

Harry Matheson (2/20/1912 to 12/5/1977)

By Janet E Luther – 2/1/2023

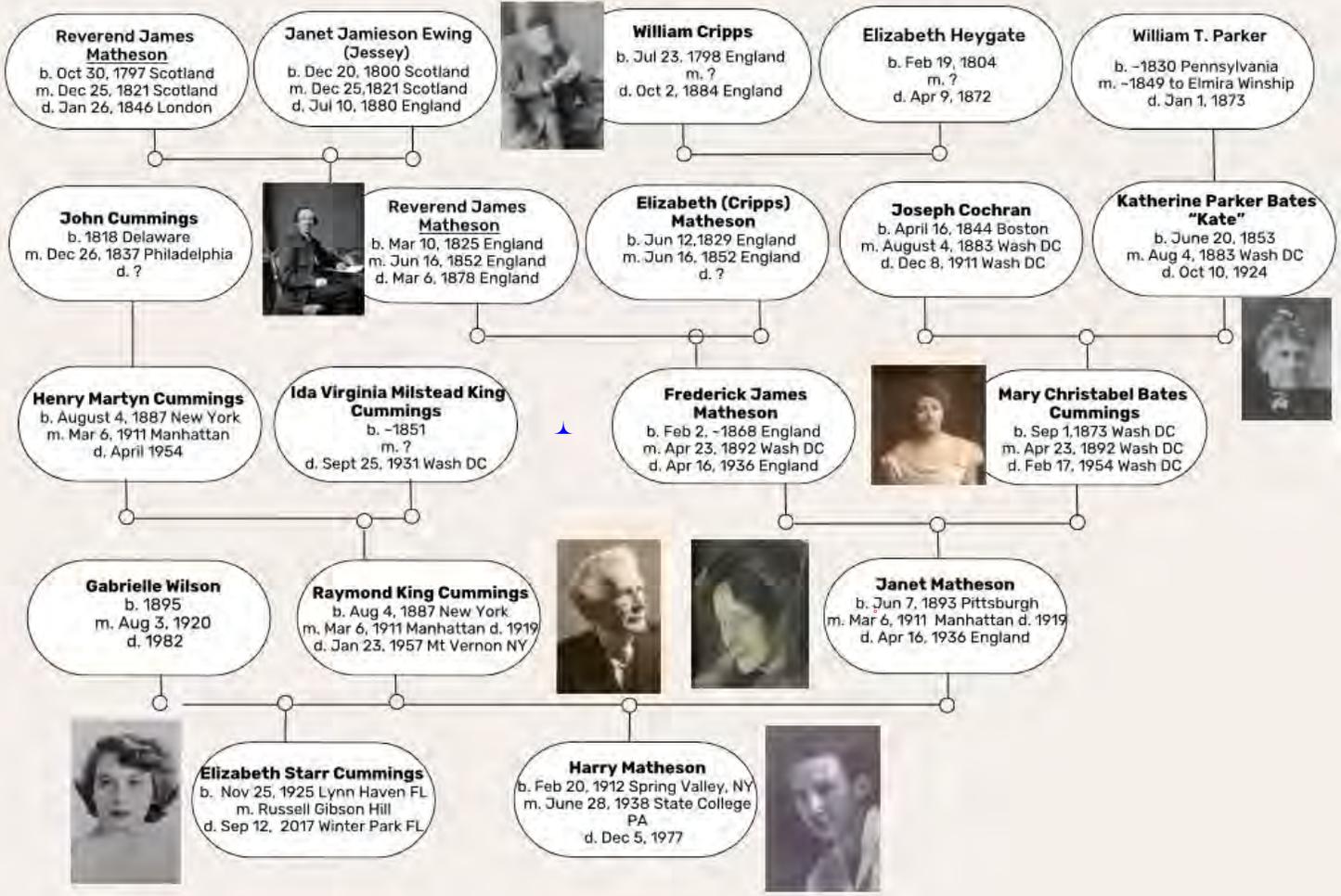
My dad was born Harry Matheson Cummings, but, when his mother Janet Matheson Cummings (6/7/1893 to 9/10/1924), and father, Raymond King Cummings 8/4/1887 to 1/23/1957), divorced during the winter of 1919-1920, Janet dropped the “Cummings” from both her and his names. From then on he was known simply as Harry (or Hal) Matheson.

This book is a compilation of what I have learned about Dad’s family.



Harry Matheson - 1976

Matheson Ancestors





A family gathering in Capel Curig near Snowdon in North Wales - September 16, 1901

Standing: Thomas Fry Percy Fred Percy's wife Will Fred's wife Isabel's husband Will's wife Lily
 Reeve* Matheson Matheson Lily Matheson Christabel Dr. Jim Gwyther Annie Matheson

Seated: Pamela Bruce Janet ** Lizzie with Janet Leonard Isabel
 Lily's sister Matheson Matheson Matheson Matheson

On the grass: Annie Geoff Len's wife
 Matheson Gwyther Mab

*Tom Reeve's wife was sister to Rev. James Matheson; Tom Reeve's son was William F. Reeve, Esq. who handled the distributions from the Matheson trust set up from the estates of Elizabeth Cripps Matheson and her daughter Janet from which Harry received money in the 1930's.

**Lizzie is Elizabeth (daughter of William Cripps) married to The Rev. James Matheson. Their children were: Fred, Percy, William, Henry, Leonard, Isabel, Annie, Lily and Janet.



In Bramcote garden 1901 - "Bramcote" is a house at Hendon, London, N.W., the home of Leonard & Mab Matheson

Standing: Aunt Mab (Leonard's* wife), Fred*, Lizzie**, Percy*, Annie and husband Will*

Sitting: Christabel (Fred's wife), Janet (Harry's mother), Aunt Janet*, Aunt Lily*

** Lizzie is Elizabeth, wife of the Rev. James Matheson; * are some of her children

1901 - Annie, wife of William Matheson at Bramcote with Leonard Matheson and his wife Mab.

William and Annie immigrated to New Zealand but visited England for a few months in 1901.



One of William and Annie's children, the potter Elizabeth Matheson (right), lived with her Uncle Leonard and Aunt Mab 1903-1911 while she went to school. Elizabeth wrote to Harry as late as 1970 and sent him these photos.





(Henry) William Cripps - 7/23/1798 to 1884

Someone has handwritten on the back of this studio portrait: November 1883 -
Henry Cripps (Father of Elizabeth Cripps Matheson) Hal's Great Great Grandfather

Descendents of William Cripps
Who wrote his “Memories” in July 1882 at the age of 89

William Cripps (7/23/1798-1884) m. Elizabeth Heygate (2/19/1804-4/9/1872)
Elizabeth is buried in Green-Wood Cemetery in Brooklyn, NY

daughter Elizabeth Cripps (6/12/1829-?) m. the Rev. James Matheson (<1850->1878)

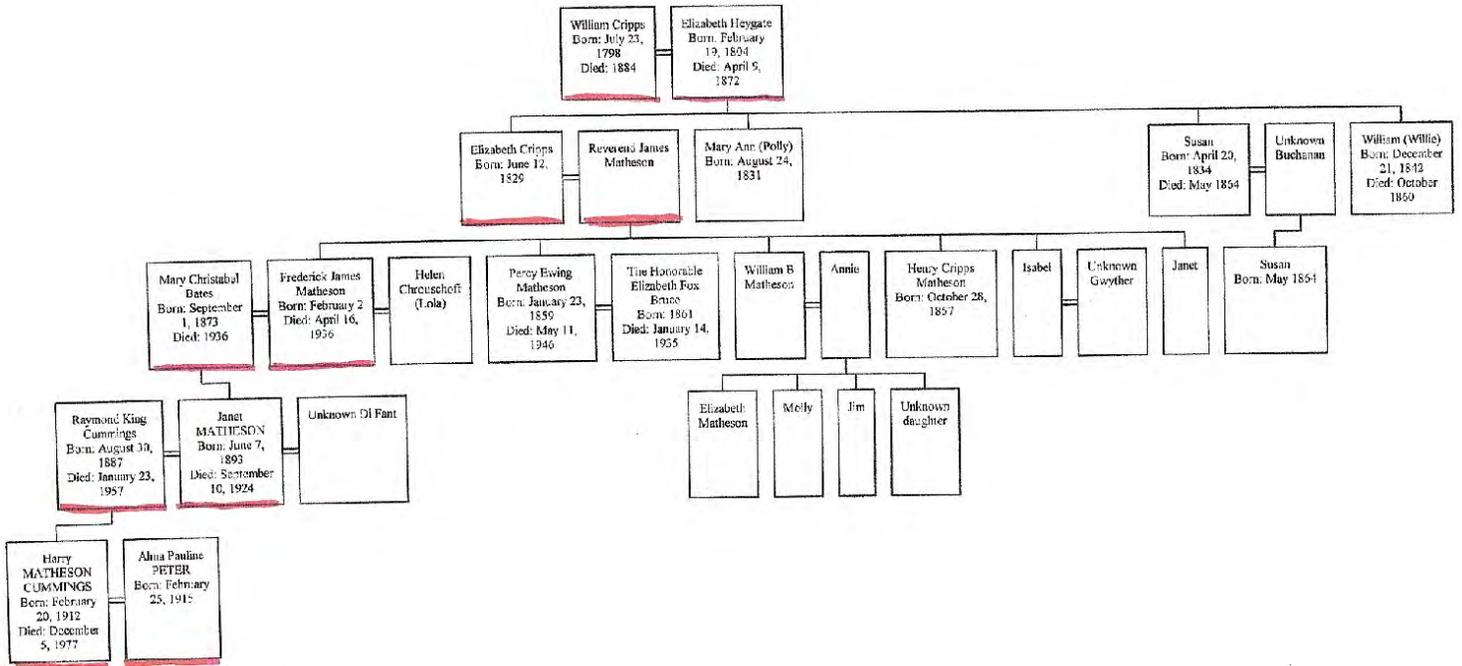
son Frederick James Matheson (2/2/?-4/16/1936) m. Mary Christabel Bates (9/1/1873-4/?/1954)
Frederick and Mary divorced in 1908

daughter Janet Matheson (6/7/1893-9/10/1924) m. Raymond King Cummings (8/30/1887-1/23/1957)
Janet and Raymond divorced in the winter of 1919-1920
Janet is buried alongside her great grandmother Elizabeth in Green-Wood Cemetery in Brooklyn, NY

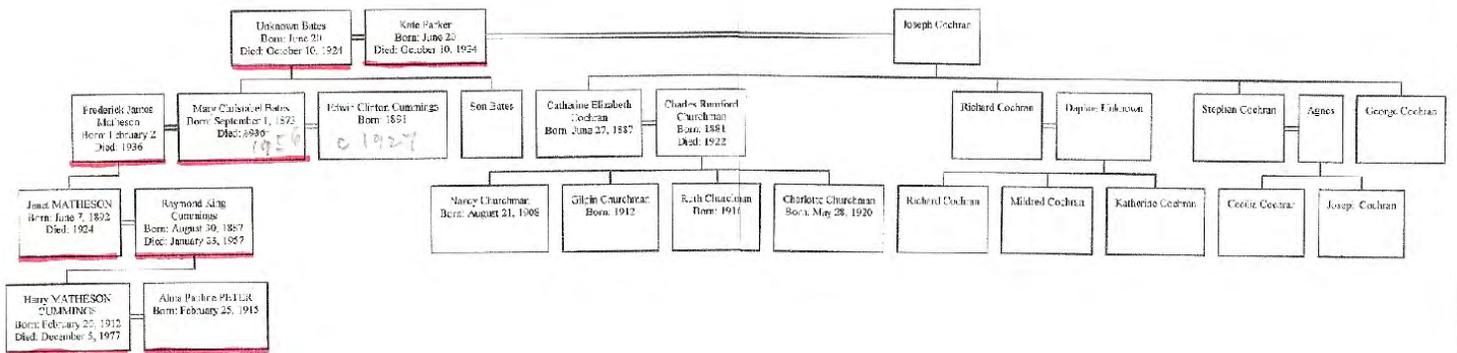
son Harry Matheson Cummings (2/20/1912-12/5/1977) m. Alma Pauline Peter (2/25/1915-6/15/2012)
Harry and Alma are buried in Parklawn Memorial Park in Rockville, MD

daughter Janet Elizabeth Matheson (b. 5/24/1939) m. Lars Christian Luther (6/18/1936-12/4/2021)
Lars is buried in Union Cemetery in Slatington, PA

Descendants of William Cripps



Descendants of Kate Parker



William Cripps – 7/23/1798 – 1884

By Janet Elizabeth Luther (nee Matheson) b. 5/24/1939 – written in May 2008

Note: **Red type** indicates my direct ancestors

Who was William Cripps? **My dad was Harry Matheson (nee Cummings); his mother was Janet Cummings (nee Matheson); her father was Frederick James Matheson; his mother was Elizabeth Matheson (nee Cripps); and her father was William Cripps.** So William is my great great great grandfather! We are incredibly lucky to have a copy (105 typed double-spaced pages!), apparently transcribed at some point from the handwritten original of “Memories of William Cripps written at the age of 84”, dated 7/12/1882. My dad, Harry, got this in 1966 from a cousin named Elizabeth Matheson, who was a potter and lived in New Zealand. She was Dad’s first cousin once removed; i.e., her father William B. Matheson and Dad’s grandfather Frederick James Matheson were brothers. We also have a photo of William Cripps dated November 1983 which calls him Henry; probably this was his middle name. Maybe he was called this to distinguish him from his uncle William (see below).

In 2018, I found this Memoir online at www.jstor.org as an article titled “The Memoir of a Nottingham Lace Merchant William Cripps, 1798-1884”, J. D. Chambers. It appeared in the *Bulletin of the Business Historical Society*, Vol. 24, No. 2 (Jun., 1950), pp. 65-109, published by The President and Fellows of Harvard College. J. D. Chambers wrote an introduction to the Memoir in which he thanks Mrs. Isabel Gwyther, a granddaughter of William Cripps, for allowing him to prepare the original manuscript for publication. Isabel (nee Matheson) was an aunt of the Elizabeth Matheson who sent a copy to Harry.

Below are some biographical highlights from this work.

William’s grandfather Cripps was a brewer in Newport Pagnel, England.

Grandfather Cripps had 4 sons and at least 2 daughters: The eldest was (also) named William; he had inherited after Grandfather Cripps’ death, but squandered his fortune and so opened a boys’ day school. He and “our” William’s father were married to sisters. The two other brothers were George, who kept the “Neptune Inn” at Newport, and Thomas, who had a grocery shop and was also a cooper at Sherrington. Of Grandfather Cripps’ daughters we know only that one married Mr. Osborn, a woolstapler, and another married Mr. Jefferson, A feltmonger, both of Newport.

Our William’s father, whose name we never learn, was a “younger son” born in 1760 who died suddenly on 1/17/1827 from pleurisy (when William was 29). William’s father was apprenticed to a hatter in London, and then worked in a draper’s shop in Newport Pagnel. He was a good singer and strongly religious. In 1785 he opened his own draper’s shop. He became a churchwarden, but the clergyman was a man of dissolute habits, so William’s father, disillusioned, left the Church of England and joined the Independent Church in spite of everyone’s strong disapproval of his “forsaking the church”. He was shunned and also suffered from epilepsy and “nervous dejection”, of which he was later cured.

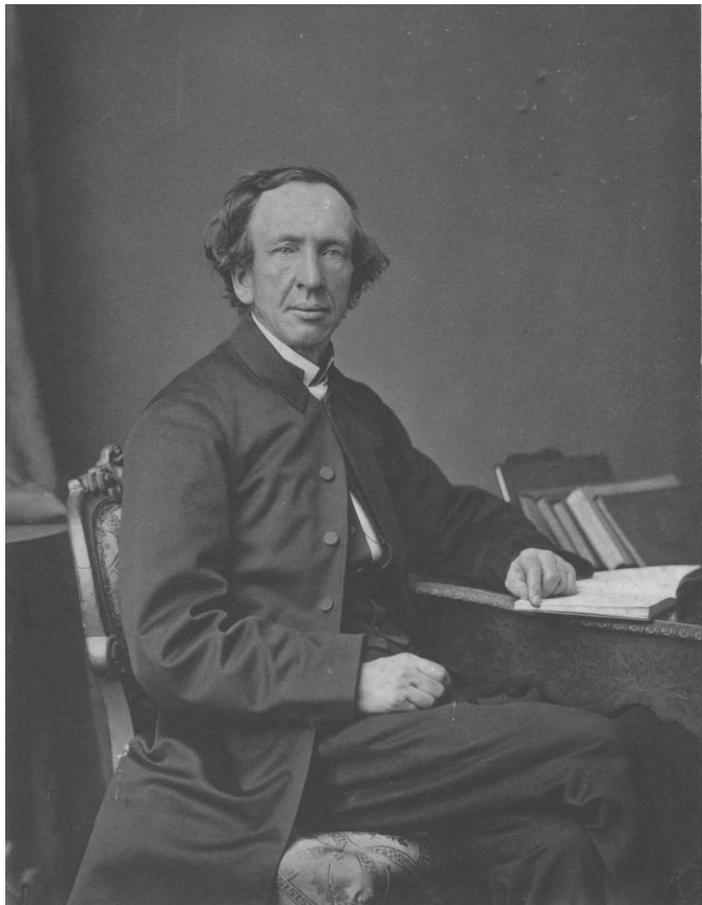
William's mother was born Sukey Rogers. Her father had a farm at Sherrington near Newport Pagnel. His mother had two brothers: John Rogers who had a farm at Sherrington and Thomas Rogers who was a doctor at Newport, and two sisters, one of whom married his Uncle William (see above) and another a farmer in Sherrington named Griggs.

William's parents had 11 children, of which six survived: Joseph (who died in May 1864), George, **William (7/23/1798-1884)**, Susan, another daughter, and Betsy. Only William and Betsy were living by 7/12/1882. Joseph got William started by lending him money and sending lace; George chose bad companions and seems to have failed at all his various employments. William eventually settled a yearly sum of \$600 on him and he settled with his wife in Greenport near Boston. One brother (I think probably Joseph) married a Miss Grundy on 8/6/1829.

William left school in 1812 at age 14 and learned his father's drapery business in Newport Pagnel but read a lot about America and decided to go there and became a lace merchant in New York. He sailed many times from England to America, each voyage taking at least 20 days. William also took several long walks in America, traveling as far as Niagara Falls and Canada.

By 1825 William was frequently crossing the Atlantic. In England he was often in Nottingham where the "bobinett" trade had blossomed. In 1829 he added "Scotch embroideries" to his stock of lace goods.

