and also of Peter Thompson, a wealthy tailor in Soho who died in 1839. Esther is probably the one who made a sampler dated 1786 marked “*Esther Thompson, her work*” then she would have been eleven years old, which at that time was the age that young girls were encouraged to work on these things. This sampler is in the possession of Herbert Thompson (1906). Son James, who died in 1818, was a timber broker who lived in Islington, next door to his elder brother, Nathaniel.

THE THOMPSON FAMILY

- **A list of his children follows:** They were at Christ Church, Stepney
Baptized Age Name Born at
- 1761 December 27 20 days Nathaniel Deacons Court, Quaker St.
- 1765 November 17 10 days Mary Wheeler Street
- 1767 November 22 16 days Ann Fleur De Lies Court
- 1769 October 15 13 days William Flower De Luce Court
- 1771 December 25 7 days John Wheeler Street snd at St. Dunstan's Church, Stepney
- 1774 May 15 14 days Philip Mile End New Town
- 1776 April 18 14 days Easter Mile End New Town
- 1780 August 2 18 days Benjamin Mile End New Town
- 1783 April 6 ---- Mile End Old Town
- 1785 April 3 28 days James Mile End Old Town

The age of Robert was left blank on the register and the name Easter is doubtful spelling, because Easter Sunday came that year four days after her birth and it was probably their spelling of Esther, a name frequently used by the Thompson's and entries have occurred where parents were entered with the mother's name written as Easter for a child and them for a later birth entered as Esther.

The eldest son mentioned above had a son Theophilus, who had a son Edmund; he, in turn, had a daughter born in 1878 and still alive in 1964. I was able to contact her a few years ago (as Mrs. Lewis, with a son a High Court Judge) They had a rough sketch and this Nathaniel (1739) was marked in pencil as living to old age and dying probably around 1817, but I was unable to find any records of his death as this was before the national registers had been established, at Somerset House. So the date quoted as 1817 is not authenticated. He was likely a man of good character, honest and thrifty, deriving satisfaction from his family and their success in life; his eldest son becoming the wealthy stockbroker, raising himself a large family equally successful in various professional and philanthropic activities professional and philanthropic activities.

- **NATHANIEL THOMPSON (1761-1825)- Eldest Son of Nathaniel (1739)**

His father was a weaver living in Stepney, but this son became a wealthy stockbroker living in affluence in Colebrook Terrace, Islington, and a member of the London Stock Exchange.

On September 2, 1784, shortly after the Declaration of Independence in U.S.A. and before the French Revolution and now in the reign of George III, he married Margaret Maw from Lincoln County: this is an uncommon name but there are in the Quaker registers of Lincolnshire many of them: in one distinct meeting house there were 14 births and seven deaths but no Margaret listed.

His father was still living in Stepney as his youngest son was born in Mile End. Old Town, but the eldest son had probably been working for some years and then settled in the City itself as his first son, although we can find no record of his baptism, is mentioned in a biography as having been born in "London", and his second son, Nathaniel, although baptized in St. Sepulchres, is recorded as born in the parish of St. Mary the Bow, which is on Cheapside, inside the city limits, and the one whose bells were heard by Dick Whittington and anyone born within sound of Bow Bells can claim to be a real Cockney. He had several children baptized at St. Sepulchres at various addresses there. He had likely worked in a financial office and begun to prosper and from 1799 to 1825 appears on the lists of members of the Stock exchange.

Eighteen hundred is the date of his appearance in Islington, then a village beginning to include occupants moving out of London. He lived at 11 Colebrook Terrace and the rate sheets of Islington still in existence (dating back to the previous two hundred years) show him living there and his widow continuing there for twenty-seven years after his death. The house was rated 40 pounds per annum, a good sum in those days, and his brother, James, lived next door and there was a John in Colebrook Terrace, who was paying large rates on

THE THOMPSON FAMILY

other property nearby; he could have been brother John, but there is no evidence of this. The Terrace existed until after World War Two but was badly damaged by Hitler's bombs and needed rebuilding. It was on a very wide road and running down the middle a strip of lawn and shrubbery with seats, like a small park, leaving a carriage way on either side. Charles Lamb used to have a cottage around the corner in a cul-de-sac, which is now known as Elia Place. Lamb worked in the India House and was still just about to retire when Nathaniel died in 1825. A few years after the birth of his last son, his wife Margaret died in April 1811 and he then married Susan Clarke of Windsor, who bore him three daughters. She survived him by over thirty years, most of it spent in the old home and the last three years in Brighton.

He made his will in 1821 and there are reasons for suspecting that he was in poor health at the time and that he had delegated the management of his office to his son Nathaniel, 1791, and it may have been that since 1821 was known in financial circles as "panic year" that prices had slumped badly on "exchange" causing him to investigate affairs and that this caused him to condemn his son for speculating and to make a will to keep his son from squandering more. This incident will be explained later. The cause of his death cannot be found, because it was before the national registry of deaths was initiated.

- **A list of his children is now given:**
Born Baptized Name Parish
- 1785 August 19 **Thomas:** No record of baptism
- 1787 -- **Ann:** No record of baptism
- 1788 -- **Margaret:** No record of baptism
- 1791 (11-16) December 11 **Nathaniel** St. Mary Le Bow (Baptism at St. Sepulchres)
- 1795 --- **William** No record of baptism
- 1796 (2-22) March 20 **James** St. Sepulchres
- 1797 (10-12) October 29 **Frederic Elijah** St Sepulchres
- 1799 (1-13) February 17 **Sophia** St. Sepulchres
- 1800 (10-19) November 16 **James** St. Mary Le Bow (died age 15 months)
- 1804 (5-21) June 16 **Edward** St. Sepulchres
- 1805 (5-19) June 11 **Henry** St. Mary, Islington
- 1807 Sept. 20 **Theophilus** St. Mary, Islington
- 1814 (3-25) August 12 **Caroline** St Mary, Islington
- 1816 (6-23) April 13, 1817 **Emily** St Mary, Islington
- 1818 (3-16) April 19 **Mary** St. Mary, Islington

The blanks are where there is no record of baptism or where the register does not quote the date of birth. The James of 1796 must have died within three years as the name was used again in 1800 like his father; he had a remarkably low rate of deaths in childhood.

From his will made in 1821, we get some indications of his character. The customary initial words at the time were "*In The Name of God, Amen*" followed by a leaving his soul to God's mercy, his body to be buried at some designated place and his worldly goods go the persons nominated in his will. The religious phraseology he had eliminated, possibly his wife had dissuaded him from having his first three children baptized and had been unable to make him leave his own Nathaniel without baptism. All of the girls who were baptized were left till well after the 30-day period, which was enjoined by the Church of England. When he died he was not buried from Islington parish but from St. Mary Le Bow and even then not by the parish clergy but by Mr. T. Shepherd, Minister of St. James, Clerkenwell.

His will consisted of fifteen pages showing some real estate but mostly Government securities and other investments. He left a few hundred pounds to his brothers and legacies to his sons Thomas, William, and Frederic Elijah (the ones over 21) and then continued to explain that he had not left them larger sums because they had "*already accumulated by their own industrious efforts*" and then comes the passage explaining the relations with Nathaniel "*where as my son Nathaniel Thompson has in consequence of his unwarrantable speculations become indebted to me for his various advances to a much greater amount than would have been*

THE THOMPSON FAMILY

reasonably required for me due reference being had to the claims of the younger members of my family” “now I do this by my will leave to my said son Nathaniel Thompson a legacy or sum of 50 pounds for mourning and I do authorize and empower the executors and trustees of this my will in case my son Nathaniel Thompson shall be in necessitous circumstances and shall apply for the same, out of the income from my residuary estate to pay into the proper hands of my said son Nathaniel any sum not exceeding one pound a week for his personal support and maintenance” and I expressly direct in case my said son Nathaniel Thompson shall attempt to seek or borrow on the strength of it before its due there shall be no more, as if in the same manner my said son Nathaniel was actually dead”

He was then 30 years old and had probably been taken into the fathers business (he was listed in the directorates as Nathaniel Thompson, 19 Throgmorton Street, the same address as his father) and given a free hand without supervision and then abused that trust and speculated with his father’s money.

The will contained detailed provision for the upkeep of the junior children and the three eldest daughters and legacies for two female servants which amount was later doubled in a codicil.

His prudence is indicated by the fact that after provided for the younger children he remembered that he was only sixty year old and perhaps that his youngest had been born only three years ago, he then mentioned in his will “*any children yet to be born.*”

The upbringing of his children was probably left to him, by his wife, Margaret, and she is described in a book written about the career of their eldest son as an excellent mother, taking them to Sunday School, training him to be a teacher her as she herself was, etc., This was the independent chapel strongly influenced by Wesley.

An account of the life of the second Nathaniel will follow this as he is in direct line, and then sketches of lives of other of the sons. A Photostat copy of his will has been made, or rather six pages of it to with few or other documents of this history.

- **NATHANIEL THOMPSON (1791-1850) Second Son of Nathaniel (1761-1825)**

There are so many Nathaniel’s involved that is easy to refer to him as the “black sheep” in contrast with his ancestors and also with his own brothers. No reference can be found to him until 1817 when he is listed in the directories as Junior at 19 Throgmorton Street, which was the same business address as his father. He was then 26 years old. He had the previous year married Mary Wilkinson on July 10, 1816 at St Mary, Islington, by Bishops License, which made it unnecessary to have the wedding publicly announced in church. The only Thompson witness signing was his sister Margaret but this need not indicate any disapproval by his parents as his own mother was dead and his stepmother had given birth to a daughter only 17 days earlier and his father may have been ill. His own signature appears in the marriage register in excellent writing with a strikingly ornamental flourish, not indicative of a modest and retiring disposition. In 1817 he appears in the Islington rate books as at Richard Street paying on a house assessed at 20 pounds per annum (one half of his father’s amount). In 1819 he is no longer listed as a ratepayer. He had a son Nathaniel born and baptized at Highbury Independent Chapel, Highbury Road, and Islington. This was the place where his eldest brother Thomas supported the Sunday school but there are no further traces of him or his family.

His younger brother, Theophilus, has a granddaughter who is now a Mrs. Lewis and she has a rough memo showing that **Nathaniel (1791) had three children.**

- **William March 9, 1820**
- **Alfred Robert February 9, 1822**
- **Jane March 26, 1824**

This was puzzling as it excluded the Nathaniel whom I had found, born in 1817 and for date of death marked 183- with a query mark as indicating that nothing was known of him after 1830 but that they thought he was

THE THOMPSON FAMILY

dead during that decade. They, of course, knew nothing of his life later in Stepney, or of his marrying my grandmother.

As no record had come to light of the William and Alfred Robert mentioned above, I was inclined to consider them spurious but in *The Gentleman's Magazine*, 1855 July 18, is given as the date for the marriage of "*Jane, only daughter of the late Nathaniel Thompson, Esq. to the Rev. Bagshawe at Downside, Somerset.*" So the Jane being authentic, I will accept the two sons as real but have found no trace of them.

Where he was between Islington around 1825 and Stepney in 1832 is a problem. The earliest trace of him since he left Islington is in the 1832 directory to 1836: Thompson and Graves, tobacco, 3 Deans Buildings, Commercial Road. 1833 and 1834, Thompson, painter, Essex Place, Mile End Road (with no initial.)

Thompson, House Agent, Crown Court, Aldersgate Street. This may not have been he; it is somewhat out of the district but the absence of initial or Christian name suggests the possibility: he evidently did not wish to display his real name. The 1841 census compelled the giving of this name and we find for Newcastle Place, Borough of Tower Hamlets, Mile End Old Town, and Parish of Stepney:

- Nathaniel Thompson age 35 painter Ind. Middlesex
- Mary " age 30"
- Mary " age 8"
- Sarah "age 7"
- Maria " age 3"

The ages of adults were given in five year groups, i.e., 35 meant between 35 and 40, and 30 between 30 and 35. Middlesex was place of birth and Ind. For independent, that is possessing financial means to be independent of earnings. Was he thinking of his pound a week allowance?

- The 1851 census after his death shows:
- Mary Elizabeth Thompson age 41 born in Shoreditch
- Sarah "17" Stepney
- Margaret "10" Stepney
- Elizabeth Ann " 7" Stepney
- Benjamin "5" Stepney
- Eliza " 2" Stepney

In the second census Mary and Maria who were then 18 and 13 do not appear, and were probably away temporarily; they were not dead as I can remember them in the 1890's

Nathaniel himself had grossly understated his age, probably to conceal his identity with the real one from Islington; it was probably easier for him to appear younger than he was. His wife was probably deceived in this as she gave his age for death certificate as 44, although he was actually 59.

On June 11, 1850, he was painting a house on the Commercial Road when he fell from the ladder and died instantly of a fractured skull. It seemed a coincidence that his son Benjamin lived only a few hours after being taken down in July 1901 from a roof where he suddenly felt very ill on a very hot day; and that Benjamin's; son Herbert, in September 1949, after a long ride in a packed railway carriage on a sizzling hot day should also die a few hours after arrival. I suspected a susceptibility to undue heat and scorching the temperature of June 11, 1850. There was no official meteorological records kept then, but copies of the *Times* of that date were found and also Saturday's issue of the *Illustrated London News* in which the weather was featured because it was Ascot Week and June 11 was the midweek Wednesday. Wednesday was reported as the hottest day of that week and that one the hottest of that last eleven weeks. No temperatures were reported for shade but only a figure of 104 degrees "*in the sun*" which does not give really a basis for comparison.