William married Elizabeth Heygate on 8/6/1828 when he was 30 and she 25 (so she was born in 1803). Elizabeth was one of the seven Heygate girls of Market Harborough: Elizabeth (the eldest), Mary Ann, Sophy, Martha, Kate, Louisa and Sarah. **William and Elizabeth had three daughters: Elizabeth born 6/12/1829, who was my dad's great grandmother;** Mary Ann born 8/24/1831; and Susan born 4/20/1834, who died in May 1864, ten days after the birth of her daughter Susan Buchanan; and a son William (Willie) born 12/21/1842, who died in October 1860 from a cold which attacked his lungs. (William calls his one unmarried daughter Polly. I think Elizabeth married the Rev. James Matheson and Susan died in childbirth, so Mary Ann must be his "Polly".)



*The Reverend James Matheson
taken in 1876*

William's daughter Elizabeth married a Congregationalist minister, The Reverend James Matheson, and lived in Nottingham, England. They apparently had a lot of children including: **Frederick James Matheson (born 2/2/?? – died 4/16/1936) who was my dad's grandfather**; Annie; Isabel, Katie, Willie and Harry. The Reverend James Matheson's family lived in England, but his children visited William in America: Katie was with William in NY from August 1873 until November 1874 – would she have been 20-ish then; ie born ~1853?

Isabel also came in August 1873 but stayed longer than Katie. Willie came in 1875 and Harry came to the Centennial Exhibition in 1876. **I suppose that Frederick named my dad Harry in honor of his brother Harry.** One of these daughters had a son, also named William, who went to New Zealand; his daughter was the Elizabeth Matheson who sent William Cripps's Memoir to Dad.

The Reverend James and Elizabeth's third son was Percy Ewing Matheson, M.B.E., born 1/23/1859, who was an Oxford don and died 5/11/1946 (he had married the Hon. Elizabeth (Liz) Fox Bruce in 1896 and she died in January 1935) – **I think this is the source of my brother James's middle name.** Percy wrote a lot to my dad, often sending him money or stamps (which Dad collected for awhile); we have several letters written 1928 to 1939.

In 1837 a widespread financial panic in NY nearly bankrupted William, but he was able to right things and pay off all his creditors by 1838. He and his family moved to Park Terrace in Nottingham, and he prepared to retire in August 1845 (at age 47) with a farewell tour to America with his brother Joseph and sister Betsy. They went to Boston, Albany and Lake George and on west to Detroit, Chicago, St. Louis, Cincinnati, Baltimore, Washington, Philadelphia and New York. William returned to Nottingham in November and had £35,000 on which to retire. He was made mayor of Nottingham in 1847.

William's family moved to Bramcote where they lived peacefully for some time.

As the result of bad investments and loans William again faced financial ruin and returned to New York, but could salvage nothing. Then William and his friends had a brilliant idea and raised \$200,000 to establish the Standard Fire Insurance Company on 3/28/1859. William was made President with a salary of \$3,000. In May of 1859 his wife Eliza and daughter Mary Ann joined him in Brooklyn, New York. They moved to a permanent residence at 470 Classon Avenue in Brooklyn in 1863. **William's wife Elizabeth Cripps died on 4/9/1872 at age 69 after 44 years of marriage and is buried in the Fountain Hill section of Green-Wood Cemetery, 500 W. 25th St in Brooklyn (Lot 20420, Section 23).**

Oddly, William makes no mention of the Civil War in his Memoir. He retired at last in April 1879 with a pension from Standard Fire Insurance Company of \$2,500 and returned to England where he died in 1884 at age 86.



THE GREEN-WOOD CEMETERY
500 25th Street, Brooklyn, NY 11232-1755
Tel: 718.768.7300 / Fax: 718.788.1101
www.greenwoodcemetery.org

-A NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK-

Name				Elizabeth Cripps	
Late Residence				470 Classon Avenue, Brooklyn, NY	
Place of Death				Brooklyn, NY	
Age	Years	Months	Days	M S W	Married
	68	2	66		
Date of Death		Date of Interment		Birthplace	
Apr. 9, 1872		Apr. 12, 1872		England	
Lot		Grave		Section	
4259		Receiving Tomb			
Cause of Death			Funeral Director		
Paralysis			T. W. Barnum		
Remarks					
remains removed to Lot 20420 - June 6, 1872					

72
08
BD

2/19/1804

-Est. 1838-



Publication: Brooklyn Eagle; Date: Apr 10, 1872; Section: None; Page: 3

DIED.

ANDERSON.—At his residence, No. 431 Fulton av, Brooklyn, after a short, but severe, illness, EDWARD O. ANDERSON.

Short service will be held at his late home, on Friday, at 3 A. M., when the body will be removed for burial to Yonkers, service there being held at his father's residence, Mr. Alfred Anderson, on Woodworth av, at 3 o'clock P. M. Friends and acquaintances are cordially invited to attend the same without further notice. ap10 2t*

BETTS.—On Tuesday, April 9, GODIVA BETTS, only daughter of John and Eliza Betts, aged 1 year, 4 months and 23 days.

The friends of the family are respectfully invited to attend the funeral on Thursday, April 11, at 11 A. M., from 226 Sackett st.

[Boston papers please copy,]

BROWN.—In Brooklyn, on Tuesday, April 9, THOMAS S. BROWN, son of Ellen and the late Wm. Brown, of Bath, New Utrecht, Long Island, aged 44 years.

The relatives and friends are respectfully invited to attend the funeral, on Friday, at 3 P. M., from the East Reformed Protestant Dutch Church, Bedford avenue, corner of Jefferson street. ap10 2t*

CRIPPS.—On the 9th inst., at her late residence, No. 470 Clason avenue, ELIZABETH, the beloved wife of William Cripps, in the 69th year of her age.

The funeral will take place on Friday, the 12th inst., at 2 P. M., from the lecture room of Plymouth Church. Friends are respectfully invited to attend. ap9 2t*

MCCORMACK.—On Wednesday, April 10, after a short illness, ANNIE, beloved wife of John McCormack, in her 23th year.

The relatives and friends of the family are respectfully invited to attend the funeral from her late residence, 88 Park avenue, near Portland avenue, on Friday, the 13th inst., at 2½ o'clock. ap10 2t*

MILLARD.—In Brooklyn, on April 9, after a very brief sickness, THEODORE W. MILLARD, in the 34th year of his age.

SIMMONS.—At his late residence, Brooklyn, on Tuesday, April 9, WILLIAM SIMMONS, native of Birmingham, England, aged 77 years.

Relatives and friends are invited to attend his funeral from the Church of the Mediator (old St. Ann's), Washington st, near Sands, on Thursday, at 2 P. M.

SHEPPARD.—In Brooklyn, on Tuesday morning, April 9, of scarlet fever, ALONZO MORGAN, son of Cortlandt T. and Agnes Sheppard, aged 4 years and 7 months.

WARDLELL.—On Tuesday, March 9, of scarlatina, R. HARRY VAN PELT, son of Henry and Emma Wardell, aged 9 years, 6 months and 20 days.

Friends and relatives of the family are respectfully invited to attend the funeral from the residence of his parents at Bay Ridge, Thursday, April 11, at 2 o'clock.

WRIGHT.—At her residence, in Rochester, Monday, April 8, of heart disease, EMILY, wife of William Wright, formerly of this city.

Funeral on Thursday, the 11th inst. ap10 2t*

CRIPPS.—On the 9th inst., at her late residence, No. 470 Clason avenue, ELIZABETH, the beloved wife of William Cripps, in the 69th year of her age.

The funeral will take place on Friday, the 12th inst., at 2 P. M., from the lecture room of Plymouth Church. Friends are respectfully invited to attend. ap9 2t*

PLEASE MAKE SURE THAT THE PRINTER IS SET APPROPRIATELY

Print

Cancel

Letters to Harry Matheson in Washington, DC, from his great uncle Percy E. Matheson (1/23/1859-5/11/1946) in England. Percy was a brother of Harry's mother's father, Fred Matheson (2/2/~1868-4/16/1936)

Transcribed by Janet Elizabeth Luther (nee Matheson) b. 5/24/1939 in May 2008

Percy Ewing Matheson was a brother of Frederick James Matheson. Fred was Janet's father. Janet was my father Harry Matheson's mother.

Notes: These were written, I think with a fountain pen, during the period 1928 to 1939 when Percy was ages 69 to 80. Percy's handwriting was just terrible, so there are some indecipherable bits below.

I have printed items of particular interest in red.

12/26/1928 – no envelope; from 3 Brookside, Headington, Oxford – includes a photo of Percy's House at 3 Brookside, Headington, Oxford

My Dear Hal

Your grandfather [Frederick James] has kindly given me your address, so I am sending you a small book which I hope may interest you. I also send you a card showing a picture of our house, which is on the pike, about 100 ft above Oxford about 1-1/2 miles from the middle of the City. We have been in it since Lady Day (March 25) 1926, and as we were lucky enough to find apple and pear trees growing on the land when we built, our garden does not look as bare as most new gardens. When you can spare time I should like to hear about your School and how you are getting on. Meantime Aunt Liz and I send you our love and good wishes.



Yours affectionately
Percy E. Matheson

1/25/1931: to Division VII, Section I, National Bureau of Standards; from 3 Brookside, Headington, Oxford

My dear Harry

I was very glad to receive your letter, but have not been able to answer it until today (my 72nd birthday). You will be sorry to hear that your Grandfather has been very ill with pleurisy at Montpelier and for some days we were afraid he might not come through, but under the devoted

nursing of the clever French doctor he is now cured and was moved to a warmer place Amelie des Bains in the Pyrenees.

You ask for news of Oxford. Much of our time and effort is now spent on trying to save it from the increasing noise in the office and to preserve a belt of green country around it. Among other things we are hoping to preserve from building the highest ground and its neighbourhood, Shotover Plain, which is about 90 min. walk from the house. I am one of a Committee that watches over this particular interest. My other chief interests are the University Press and large Headington [?] School, close at hand. I no longer teach in College but am still a Fellow of New College, i.e., a member of its Governing Body, and also a Fellow of Winchester, the Great School connected with New College, and go to the School at Winchester for meetings about 8 times a year. This I like very much as the Governing Body (the Wardens and Fellows) are very interesting and congenial men. The Warden, the Chairman appointed for 5 years, is Lord Chelmsford, among the other members are a Warden of New College, a Right Hon. Herbert Berlse, once Minister of Education in our Coalition Government, Lord Selburne, once Governor of S. Africa, Lord Gray of Falenden, once Foreign Minister.

We have had great anxiety lately not only about your grandfather, but about my wife's elder brother, W. N. Bruce, once a high official of the Board of Education and now Pro Chancellor of the University of Wales. He is a year older than I and in the past a fairly strong man, but is now afflicted with a very disabling illness, which gives him great pain in arms and hips and for the present makes movement very difficult. We are very fond of him and his family and much distressed.

I hope your office and chem work get on and that you are not overdoing it. With love from us both.

I am your affectionate uncle,
Percy E. Matheson

The offices I have mentioned are unpaid, but very interesting.

12/21/1937: to 2117 S St. N.W. (forwarded to 1933 Calvert St, NW); from 3 Brookside, Headington, Oxford

Dear Harry,

This is only a note to tell you that I am sending you in another cover [?] a draft on Barclay & Co for \$9.98 (the equivalent of 2 £ English), which I hope will arrive safely.

Yours affectionately
Percy Matheson

2/21/1937: to 2117 S St. N.W. (forwarded to 1933 Calvert St, NW); from 3 Brookside, Headington, Oxford

My dear Harry

I hope all goes well with you. I am sending you with this letter a draft for dollar equivalent to 2 £ English, for which I hope you will find some use, for books or anything else. Will you please let me know whether it arrives safely? I should like very much to know what you are working on

now that your studies in general are getting on. I have been reading a travel-diary of another great nephew who has just finished his two years Commonwealth Fellowship at Princeton & spent the summer with a friend visiting some 22 States & covering many miles in a car, from Princeton up to Buffalo & then down South to New Orleans. We have been having some very cold weather, which drove me to bed for half a day, but my health in general is good, except that my memory is uncertain ??, much less active, unfriendly ?. I shall be 79 in January. Hoping to have news of you ever ?, and ask good wishes for 1938.

Yours affectionately
Percy E. Matheson

12/24/1937: to 1933 Calvert St, NW; from 3 Brookside, Headington, Oxford
Christmas eve 1937

My dear Harry

All good wishes to you & many thanks for your wonderful letter. This is not a proper answer to it for 3 days ago I was unwise enough to let a car knock me over & though my injury is not serious – [illegible] I am not quite up to a long letter, but I write it because 5 or 6 days ago I sent you a letter to the old address 2017 S St. NW, containing a draft on Barclays in dollars for 2 £ English. If you have not received it please inquire at once. I will answer your letter before long, but please notify me when you change your address. I like what you said about Pr?; it is very true.

Yours affectionately
Percy Matheson

I hope the lady (name unknown) is someone you can really trust as a faithful companion in life and not a mere [?]. Don't be hasty.

1/3/1938: to 1933 Calvert St, NW; from 3 Brookside, Headington, Oxford

My dear Harry

I hope you have received my letter written a few days ago and that you have received the letter sent to your old address containing a draft on Barclay & Co. I think when I wrote I told you that I had an unlucky blow for a while on Dec 21. I have in that since recovered from it but x-ray photographs show that the blow cracked or broke a bone in or near my nose which causes a swelling down the right nostril and an ache when I bite hard, but the surgeons again tell it is best I let nature work. I stay in the house & clear away the blood remaining from the wound, which, it is hoped, will be absorbed. I am able to go about, but am under my excellent doctor's supervision.

Enough of myself. I am truly very grateful to you for giving me such a complete account of your history & doings. I admire the way in which you have turned your scientific training & the degree of success you have achieved. I am very glad also to hear of your rise of salary & your more comfortable conditions of life. Your friends, the two Denslows seem to be men you like & trust & I am very glad you have one living with you.

The news of your father's existence takes me by surprise. I did not know that your father was alive: still less that you had a sister. I do not like saying anything unkind of him; I only met him once, I think, when I could not help thinking that he was quite unworthy of your dear mother,

whom we all loved dearly. How they parted I never knew, but I do not think it can have been her fault. I am glad that you have a sister & that you enjoy her society.

You call your lady friend at Scranton Alma but do not give her surname. I can see that you have interests in common with her, but her temperament as you describe it does not seem as if it would fit in very well into marriage to a man of the energy and legitimate [?] condition of a man of your scientific bent. It also seems to me rather a drawback that she is not an English-speaking American although no doubt her knowledge of German combines well with your scientific German. But it is not for me to advise you without knowing the lady.

It is very kind of you to support my paying you a visit, but I am afraid I cannot do that. I shall be 79 in three weeks from now, & I hate sea travel and nearly all my old friends in USA are gone. I do not expect to travel much more, at least outside this Island. All you tell me about your studies is interesting, particularly what you say about Dr. Lindel [?] & his wife & also about the Polarograph of which further I shall be glad to hear. I shall be seeing Francis Price soon & will explain to him what you say about his companion who is, I am told, a Fellow of Trinity College Cambridge, the leading College there. He is a distinguished mathematician; Price is a fellow scientist.

I hope someday it will be possible for you to come over here & see something of our laboratories while renewing acquaintance with some of the family ? alas it is terribly shrunken. Today Teresa Peale [?] **my sister Isabel**'s daughter drove over from Bramsfield to lunch, with her only **child Barbara**. T's husband died some years ago, in an operation for appendicitis. He was a healthy man & a good one. A few days earlier I had a visit from Barbara Reeve, a cousin whose father Will Reeve, one of the best of men, wrote you his own letters. Only those of my generation in our family are left, Isabel G? & my brother's wife in N. Zealand, & myself. **But there are Matheson cousins, children of my father's brothers Ewing & Thomas ??.**

I hope when your scientific studies are completed so far as graduation is concerned you may find time to enlarge your education on the side of literature & history. But it may be that you are stronger in these regions than I know. Your description of your room at Savile ? Road house is correct. The house is now occupied by a historian in our New College Staff, and her handwork [?], who sublets the top floor (provided with cooking-flat) to a scientific lady, but the garden is rather neglected.

I began this yesterday & now add that I saw my doctor this morning, an able Irishman called McCoy, who is satisfied with my progress, & I am not to see him for a week. With best wishes for the New Year

Yours affectionately
Percy E Matheson

2/4/1938: to 1933 Calvert St, NW; from 3 Brookside, Headington, Oxford

Dear Harry,

I had a long very interesting letter from you just before Christmas, which I answered at once in order to tell you that there was a letter with a cheque inside waiting for you at your old address. And a week or two later sent you a longer letter (delayed by the consequences of a motor accident.) dealing with some of the contents of your letter. I hope you have not been, like me knocked over by

a car & that the only reason of your not telling me whether or not you received my cheques is that you have been too busy with the polarograph to spare a minute to answer my question.

Your affectionate uncle
Percy Matheson

2/22/1938: to 1933 Calvert St, NW; from 3 Brookside, Headington, Oxford

Dear Harry,

Many thanks for your letter of Feb 6, which reached me a few days ago. I am very glad to have a fuller account of your doings & also to be reassured about your friend Alma & your long acquaintance with her. I am glad to say that the crack in my jaw-bone seems to have healed & I am in no pain, & my nose, though a little out of control in watering is mending, I suppose because of the damage to its inside, has practically recovered. I have parted from my doctor but I am going to see him once again for him to say whether I should have any more arranged to improve its circulation.

3 Brookside is a detached house in a sloping garden of 3/4 of an acre, fronting on to a short street (happily not a thoroughfare) which runs southward from the road to Wycombe & Bremsfield. My house is about 2 miles from Saville [?] Road (40 minutes walk) & there is a good line of buses, which take from 10 to 15 minutes. I have no car nor can I drive on so that I am dependent on my legs & buses & occasional lifts from nieces or other friends. My wife was a good gardener & made the garden very pretty with the help of a gardener once a week, Robert Sugar, a very grand impossible [?] fellow.

I retired from my Tutorship in 1936 & we built this house & came to live here then, but I am still a Fellow (now the senior Fellow of New College, to which I was elected in 1881) & attend College meetings, four big ones in the year & other less important ones from time to time, at where all the business of the College is done, including

- (1) Management of College estates
- (2) Arrangements for teaching
- (3) Care of College buildings
- (4) Investments

The governing body, called the Warden & Fellows, consists of the Head of the College (Warden) and 27 Fellows, who consist of

(1) University Professors, partly only paid from College manner [?]. They do no tutorial work for the College but lecture & (in the Scientific ones) work in Labs for the University

(2) The teaching body of the College Tutors & Lecturers, who give individual tuition to the undergraduate members of the College.

(3) A few Research Fellows who receive a stipend in consideration of research conducted by them in the University.

(4) Two are the silent tutors, like myself, who receive no proper Fellowships but receive pensions (to which they contributed when in service) in consideration of their past work.

The number of undergraduates in College varies from 100 to 250. In New College we have 240. All our men read for Hanover [?], taking a course of 3 or 4 years.

You ask what my occupations are

(1) College affairs. I attend College meetings & am frequently in College. I generally dine there with my chaps on Sunday, at "high table" in Hall, generally a party of from 25 to 30, & sometimes dine there on other nights & occasionally lunch there

(2) I am a member of the Governing Body of Winchester College (a "fellow of Winchester"), one of the leading "Public Schools" (with Eton, Harris, Rugby & others) not in the sense of your schools of the name, but Schools preparing for a University, where boys stay until 18, most of them boarding schools. This takes me to Winchester about 8 times a year, a very pleasant occupation on the Governing Body, of about 12 members, consists of men engaged in public or academic life. Judges, eminent scholars, University Dons etc. I was at a meeting on Feb 20.

(3) I am on the Council of Headington Girls School, a School, half day-girls half boarders, very near me. From time to time I have taught "for love" picked girls of the School [in later of work ?], but have no pupils just now.

(4) I am a Director (unpaid) of a College Disbursement Society, which does its best (this done for some 80 years) to provide housing for wage-earners in Oxford at moderate rents.

(5) For the rest, my life is taken up very largely with keeping up communications with my many relations. I have some 25 nephews, nieces, [? ?] great - , most of these in England being on Aunt Liz's side, but I keep up a regular correspondence with my brother Will & his children & grandchildren in New Zealand.

(6) I have in the past done a limited amount of reviewing & other literary work, but rarely do this now.

(7) Otherwise I do a good deal of reading, old books anew, or when my eyes are tired, turn to embroidery. My sister-in-law, Aunt Liz's younger Sister Alice, once Vice Principal of Samaritan College, lives less than a quarter of a mile away, with her niece Norah Bruce, daughter of Alice's brother W. N. Bruce, a distinguished member of the Civil Service in the Board of Education who played a great part in the development of longtime Church of Wales & was for some years Pre-Chancellor of the University of Wales. I have also 5 nieces in Oxford, all daughters of Augustus Harcourt (a cousin of Sir Ian Harcourt, statesman) who married aunt Liz's sister Rachel, & I see a great deal of them. I also from time to time go to see **my sister Isabel Gwyther**, living alone in London & Verena who lives in a tiny house (not with husband: she is a widow, her husband having died suddenly in an operation for appendicitis a few years ago.) Her only child Barbara is at a co-educational school at Letchworth, Herl?.

Headington, which was a tiny village when I came to Oxford 68 years ago, is now a huge suburb & parts of the City, so that we are being more and more surrounded with houses.

I think this answers most of your questions.

Yours affectionately
Percy Matheson

11/18/1938: - no envelope; from 3 Brookside, Headington, Oxford

Dear Harry,

This is rather a belated letter. When your Father died [1936] I put aside a watch of his to send you, but it has been waiting here in the hope that you might be able to come over. As this is unlikely to happen soon I send the watch & the things attached to it now. I do not think its intrinsic value is great, but it will have associations for you. If you have to pay duty on it, please let me

know. I hope that your researches & studies have prospered since I last heard from you. I had a pleasant holiday in August & part of September with friends in N. Wales & Scotland, since then I have been living my quiet life here. Let me know that this packet arrives safely & give me your news. I have just had a day or two in London with your **Aunt Isabel Gwyther**.

With love,
Yours affectionately
Percy E. Matheson

The seal [refers to the wax seal used to seal envelopes], I think, must have come from my Mother.

1/2/1939: to 1933 Calvert St, NW; from 3 Brookside, Headington, Oxford

Dear Harry,

I was very glad to receive your letter of Dec 12th this morning & to know that you had received my packet with your watch. I hope that you have now received my Christmas gift. I gather from your note that you were married in June; if I had known your news sooner you should have had my good wishes sooner too, but I send them now very warmly & trust that your marriage will be a very happy one. By that same post this morning I had another letter from U.S.A. from Mrs. Fitzgerald in Boston, a daughter of very faithful friends of your Grandfather, the Walkers, & they were very kind to him when he lived in your country. Please give Alma my love & good wishes & when you can find a few minutes to spare tell me what you have made of the new machine you had to experiment with, & how have your U.S. researches been getting on.

I have had rather an anxious Christmas, as my sister-in-law Miss Alice Bruce, one of the two remaining sisters of your aunt Liz, has been having all winter very alarming heart attacks & we do not yet know whether she will be able to withstand any further attack. I have just had a visit this morning from one of my many nieces, Lady Beach Thomas, the husband of Sir Wm Beach Thomas who was one of the leading journalists in the War. After a long time of writing for daily papers, he now writes only weekly articles – one for The Spectator on farming and open-air topics & one for The Observer.

With all good wishes
Your affectionate uncle
Percy E. Matheson

1/3/1939: to 2117 S St. N.W. (forwarded to 1933 Calvert St, NW); from 3 Brookside, Headington, Oxford

Dear Harry,

Three surprising things happened on this dark morning. By the first post I had your card with the wedding pictures, which I answered at once; by the second I had your longer letter in a long envelope, and by the same post a letter from Mrs. Fitzgerald, mother of two daughters, Annie (Nancy for short) & Susan. It was Nancy who wrote to you from N. York. The mother's address is

Mrs. Richard G. Fitzgerald
7 Greenough Avenue
Jamaica Plain Mass

I think this is near Boston & is probably the home to which you were taken. I have written to Mrs. Fitzgerald and told her about you. Your letter answers most of my questions & I will now answer yours. (1) I know nothing of the seal (2) nor do I know anything of the opal or ring. I cannot remember whether my brother wore the opal when he was at Cambridge & I was not there when he died. Lola would have been the only person to deal into his things. I am sorry, but I fear it cannot be remembered.

To turn to the Fitzgeralds again. Miss Ann F. left the address she gave you, in December to take a library job at Mt. Vernon NY where her present address is 9 Madison St. Besides her knowledge of libraries she is a dog person & has two dogs to keep her company, which she has bred herself. There is a married sister, Rebecca, whom I have not seen. The mother & her daughters I saw, when they came once a year & a half ago, to see your grandfather & Lola, when they came to see me. Mrs. F., who wrote to me today for the first time, is daughter of your grandfather's friend Admiral (I think he was Admiral) Wilber. He & his wife were very kind to your grandfather in early days, his best friends in U.S.A. & I believe he was a man of some distinction. Thank you for telling me of the Polarograph & also of your other adventures – marriage and your work. When you speak of your own lab, is it a lab assigned to you for your work in the Research Dept?

I hope your lectures & work for your thesis will prosper & that Alma is able to help you in some of your work. Good luck to you with your thesis. I shall let **your cousin Will Reeve, who is the son of my father's only sister, who sent you the payments from the sum Fred & Janet left you**, all your news. He took me a few weeks ago to dine into one of the old City Companies in London, the Clockworkers, of which he is a member. With all good wishes for 1939.

Yours affectionately
Percy E. Matheson

2/2/1939: to 1933 Calvert St, NW; from 3 Brookside, Headington, Oxford

Dear Harry,

This happens to be your Grandfather's birthday, and there seems a fitness in writing to you today. I write to ask whether you received a draft for 2 £ which I posted to you at Christmas. There was a good old English (and possibly USA) habit of acknowledging receipt of money more or less by return of post, that has its convenience. When I heard of your marriage, even after I had sent my draft, I intended to send another 3£ to make up a more adequate gift on the occasion, but I have been waiting to learn whether you received the earlier draft. Please let me have a card to say whether you received it. I have nothing special to tell you except that on Monday Jan 23rd I became 80. I have had to write a good many letters, in thanks for telegrams, letters and gifts of flowers. I am now expecting a short visit from my niece and goddaughter Marjorie Randle [?]. We are still living in a state of political uncertainty, but hope to avoid war. I think it is certain that the Prime Minister will not make concessions beyond a certain point to have the large majority of our people within Britain support him. Do not think it necessary to write a long letter. With love to you both and all good wishes.

Yours affectionately,
Percy Matheson

2/21/1939: to 1933 Calvert St, NW; from 3 Brookside, Headington, Oxford

My dear Alma,

I shall address my first words at least to you as you were good enough to begin your joint letter of Jan 24 & I hope it will not be the only letter I shall have from you. I now send a draft for 2£, the remainder of my Christmas wedding present you, which was very properly spent on your house equipment. I hope you will not often make such long & harried trips as that to PA, but I have never owned or driven a car & do not understand the demonic force cars seem to exercise over their drivers. There is one at this moment sitting in my garden, driven over this morning from Stublin, the county [?] in [?] near the little town of Warminter, where Champin Russile, who married my wife's sister Isabel (no longer living) lives with his two daughters, Marjorie my goddaughter who drove the car over today, & Pamela, who devotes her life to drawing & the study of birds, which she watches in the Spring up in the ? & Shetland Islands. Marjorie only pays me short visits as she has to run the household & garden & so on at Stublin; she comes from time to time to look after the garden – plant bulbs, order seeds, & generally give directions to my gardener, who comes once a week.

I am now going to address Harry, whose wondrous long letter is full of many matters of interest, chemical & political. **Many thanks for telling me of your adventures with the polarograph & your arrangements with Dr. Werner. I hope in spite of drawbacks you may get your MS thesis done in time.** I did not have the watch cleaned, as I do not consider any Oxford man very good, & I am glad to hear it is in fair condition. It has been kept away from dust & I will not go into the question of 1916 with consequences. It is comparatively easy to invent might-have-beens, & not very profitable & a good deal of your speculation depends on a view of international relations much simpler than the facts warrant. You cannot so simply distinguish when & what from one another. In England the governing class lost as many lives as the governed – from New College 290 men (past & present members) were killed, sons of Peers & commoners of all classes. You may use the language you do about T? S? [Hitler ?] but not of democracies. Wilson & the U.S.A. were hugely responsible for ? ?, & now apparently your Government is inclined to say that they cannot plan for Europe & then stand aloof. I think our fault since 1918 has been partly declining to make concessions to Germany which by the way played [?] & finally failing to keep up our armament. In any case we have a hard time before us & we cannot expect to fill the same place in the world as we have done in the past for many reasons – of which perhaps the greatest is the change in methods of war, & especially the loss of our insular position & the tendency of our population to decline. We shall have to do our best & we rely much on the friendship of U.S.A. I joined an English Speaking [?] Union at your dear mother's request & hope it is doing good work (I am going to a meeting next week).

You will be glad to hear that Francis Price is to be married April 1st to a very clever & agreeable young, Celia Wertroff, who is a qualified medical doctor. He is now a master at University College School, London, in Hampstead & she working in a Childrens Hospital. Best wishes to you for your expected arrival in May! With love to you both.

Yours affectionately
Percy E. Matheson

4/7/1939: to 1933 Calvert St, NW; from 3 Brookside, Headington, Oxford

Dear Fred [clearly a slip] & Alma

I do not think I have answered your capital joint letter of March 3, which was very welcome. I hope you may manage to get your M.S. this year, but you are young & it could not be worth much to over-hurry. All the same good luck to you. I had, like you, a notice of Miss Ann Fitzgerald's wedding, & have written to her & her mother, but I know nothing of her husband or where they are going to live. Thanks for telling me of the work on the platinum metals by Dr. Vickers & dr. Gilcrest (is it a G or a L?), & for your other scientific news. The halt called by Chamberlain in his speech on Poland has met with general satisfaction here, but nobody yet knows whether it will lead soon to war or not. I think the prevailing idea this week is "no", but a sudden fit or the presence of internal events in Germany may precipitate things. At present our defenses against air-raids are very incomplete.

My garden is not a large one, but being on a slope & cut into two sections it looks larger than it is. It is very gay now with daffodils. I was driven last Wednesday to Canterbury to the wedding of Francis Price, a great-nephew. He is the only child of Mabel Harcourt, one of my wife's eight Harcourt nieces, & Willie Price, a former Scholar of New College, who has done a great deal of research in electricity ("sparking" on towers?). It was a very pleasant family gathering. Francis Price is a Master at University College School in Hampstead & is likely to make a grand career for himself as a Schoolmaster. I entertained at tea two days ago a very pleasant young couple from Harvard, Mr. And Mrs. Kelly. He is in the exceptional position, having already a Harvard degree, of working for an honours degree of Oxford in Modern History, & is going back to teach in one of the Academies founded by D. Philips, the one in PA. He is a cousin of the wife of my friend Sir Francis Wylie who was for many years Secretary & Warden of Rhodes House Oxford & in charge of the Rhodes Scholars. He married a very nice American who [?] at Lady Bryant, one of the Women's College here & they have friends all over the English-speaking world. He retired some years ago & has visited USA & also English Dominions. I went away for a week Mar 22-29 to Sidmouth in the county of Devon, but found there cold North and North East winds & only little sunshine. I am going next week to stay with an old pupil & friend, St John Hornby, who is famous as the Editor with his wife, of many beautifully printed hand-made books, of some of which he has kindly given me copies. Good wishes to you both & specially to Alma for the coming event.

Yours affectionately

Percy E Matheson

6/2/1939: to 1933 Calvert St, NW, Washington DC; from 3 Brookside, Headington, Oxford

Dear Harry and Alma

I am afraid I have been slow in thanking you for your last letter, but the last few weeks have been full of incidents, glad and sorrowful. My niece's goddaughter, Marjorie Turnble [?], who was my most frequent visitor here, married an old friend Mr Ellery Sedgwick, former news Editor of the Atlantic Monthly, and has gone to live in Berlin. **The sad news is that on May 17 I had a cable from New Zealand to say that my only surviving brother, William, Always called Will (his full name was William Bromly [?] Matheson died on May 16 after a short illness.** He had been living, after a very hard life as a farmer, at Seatown close to Wellington, the capital in the N. Island. I should not receive any contacts for a week or two. They had two daughters, married, with children, in the S.

Island: they married brothers, called Wardell, and farm in a little county. **An unmarried daughter Elizabeth, a potter, lives in the N. Island** with a farmer's son Jim (James) with children, and two children of a daughter who died, the Poteas. I do not know whether **Annie, Will's wife**, and very able and well woman, will live on alone in Seatown or join one of her children. **Will was 77**, a man very much respected and loved by his friends & a liberal who had to fight what he thought the more fanciful government of the Labour party. He wrote me very good letters pretty regularly and full of interest and good sense. I shall miss them very much. He went to NZ in 1853 and came here to see us only twice.

To turn to your affairs, I hope very much that all has gone well with Alma & am hoping to have news of her soon. I have never seen the Yeoman of the Guard but Gilbert and Sullivan are nearly always delightful. I am glad you use your silver every day. I was wondering whether your thesis has gone in and whether your judges have approved it. My garden has been very gay with tulips but now anemones and peonies and roses are beginning. I joined an English Speaking Union **at your Mother's suggestion**, not vice versa. Yesterday I met at a house-party, a very vehement [?] American, Dr. Willis, Director of (or connected with) the Rockefeller Foundation, who was staying a few days in Oxford. Francis Price is teaching Physics (and other things) at University College School in Hampstead, London, and living near the School. She, being a qualified doctor, is doing half-day work at a Hospital in Fulham, going home about 2 daily. They seem very happy. William Price is his father, about my age but very much of an invalid. With love & good wishes to you both.

Yours affectionately
Percy E. Matheson

I go to Winchester this evening, to attend a meeting of the Warden of Fellows (I'm in the Governing Body) 11:30-3:30 tomorrow. The world on the whole looks a little more peaceful but one dare not prophecy.

8/22/1939: to The Bureau of Standards, Washington DC; from Trevorwerk, Bodendern, Holyhead (There were two letters enclosed.) First letter:

My dear Harry & Alma

I am very sorry that my answer to your good long letter & the many interesting pictures of Elizabeth Jane [I was born 5/24/39 so he means pictures of me] has come so late, but I have been laid up with a bad throat from which I have not yet fully recovered. I congratulate you on the safe arrival of the babe & her flourishing condition & send her my best wishes. I had arranged to spend my holiday with various friends so left home early in August, but a good deal of my time has been spent in bed. I had a few days in the Cotswolds hill country and then came on into N. Wales, a country familiar to me since 1870 and have been staying first at Copley Caring, a village with a very fine view of Sweden, & since this have been into often ? ? ? 89 my sister in law & her daughter Margaret is ? born in Anglia. I am going home tomorrow for a night & then go on to S. Wales – first I stay with a cousin of Aunt Liz's, George ? in ? & then at St. Davids with Sir Wilford Davies the musician & his wife, where I hope to see the former Cathedral for the first time. I am to end my holiday, unless suddenly needed, with a visit at Little Stiether in Shropshire with our cousin Barbara Reeve, whose father Harry knows through business [?]. I am enclosing a separate letter to Harry on his Grandfather, telling him of something I think he ought to hear.

Enough of my affairs. **Now let me congratulate Alma on her baby & the baby's name & Harry on his M.S. degree**, which is very satisfactory. I hope he will not over-tire himself by trying to combine too much society into his domestic & scientific work. I think it is since I last wrote to you that we have lost Aunt Liz's only remaining brother, Brigadier General Bruce, the former organizer of Glunk Society in India & climber [?] of two Himalayan expeditions. He died about a month ago after a short illness. We all miss him very much, for he was a man with strong family affections & an exhilarating companion. His wife died ? young & they had no children.

I fear that before this reaches you that straw-cloud may have burst & we may be in the midst of a great war. It does not look as if Germany were likely to give up her declared purpose (as set out in Hitler's "Mein Kampf") to dominate Europe. We have very difficult days before us. I must not write more now, but when my holiday is over I hope to send a birthday gift for Janet Elizabeth. With much love to your both

Yours affectionately
Percy E Matheson

PS I have had to address this to the Bureau of Standard for, in the press of my travels & my illness, I have earlier mislaid my address-book. Please let me have your address again on a post card.

8/22/1939: Second letter:

My dear Harry,

I want to tell you of something I do not think I have mentioned before, but which I think you ought to know. When your Aunt Janet died it was clear from her Will, leaving all that she had from our Mother thru our savings to her nephews & nieces, that she had not been even as badly off as your Grandfather would be when he retired, or she would have left some part of her property to him instead of leaving all to nephews & nieces. By agreement between Will Reeve & myself we asked the nephews & nieces in N. Zealand if they were willing during your Grandfather's life-time to let their share of their Aunt's bequest go to him instead of to them. This they kindly consented to do & so made his position easier while he lived, though even so he was very badly off. It is possible that I have told you this before, but I think it well that you should know that the young people in N.Z. showed their affection for your Grandfather in this way.