THE THOMPSON FAMILY

We do not know when Nathaniel first lived in Stepney or if he found any uncles still alive: his first child by the second wife was born in 1833, so he was likely married in 1833 but no record of the marriage found in Shoreditch or Stepney. As a child I remember seeing her once, taken there by my father and she was in bed, probably her deathbed. She was gentle and I did not shrink from her as being very old; it was about 1883 and she died, I think, in that year and I afterward saw a photograph of her, which showed a fine face. The aunts Mary, Sarah, Maria and Margaret lived to the late 1890's, all spinsters except Margaret, who had about 55 years of age married a watchmaker and jeweler from Stansted, Essex. They were married from our house in Manor Park where he left his leather hatbox containing his silk hat. This constituted the evidence of his living in the parish where the banns were called.

There are no records of his family life, his children were well brought up but most likely this was by the mother. He himself is a mystery, evidently his own father considered him untrustworthy and irresponsible and this opinion commands respect as made by a just man who felt that his son would be unable to make an honest living. Whether he was either a gambler or alcoholic is unknown, possibly the latter but not a shred of evidence has been found to support it.

Am sorry to present such a poor record but have given all of the few items known and suppressed nothing.

- **NATHANIEL THOMPSON 1761 (Careers of some of his children)**
- **THOMAS: 1785** He was the eldest son and because of his philanthropic activities he became a public figure and books were written about his life. The best on is "*Thomas Thompson, a treatise on his life and character,*" which can be found in the British Museum Reading room, listed under Thomas Thompson in the catalogues. Briefly it shows him to be a bright and independent boy, who made a large fortune in a few years, retired from business, married into the aristocracy, devoted himself to religion and philanthropy, particularly as a lay Congregationalist worker.

When about six, he used to pass a bookshop daily and was very interested in a book about the Bible displayed outside and used daily to read snatches of it. Then he entered, asked about it and was told it cost about five pounds. He offered half a crown and sixpence a week until settled and was very offended at his H.P. offer being refused. Mother noticed his sadness and extracted the reason and told him it was being issued in weekly or monthly parts, which he could, but for the sixpence and have them bound when complete. It is stated that he never could be persuaded to wear a hat, button up his jacket, and he was probably very healthy as he lived to be eighty. We do not know his business but suspect it as stocks and bonds. By 1818, when he was 33, he had made 60,000 pounds and decided to retire and devote his attention to religion and charity. He then married, but no details are given. In 1838 or 1839, he married the Hon, Charlotte Margaretta Weiman, daughter of the late Baroness Barham and Sir Gerald Noel-Noel. She was then about forty and he fifty-three. Her brother was the first Earl of Gainesboro.

His life was now tied up in his religion based on church authority coming from congregation and not from the leaders. At that period, many women were taking a great interest and founding new places of worship, which were usually known by the name of the lady founder. The Reverend Edward, whose life appears later in this series, served as minister at one of these known as Charlotte Chapel, and there were several known as the Lady Huntingdon Connexion.

He was treasurer of the Home Missionary Society (Congregationalist) and had numerous plans for a sailor's chapel and bought a steamship and fitted it so it should be used in various ports: also penny editions of parts of the Bible.

He lived in various places where he could work, mostly large country houses, and his last one, Prior Park, Bath, is the huge place where he died. He used to entertain hundreds of Sunday school children there in its large grounds. After his death, it was purchased by the Catholic Bishop of Clifden and is used as a college.

THE THOMPSON FAMILY

Several illustrated pages were given to this place in the illustrated London News in 1955 and have been kept with these papers. His wife established several chapels in South Wales. He used to write to Gladstone (The Prime Minister) every year protesting against the government grant to Maynooth, the Catholic Seminary in Ireland, call it the grant) the "*thin end of the wedge*" which might assist the return of the old superstitions of the Roman tyranny from when we had escaped centuries ago at the great cost of blood and human lives etc.

He did not quarrel with the Church of England, but when his brother, the Reverend William, died in 1843, he sent letters to parishioners of St. Barnabas of which Reverend William was Vicar, suggesting that they withdraw their allegiance to the Church of England and form an independent Congregation.

His will did not make any specific bequests to charities, but he did leave a large amount for the trustees to dispense at their own good judgment. He explained that as conditions changed it was better in his opinion that their hand should not be tied. He had ten children, of who five were living in 1870, but it is understood that there are no living descendants. His wife died in 1867, two years after his own death in 1865 of rheumatic gout

- **ANN THOMPSON: Born AROUND 1787**
Uncertain because not baptized. When her father made his will in 1821, she was already married to John V. Broughton and he was then already preparing for his retirement from business. She was already a widow in 1855 and died at Cliff House, near Wakefield, in 1856, leaving five children.
- **NATHANIEL THOMPSON: 1791 being in the direct line his story has already been given.**
- **WILLIAM THOMPSON: 1795 third son**

No record of his baptism has been found, but the records of Cambridge show that he was born in London in 1795 and the inscription on his coffin confirms this. The college also records the he went to school in Middlesex; was admitted to Trinity College, June 23, 1817, B.A. 1821 M.A. 1825.

Before he obtained his M.A. he became assistant curate of a parish in Westmoreland known as Over Denham and Fareham and was supposed to be there until September 1842, but the present vicar wrote that they could find no trace of his activities or any of his signatures in the parish registers during that period, although there is mention locally of a Reverend William building a small school in Drigg, Cumberland, which is not far away. It looks as if his position was a sinecure and that most of his time was spent in his beloved Islington where he gave 40 pounds to a fund for reorganizing the parishes, and built a vault for is family and buried his wife in it in 1838. He also was the officiating minister at the marriage of Reverend Edward at St. Mary, Islington in 1827, with his sister Sophia as witness.

In 1842 he became vicar of St. Barnabus, South of Islington, and there had trouble with his Bishop because he had been reported as leaving his Sunday school in charge of a layman and of not residing in his own parish but in Islington. His reply is recorded that "*he was not dependant on the Church of England for his livelihood and that he were not suffered to do as he liked in all things, he would join the Dissenters who would be very pleased to have him.*" Apparently nothing was done and he died the next year while still living outside the parish. The burial entry reads, "*Rev. William Thompson, April 28, 1843. Rev. William Jower, Officiating Minister.*"

The church had been badly damaged by bombs in the last war and the family vault had the large iron gates all rusted, but they were forced and three coffins found. The dirt of more than a century had to be cleaned and the inscriptions made legible. They were:

- Eliza wife of Rev. Thompson M.A. born 3rd May 1799, died 5th Jan. 1838
- Rev. William Thompson M.A Died April 28, 1843 in his 49th year.
- Edward son of Rev. William Thompson. Died 1844.