Yours affectionately
Percy E M

1/23/1859-5/11/1946

1946 MONDAY MAY 13

Obituary

MR. P. E. MATHESON

OVER 60 YEARS FELLOW OF
NEW COLLEGE

Mr. P. E. Matheson, M.B.E., who was elected a Fellow of New College, Oxford, in 1881 and became an honorary Fellow in 1942, died at Oxford on Saturday. Since 1925 he had been a Fellow of Winchester.

Percy Ewing Matheson, third son of the Rev. James Matheson, Congregational minister in Nottingham, was born on January 23, 1859, and after six years at the Nottingham High School passed on to the City of London School, then under the inspiring direction of Edwin Abbott, a prince of schoolmasters. Abbott's teaching fell upon fertile soil, for Matheson won a Classical scholarship at Balliol College, Oxford, a success which was in due course followed by first classes in Classical Moderations and *Lit. Hum.* At Balliol Matheson found himself in a brilliant company of undergraduates, including J. W. MacKail and Claude Montefiore, to whom he was linked by ties of enduring friendship. After taking his degree he taught for a time at Fettes, but on being elected to a fellowship at New College in 1881 exchanged school-teaching for a career at Oxford. There, in a college fast outgrowing its long traditions of Wykehamical exclusiveness, Matheson's singular graces of mind and character triumphed over all obstacles. His wide culture, his judgment and ability in affairs, his interest in the furtherance of education both within and without the University, his conspicuous devotion to duty and sympathy with young men made him an invaluable member of an academic society.

The special subject of his Oxford teaching was ancient (mainly Roman) history, but he did a great deal more than prepare men for Greats. For 13 years he was Oxford secretary to the Delegacy for the Inspection and Examination of Schools, a task which involved much close and tedious work; he was afterwards for many years its vice-chairman. Then he was for a time editor of the *Oxford Magazine*, in the days when the pages of that periodical were brightened by the engaging wit of "Q." and "A. D. G." Moreover, he made substantial and long-sustained contribution to the conduct of University business, serving as Senior Proctor in 1895-96, as member of the Hebdomadal Council from 1890 to 1914, and finally as a member of the Statutory Commission for the reform of the University which was set up in 1923. As a delegate of the University Press his wide reading and delicate judgment made him an invaluable adviser in the choice of books, and he took a great interest in the life of the institution and its members. What gave him his special power, both in college and in the University, was his

combination of practical good sense with elevation and disinterestedness of character. Entirely devoid of vanity and *amour propre* he possessed to a high degree the art of putting his brains into the common stock and of contributing to the formation of wise decisions.

Matheson did not confine his interests to the University, for he took part in social and educational work outside it. He served as a guardian of the poor from 1888 to 1905, was a governor of the Royal Holloway College, and in 1912 was a member of the Royal Commission on the Civil Service. During the first two years of the 1914-18 war he did excellent and unobtrusive work in the wages section of the Ministry of Munitions. The Board of Education also made use of his services after the 1914-18 war and persuaded him to go on to the newly founded Secondary Schools Examination Council—a task for which he was especially equipped.

So large a burden of useful practical work, much of it dry and technical, might have depressed a spirit less humane and elastic. But Matheson found time too for literary work. His editions (with Evelyn Abbott) of Demosthenes' "Orations against Philip" and "Speech on the Crown" are widely known, as is his valuable "Skeleton Outline of Roman History." He also published a brilliant series of lectures on "The Growth of Rome." His translation of Epictetus, at once graceful and exact, is generally appreciated by scholars, and during the 1914-18 war he taught himself Russian and even published a translation into English of some choice Russian lyrics which had taken his fancy; in 1926 his translation of Moritz's "Anton Reiser" appeared in the "World's Classics." His other books included "National Ideals" (1915) and "The Life of Hastings Rashdall" (1928). He was a good, quick walker, could sing a capital song, and enjoyed the best music without pretending to classical knowledge. Perhaps his greatest intellectual pleasures were derived from Italy. He loved the country and was never happier than on Italian soil. Naturally he was a member of the Oxford Dante Society.

When the Wardenship of New College became vacant through the retirement of Dr. Spooner, there were many who thought that Matheson might have been chosen to fill the vacancy. His election would certainly have been popular with the University and with generations of old New College men who had profited by his help and had enjoyed the pleasant hospitality which he and his wife were wont to dispense. This, however, was not to be. The choice of the Fellows fell upon H. A. L. Fisher, a younger man who had enjoyed a wider experience of public affairs. Matheson, who was the soul of generosity, accepted the position with characteristic loyalty, and placed his knowledge without reserve at the disposal of the new Warden. Had the vacancy occurred five years earlier, he would most probably have been chosen to preside over the fortunes of the society to whose advancement he had dedicated with such singleness of purpose the powers of his active life. After his retirement he lived at Headington, where he continued his characteristic hospitality to his many friends who had been his colleagues in the University or his pupils.

In 1896 Matheson married the Hon. Elizabeth Fox Bruce, one of the gifted daughters of the first Lord Aberdare. She died in January, 1935.



A. Maarpuit

Tours



Fred and Christabel



Frederick James Matheson
August 1903
(2/2/~1868 - 4/16/1936)

Frederick James Matheson – 2/2/~1868 – 4/16/1936

By Janet Elizabeth Luther (nee Matheson) b. 5/24/1939 – written in May 2008

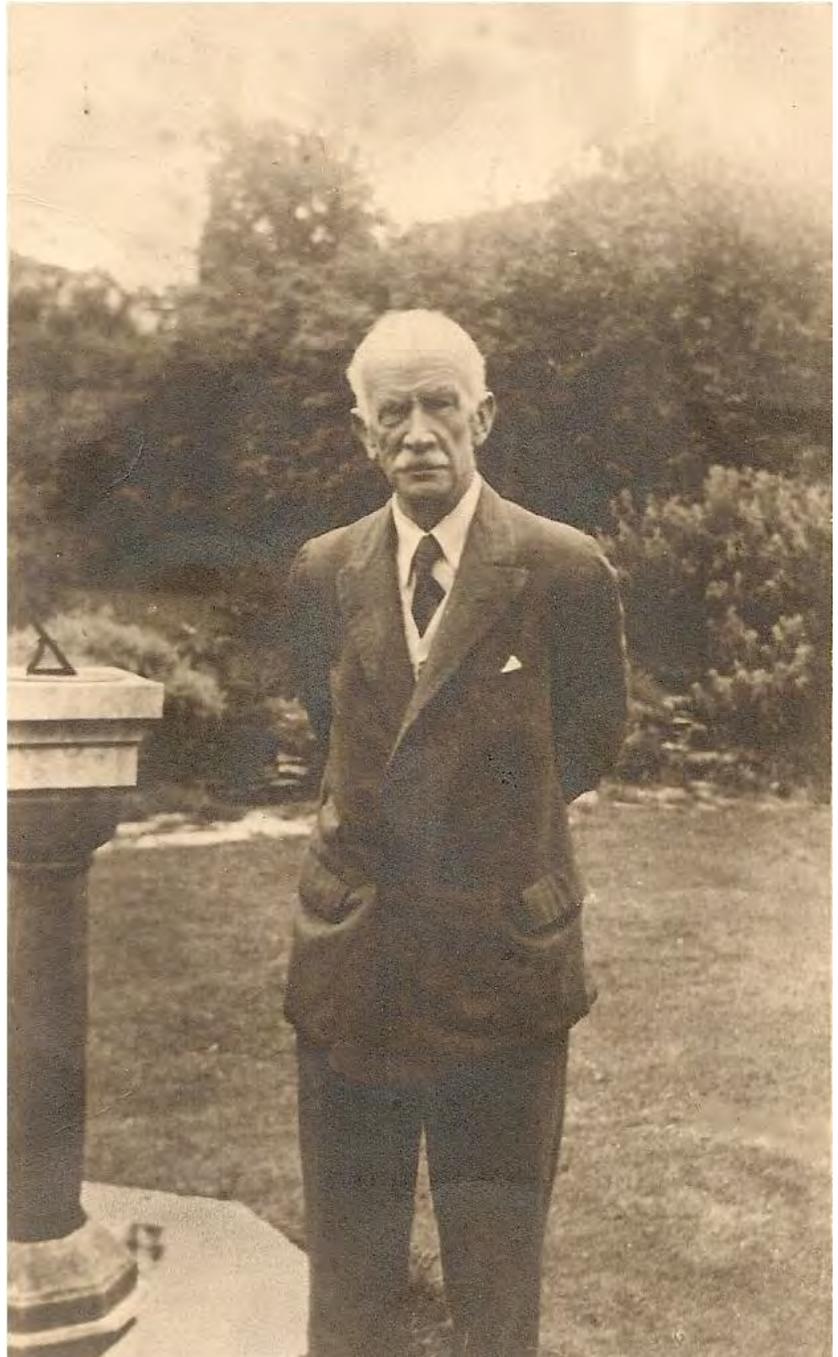
My dad was Harry Matheson (nee Cummings); his mother was Janet Cummings (nee Matheson); her father was Frederick James.

Frederick James Matheson was the youngest son of The Reverend James Matheson, a Congregationalist minister in Nottingham, England. He immigrated to America and worked in engineering in Pittsburgh and St. Louis before becoming a journalist for the New York Herald.

We think he met Mary Christabel Bates in the US. They married in Washington DC and had one daughter, Janet (my father's mother), who was born in Pittsburgh. After Fred began working for the New York Herald the family probably lived in Brooklyn. After divorcing Christabel in 1908 when Janet was 16, Fred moved back to England and lived in Bournemouth, then moved to Cambridge in 1934. He married Helen Chrouschoff (whom he called Lola or Lolla), of a well-known Russian family – family lore has it that she was a floozie. She also worked as a translator; she gave German and French lessons and was teaching herself Spanish.

In 1929 Fred wrote Hal from 52 Broad St in London. Lola and Fred lived at 68 Alumhurst Rd, Bournemouth West in 1931.

Fred must also have worked at the Department of National Insurance because on 10/25/1937 Dad received, from Fred's brother Percy, a note-case which was given to Fred on his retirement. Fred's ashes are scattered in a London rose garden.



Right: Fred Matheson c.1925



Fred and
Christabel
Matheson
circa 1892

This letter dated 4/13/1892 was sent to Frederick James Matheson by Henry M. Earle, a notary public in Washington DC. In it Henry enthusiastically agrees to perform the **marriage ceremony of Fred and Mary Bates. So I think they were probably married in DC on 5/23/1892.** (Janet was born 6/7/1893.)

April 13th, 1892

My dear Fred:-

For some time I have been intending to write to you to congratulate you, on the approaching event, the details of which you mentioned in your letter of the 11th, but I have never in my life been so overworked as during the last 3 or 4 months. I shall be delighted to perform the offices, and services requested, and shall see to it all, so do not give yourself any uneasiness, but depend on me etc. Now you must stay at my home, you can come in when you wish – on the evening of the 22nd – and next P.M. can leave from there etc. You will I insist be more comfortable, and that will give you time to see to anything that you may wish etc. Will expect you.

Miss Carlisle and myself et al are quite enthusiastic over the approaching culmination. From my first acquaintance with s'Mary I appreciated in her a combination of the natural feelings and instincts of a true woman with a force of mind and character that is seldom found. We became further acquainted and now I hope I am counted among her friends – certainly among her admirers. It gives me great pleasure to see her so happy. I know, old fellow, that you are about the happiest man in Penn. – and you ought to be. Mary will be a never failing source of help and happiness to you, and that together you may always enjoy the roses of this life is the sincere wish of

Yrs truly
Henry M. Earle

Do pardon my haste; and if there is anything else that you think of that I can do for you don't hesitate to call on me.



This is a photo of Janet with her parents, Fred and Mary Matheson circa 1900.



Fred Matheson
c 1920

Mary and Fred Matheson
with Janet
~1900



MARY CHRISTABEL MATHESON

VS.

FREDERICK JAMES MATHESON

:
:
:
:
:

C. P. NO. 5

JUNE TERM, 1908

NO. 225. IN DIVORCE.

DEGREE OF DIVORCE A. V. M.

AND NOW, to-wit, NOVEMBER A. D. 1908, the Master's report in the above case having been approved, the final rule granted, and proof of service of final rule submitted, on motion of Joseph Knox Fornance, Esq., attorney for the Libellant, the Court by virtue of the authority vested in it by law, makes the said rule absolute; and decrees that the said Mary Christabel Matheson, the Libellant, and the said Frederick James Matheson, the Respondent be and hereby are divorced from the bonds of matrimony, and all and every the duties, rights and claims accruing to either of the said parties at any time heretofore in pursuance of said marriage, shall henceforth cease and determine, and the said parties shall severally be at liberty to marry again, in like manner as if they had never been married.

And it is further ordered, adjudged and decreed, that the said Frederick James Matheson, the Respondent, pay the costs of this proceedings.

BY THE COURT.

Matheson
vs.
Matheson

Decree of
Divorce A. V. M.



Harry Matheson Cummings (2/20/1912 - 12/5/1977) with his grandfather,
Frederick James Matheson (2/2/? - 4/16/1936)
photo taken ~1913

**Letters from Fred Matheson (2/2/? – 1936) in England, father of Janet Cummings (nee Matheson – 6/7/1892 - 1924); grandfather of Harry Matheson (2/20/12 – 12/7/1977)
Transcribed by Janet Elizabeth Luther (nee Matheson) b. 5/24/1939 beginning in May 2008
I have printed my notes [] and items of particular interest in red.**

St. George's Day (4/23) 1903: from Cambridge to Mrs. Fred. J. Matheson (i.e., Christabel), 9 St. Martin's St., Leicester Square, London, W.C. [Janet was 11 then; I assume Cap was her nanny. Fred and Christabel were still married at this time; they divorced in 1908.]

It is a beautiful day, cool breezes, but bright bursts of sunshine. While I write this I am sitting in "the baths". The air is full of the softened sounds of bells, the cawing of rooks & the gentle music of other birds. Before me are some of the buildings of Trinity College, with a stream between me and them. Behind and around me are acres of close-cropped lawns & trees covered with fresh spring greenery. Adams & Dr. Fletcher (head of a teachers' training college) dined with me last night – at the Bull. We sat & chatted for some time after dinner, then Fletcher went home & I had a sharp constitutional with Adams before bed. I slept very badly, but was up in time to go to breakfast with Adams in his diggings when he called for me at 8:30. He said last night that he would be very glad to return with us for Sunday if it did not crowd us too much. Since then, however, I have learned that I shall have to start from here later on Saturday than I had expected, so I shall give Adams a chance tonight to back out in favor of a later Sunday if he prefer it. Should he come we shall probably reach Liverpool Sta. at 6:22 or 7:20, St. Pancras at 6:15, or King's Cross at 5:55. We should be at least half an hour later in arriving at St. Martin's St. I think, therefore, that with the lateness and uncertainty of the hour, the best plan will be for us to take him to the Boulogne for dinner immediately upon our arrival. I will take & treat you, too, if you like, but I think it would be best to arrange for Janet & Cap to dine at home. I will let you know later, whether he will come & what train is most likely. The train, however, will depend upon how the exhibition goes & I may not be sure of it until I actually reach the station, in which event I doubt whether a telegram would reach you before I did. Many thanks for your wire which I found when I returned to the Bull after lunching with Fletcher. I hope all goes well with you. If Adams should come, he will have to catch an early train back on Monday.

Your devoted Fred

8/29/1903: from 9 St. Martin's Street, Leicester Square, W.C., England to Miss Janet Matheson, c/o Mr. Joseph Cochran, 31 N St NW, Washington DC [Janet was 11 then.]

Dearest Daughter,

It was very jolly to get your letter of Aug. 18, but I am still greedy enough to wish that you would write more than once a month. I am glad you are having such a good time with your roller skates & hope you will continue to like them & won't hurt yourself or become too rough in using them. I do wish I could see you scooting about on them! It's very good to know, too, that you are so happy & are making friends & gaining weight. I am putting in with this some bits of flowers from the Cardsley Cottage Garden, which I think you may like to have. The oak leaf is from that little tree which we transplanted from the path to the bed to the left as you look out of the dining room. The hart's tongue fern leaf is from one of the plants Uncle Leonard sent that we put near the pipe just outside the dining room. They are flourishing finely. The oak tree is about 18 inches tall. The jasmine is from the middle of the right-hand fence & the rose petals are from the plant opposite to it, on the left, which is full of blooms. The blue flower is, I think, called purple honesty & comes from the bed under the front window. The whole place was in a great tangle, but the things had grown enormously. Flossie saw me & ran out to enquire for you & to send her love.

Oceans of love from

Your devoted Dad,
Fred J. Matheson

9/12/1903: from 9 St. Martin's Street, Leicester Square, W.C., England to Miss Janet Matheson, c/o Mr. Joseph Cochran, 31 N St NW, Washington DC [Janet was 11 then.]

Dearest Daughter,

The time goes by, & still I have no letter from you. I don't think it's a bit kind! There is just a chance that I may pack the whole Andrews family in here for November & December! It will be great fun if I can manage it & it will be specially jolly to have the two children about. This is a splendid sunny day, but quite cold & suggestive of winter. We have not had much summer, but you seem to have had too much. I was looking at the birds in St. James's Park the other day. They seem very much the same as when we used to feed them. Have you any pets?

Very much love, Sweetheart,

from Your devoted Dad,
Fred J. Matheson

4/30/1919: from Brook House, Francis St., London W.C.1 England to Christabel:

Dear Christabel,

Just after I had registered a letter to Janet today, I received your long & interesting undated letter on ancestral research. I have not yet had time to read the package, but shall enjoy doing so. I will do what I can to have the matter looked up as promptly as possible, but I fear that it may be some time before I can send you any definite information. I will also try to get you a copy of Moore's "Death & Life of Lord Edward Fitzgerald" which you say was first published in 1831. It may be that the name of the publisher & the place of publication would help to trace it. I wish I had a clearer memory of the story of your ancestor, but the package will probably enable me to get, or to try to get, just what you want. I shall probably put the matter into the hands of a friend (who is, curiously enough, herself a Mrs. C. la Parker) who has done a good deal of research of that kind, on a professional basis. I fear that my knowledge of Janet's ancestors is very vague, but I will see what I can do towards constructing a tree for her. I thank you for your news of her & Hal. I am very glad to hear of Uncle Tom's prosperity.

Friendly greeting from
Yours, F. J. Matheson

2/8/1924: two letters to Hal for his 12th birthday, one from Lola and one from Fred, from Westwood, Gregorys Road, Beaconsfield, England to Mrs. Janet Matheson, 412 East 50th St, New York City, NY

My dearest Hal,

Many happy returns of the day & may we spend some of your birthdays together. I wish you every sort of happiness & success & most of all health. We are busy getting the garden tidy. Do you know that we have done away with the beds on the lawn & have sown grass there as we found they were not pretty. So when you come you must choose another bed.

I am teaching French to a col. of small children who are all very keen to learn. How is your French? Andrew is now at Oxford & I only see him in the holidays. His father is going to America. I think we shall all go soon for life here is rather difficult.

Much love to you, dear.

Yours very affectionately Lola

Dear Hal,

I am writing this to wish you a very happy birthday and very many happy returns of it. Twelve is a great age and you must be a really big person by now. I am sending a present which I hope may take the form of a loose-leaf stamp album, if you have not got one, or of some other book or thing that you want. I expect you have forgotten that I have not had a letter from you since I last wrote and that I have not had a word from you since Christmas. I think that you are a piglet not to write more! I wonder whether there is any boxing at your school? Andrew is very keen about it and hopes that he will be one of those chosen to box for his school in a match which they are to have with another school. But he is very keen about all games. This term he is mostly playing hockey. I wonder what you are reading and what you are doing just now in the way of games. You would not know this road, there are so many more houses on it than when you were here. We have

them very close to us on each side now, and I do not like it a bit. Flowers are just beginning to come out. Besides yellow jasmine there are a few polyanthus and snowdrops and winter aconites. Lots of other bulbs are shooting up leaves, but it will be some time yet before they bloom. I am sorry to say that a mole has begun to raise hills on the lawn again. I had hoped that we had killed them all. It does not seem to be much use to ask you questions as I sent a whole lot in my last letter and you have not written since! Lots of love to you from

Your old granddad F. J. Matheson

12/9/1924: from 52 Broad St, Bloomsbury, London W.C.2, England to Harry Matheson, c/o Mrs. C. Cummings, 1501 West Allegheny Ave, Philadelphia, Pa. [Dad was 12, and Janet had died 9/10/1924]

Dear Hal,

By this post I am sending you a little book called "The Path of the King" by John Buchan, which I enjoyed reading and which I hope that you will like. You will see that it finishes in America after adventures in many places in different ages. I am also enclosing a note for a pound for you to buy some little present from me or put in the bank or whatever you like. I wish that I could make it more. We have had so much sadness lately that I cannot hope that you will have a "very merry" Christmas, but I do wish you a great deal of happiness, and I really think that you will find that in being the comfort you can be to Grannie. Poor Grannie, she has had, and is having, a worse time than any of us. It seems centuries since I saw you, and yet actually it is less than four months. [I guess this means that Dad had visited Fred in England in August of 1924.] I wonder whether Luigi will be with you either in Philadelphia or New York for Christmas. [I guess "Luigi" is Janet's second husband, presumably Luigi Di Fant.] I do hope that it will be possible for you to be together. If you can manage to make time to write to me, I should like very much to hear what you are doing and thinking. I don't want to lose touch with you and it is difficult to write unless you tell me about yourself now that Darling Mother cannot do it. Still, I don't want to be a nuisance but only wish that you could feel like writing. Are you still very keen about wireless? How do you like being a day-boy instead of a boarder at school, and how do you like the school itself? Are you above or below the average age of the boys in your class? What is your place in the class? How are you getting on with the Scouts? I hope you like being a Scout? These are a few of the things that I should like to know and anything more about yourself that you care to tell me. Have you been reading any really interesting stories? I have been re-reading a lot of Kipling and am still doing so. I wonder if you still have the knife in working order? I send you a lot of love and friendliest greetings and best wishes to Grannie from

Your loving granddad Fred Matheson

I suppose you are keeping the name Matheson?

52 Broad St.,
London, W.C.2.
England.

Tuesday - 15/2/27.

~~WESTWOOD,
GREGORYS ROAD,
BEACONSFIELD.~~

Dear Hal,

Very many thanks for your jolly letter. You certainly scored by writing while I still owed you a letter. But it strikes me as an odd coincidence that you should have happened to choose to write on the very day on which I was writing to you, especially as there was no particular significance about Feb. 2 for you. I hope that by now you have received my birthday wishes and the present posted that day.

There must be a lot of "hot stuff" about the Academy to have had those two fires so near together, and I am wondering when you will get the third to which you seem to be looking forward with great cheerfulness.

I am glad that you did so well in the examinations. What you tell me about the teaching staff is very interesting, though I imagine that they would hardly regard your descriptions as flattering. You tell me that the highest marks possible for deportment was 90; was it 100 in all the other subjects? What is a "Mardian"? You say that your French teacher speaks English like one. Does it mean a Martian, an inhabitant of Mars? You say that your History teacher is C.O. Does that mean that he is Commanding Officer?

I am still plugging away at cutting up the big tree at week-ends, but I don't seem to make any very great difference in its appearance. It is a long business.

When is your next vacation, and how long do you get?

I used to like Algebra, especially the problems.

We are having rotten weather here, with more than the usual allowance of fogs, and everything in the garden is very late.

Lots of love. Write soon.

Your loving grandad.

J. Matheron

1/30/29 – from Lola at De Vere Residential Club, 7. De Vere Gardens, Kensington W.8:

My dearest Hal, Many happy returns of your Birthday [Dad was 17 on 2/20/29.] & may the future hold every good thing for you. I am sure you will know how to set about winning material happiness & all that a courageous spirit can give, but the gods do have to be propitiated for they can be very tiresome in great things & small. Personally I have a little Imp who hides my things in a most reprehensible manner. No, it is not untidiness; it is the malice of Alf (that is his name). The Irish know all about this sort of creature & say that it is the result of boredom & if you tie a string to a chair leg, so that it will have something to play with, it will not hide your studs or nail scissors or the letter with that important address on it! Well, Hal dear, I do hope that your Alfs will be content to play with string & will not torment you with serious trouble. Troubles you will have, of course, but the son of your dear mother should know how to meet & overcome them.

I send you much love. Lola [note that she signed this and spells it with only one "l"]

1/31/1929 : from 52 Broad St., London, England to Mr. Harry Matheson, c/o Mrs. C. Cummings, 1104 Vermont Ave, Washington DC - forwarded to the La Salle [Harry was 17 then.]

Note that there are two 1/31 letters: part of one to Chris and one to Hal

Candy factory was over

52 Broad St.,
London, WC2,
England.

Thursday-31/1/29

Dear Chris,

Thank you very much for your letter of New Year's eve. I have it before me now, so you will understand that it accounts for what I am writing and the order in which the things are written.

Leonard died on Nov. 19, 1927. I sent word to Hal at the time, but he perhaps forgot to tell you. As you say nothing about Lily, you may not have heard from him of her death on April 6 last year. It was because of the break-up of their home caused by her death that sister Janet let their little house at Bournemouth and went on her visit to Will's family. He and Annie have just settled in a house at Wellington, as he has given up his farm, having just enough to live on. Percy was seventy a few days ago. He has given up his work at New College, and has a little house at Headington, just outside Oxford. He did a long biography of a friend last year which was very well reviewed, and he has much more youthfulness and vigor than I have.

I wish that I could help you with Hal, but it is impossible. Next Monday I begin my last year at the office, and owing to the late date at which I entered the service, my pension, which depends upon the number of years served, will amount to only about twenty dollars a week, which is hardly enough for us to live on in these days of high prices. When I took the job, I knew that the pension would be small, but we counted upon Lolla's income, all of which vanished with the Russian revolution, while there were innumerable demands upon her from starving relatives whose losses had been even greater. I shall, therefore, have to look for work, and that will not be at all easy to find at my age, especially as civil service work has not given me or enabled me to retain, many connections with the business world.

I think that it is a great shame that Raymond should do nothing for his son.

I congratulate you very warmly on the success of your studio work, and am only sorry that it should be such a strain on you. Were you swindled out of all your interest in the sweet factory?

I am of course intensely interested.

I am not seriously worried.

I think that he

of

"Sister Janet" probably means Fred's sister Mary Janet.

My mother, Alma, had written at the top "candy factory was over".

I think that Christabel and her second husband,

Edwin (Ted) Clinton Cummings (1882-1924),

had at one time owned a candy factory in New York City

52 Broad St.,
London, WC2,
England.

Thursday-31/1/29.

Dear Hal,

This ought to arrive in very good time to give you my best wishes for your birthday and many happy and prosperous years to follow it. The enclosed fifteen dollars are a present from Lolla and me which we think that you may like to spend on a tennis racket. You can, however, of course, do exactly what you like with it, and it seems likely that you will not have time for much tennis with the work that you are doing in addition to your schooling. I wanted to let you have it last summer, but could not manage it then.

I was very glad to get your letter of Dec.30. It had been a long time since I had had any news of you. Your work sounds very thrilling and I hope that it will continue to interest you and lead to something profitable for you. I am not quite clear just what you are doing for Dr.Jenkins : i.e. whether you earn your money by actual constructive work for him, or whether you are helping him in general ways. I have not yet seen any samples of television, but it sounds very interesting for you to be able to pick up broadcast pictures in your own home. Please let me know how you and the work get on, as it is very tantalising to know nothing of what you are doing for a long time at a stretch. I should think that your outside work must make it pretty hard to have any time or energy left for classwork and preparation.

I have asked my friend to send the watch to you, so you ought to get it very soon after this reaches you. I hope that it will continue to go all right in your keeping, and that it may serve you well for many years. You will see that if you want to set the hands it is necessary to open the face of the watch and push the hands round, but they should be moved only in the direction in which they normally travel.

We astonished the publisher by letting him have the translation before the date at which we had promised completion, and he too was very prompt, as he sent off his cheque on the very day that he received the manuscript. We are hoping that we shall get some more work for him, as he seemed very pleased with our stuff, but of course he will wait to see how this book goes commercially before he tries any more by the same author.

Do you still take an interest in stamps ?

My fingers are still pretty bad, but they are improving ~~xxxx~~ by reason of daily treatment to which I have been driven though it is both tiresome and expensive.

We had a pleasant five days with uncle Percy at Christmas, though we spent a good deal of our time over the translation.

Much love, and the best of wishes from

Your affectionate granddad,

J. M. Watson

5/13/1929 : from 52 Broad St., London, England to Mr. Harry Matheson, c/o Mrs. C. Cummings, 1104 Vermont Ave, Washington DC - forwarded to the La Salle [Harry was 17 then.]

52 Broad St.,
London, WC2.

Monday-13/5/29.

Dear Hal,

I wonder whether you ever received the fifteen dollars I sent to you at the end of January, and grandfather's gold watch which was forwarded to you by my friend? I hope that you did, but I think that you ought to have sent a line of acknowledgement, though I can fully understand that you do not find letter-writing easy with all the many claims on your time. Still, I do like to hear from you, and I hope that you will manage to let me have some news of you before very long.

I am going tonight to join Lolla on the coast of France, where she is staying for a while to save money, at the cheap place which we discovered last year, and where I shall be for a holiday until June 24. The address is

L'Abbaye,
St. Jacut de la Mer,
Bretagne,
Côtes du Nord,
France.

I shall be thinking of you specially on June 7.

How goes Television? Are you still working at it?

"The Love of Jeanne Ney" is to be published over here about the end of June, and Doubleday is to publish it in America in the Fall. That is the Russian novel which Lolla translated.

Alfred Thomas, the youngest of Frances (born Walker) Thomas's three sons, is to be married in July, and after the wedding, his mother and father are coming over to England with their daughter, Betty, so I am looking forward to seeing them, though they do not expect to reach London until September.

As the French government has had a panic about a slight outbreak of smallpox in England, I have had to be vaccinated, and have had a very bad time over it, from which I have not yet entirely recovered.

Give my greetings to your grandmother, and do let me hear from you when you can manage it.

Your affectionate granddad,

Harry Matheson

9/16/1929: from 52 Broad St., London WC1, England to Mr. Harry Matheson, c/o
Mrs. C. Cummings, 2204 Vermont Ave, Washington DC - forwarded to the La Salle

52 Broad St.,
London, WC2,
England.

Monday-16/9/29

Dear Hal,

It is so long since I have heard from you that I am inclined to wonder whether you are still at the same address in Vermont Avenue? I have not had any letter from you since you wrote Dec.30, though I sent you fifteen dollars for your birthday since then as well as arranging for you to have my grandfather's gold watch, and you have not let me know whether you have received them. I also wrote to you on May 13 last. I know that it is hard for you to write when your time is very fully occupied with work, but you really ought to acknowledge gifts, and I do like to know what you are doing. I think that if you realised how much I enjoy hearing from you, you would perhaps make a special effort to send me word of your doings from time to time.

Sister Janet will soon be home from her visit to New Zealand. One of Uncle Will's daughters, Marjorie, has just recently died, five days after giving birth to her third child.

For some reason best known to the publisher, and not communicated by him to us, "The Love of Jeanne Ney" has not yet appeared, but we are expecting it to come out any day now. It is to be published in America by Doubleday.

I hope that your Grannie continues to prosper in her art work. Dr. Thomas, his wife, his daughter Betty and his son Harry are still in England and we enjoyed seeing something of them when they were in London.

We also have had glimpses of Sarah Walker and of Nancy Fitzgerald, who were travelling separately from the Thomases and from one another. ~~For these~~ reasons of cheapness and for the sake of my fingers, which suffer severely in cold weather, we have decided to live in the south of France, somewhere in the region known as Provence. We intend to go to look for a place to make our home, when I have to quit work at the end of next January.

Are you still working with Dr. Jenkins at Radiovision .? How are things going with you in general ?

I shall be very glad to hear from you when you can manage to write, and I do hope that I shall get a letter before very long. Give my greetings to your Grannie. Lolla and I both send love to you

Your affectionate granddad,

H. Matheson

3/13/1930: from 52 Broad St., London, WC2, England [the “old address”; they are in Monaco] to Mr. Harry Matheson, Apt. 205, 1028 Connecticut Ave, Washington, DC

Dear Hal,

I have put the old add[ress] at the top of this, because our movements are still very uncertain & it will be safest to use that for forwarding. Thank you very much for your letter, postmarked Washington Feb. 27, which reached me at Monaco yesterday. We went from Avignon to Antibes (between Cannes & Nice) until we came to Monaco last Monday. We were very unlucky in our weather at Antibes, as we had a lot of rain & cold wind. But we also had enough sunshine to make us realize what a lovely place it is with its twin (on the other side of a long peninsular) Juan les Pins. A very pleasant feature of our time there was an Anglo-American circle of people interested in books & who were very kind to us & anxious that we should settle there. They included two daughters of the Santa Fe R.R. President, one of whom has wintered at Antibes for three years. But unfortunately we found nothing to rent within our means & even if we could find a tiny villa or flat by waiting, the cost of living is said to be even higher there than in other parts of the Riviera. We have been much disappointed in the high prices for everything in this region & have about decided that we shall have to go to Brittany, where we know that things are cheaper, in the hope that the winter climate would be mild enough for me there with ease. Brittany, too, would have the further advantages of being free from the excessive summer heat & the pest of mosquitoes which are drawbacks of the Riviera, & the great merit of being much nearer to England & therefore more accessible for our friends. We shall, however, very likely go from here to Antibes for a month or so of sun-soaking before we make our way to St. Jacut de la Mer. **By now, I feel sure that you will have heard from the lawyer about your inheritance. He is my first cousin – the son of my father’s only sister - & was a great favourite of your Mother’s. I wonder what you will decide about the interest on the money for the next three years. [Probably a reference to the fact that Dad will be 21 in three years.]** I hope that you may feel included & able to let it accumulate, as it would be an excellent thing to have as good a nest egg in reserve at the beginning of a provision for the old age which must now seem very distant to you. But, of course, if the interest would help you to Annapolis or any other course of professional or technical training, it might be wise to use it for that. Meanwhile, **I congratulate you on being self-supporting with your \$20 a week job;** though I gather that that is only temporary? I need hardly say that all your doings interest me very much, & that I love to get your letters. I do not wonder that some of your friends are envious of my being in France, but it is one thing to be here on a visit, & quite another to have a feeling of exile when one has no prospect of returning to the land of most of one’s friends & earliest associations. It is good to hear of your determination to come over here again, but I imagine that will not be for some years, when you have made such a start as will enable you to meet the expense out of income. Still, some of my young friends have found the tourist third-class accommodation quite tolerable, & even good fun, for so short a voyage. Bess, who was at school in England & was a friend of your Mother’s while living with **Uncle Leonard & Aunt Mabel, & her sister Molly (two of Uncle Will’s daughters from New Zealand)** are now on their way for a visit to England, but it is very doubtful whether I shall see them. I speak French very little & very badly but am trying to improve under Lolla’s tuition, her French being perfect. With a view to practice, I am

reading nothing but French & it sets Lolla's teeth on edge to hear my accent when I read aloud in order to have it corrected. I have not yet been into the Casino at Monte Carlo, where the gaming tables are, but I shall try my luck there in a small way before I leave here, though I do not expect much of it. There are three main parts to the tiny independent Principality of Monaco. There is the old capital built on a rock which can be climbed only from one side. That is called Monaco, like the Principality as a whole. It is a quaint mixture of ancient & modern, the modern buildings including a cathedral & a handsome marine museum with a very fine aquarium. It has beautiful gardens on the rocky cliffs full of weird cactuses & other African growths with also lovely views of the Mediterranean & of the square harbour below its steep rock with yachts lying at anchor, some of them from New York. The big square outside the Palace, & the general aspect of the place is a kind of cross between a fairy story & comic opera. Across the harbor, with the two little piers which protect it, rises the hill on which Monte Carlo is built with its Casino. Between the two, on low ground, comparatively level, between the sea & the amphitheatre of hills which form the background of the whole, is La Condamine, in which lies our Pension. There is really a fourth part, which has no particular name, on the rising ground behind La Condamine & Monte Carlo, up to the boundary between the Principality of Monaco & France. Beyond the boundary behind Monte Carlo, is a new suburb, which is in France, called Beau Soleil. But this is all a bit complicated & will not interest you much. Besides, I have written more than enough to bore you in one letter. I am glad that you can give such a good account of Grannie. [This is Christabel Cummings, Fred's first wife. They divorced in 1908.] Give her a friendly greeting from me. I am much better & my fingers are giving me less trouble since I left England so the change or the rest, or both must have been good for me in spite of the vagaries of the weather. Still, I cannot get my weight up, & am only 143 pounds in my clothes! There are an awful lot of wrecks here, & I should hate to feel that I was really one of them. Lolla joins me in sending much love to you. Do write again as soon as you can manage it.