THE THOMPSON FAMILY

There were about 40 other coffins lying on the floor and I told the Vicar he could put them in the vault if he wished, as there were no descendants to query the matter.

William's will disclosed evidence of his riches; one item alone of 20,000 pounds was to be divided between his two sons and his brother Thomas. His only daughter, Elizabeth, married the Rev. H. Williams of St. Albans at St. Georges, Bloomsbury in 1853.

Why he began his clerical career in Cumberland and Westmoreland is an unsolved puzzle. It suggests that earlier generations may have lived there. The Cambridge records of their Alumni quote the Reverend Edward as having his first curacy at Aspasia in that district, although I am not sure that they were correct. William's successor after his death was a Reverend H. Thompson, but whether he was a relative is not known. His sister married a Broughton and Reverend Edwards' own selected churchwardens were Coupland and Plaskett, all Northern names.

A curious coincidence is that another William Thompson, a curate of Over Denham and Fareham, was in 1686 arrested in St. Botolphs, Bishopgate for saying mass there; for this he was hung, drawn, and quartered at Tyburn. This was the church where Nathaniel (1739) was baptized.

- **James 1796** - He must have died in infancy as the name was used in 1800.
- **Frederic Elijah 1797** - He became a barrister and died in 1849 as the result of an accident. He fell from his horse while riding, probably while fox hunting. He married a Miss Springhall and named his first son Springhall. The son took up the chase and is reputed to be the hero in a book by Surtees called "*Memoirs of a Fox Hunting Man*" although under a changed name. Frederic Elijah had three daughters; one a spinster; the next known as the Prioress, the Superior of a Church of England religious community; and the other married Reverend J.M. Crocker of Lavenham.
- **Sophia** - The next of Nathaniel's children; all the news in one item - she married the Reverend Crackett.
- **James? 1800** - This is the second James and he died January 4, 1802, aged fifteen months and was buried at St. Mary Le Bow. Why there? Father was already living in Islington. P.S. Perhaps the above line is in error and he may still have been in London.
- **Edward 1804-1869** - His first wife died in 1864 leaving five children. He remarried and after his death his widow remarried the Reverend Valentine Williams.
- **Henry 1805** - Had four children
- **Theophilus 1807** - His life is the only one recognized by being included in the Dictionary of National Biography. He became a celebrated surgeon living in Russell Square. He had a son Edmund, to whom a friend SYMES left an estate but with the condition that the name Symes be prefixed to Thompson. Later, seeing an "In Memoriam" notice of a Symes-Thompson, the remnants of these were discovered, two old widows who put me in touch with a daughter of Edmund who had married a Mr. Lewis and now a widow, born in 1878. She is the source of nearly all this family data on these children of the younger generation; the seniors had been found mostly in parish registers.
- There is a life of Theophilus in the British Museum and also a book called "Bridgebuilding" by one of his sons, the Reverend A.P. Thompson. The other son became a doctor, a very successful one.
- **Caroline, Emily, Mary:** These born in 1814, 1816, and 1818 are the last three children; the only ones by his second wife; all spinsters and known as the The Colebrook Aunties.

THE THOMPSON FAMILY

- **BENJAMIN THOMPSON (1846-1901) Son of Nathaniel (1791)**

We are now in the reign of Victoria who had been Queen for nine year when he was born. The story of his father having been taken to school on a pony must have been told to him by his mother or his sisters, as he was only four when his father died.

He was born in Stepney on Valentine's Day, February 14, and his birth certificate is with these family papers. My memories of him are few as they were mostly before leaving school. After that I saw little of him as my evenings were mostly spent in amusements outside the home and at the end of four years left for America and never saw him again. One incident does stand out, which gave me a great admiration of him. He had driven himself and me to some kind of Methodist evening gathering at Cheshunt, a small place several miles north of home, and returning on a very dark night, we collided with a farmers loaded wagon- which was on the wrong side of the road and without any lights. Father was thrown from the driving seat onto the ground and after awhile got up and we left the pony and trap somewhere and walked the rest of the way home. I was a school boy then, and we arrived about midnight and did not know until then that he had a broken collarbone; he was short and sturdy and muscular and I always admired his well shaped arms and broad chest. He always wore a full beard; had a good clear tenor voice- no musical knowledge but a good ear for melody and harmony and knew the current operas and ballads. He had evidently had good schooling, good handwriting, spoke grammatical English and expressed his ideas clearly and fluently.

In 1862 he was apprenticed by his mother to a George Hewitt to learn "*the art or business of a carpenter and joiner*" with wages during the five years of apprenticeship at the rate of eight shillings per week for the first year and then nine, eleven, thirteen and fifteen shillings for the remaining four years. The original document is with the family papers and is worth reading; it is dated March 27, 1862 but to take effect from the previous February 14 so that it would expire on his 21st birthday. It stipulates among other things that during its term he must not "*waste his master's goods- commit fornication- contract matrimony- play at cards, dice or tables- buy nor sell- haunt playhouse or taverns, etc.*" The most thrilling incident must have been the beginning of the second year when he received the raise of one shilling per week.

When the agreement expired, he married Sarah Ann Lampard, the daughter of a Barking farmer. This shows the difficulty of tracing genealogy through through the female line, the mother had married a man, name unknown, then a Mr. Lampard, who died, and she married a Mr. Anderson and was known as such when I saw her in the nineties. She remembered the pealing of the church bells when news reached London of the victory at Waterloo-1814. Except for any register of her first marriage, her maiden name would be unrecorded and it would be impossible to find that record because we do not know the name of the man she married; any but a very uncommon name would lead nowhere even if it could be found when she married Lampard.

This being originally a French name probably accounts for the French names of a number of the family friends and relatives; there were Corp, Prestage, Poupard, etc. Some of these names go back to 1600, probably Huguenot refugees.

Benjamin worked at his trade in Stepney, and was active in Sunday school work and was a friend of General Booth when the Salvation Army was founded in the East End of London. Around Tottenham where he bought a retail business then known as "*Oil, Colour, and Italian Warehouseman*" but now with added lines, "*domestic stores.*" It was not infrequent then for the thrifty working man to save and go into business for himself, a lot of modern propaganda about grinding the faces of the poor when checked by experience has been grossly exaggerated. He sold the first business and had two others later each in Tottenham, later in Upton Park, Manor Park, and then bought some building land in Romford where he built houses doing the woodwork himself and hiring bricklayers, etc. He was moderately successful and had guessed the growth of the town. He had the "*Freedom of the City of London*" but I think this could be claimed by any citizen who had completed a proper

THE THOMPSON FAMILY

apprenticeship. This is in the possession of Herbert Lampard Thompson, 1906, the son of his eldest son, Herbert, 1868.