Your affectionate granddad,

Fred Matheson

4/27/1930: from L'Abbaye, St. Jacut de la Mer, Bretagne C. du N. to Mr. Harry Matheson, 1636 19th St, Washington D.C. [I think this was Dad's first apartment on his own. In 1930 he was 18.]

Dear Hal, Please note the above address as permanent, i.e., I think it will be a life sentence. Very many thanks for your excellent letter of Apr 12, which reached me here today. You do not say anything about having moved, but I think you must have done so because you wrote on your envelope the address which I am putting on mine to you. I hope this will duly reach you. Please let me know whether I should treat it as permanent? I am sorry that I did not manage to pick up more Monaco stamps, but I enclose the few I have, as well as two or three pre-revolutionary Russian stamps, which ought to be fairly rare. I am glad that you have heard from Will Reeve (there is no s at the end of his name) & hope that you have replied to him telling him to re-invest the interest. I congratulate you on the result of your exam. I hope that you have linked up with Dr. Dallinger, as that seems to be more in your special line, & I am quite sure that there is nothing like sticking to the same sort of thing, if one can manage it, in these days of specialization. I am much struck by your ability to tackle such varied jobs, but it will certainly pay you best to keep right on in the one direction if only you can so arrange, even if you do not earn quite so much in the meantime. It is a sample of the difference in the costs of living in the two countries to learn that you cannot live on more than half what Lolla & I have to make do for the two of us! I shall be very eager to learn the result of your interview with Dr. Dallinger & what happened at the end of your three months' temporary appointment? So do write soon. Lolla & I both very much enjoy your letters. Did I tell you that Hugh Piviere painted a very good life-size half-length portrait of me just before I left England? He had intended to send it to this year's Academy, but he decided that it was too good for that, & is sending it instead to the Royal Society of Portrait Painters. I do not know when their show opens. What do you do in the Glee Club? Sing or play, & what voice or instrument? [Dad sang bass, although I don't know about this Glee Club.] You were very lucky to get off with such slight personal damage from your motor smash. Did the insurance cover the cost of the new car? I will remember "Brothers", but I fear there is very little chance of my seeing it in this remote spot, as there is no cash for fares even by train or bus, to say nothing of planes. We decided that the Riviera was a washout financially & economically, & came here about three weeks ago. It is cheap, we know the cost, it is near England & these are kind folk at hand in case of illness. Our friend Mrs. Gilmour is staying here. One of her sons came over for Easter, & her husband is coming for Whitsuntide. Greet your Grannie for me. Lots of love from Lolla & from

Your grand-dad, Fred Matheson

6/8/1930: one letter from Lola at L'Abbaye, St. Jacut and one from Fred at La Rue Eternel, Auray, Bretagne, Morbihan, France to Mr. Harry Matheson, 1636 19th St, NW, Washington D.C.

Dearest Hal,

There is nothing at all to write about in a place like this & I am writing, not to amuse you or interest you, but to show you that I think of you & like to keep in touch with you.

I suppose you know all that has happened to us lately: the Great Retirement; the starting off to find a nice climate; the Complete Failure in the south; the Despair; the trek to Brittany; the decision to settle here & the disappointment at not fitting the rooms we desired & so another move on.

I ought really to have waited for the move on before writing to you. It might have provided something less dull as subject. But we may not like the new place & then I should only want to grouse. So perhaps sun is shining & hopes are high with regard to South Brittany. We have always wanted to see it & especially Carnac which is an alignment of nearly 3000 members – said to be pagan warriors turned to stone because they wanted to disobey a missionary saint. But surely 3000 warriors would not be required to kill one poor little saint, nor would they stand in a line which extends over 2 miles in length? Still, it is the nicest explanation & I think I shall adopt it & reject the more matter of fact notions about the members being grave stones or a sort of monumental sun dial.

We leave here on Thursday, early in the morning & we shall stay at another convent. In fact, before the summer is over I imagine we may sample quite a number of French convents. I only hope we shall get some more lovely names like the Pere Eternel. How nice to remark: I am going to the Eternel Father & then reassure your heirs that you are not under sentence of death. There are some names I won't accept, however. If we find a nice convent called Our Lady of Sorrow I shall refuse it for I have had enough of sorrow to last my time.

I am deeply interested in your doings, Hal dear, & I foresee a great future for you. I do hope you will be able to come to Europe soon – we should so like to have a glimpse of you.

Muchest love, dear, from Lola

Dear Hal, Usually our one mail a day reaches us soon after eleven in the morning, but if there are any surcharged letters they are held over until the directrice has a chance to collect from the addressee whatever may be due. That was how it happened that your letter post-marked May 27 did not reach us until the evening of your Mother's birthday. There has been the same coincidence before, & I cannot help wondering whether, when you posted it, you had any idea that it would actually reach me on June 7. Anyway, it was very welcome & none the less so for coming at the end of a day in which your Mother & you had been specially in my mind. You ask about the postage: It is five cents. I think that England is the only country on this side of the Atlantic to which you can send a letter for two cents. (That is probably because two cents is the rate from Canada.) It was because the rate to France is five cents that I suggested that you should put on 5 cts for letters sent via England, so that they could be forwarded without surcharge. I am still at the Abbaye, but we go next Thursday to the above address, where we shall probably stay till Sept & then return here to settle down for the winter & for good. There is a tremendous demand for rooms here in July & August, so that more than a thousand applications for that period are turned down every year. The booking is very primitive & is largely carried in the head of the somewhat wonderful sister who is the Directrice of the Abbaye. She has been very ill since we arrived & that was partly the cause of the misunderstanding by which – to our surprise – we found that we could not get for the summer any rooms that Lolla thought good enough. It was only just before Lolla had planned to go to London to arrange for the shipment of some of our things to make our two rooms more homelike that we discovered the mistake. So Lolla did not go & we decided to see something of other parts of Brittany. The place to which we are going is on the Western coast of Brittany. Here we are on the North coast. Le Pere Eternel is the

very appropriate name of a convent where the nuns take a few boarders to eke out their expenses. It is even cheaper than this & we hear that it is a little less primitive. Auray is close to Carnac which is famous for its line of huge prehistoric stones; there are more than 2,000 of them, all brought from a long distance. It is, like Stonehenge, attributed to the worship over which the Druids presided, about which archeologists still know very little & will probably never know more. The stones are supposed to have been transported & arranged between 4,000 & 5,000 years ago. I have always wanted to see Carnac & there are other interesting things in that region, so we shall probably enjoy our change. The only drawback is the disappointment of not being able to settle down for good & get our own things around us. We may find something more attractive than this as a permanent resting place while we are away, but the chances are that we shall come back here. Mrs. Gilmour, who has been here all the time that we have, is going back to London tomorrow with her husband, who came last Wednesday for Whitsuntide. We are having real hot summer weather now, though there are still cold winds from time to time. From what you tell me of your plans, I am afraid that you are not getting away this summer? But I do hope that you will manage to get away somewhere somehow. If you do not write before August it might be safest to use the 52 Broad St., WC2, address, though I shall of course leave addresses for forwarding wherever I go. Uncle Percy, now past 70, was recently knocked down by a motorcycle, but he seems to have suffered very little from shock or otherwise, although they had to use eight stitches to sew up his cuts. Your tests sound very interesting & I should think that they must have considerable commercial value. I should very much like to hear about the July shake-up as soon as possible, so as to know whether you will be affected by the changes as you expect. It certainly looks very promising & it would be fine if you were able to take the G. W. course at the same time, as you suggest. I hope you haven't had any more of the skin trouble? Is it a sort of rash? What is supposed to cause it? Did your three months temporary appointment count towards the six months probationary period? Am I right in thinking that the G. W. University is at Georgetown? What sort of subjects shall you have to take, & what degree or diploma comes at the end of it? Do you have to do any languages, literature, history & that sort of thing? Or is it all science, mathematics, physics, mechanics, chemistry, electricity & technical subjects? Does the course include any practical work in laboratories or workshops? I believe you once told me that you did not mind how many questions I asked, so you see I am sending a good many because the more I know about your doings & yours likes & dislikes the nearer I shall get to knowing you, & I fear that there is not much chance of my seeing you, because I don't feel as though I should be likely to last long enough for you to be able to afford the journey even as a tourist student, which is how the Fitzgerald girls travel & find it quite comfortable. Their mother was Susan Walker, sister of Frances Walker, who is now Mrs. Thomas. We are hoping this Fall to get a glimpse of my nieces Bess & Molly, daughters of my brother Will in New Zealand, who have had a present of a visit to England made to them by relations there. They are now in England & hope to give us a look at the beginning of August on their way back from a trip to Switzerland. Are you keeping up any of your music? I am sorry that I have no better stamps to send this time. My friends have not been considerate enough to have got to the right places. I have come to the conclusion that all places are alike for my fingers provided that the cold is not too severe. I am quite conscious of them even in this hot weather & have not dared to bathe yet. The bad circulation makes me short of breath too. Still, I manage to carry on & get some mild pleasure out of life. Now that you have a room "on your own", where do you get your meals? Still with Grannie? But I suppose not, as you say that you don't always have time to see her. It is horrid to think of having our very miscellaneous luggage to pack up again before next Thursday, but we can't help it as we had such varied clothing to bring under the conditions of our leaving England & with all kinds of weather before us. Write soon. Lots of love from

Your devoted granddad, Fred J Matheson

2/13/31: from Hotel des Thermes Romains, Amélie les Bains, Pyranées Orientales, France to
Mr. Harry Matheson, 2025 H Street, NW, Washington, DC

Hotel des Thermes Romains,
Amélie les Bains,
Pyrennées Orientales, France.

Friday-13/2/31.

Dear Hal,

I fear that this will be a day or two late for your birthday, but it will at least show you that I was thinking of you, with my best wishes, at this time. I have been meaning to write for some days, but I am still only convalescent after three weeks in bed, so that letterwriting, like most other things, is somewhat of an effort. After nursing Lolla through an attack of flu, I was thoroughly exhausted and took to bed myself with an attack of bronchitis which turned to pleuresy with very high temperatures which made them afraid that I was going to die. We were fortunate in getting a really good doctor, and, still more, in the devoted day and night nursing which good friends gave me, Lolla not being fit at that time to do much for me. As soon as I was able to travel, the doctor advised us to come here as not subjected to such sudden changes of temperature as we had experienced at Montpellier. We were very sorry to leave our friends, but we are more comfortable and better fed here than we were there. I do not think, however, that we are likely to stay here very long, so you had better note, as our permanent address for forwarding,

c/o Lloyds Bank, PennRd. Branch, Beaconsfield, Bucks, England.

It is better to use a fivecent stamp on letters intended for forwarding to France, but it does not really matter very much/. I think that Lolla sent you a note to tell you that I was ill, but I am a bit vague as to what happened in those days. Our friend Mrs. Gilmour came out from England to join us just before we left Montpellier, and is with us here. It is uncertain where we shall go next, but it seems probable that we shall have a night or two at Bordeaux on our way to Arcachon/, just S.W. of that port on the Atlantic coast of France. Here we are only a few miles back from the Mediterranean, near the S.W. corner of France and close to the Spanish border. The air here is bracing, and though we are only about six hundred feet (no, eight hundred) feet above sea level, we are surrounded by mountains, some of which are about seven thousand feet in height and snow-covered at their summits.

The country is very beautiful, and there are lots of good walks, but unfortunately most of them involve more climbing than our hearts will let us undertake.

Our plans are somewhat fluctuating, and will depend a bit upon what the doctors advise, but it seems likely that we shall go from Arcachon to North Brittany and try to find some corner near St. Malo which will enable us to come to rest for a time.

It is just possible that we, or at least Lolla, will be able to make a short visit to England some time this Spring. But that is one of our many uncertainties.

Did you get your money all right from Will Reeve ? How goes the work, at office and college ? Any changes to report ? I think that this is about all that I can manage now. I shall be more than glad to get a letter when you can manage to write. Lolla joins in sending much love and best wishes.

Your affectionate Granddad,

Ed Matheson

11/17/1931: from 68 Alumhurst Rd, Bournemouth West, England to Mr. Harry Matheson, 2029
Allen Place NW, Washington DC

68 Alumhurst Rd.,
Bournemouth West.

Tuesday-17/11/31.

Dear Hal,

It is always a great pleasure to hear from you, but your letter of Nov. 3 was specially welcome, because it brought such good news of the progress which you are making. I am proud of you and congratulate you on the way in which you are "sticking to it". You must indeed be kept very busy, and that makes it all the kinder of you to find time to write to me. Good luck to you with the rest of your subjects, and specially with the calculus, which is a ripsnorter in the concentration that it demands.

I think it was jolly good to be able to have your tonsils removed with so little fuss and interference with your work. I hope that by now you are feeling all the better for the operation, and that you are finding your new quarters comfortable and convenient. Do you go out for all your meals? How much do you see of Grannie? Give her my greeting when you next see her.

I wonder what you will be doing on Thanksgiving? Have you any special chums? You do not tell me what you did with your leave this summer? I hope that you got a decent holiday of some sort.

Who is "the Boss"? Is it your office chief or the man who is teaching you? Whichever he is, I am very glad that he is such a good fellow, and I should like to hear more about him, when you can make time. I take it from what you say that the Boss is your official chief, and that the "Publication" on thermal conductivity is a report that you had to prepare on some of your research work? Am I right? If so, and it is printed and does not cost too much, I should like to see a copy of it.

As a small contribution to your operation expenses I am enclosing a pound. It will be very little at the present rate of exchange, and I wish that I could send more. Prices have not begun to go up yet, but I expect that they soon will, and we have to watch our pennies pretty closely.

I suppose that the suffering in Washington is less marked than in the more industrial parts of America, but it looks as though unemployment was going to make a hard winter of it for a great many of your people.

Lolla is gaining strength, but I have to watch her closely to prevent her from trying to do too much.

Do you walk to and from work and classes or take the cars? If you ride, do you get any regular exercise? The trouble with me about walking is that in cold weather I have hardly enough breath to let me walk fast enough to keep warm, but I keep pretty well except for the trouble with my fingertips from bad circulation. It is blood conductivity that I want rather than thermal conductivity.

I hope that your bank account will prosper. The one great thing is to be able to budget so that there is a margin on the right side however small it may be. It is perfectly beastly to have to try all the time to cope with an adverse balance.

Here are a few more stamps. There will probably be time to hear from you and write again before Christmas, but in any case you will have our best wishes. We both send a whole lot of love.

Your affectionate granddad,

Harry Matheson

12/11/1931: from 68 Alumhurst Rd, Bournemouth West, England to Mr. Harry Matheson, 2029
Allen Place NW, Washington DC

68 Alumhurst Rd.,
Bournemouth West.

Friday-11/12/31.

Dear Hal,

You're a good scout - Sometimes, anyway. } Which means that your excellent letter of Dec.2 arrived this morning. I must answer at once if you are to get the enclosed pound by Christmas Day to give you a tangible, if small, token of our best wishes. I suppose that, if you do not need it at the moment, it would pay to hold it, as I feel sure that the exchange rate is bound to improve before long. But I gather, from what you said as to the state of your finances, that you are more likely to change it right away. } We are able to send it, because Lolla recently received a check for her latest translation.

Are you paid weekly or monthly? I hope it is weekly, because ~~kw~~ a dollar and 47 cents and two car tokens does not seem much to carry on with for a week, to say nothing of a month. But perhaps that is only cash, as distinguished from your bank account? I suppose the bank account is for current use and not a saving deposit?

What does "G.S.J." stand for at the head of your letter? It looks as though it had something to do with the time, but I cannot think of any interpretation for the letters.

I hope that you got paid all right for your radio fixing. We have had a set given to us, from which we get a great deal of pleasure, and some instruction from really good speakers. We have an excellent service of music. There are, however, two drawbacks. One is that Bournemouth has a very powerful distributing station, which is apt to interfere with our getting other stations of about the same wave-length. The other is a powerful station at Stuttgart, which works on a wave-length which is inconveniently near that of Bournemouth.

I am glad that you are getting some swimming. Do you still take any part in the G.W. Glee Club, or do any other music? Not that you would seem to have time for it, but you do manage to crowd a good deal into your time.

As you did not have Thanksgiving Dinner with Grannie, I judge that you are not seeing very much of ~~Grannie~~ ^{her}, though you do not directly answer my enquiry about her.

No: We have not heard anything from either Luigi or Leo for a very long time. Leo's Mother is still frightfully hard up in Paris, as are his sisters and Father in Silesia, and we have to do what we can to help them. They get nothing from him.

I suppose you don't ever hear anything from your Father?

When I left the Civil Service, I was entitled to 40 days' leave in the year, and an unlimited amount of sick leave with a medical certificate, though after six months of sick leave the rate was reduced to half pay. I could not take less than half a day of leave at a time, and Saturdays counted as a full day.

If you are going to Pa. for Christmas, I imagine that you will very likely not get this till you return. Well, it will not be any the worse for keeping. I wonder just where you are going?

I can well understand that you find use at work for what you are acquiring at College, and I hope that you will be able to stick out the course until you have got your degree.

Has your appointment duly been made permanent? Are you classed now as a research man? Is your rank still officially that of an apprentice?

What is Bull's real name? What does he do?

It seems to me you took a big risk in gadding about on leave just at the time of your finals, but the result justified you anyway. I suppose your friend had a car from the way you managed to get about?

I hope the publication will come off all right, and that it will be in

the B.S. Journal of Research. I am glad to hear about A.J. McPherson, and hope that he will continue to prove such a satisfactory Boss.

M'yes, thank you. I do try to fill my lungs as you suggest, but the trouble is that they seem to have passed their limit of elasticity, or my heart has, or both, so that I cannot walk quickly at all without painful shortness of breath. Do you know those electric machines that barbers use for drying your hair? Well, I use one of those every day to give my fingers a light massage of hot air. There is real danger of the tips of my fingers going dead when the weather is at all cold, and they are not at all comfortable.

Lolla's inclinations are far more energetic than mine, and she is always taking on new tasks. At the moment she is working hard at teaching herself Spanish. She is teaching German to our landlady's son. She gives a French lesson once a week to a girl friend and me. But her strength is not up to much, though I think that it is increasing. She is probably going to coach a boy in French in the holidays, who is backward in that subject at school. It is a pity that she is not in reach to help you.

I have no inclination to take on new things, and it seems to take all my time and energy to keep up my correspondence and read what I want to do.

Here are some more stamps:

We both send lots of love and best wishes for the New Year and all ways. Do write soon and often.

Your devoted granddad,

Fred Matheson

7/29/1932: from 68 Alumhurst Rd, Bournemouth West, England to Mr. Harry Matheson, 2029
Allen Place NW, Washington DC

68 Alumhurst Rd.,
Bournemouth West,
England.

Friday-29/7/32.

Dear Hal,

It is a very long time since I heard anything of you, and Will Reeve, in answer to my enquiry, tells me that he has not had any acknowledgement of the June remittance. I hope that there is nothing wrong with you, and that you are still carrying on with your job. I wonder whether you are getting any holiday away from Washington, and if so, where? Lola's heart has been troublesome again lately, and she is taking a few days in bed. She sends much love to you, and is as anxious for news of you as I am. We had a week with my sister Isabel at Studland, but we could not do much walking, as neither of us can go very far on foot. We have had a few motor drives with friends. But mostly our time is spent quietly in our rooms here, with short walks designed to avoid hills as much as possible. I wonder whether you have read anything about the "conversion" of five per cent War Loan to a three and a half per cent basis? It will mean an immense saving to the British Government, possibly slightly reducing taxation next year, but in the meantime it will involve a considerable loss for those who had the 5% until such time, if any, as they are able to reinvest in something which will give them equal interest with equal security. That is a prospect which does not seem very hopeful at the moment, though I do think that there are some slight indications that we have seen the worst over here, and that things may slowly begin to get better. But the whole world seems to have got into a strange condition of financial muddle from which it can be extricated only by some sort of international action, though it is difficult to suggest what. We have been reading a very well written book called "The Economic Results of Power Production", by one Fred Henderson. So far as one can epitomise in a few words what a man has taken a whole book to elaborate without indulging in padding, his thesis is that while the world has completely revolutionised its methods of production, its methods of distribution are essentially still those of the feudal age. The result is that though the world of man, as a whole, is richer than it ever has been, men as men are poverty-stricken because there are no means available at present for distributing its increased products, and so we suffer want by reason of the excess of the things wanted. I meant to say, in pointing out the results of the War Loan conversion, that it will mean, after the end of this year, a probable reduction of about twentyseven pounds in our income from the little family trust which was formed for our benefit. That is a good deal in the case of an income which can best be reckoned in shillings a week. I wonder what you intend to do with your legacy next year when you become entitled to the capital. I do

hope that you will decide to leave it intact, in some safe investment either on your side or over here, as it is a great thing to feel that you have a provision of that kind for days of real need. Another book which we have been reading with a great deal of interest is "The Discovery of Europe" , by Paul Cohen-Portheim. It is a most charmingly written survey of things in this hemisphere, with an attempt to assess the prospects, and with very pleasing memories of things as they once were. What researches have you been doing lately ? We were interested at Studland one day in watching tests by army lorries to determine - presumably for desert travel - what were the best shapes of tyre and at what air pressure for negotiating sand. I enclose a few more stamps which you may be able to trade. Do write soon and tell us what you are doing and thinking, and how you size up the American situation. The news this morning about the trouble between the military and the camping veterans on Pennsylvania Avenue does not look very good, and the news of conditions in your country generally seems to suggest that you will be lucky if you get through the winter without any serious disorders. I have been glad to think of you as in government employment, and I do hope that nothing has interfered with that. One of the members of my former staff was down here for a holiday recently, and took us for a motor run to the Dorchester region, the country about which Thomas Hardy wrote. There we saw on a hillside the outline of an enormous giant, made by cutting away the turf to expose the soil. Archaeologists do not agree as to its exact date or origin, but there seems to be no doubt that it is a relic of Pagan days and was probably made some three to five thousand years ago. The outline is, of course, freshly cleared from time to time. It is strange to think of all the changes that the big fellow standing there has seen since he was first made for purposes of primitive worship. I wonder whether you are getting any camping. I suppose you have not heard anything of Leo or Luigi lately ? How is Grannie ? Give her my best wishes and greetings.

Write soon to

Your devoted granddad,

Fred Matheson

Notes about "Childe Janet"

Transcribed by Janet Elizabeth Luther (nee Matheson) b. 5/24/1939 in November 2012

After Mom's death I found five small handwritten sheets, apparently excerpts from things various people had written about my grandmother, Janet Matheson (6/7/1893 – 9/10/1924) and given to her father, Fred Matheson. The notes are dated August of 1906 to February of 1907. They were with some of Fred's letters. I wonder if they were entries in a sort of visitors' book; apparently Janet was with her father in England and even going to school there. She would have been 13 or 14 then. (Fred and Christabel were divorced in November of 1908. No mention is made of Christabel here.)

Janet I liked very much & I am sure that situation will turn out all right. She is made of fine material, I think, & there is a quality of what I can only call that of a gallant boy that appeals to me greatly.
U.A.C. Aug 11/06

I wish your visit had been a little longer; I fancy we did not make the most of our opportunity of having you & Janet. She is an altogether charming – if difficult – little personality, & I think you show much judgment & tact in your dealing with her, which ought to bring you lasting reward. I fancy I could never have brought up a daughter if I had been so blessed.

S.L.G. Aug 11/06

I don't often feel satisfied after guests have gone but I did feel that I got hold of Janet a bit & that I perhaps or I should say we helped you with her too. I felt I had gained something by her desire to come back & she quite spontaneously threw her arm about me that last day she came to say good-bye. I felt that she really did feel she had made friends. Of course I realize more & more how absorbing it all is for you & that one must take a seat quite in the back room in a dim light but that's quite all right & I am content

I.I.F. Aug 19/06

Janet & her box will reach Paddington at 12.15. She has been charming & we shall be delighted to have her at any time you can spare her.

Aug 22/06 E.F.M.

I hope you survived your day without Janet & then had a doubly delightful time with her in Oxford. Take the advice of an old woman & - later or perhaps – let her feel the wisdom & authority as well as the love of a father.

Aug 20/06 M.T.

I am so thankful you have Janet, she is a most charming person, & I am sure with you & your people will grow more & more what you wish, though I feel sure she is made of quite the right material at the bottom.

Sep.9/06 U.A.C.

You and Janet seem to be making a tour of England. I am so glad you have had such pleasant interludes & that you and Janet are getting to be more & more to each other. I hope she is quick enough of perception to recognize how much you do & give up for her without any need of finger posts. I so often find I have to act in that capacity to enable children understand at all the devotion of their parents.

Sep. 7/06 M.B.P.

I trust Childe Janet is settling happily into the daily round of school life without losing anything of her sparkling personality. The coachman here, a sort of Aaron Willer, said of a child the other day “she looks as if she’d got a candle burning inside her head to shine out through her eyes” which though crudely put reminded me of Childe Janet’s luminous orbs.

Janet Pinlearn Nov/06

I hope you too as well as your visitors had the pleasant consciousness of a “homelike” atmosphere in your flat. It is good to think of it filled with the young beauty & brightness of the dear child.

M.B.P. Nov 2/06

You ought to be ashamed to suggest that your back has been all bad lately when the last year brought you Janet & she not an ordinary child but such a splendid sort of a daughter. I should like to go to see her some day if you will tell me at what hours she would be visible.

M.B.P. Feb 10/07

Thank you once more for Janet’s photograph. It stands on my book-rest before me now – such serious, deep eyes they are: it is good to have the child-face – through she has changed considerably.

F.R.P. Dec 18/06

How goes the world with you – this world of work & play? I am sure the play hours are the gayer because of the pleasure of that beautiful eyed daughter.

E. Wingate Rinder Jan/07

By the way, how jolly Janet is! But I should like to have her alone & hear what she thinks about. She has such wise eyes & will be a handsome woman, I think.

H. Vernon Jones Jan 29/07

I am proud to hear Janet thanks she can enjoy being with me. I value a child’s good opinion very much, & she, for all her precocity, is but a child. Probably, as you say, her reserve is unconscious – maybe she has those private resources of her own which children never explain or tell other folk about. We never remember enough how different the child world is from ours. They have not yet grasped the mournful value of “compromises”, nor have they learned to acquiesce for the sake of a quiet life.

H. Vernon Jones Feb 4/07

Reprinted from

THE  TIMES

Saturday April 18 1936

MR. F. J. MATHESON

Mr. Frederick James Matheson, who died on April 16, was the youngest son of the Rev. James Matheson, Congregational minister in Nottingham from 1850 to 1878. Educated at the Nonconformist School at Bishop's Stortford, now Bishop's Stortford College, he went to the United States. There after some years in engineering works at Pittsburgh and St. Louis he became a journalist, writing for various newspapers. As correspondent of the *New York Herald* he was one of the earliest to enter Havana after the Cuban war. Returning to England he became English agent for Messrs. Ginn and Co., the New York publishers. Later he was editor of *Progress*, a periodical for the promotion of social welfare, and when the scheme for National Insurance was initiated he did valuable service in making the scheme known and explaining its details. Afterwards he became one of the London Inspectors of the Department, which he served with great efficiency and devotion until his retirement under the age limit, when his colleagues showed their sense of his services by a farewell dinner in his honour. He had early shown his interest in social questions in working at an East End boys' club conducted by the late Sir Cyril Jackson, and in his later life in London he was an active member of the Rainbow Club, a discussion society, to which Sir Richard Stapley, Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, Mr. J. M. Robertson, and other men of mark belonged.

Mr. Matheson will be remembered by his many friends in England and the United States as a man of varied interests and experience, whose friendship and social gifts made him welcome wherever he went, and whose friendship was prized by all who knew him, both young and old. His last years were divided between Bournemouth and Cambridge. His wife, who survives him, was Helen Chrouschoff, of a well-known Russian family, whose work as a lecturer on history and as a translator of Russian books is well known. By his first wife he had one child, Janet, no longer living, whose son, Harry Matheson, is working in a research laboratory in Washington.

Notes: His first wife was Mary Bates (aka Christabel Cummings)

We know that Fred's birthday was February 2, but not the year.

Christabel Cummings (nee Mary Christabel Bates 9/1/1873 – 4/1954)

By Janet Elizabeth Luther (nee Matheson) b. 5/24/1939 – begun in May 2008

My dad was Harry Matheson (nee Cummings); his mother was Janet Cummings (nee Matheson); Janet's mother was Mary Christabel Matheson (nee Bates), an artist and a fascinating woman. I think she abandoned the "Mary" for "Christabel" because it was more elegant.

Christabel's mother was Kate Parker (6/20/18??-10/10/1924). She married a man named Bates, about whom we know nothing. (Christabel also had a brother who went to sea, probably to the Orient.) They divorced, and Kate later married Joseph Cochran on 8/4/1883. They had four children, one of whom was Catherine Elizabeth Cochran (6/27/1887-2/12/79) whom I remember as Aunt Catherine. Catherine married Charles Rumford Churchman (1881-1922). They also had four children, one of whom is Charlotte Hamilton (nee Cochran) (born 5/28/1920).

Right: We think that this is a photo of Kate.



An old family mystery: Kate's father (or perhaps her grandfather) came from Ireland and took the name of the captain of the ship, which was Parker, and, evidently, used that as his name the rest of his life. We



don't know what his real name was or why or when he left Ireland. We think there may have been some connection with Sir Edward Fitzgerald because Kate had an old book written about Fitzgerald and a picture of him.

Left: Kate, Christabel, Harry, and Janet, circa 1916



Above: circa 1905 – Janet and probably one of her grandmothers, either Kate Parker Bates or Elizabeth Cripps Matheson.

Frederick James Matheson came to the United States after completing his studies in England, worked in St. Louis and Pittsburgh and worked as a journalist for the New York Herald. He and Christabel – although I believe she still went by “Mary” at that time – were married by a notary public in Washington DC probably on 5/23/1892, perhaps at Grace Episcopal Church (on the north side of 6th St) where Christabel had been baptized and confirmed. They had one child, Janet, who was born in Pittsburgh in 6/7/1893 when Christabel was 19, and later moved to New York. Christabel and Fred divorced in November of 1908 when Janet was 8 – we have a copy of the divorce decree. I think that Fred then returned to England while Christabel stayed in New York with Janet.

Christabel married Edwin (Ted) Clinton Cummings (born 1882 so he was about 10 years younger than she) sometime prior to 1911 when she was 38 and he was 28. By about 1916 Christabel and Ted lived in Philadelphia on Tioga Street near the B&O station and had a coffee roasting plant at 2029 N. Broad St. Also, Mom says, they had a candy store.

Christabel's daughter Janet married Raymond King Cummings, Ted's uncle, in about 1911 and divorced him during the winter of 1920-21. So Janet and Ray were married just after Christabel and Ted married. To add to the confusion, the uncle (Ray) was four years younger than the nephew (Ted)!

So there were three generations of divorce in my dad's family: Christabel's mother Kate (perhaps in about 1880), Christabel (in 1908), and Janet (in about 1920). I imagine that divorce was a pretty scandalous thing in those days. Amazing that my dad remained happily married to my mom for nearly 40 years until his death!



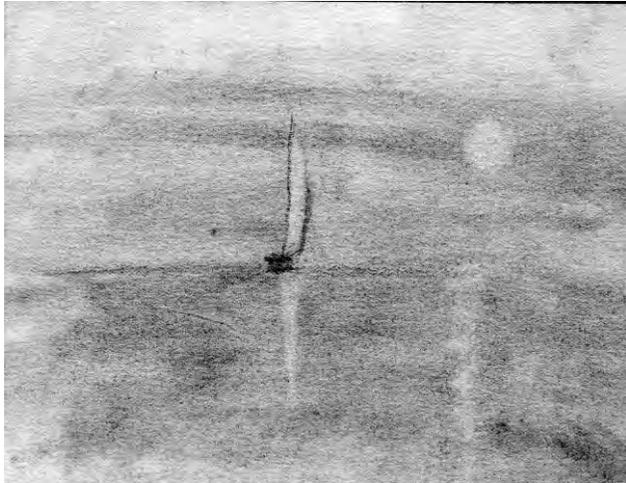
Harry and his grandmother Christabel – left: circa 1916 and right: circa 1930

Edwin died in 1924, the same year that Janet died at age 41 while Dad was in high school (1925-1929) and was interred on 2/26/1925. He's buried in West Laurel Hill Cemetery (Lot 6 in the River Section) in Bala Cynwid PA, as is Christabel whose cremains were interred on 4/26/1954 so she was 81. After his death Christabel moved to a corner apartment on the second floor at 2020 S Street, Washington DC (at the corner of Connecticut and Florida); there was a restaurant on the first floor. The apartment was so big that she rented out two rooms and would often do portraits of her boarders. One boarder was a Mr. Artur Erlantes (or Ermantes), a photographer who did many of the photographs we have of Dad as a young man.

Christabel was an artist working with oils and also did sculptures, often using Janet and Hal as models. We have a very realistic plaster statue of Janet holding a baby (based on Hal) with a somewhat older Hal standing alongside and sucking his middle two fingers, a distinctive trait he had as a small child. (Unfortunately, I don't know where that statue is now.)

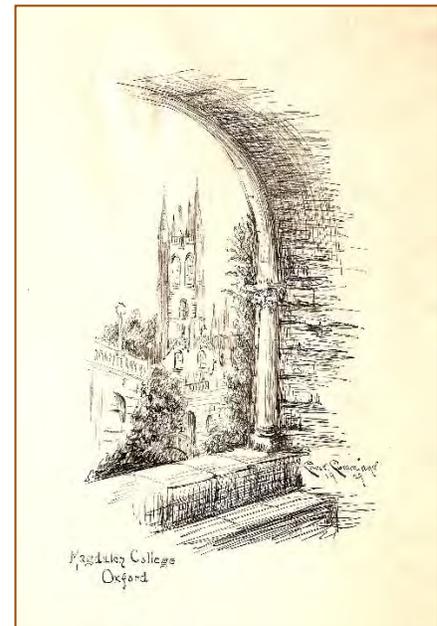
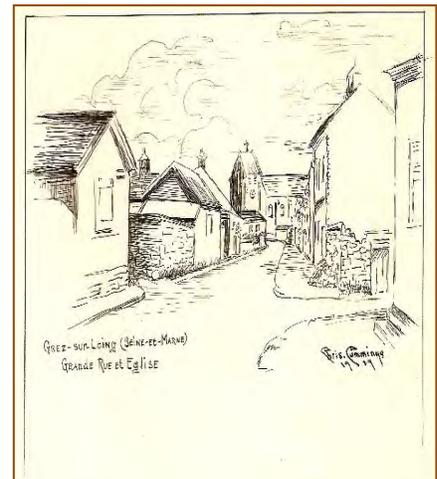
My sister Jane got one of Christabel's large oil paintings. A commissioned portrait, the sitter's husband felt it wasn't a good likeness, so we've been lucky to inherit it. We also have a sort of positive/negative of a photograph of the lady in the painting, but the face is somewhat different – could it be Janet?





After Mom died, I found this little sketch (3-1/2" x 4-1/2") in an album she had made of things from Janet and Christabel. Since we have no reason to think that Janet did any sketching, we'll assume that Christabel did this.

We think that as a young woman Christabel went to England to study art; Dad once said that she'd lived intermittently in England. At any rate it appears that in 1929 (five years after Janet's death when Christabel was 56 and Harry was 17) Christabel must have traveled to Europe, as we have these three ink on vellum drawings: a river view, "Magdalen College Oxford", and "Grez-sur Loing (Seine-et-Marne) Grande Rue et Eglise", so she probably went to both England and France.



After Mom's death I found a sheet written in pencil by Christabel:

Impressions of Oxford By Christabel Cummings

Old buildings of quaint architecture – Carvings of gods and beasts showing the queerest conception of proportion – The crumbling stones have in them every shade of grey from the palest to almost black – Tucked away in their crevices are tiny tufts of bright green moss suggesting the great contrast between life & youth & the age & decay expressed by the stones in whose corners they creep – The colour scheme too is glorious when with this green & grey there comes into the tiny leaded windows the reflection of a wonderful sunset.

In the College Gardens are beautiful old trees with great spreading branches that keep all sun from the ground beneath them & here are growing huge beds of glossy ivy – these circles of dark green intensify the brilliancy of the lawns of grass like velvet – While strolling in these gardens & quadrangles & the meadows of Christ Church rising up all about you are wonderful towers & great drives which complete to the eyes satisfaction this picture of beauty & the long ago – The ears tingle & the whole body thrills with delight at the pealing of the many soft-toned bells calling to Service. While others with solemn richer tone toll out the hour of the day – A fairy land indeed in which it seems a crime to speak – So majestic are towers – So heavenly the windows of rare stained glass – So dark the oak all queerly carved & worn – So dim the Cloisters & black the halls that in all you feel the death of ages – the hush of solemnity & the power of greatness.