Like many of the Thompson's he had a pronounced interest in religion. Of the sects, he seemed to favor the "Primitive Methodists" and sent us to the Sunday School there in Tottenham. It was without ornament or any attempt at beauty, but the congregation were interested and used to discuss the sermon afterward on the pavement outside. I think it was mostly "*the bible and the bible only*" with, of course, each man his only interpreter.

- On my ninth birthday he gave me a copy of Fox's Book of Martyrs; at the time with the Pilgram's Progress the only books allowed us for Sunday reading.
- **His children were:**
- **Herbert Harry** **1868 October 4** **Died 1948**
- **Emily** **1877 July 5** **Died 1918**
- **Edward** **1879 July 17** **The writer of this story**
- **Grace Maria** **1884 April 17** **Died 1929**
- **Arthur Frederick** **1886 October 13** **Died 1916**
- **Willie Benjamin** **1890** **Died 1928**

Herbert went to the U.S.A. around 1885; was in the Klondike-gold-rush in 1897 and 1898, returned to England in 1900 and soon took over a small real estate business, built it up successfully and died a rich man- had one son, Herbert Lampard, 1906, and a daughter Selma, a spinster, who was still living in 1964.

Emily became a nurse, never married and worked herself to death nursing the wounded in First World War and died in 1918 just before it ended. She was a loyal member of the Church of England. Edward being in the direct line will have a separate article.

Grace Maria - 1884 She was a school teacher and around 1910 was engaged to a man in Romford, England who went to New Zealand to prepare a home, arranging for her to follow when all was ready and to marry out there. When on her way she traveled via New York and had arranged to stop there for a month or so with her brother Edward who was living there. She found that he had become a Catholic and so investigated and became one also. Writing this to her future husband, she was surprised to receive a cable from him giving her the choice of renouncing her new religion or breaking the engagement. So she cancelled the reservation for New Zealand and after a few months returned to England and then married another - the son of a Romford farmer. She had no children and died of cancer.

Arthur Frederick- 1886 School teacher and organist; contracted T.B.; was cured; went to Canada to complete the cure then came down to New York and lived awhile with brother Edward; than married Beatrice Hewetson; also became a Catholic; and later the T.B. returned and he died in 1915.

Willie Benjamin- The youngest son- He had more brains than any of us, had a B.A. from Clare College, Cambs (or was it Catharines?) Was in the Hawke Battalion in the Gallipoli expedition and contracted Yellow Jaundice; was invalided out; returned to be a headmaster of a technical school; and there was taken with T.B.

Benjamin himself after starting in his career in the building business in 1896 was fairly successful as he had judged correctly that the neighborhood would increase in population. One hot day in July 1901 was on the roof and said suddenly, "*Herby, I do feel queer;*" was taken down at once and died during the night; being away since 1918, my own recollections of him were prior to that year, but I remember him as a good father, just but very generous and fair and esteemed by everybody.

THE THOMPSON FAMILY

- **EDWARD THOMPSON (1879 - Still alive in 1964)**
The author of this story - son of Benjamin - 1846

This being an autobiography is more difficult; the problem is what to leave out and for the reader to judge how much is colored by egotism.

Being born in Stepney in July 1879, always hated the crowded areas and for the first few years never saw the country or sea. Can remember seeing the horse being led by his owner with harness loose and no cart attached, and so hurrying in to mother crying "*horse and cart broke to pieces*" because I had never seen a horse without a cart and thought they were born together. The bright boy at school but not much physically. At the end of 1893, left Tottenham Grammar School as I did not want to continue for the sake of what was offered in sixth form. Had two good years in Latin, three in French, and one in German, which now seems pretty good for a boy of fourteen. Had first class honors, first division and second in all England in arithmetic in the Junior Cambridge Local exams, and wanted to be out into the world. Answered an advertisement and became a junior in an insurance office. Joined Mudies Library and read two hundred books a year from there plus many others. Result was unlimited faith in the printed word and Socialism and Agnosticism with the desire to teach the rest of the world as much as I knew myself and so benefit them.

Was already booked to go to Paraguay to join a Socialist colony in September 1897 when brother Herbert (who had been in the U.S.A. since 1885) wrote me that he was going to Alaska where gold had just been discovered- would I join him? So the Socialist plan was postponed; I could always go later, possibly with plenty of cash to ease the settling down. By the end of May 1898 when the snow had begun to melt and we had our outfit (2000 pounds of it) sledged and carried over Chilkoot pass and the worst labor over; Herbert was exhausted (he was thirty and I was eighteen) and he was ill and said "*I want to die in the States*" and left. We had been sleeping in a tent, on the snow, and working hard in moving along in six mile stages and only had to make a boat and drift down the river a few hundred miles to Dawson City. After the other member of the party had also left, I had qualms and plodded back to Skagway and took a steamer for Seattle (one thousand miles), fare five dollars but it was not de luxe. In the state of Washington it was then easy to get an unskilled job at manual labor and I spent all summer in saw mills and logging camps and was much benefitted by the outdoor work. It lacked music and literature and intellectual society which I missed and had to consider the future. Planned to go East later and see Herbert in New York; then heard that a railroad rate war then on was to end on Saturday, so I borrowed two dollars from an Australian chum and left the next day for New York; cost 24 dollars instead of the regular 80 dollars.

At Herbert's address when I arrived no one was home, but I could see in the letter box one in his writing post marked Sioux Falls, S.D. So I had to hunt for a job and found one in an insurance office at 25 dollars a month, not much to save on but I waited for Herbert's return which took several weeks. Instead of planning for return to England, I remained because in a few months the office salary had been increased to 40 dollars and it looked like a good chance for promotion. Result: I remained in New York until 1927, ending with an annual salary of five figures. Father died in 1901 and I took a trip over to London. Mother was seriously ill in 1904 and so another visit and I was able to see her before she died a few days after arrival.

That led to my meeting Ruby Alice Side of Hammersmith, Socialist and Agnostic like myself, and we liked each other, so it was Au-Revoir- but not goodbye. Out of a job later in 1904, I decided to take a few months to see Europe before taking another when it might be more difficult to spare the time; so England once more; borrowed a bicycle; rode to Dover, Ostend, across Belgium, Germany, south to Luxemburg, west to Paris, north to Dieppe and then to Romford. Cost next to nothing and saw a lot.

Asked Ruby Alice to come to U.S.A. to marry but to wait for time to get a job and settle. Married and we are looking forward to our diamond wedding in eight months.

Around 1900 I was walking with a friend and he wanted to go for a couple of minutes into a church to collect some music. He was an organist and I asked him to show me the organ, although as a boy I had a few piano

THE THOMPSON FAMILY

lessons, I had never seen an organ keyboard. I tried it and he said, *"you have the touch, let me have a key made and you, with a little practice, will be able to get the position here when I accept a better place where they want me in Jersey City."* So it turned out and when Ruby Alice arrived, we were married there, May 3, 1905. After that I had been an organist there and at other places. This was St. Johns Episcopal Church of Bayonne, N.J. At the time neither of us had any religion but soon the question of conduct and ethics began to arise. She liked to use an expression *"I myself am the center of the universe"* and apart from this giving, to my Euclidian mind, too many centers. It certainly gave no guidance in conduct and morals. The ethical societies which I had attended talked of everything but ethics and none of the codes seemed valid except they came from some form of religion and a man could choose which religion he liked; i.e. a man who liked wine would not choose Mohammedanish but leave it to those who preferred women. All religions were based on the existence of God whose existence to me was unbelievable. Sermons I occasionally listened to in church did not impress, they were usually too much exhortation; but the Vicar considered himself a Catholic because he used their ritual and music occasionally referred to the beliefs of the Middle Ages. It was the first time I had ever heard the Reformation referred to without respect.

Now comes the curious sequence. In 1907 I was in Philadelphia on a business trip and found it necessary to remain there until the next day. The hotels were all crowded because of an Elks convention, but I remembered the address where I would surely be invited to spend the evening and night. They were out when I called but expected back later, and I had an hour or so to fritter away. Crossing a bridge, I saw and heard a blind negro playing a violin and playing it very well. He was begging, but I passed him, my Socialist principles were not to give because it alleviated the distress of the capitalistic system and so delayed the social revolution. Somehow or someway I yielded and returned to give him a dime. A mental conflict at once arose: Intellectual conviction had surrendered to human sympathy and I felt like a split personality but with a feeling that right had won, although I felt it almost a case of outside interference.

Continuing the journey, I saw a library across the street, an excellent place to kill time and after sampling a few volumes from the shelves found a volume which proved interesting; it was treating religion from the intellect instead of the emotions. Their similes with their surprising contrasts contained the essence of true humor, i.e., surprise and contrast. I copied the name of the author from the title page (had never heard of him) and planned to read more of the same author. His name was G.K. Chesterton, and about thirty years after I met him in a London club and thanked him for a book which kindled a spark and led me into the church before him. He was a Protestant when he wrote it, and in 1936, on the Queen Mary going to New York, the Australian priest at mass turned and said *"this mass is being offered for the repose of the soul of Gilbert Chesterton who did so much for the Church."*

In Philadelphia it seemed advisable to do more reading and this was done for months: Result, none of the others had any center, one was as good as another sort of thing, private judgment the key. One day I came across Macauley's essays. As a Protestant he had written a review of Ranke's History of the Popes and had stressed its remarkable survival over four periods but could give no explanation of it; during its life, kingdoms and dynasties had come and gone and it had outlived them all and seemed most likely to continue. I thought of additional reasons why its survival seemed so inexplicable- the Pope appoints the Cardinals and the Cardinals elect the Pope. What human society could survive under such a system? To accept a thing because you can not explain it seems unreasonable, and I was still tied to reason but the Church explains it by saying that an organization of Divine origin cannot be destroyed and this makes sense as also it is not an organization but an organism.

Time was running without decision, but in 1909 Ruby wanted to see her parents and I arranged a six months holiday for her with the two children to stay in London and resolved to decide in that time. So at last it came *"to refrain is the equivalent to refusal"* and so somehow I believed God because I believed in the Church, which is perhaps not so bad as it sounds, and I believe lots of material things because of my belief in the people who tell me them. I have never had a single doubt since.

When Ruby returned, five more boys were born and made it necessary to earn more. This was achieved by

THE THOMPSON FAMILY

seeking new positions when salary was not increased sufficiently; the increased expense caused demands for increased salary which were usually met.

The mental strain was being felt and in 1927 I decided to return to live in frugal comfort, leaving about ten acres of land ripe for building development. This was delayed by the financial slump and I could not keep sending money for the rates. (Land is ratable in the U.S.A. even if unoccupied) and so returned to work and accumulate a new estate and retired in 1957.

This is probably an egotistical story but does not have to be read, although I wish my father had written his.

The sons were and are:

- EDWARD AUGUSTINE THOMPSON 1906
- HAROLD FRANCIS 1908
- JOHN HENRY 1910
- STEPHEN GIRARD 1912
- CHARLES HILARY 1914
- ALFRED CUTHBERT 1919
- ARTHUR FREDERICK 1919 TWINS

There are twenty-seven grandchildren and several great grands, and most of the children should live to 1995. The tercentenary of the Nathaniel 1695 whose authenticity has not yet been admitted.

* * * * *

PETER THOMPSON (1765-1839) Son of Edward Thompson (1737-1818)

No record has been found of his baptism, but as his age was stated as 73 3/4 (the only time such a fraction has been quoted on a death certificate), if this age was correct he was born around April 1765.

The first record found is of his having his children baptized at St. Anne's Church, Soho, where he had a large tailoring business. He most likely had army contracts for officers' uniforms for the wars with France and is described in current dictionaries as "tailors" and "army clothiers" and "military tailors." He lived at 12 First Street, Soho.

His children were:

- Peter January 24, 1786 St. Anne's Soho
- Henry Edward No Record Died at St. Paul's, Covent Garden, July 31, 1788
- Mary Ann Rigden February 17, 1788 St. Paul's Covent Garden
- Elizabeth August 6, 1789 St. Paul's Covent Garden
- Mary Ann August 11, 1792 St. Anne's, Soho
- Francis October 5, 1790 St. Anne's, Soho Died St. Paul's May 1, 1793
- Grizelle Ann Rachel April 17, 1994

THE THOMPSON FAMILY

All of these by his first wife, Elizabeth, and the ones below by his second wife, Nanny.

- Nanny No record of birth Died April 26, 1806, Covent Garden
- Edward May 18, 1806 Died Covent Garden November 1806
- Ann January 10, 1808 St. Anne's Soho
- Edward 1810/1811

The St. Anne's and St. Paul's are the churches where they were baptized and do not indicate that any of them were born away from his home; the churches are very close together and I think sometimes that St. Anne's was temporarily closed or the parson not available. All the burials were at Covent Garden.

From the number of his children who died before they were three years old, it seems that he was not as successful in combating high mortality rate of his period as Nathaniel (1761) had been or that the parents were not as efficient in caring for the health of their children or that Soho was not as healthy a place for children.

There is, however, one curious feature in the fact that Peter was apparently desirous of appearing to claim as old as possible by claiming the fraction 3/4 years on his age.

One explanation could be that possibly he was a few years younger than 21 when he married and to avoid the necessity of obtaining the consent of unwilling parents he might have obtained a Bishops License, easily secured if he had alleged on the application that he was 21 and could then marry in any church in the London diocese without any publicity and married in some small parish away from his residence.

He called his first daughter Mary Ann Rigden and people frequently gave the maiden name of their mother as Christian mane of their children in the same way that Herbert Thompson (1868) called his son Herbert Lampard Thompson-- Lampard being his mother's maiden name.

Now Peter's father was Edward, as was shown in the will of the latter, and an Edward Thompson married a Mary Ann Rigden on May 7, 1766 at St. Paul's, Covent Garden (adjoining Soho) and could easily had a son by February 1767. We do not know the name of Peter's mother, but suspect it to be Mary Rigden from the fact that Peter used this name for his eldest daughter. Also, there are records of a Rigden family in Mile End New Town, near Stepney, in 1720 -- a weaver. In 1730, a Richard Rigden had a daughter baptized at St. George's, Stepney, and in 1815, a Richard Rigden died in Islington, aged 55, therefor born in 1760. If this really was the father of Peter, it could explain that Peter was not born until 1767, was under 21 when he married, but wished to add a couple of years to his age.

After the marriage of his eldest son, Peter, who became a partner in the firm of Peter Thompson and son, he moved to Enfield and lived on a main country road where each house had a few acres of lawn and garden and even as late at 1950 was lived in by prosperous families and must have been a delightful place if one kept horses and carriages, with plenty of servants. There is still a quaint terrace nearby called "Gentleman's Row." We do not know when he moved as the library in Islington only has the rate sheets back to 1860.

He must have been a person of importance. In the Gentleman's magazine he is referred to as "Esquire" or "Gentleman" and the deaths of himself and also his widow are mentioned as news.

Two years before his death he made his will which included many items of real estate and in different towns and counties. They were usually business buildings-- in Croydon, London, Greenwich, Watford, etc.. a small cottage in Malham, Yorks which he left to his son, the Reverend Edward and who, in turn, left it to his sister. One important item was a 65-acre tenanted farm in Keyworth, Notts, the title to which carried the advowson of the parish church of Keyworth that is the right to appoint the successor of any rector there who had died, resigned, or created a vacancy. To this parish, the son, Reverend Edward, became rector in 1834, two years after he had obtained his B.A. and before his M.A. One item of 15,000 pounds was left in trust, income apportioned between some of the heirs and the capitol then to go to sons or widow.

THE THOMPSON FAMILY

His executors were sons Peter and Edward and a Robert, who was probably the brother of Nathaniel.(1761)

His first wife died after the birth of Grizelle Ann in 1794, and he must have married Nanny inside of ten years as his next daughter Nanny died April 26, 1806. His widow Nanny ceases to appear in the Enfield directory of 1840. She made a will in Hampstead in 1851 but died at Crockham Hall, Edenbridge, Kent at the age of 86 on March 1, 1856, surviving him by 15 years.

The will also included his library, paintings, works of art, and his horses and carriages. There is no evidence found on his character. He may have been interested in art--an item of historical interest was found by him in Enfield and he gave it to a London museum.

The cause of death stated on his death certificate reads "Gout of the Heart"--not an indication of frugal living.

REVEREND EDWARD THOMPSON (1810-1860) Son of Peter (1765)

Date of birth uncertain because of no baptismal record, but death in 1860, aged 49, makes it 1810 or 1811. The first record of his existence is the marriage entry in St. Mary's, Islington on September 4, 1827, to Mary Ann Powell; then his appearance at 3 Bransbury Terrace in the same months on the rate sheets of Islington, followed by his admittance to Clare College, Cambridge.

The wedding differed from the usual in several ways-- none of the family were present, the ceremony was not performed by any of the parish clergy but by the Reverend William Thompson, M.A. as officiating minister (son of Nathaniel 1761). The only Thompson was Sophia, the sister of William. No details of age, residence, names of parents, their rank or occupation were given in the register. It was made by Bishops License, which obviated the necessity of "calling the banns" and on the allegation necessary for obtaining this license the question of age had been answered "of full age." This application was signed by the Reverend William.

He occupied the house at Barnsbury Terrace for some years and appears there on the 1841 census as independent with his wife and children:

- Mary
- Ann 1837
- Martha 1839
- A daughter 1842 announced in Gentleman's Magazine born at Mymms Park
- A daughter June 1844 announced in Gentleman's Magazine born at Mymms Park

Then later by his second wife (Mary died in 1849)

- Janny Gwalter 1852 Baptized October 18
- George Cooley 1854 Baptized April 5
- A daughter 1855 Born in Harley Street. Announced in Gentleman's Magazine.

There is a marble plaque on the south transept wall of All Saints Church reading "*sacred to the memory of Mary Ann Thompson wife of Reverend Edward Thompson, Vicar of this parish. Died March 1849, age 34.*" A little mental arithmetic shows that married in 1827 she married young, and that we remember that her husband according to Cantabridgiensis Alumni was admitted to Clare College immediately the marriage. The following data help in following his career:

- 1830 Degree B.A.
- 1833 Minor Orders. Deacon

THE THOMPSON FAMILY

- 1834 Holy Orders. Priest.
- 1834 to 1840 Rector of Keyworth, Notts
- 1835 Degree M.A.
- 1840 to 1845 Minister of Charlotte Chapel, Pimlico
- 1845 to 1840 Vicar, All Saints, St John's Wood
- 1847 Degree D.D.
- 1849 Wife Mary died
- 1850 Vicar, Kingston, Herefordshire (until he died)
- 1851 Married Jane Gwalter (under 21)
- 1860 Died

His first clerical position was at Keyworth, although the Cambs. record has him being at Aspasia a year or so earlier, and that was before he was ordained. The careers of their graduates made much later are not always reliable as they are apt to confuse those of one with similar name. On the other hand, the Reverend William himself had served in that territory, Aspasia being in Cumberland or Westmorland. When he left Keyworth, his father had already died and he was the owner of the advowson to his own parish.

He became minister of the Charlotte Chapel, Pimlico which may have been the place which Thackeray was ridiculing in the *Newcombes* describing the Reverend Honeybun in conversation with the owner of the premises (a shop and warehouse used for church purposes) and referring to the Sunday offerings as "*receipts from the Box Office.*" Charlotte Chapel was named by Lady Charlotte, one of the feminine patrons so useful to Thomas (1785). While there he must have heard of plans for the new parish of St. John's Wood, and he took an active part in the erection of the building and had dealings with some presented by a Peter Thompson, who was no relative but an enterprising adventurer who died years later in extreme poverty.

As soon as the church was opened, he had a vicarage built for his family and moved from Barnsbury Terrace. In 1946 the parish issued a centenary number of their parish magazine, a copy of which I was able to obtain. Surprise was expressed at the expensive staff required even when they were in the first temporary building, and it was only used on Sunday. As soon as the place was completed, the Reverend Edward engaged two curates and appointed churchwardens and the General Particulars Book contains reference to his sarcastic remarks when any of them were late or absent.

He appears to have been industrious; he was for many years editor of the *Church of England Quarterly*. The catalogue of the reading room of the British Museum shows 22 volumes written by him, including one on "*Errors of the Church of Rome.*" His writings were clear and intelligible but were mostly sermons.

In the Act Books of the Archbishop of Canterbury, there is a reference to charges being made against him by parishioners of conduct unbecoming to a clergyman, "*in that for two years he had harbored in the vicarage on Harriet Sophia Augustine Maria Binckes, being then and having theretofore been a notoriously lewd and unchaste woman.*" Hearings before the Bishop of Hereford decided that there was a prima facie case and later it was referred to Canterbury. The issue ending in 1859 of the Acts (page 370) shows only notices of hearings and committees and apparently the case was dropped. Some record is in the County Library at Maidstone and some at Lambeth Palace Library. Guilty or Not Guilty? Who knows. The two years would have included a period containing his early residence there, this courtship of his second wife, his marriage some months thereafter. It seem incredible to think a D.D. in a new parish would carry on like that, and easier to think that he treated the affair with disdain, but-- his first marriage was a queerly arranged affair suggesting a shrinking from publicity and there was a reluctance to publish true ages. I have given the record because there the matter ends.

A difficult character to sum up. His picture which gave rise to this family story (although it transpires that he was no relation) shows him as quite naturally dignified, judicial and recollected and his writings likewise.

THE THOMPSON FAMILY

Two years before he died he built another vicarage, there is a stone there inscribed "*laid by Jane, wife of the Reverend Edward Thompson, April 22, 1858.*"

He provided for his widow and also for the three daughters by his first wife and the little house in Yorkshire which his father gave him and he left to his sister Ann.

THE THOMPSON FAMILY FALSE CLUES

For the benefit of any doing research further back, a few Nathaniel's are listed here who appeared to be possible ancestors but must be disregarded.

Nathaniel Thompson D.C.L. born in 1682 was a son of William Thompson who was a "paynter and stayner" and when he died in 1710 was doing work in St. Paul's Cathedral. He had sent his son to Pembroke College, St. John's, Oxford where he received D.C.L. which he wrote as L.L.D." At one and the same time he had three livings -- Radley, Berks., Sunningwell, Berks., and also Duns Tew, Oxford, Co. He married in 1731 and died in 1746.

This man appeared to qualify for our Stepney ancestry because he received under his father's will two houses in Stepney, one on Stewart Street and one on the old artillery grounds. Both of these very close to the houses where Nathaniel brought up his family (i.e. Nathaniel 1739). I had to visit the parishes there before deciding that he was surely not the one.

Nathaniel Thompson, married Jane in February 1708 at Trinity, Minories. He was a mariner and died a few years later and has nothing in connection with our line.

One other Nathaniel was a member of the Dyers Guild, was married in 1766 and had sons William, 1769, Nathaniel, 1776; Nathaniel 1779. He died in 1798 and these sons were already dead.

THE THOMPSON'S - Ultimate Reflections

This inquiry was largely influenced by the remark "you are just like the rest of the Thompson's." It seemed strange that there could be any unusual similarity, seeing that we had been so split up, living away from home so much. It did not seem likely that heredity could affect us much as the resemblance was not to physical features, but rather to the mental and moral, which I always thought were matters of choice and free will, except for a few things like the hopeful or sanguine temperamental depending somewhat on the bloodstream.

A few features appeared somewhat frequently, which after all may be largely coincidence:

Firstly: the preponderance of male children in the Thompson's

- Nathaniel (1739) had seven boys and three girls
- Nathaniel (1761) had nine boys and six girls
- Nathaniel (1791) had four boys and eight girls
- Benjamin (1846) had four boys and two girls
- Edward (1879) had seven boys and no girls
- Edward (1806) had three boys and no girls

Making a total of 34 against 19. If we exclude the "black sheep", the result would be 30 against 11, and I think the grandchildren are predominantly males.

THE THOMPSON FAMILY

Secondly: the large percentage of spinsters among the daughters; of Nathaniel's six girls, the last three never married and were known as "The Colebrook Auntie's." Benjamin's two daughters - one never married; Of Nathaniel's (1791) girls, only two married.

Thirdly: None of the male Thompson's died as widowers; if the wife died first, they remarried -- Nathaniel (1761), Nathaniel (1791), Thomas (1785), Herbert Harry (1868), Peter (1765) and Reverend Edward (1811).

Fourthly: their last child was usually born when the father was well over forty: Nathaniel (1739) was 46; Nathaniel (1761) was 55 when his last daughter arrived and 5 years later when he made his will he provided for any children yet to be born; Nathaniel (1791) was 58 when his youngest was born; Benjamin (1846) was 44; and Harold (1908) over 50.

Another feature is that the men seem to carry their years lightly and to appear younger than they really are. This of course, cannot be proved, but seems to be the current opinion.

The above are physical characteristics: the mental ones are hard to define even if they are actually there. To me, most seemed to be perhaps justly called eccentric, that is away from the regular conventional type. They do not so much oppose the majority but refrain from accepting it merely because it is a majority: i.e. to be sceptical rather than credulous, and perhaps through pride refraining from bothering much about public opinion and not anxious to dress well. One of the next generation once took off his shoes on Fifth Avenue because they were annoying him on a very hot day. When the Bishop of London criticized the Reverend William (1795) for not living in his parish, the Reverend William said, 'I am not dependent on the Church of England for my livelihood, and if I cannot do as I please I will resign and join the Dissenters.' Not very loyal or even courteous, but certainly not overly anxious to please.

Another feature seems that so many of them changed their residence so frequently. Nathaniel (1739), a poor weaver, had several addresses when his children were born and son Nathaniel (1761) also from Stepney to St. Mary Le Bow then St. Sepulchres, several addresses when in that parish, and finally to Islington. His son Nathaniel was at two places in Islington and when he reappeared in Stepney had several different addresses. His son Benjamin moved frequently, as also his son Edward (1879). Thomas (1785), the philanthropist, was frequently moving, and lived in at least 10 different towns. Whether this is due to a disposition restless and enterprising, who can tell?

And to add to the difficulty, we must reckon with coincidence.

* * * * *

This history was extracted from the following website:
<http://womanlondonblitz.blogspot.com/p/for-genealogy-lovers-thompson-family.html>