I knew Christabel as “Great Granny”; she died when I was 14. As a child I idolized her since I, too, planned to be an artist. I remember her telling me that a real artist never put the sun into his paintings and also that you began a portrait by painting the eyes. She was short, with white hair piled atop her head and always fastened with a big black velvet ribbon and a long, gaudy necklace of rhinestones hung over her ample bosom.

At that time Christabel lived on the top floor (the sixth) at Connecticut Ave just over the “lion bridge” (The Taft Bridge), and there was a pharmacy downstairs. In her apartment Christabel had this plaster-of-paris angel perched high on a bookcase. Our family always believed that she had sculpted it, but it is actually called “**Meditation**” by **Pietro Ghiloni**. The Italian-born Ghiloni (born c. 1864) studied at the Royal Academy of Florence. He immigrated to New York City in 1892; after nearly a decade, he moved to New Orleans.



As an old lady Christabel moved in with us at 3114 Jennings Rd, Kensington MD for a short time, but her mind was no longer clear, and she had to be sent to a nearby nursing home. (While she lived with us, she had Mom and Dad's bedroom and they slept on a single bed up in the attic. How they managed that, I don't know, but they did usually sleep "spoon fashion", so I guess they were ok.)

**Right: circa 1945 – the elegant Christabel
(Great Granny) as I remember her**



Some of Christabel's early addresses as determined from letters from:

Rebecca W. Walker 3/17/1899: 261 Stenhew St, **Brooklyn NY**

Fred Matheson 4/29/1903: 9 St. Martin's St, Leicester Square, **London England**

Janet Matheson 8/1920: 3025 N Broad St in **Philadelphia PA**

Janet's will dated 1921 indicates that at that time Christabel lived in **Glenside PA**

Harry Matheson 1/17/1928 and Fred Matheson 5/13/1929 (to Harry c/o Christabel): 1104 Vermont Ave, **Washington DC**

Acknowledgement of sympathy card dated 6/21/1927 sent to 1829 Ronald (or Ranald), **Philadelphia PA**

A 2¢ postcard from Lolly dated 9/8/1930 – The LaSalle, 1028 Connecticut Ave, **Washington DC**

MARY CHRISTABEL MATHESON

VS.

FREDERICK JAMES MATHESON

:
:
:
:
:

C. P. NO. 5

JUNE TERM, 1908

NO. 225. IN DIVORCE.

DEGREE OF DIVORCE A. V. M.

AND NOW, to-wit, NOVEMBER A. D. 1908, the Master's report in the above case having been approved, the final rule granted, and proof of service of final rule submitted, on motion of Joseph Knox Fornance, Esq., attorney for the Libellant, the Court by virtue of the authority vested in it by law, makes the said rule absolute; and decrees that the said Mary Christabel Matheson, the Libellant, and the said Frederick James Matheson, the Respondent be and hereby are divorced from the bonds of matrimony, and all and every the duties, rights and claims accruing to either of the said parties at any time heretofore in pursuance of said marriage, shall henceforth cease and determine, and the said parties shall severally be at liberty to marry again, in like manner as if they had never been married.

And it is further ordered, adjudged and decreed, that the said Frederick James Matheson, the Respondent, pay the costs of this proceedings.

BY THE COURT.

Matheson
vs.
Matheson

Decree of
Divorce A. V. M.

Christabel Cummings (nee Mary Christabel Bates 9/1/1873 – 4/1954)

Painting the Actress Betty Linley?

By Janet Elizabeth Luther (nee Matheson) b. 5/24/1939 – begun in November 2012

After Mom's death I found some correspondence between Christabel and an actress named Betty Linley. Apparently Christabel had seen her in "The Rivals" at the National Theater when Christabel's half-brother Steve Cochran was manager there and wrote to her in May of 1930 and wanted to paint her portrait. There were two drafts of the following letter dated 5/12/1930:

My dear Miss Linley,

May I introduce myself as a portrait painter & also a half sister of Steve Cochran, Manager of the National Theatre in Washington, D.C.

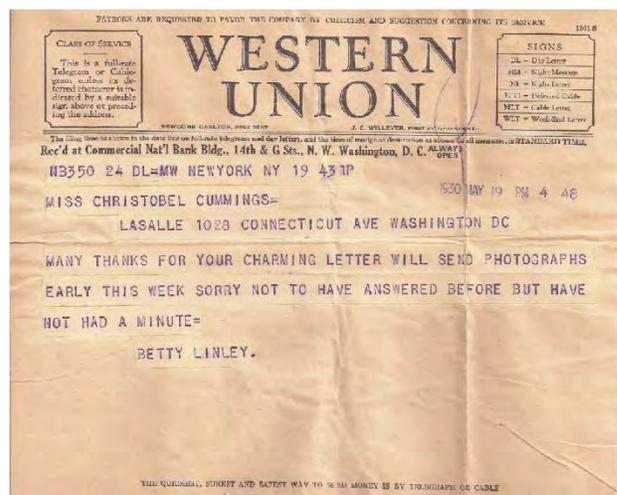
I was at the theatre last night & apart from my keen enjoyment of "The Rivals" which was superb, I was charmed by your beauty & the wonderful picture you are in your blue bonnet. May I please beg a photograph of you in that bonnet? As the old masters have immortalized Mary Sidrus [?] & other great beauties of the stage, I would love to immortalize Betty Linley as Julia Melville. May I be granted that privilege? I will be glad to express my appreciation by presenting you with a copy in oil of the painting when it is completed. My favorite position was with the chin up a bit. However if you can send me several I could select the one with the greatest picture value & which best expressed what I loved in your face.

Looking forward to seeing you again & trusting you can grant my request, believe me,

Cordially
Christabel Cummings

On 5/19/30 Miss Linley replied by telegram:

MANY THANKS FOR YOUR CHARMING
LETTER WILL SEND PHOTOGRAPHS
EARLY THIS WEEK SORRY NOT TO
HAVE ANSWERED BEFORE BUT HAVE
NOT HAD A MINUTE.



On 5/22/1930 Miss Linley wrote from The Madison Square, 37 Madison Ave, New York City:

My dear Miss Cummings

I feel very honoured & happy that you want to do a portrait of me & am sending you all the pictures that I think might be of use. I wish I could have really sat for you.

Most cordially
Betty Linley

One further postcard dated 6/30/1930, again sent from the Madison Square Hotel:

Dear Miss Cummings – Did the pictures I sent arrive alright & were they any use? I do hope so.

Sincerely, Betty Linley

And there – for us – the matter rests; we have no further information. I wonder if the portrait was ever made?

We have these photos of Christabel painting, probably taken in the 1940's.



This is an oil painting of Charlotte (Churchman) Hamilton (b. 5/28/1920) so this must have been painted ~1925. Charlotte said she'd always hated the painting and sent it to me ~ 2014.



Charlotte's mother,
Catherine Elizabeth (Cochran) Churchman
(6/27/1887 - 2/12/1979)
and Christabel (9/1/1873 - 4/1954)
were half-sisters.
Their mother was Kate (Parker) Cochran
(6/20/? - 10/10/1924)

Below: This pastel orchid is
signed simply "CC 1940"



Below: This pastel is
dated 1929 when Dad
was 17, and is probably
is based on this similar
photo of him as a little
boy. There was likely
another taken at the
same time which we
have lost.

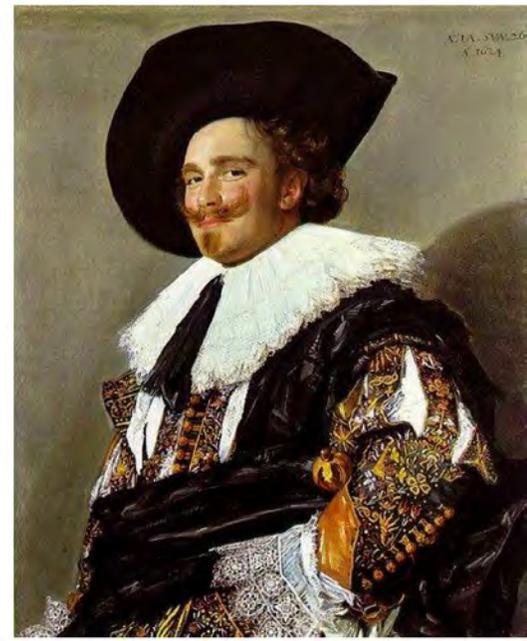




Dad's grandmother, Christabel Cummings, copied this famous painting (right) by Franz Hals called *The Laughing Cavalier*, dated 1624. It is now in the Wallace Collection in London. Did Christabel ever see the original? Was she in London when she painted the copy?

Her copy (above) is signed on the lower right corner: "Christabel Cummings, 1934, Apres F.H". When Dad (Harry) was at Penn State (Summer of 1932 to June of 1935) he lived for a time at the Theta Nu Epsilon fraternity house where Christabel's painting hung over the fireplace which explains the heat-induced cracking. Later on when the fraternity disbanded, Dad was given the painting, and it always hung in our living room in Kensington, MD, and, more recently, in our dining room in Bethlehem, PA.

Janet Luther - July, 2008





Christabel, Janet and Harry - circa 1915



Above: Mary Christabel Bates - c 1890;
Left: Mary Christabel Bates Matheson
with her daughter Janet - c 1901;
Below: with her grandson Harry
Matheson Cummings - c 1913





1897 - when Christabel was 24

Christabel Matheson Cummings (nee Mary Christabel Bates) 1873 – 1954

1904 - when Christabel was 30





Christabel Matheson Cummings

(nee Mary Christabel Bates)

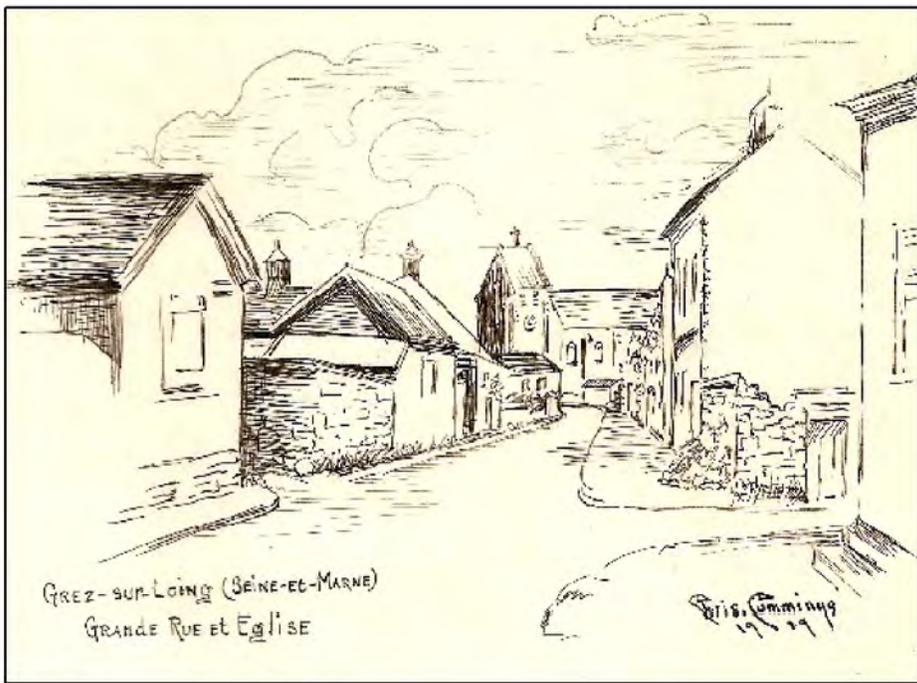
1873 - 1954

These photos by Mary Carnell,
1314 Chestnut St, Philadelphia,
are dated 1904 -
when Christabel was 30.





Christabel's second husband, Edwin (Ted) Clinton Cummings (1882 to ~1927) whom she married ~1910.
This photo was perhaps taken about 1920.



GREZ-SUR-LOING (SEINE-ET-MARNE)
GRANDE RUE ET EGLISE



Magdalen College
Oxford

Ink drawings by Christabel Cummings - 1909



Christabel Cummings
1909

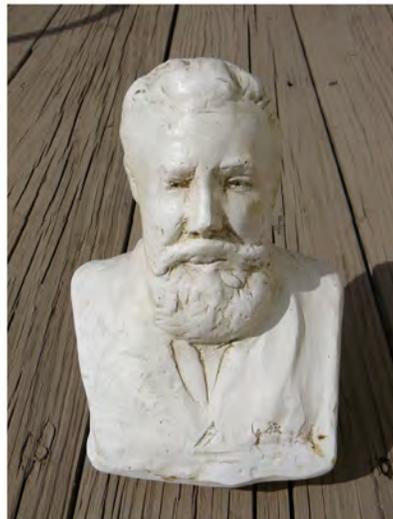
Left and below: Christabel's daughter Janet portrayed as a Flemish maiden



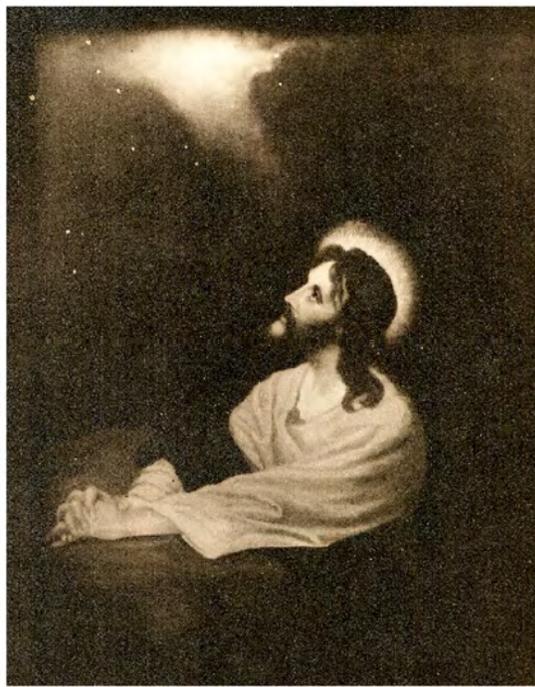
"WILHELM KONRAD RÖNTGEN,
DISCOVERER OF X-RAYS 1895"



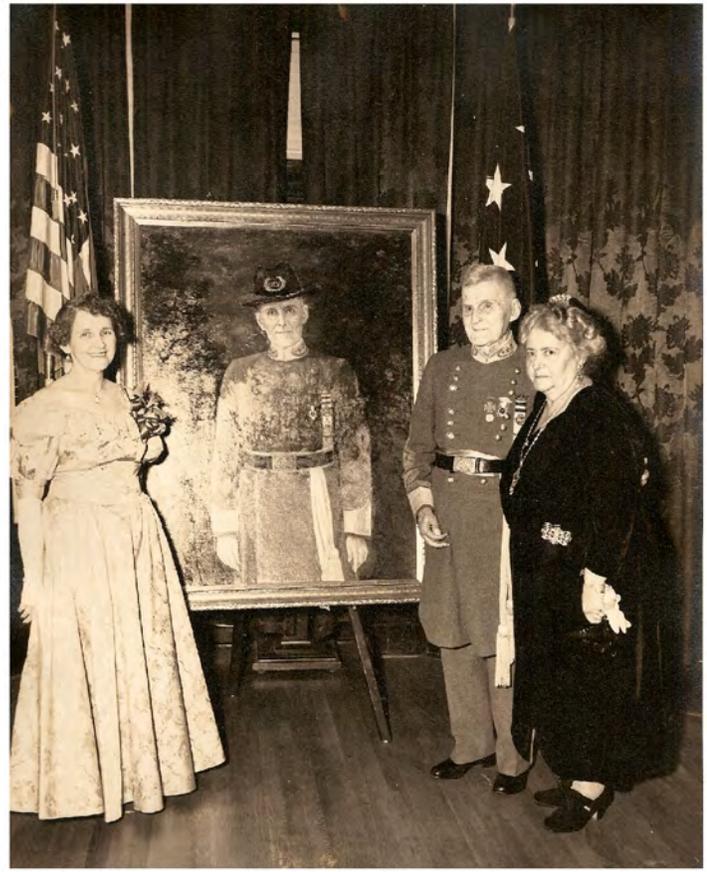
Christabel on the right



Examples of the work of Christabel Cummings



Detail from a painting for
a church on Rhode Island
Ave, Washington DC
c.1945



Although this is signed "Chris Comyn 1925", I'm reasonably sure it's by Christabel.

I wonder if it could be of her niece, Charlotte Cochran Hamilton who was born 5/28/1920, daughter of her half-sister whom we always called "Aunt Catherine"



Christabel's half-sister, Catherine Elizabeth (Cochran) Churchman (6/27/1887 - 2/12/1979) in May 1974



I found this little broken statue "Freedom, Despair" when we were cleaning out Mother's house.



In 1924/1925, Georges Marie Haardt and Louis Audouin-Dubreuil set out on the second Citroën Mission to Central Africa. With them went (amongst many others) the artist Alexandre Iacovleff. Below I reproduce some more of his drawings and paintings made during that trip.



Ialingédé. race Mandja (Fort Lamy)

We had always had this picture hanging up at home and I thought it was one of Christabel's original drawings. When I took it out of the frame I realized that it's just a photograph of a drawing. On the left she has written "Ialingedi race Mandja (Fort Lamy)" and on the right signed it "Christabel Cummings Apres A. Iacovleff" From the Internet we see that she must have drawn it after 1925. I don't know where her original drawing is.





Christabel was commissioned to make a medal for Admiral Byrd for his exploration of the South Pole.

Left: Pencil sketch of the medal;
 Right 12" diameter plaster cast.
 Below: metal casts

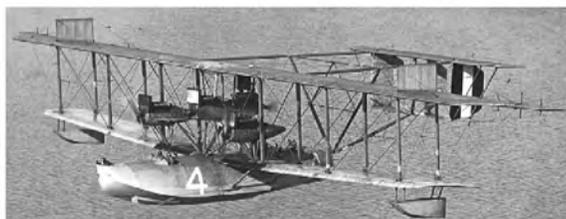


The Society of Virginia
 1948

The two drawings below commemorate the first aviation crossing of the Atlantic.

The historic mission had begun with three identical aircraft, NC-1, NC-3, and NC-4 departing from Naval Air Station Rockaway on May 8, 1919. The NC-4 was the sole aircraft to arrive in the Azores after a 1,200 miles flight lasting 15 hours, 18 minutes. On May 27 the NC-4 arrived in Lisbon, Portugal, before accomplishing the solo mission in Plymouth, England, May 31.

Inscribed around the edge of this sketch:
 Teepassy - May 16, 1919
 Hort - May 17, 1919
 Lisbon - May 27, 1919
 First Trans-Atlantic Flight



During the flight bad weather had forced the NC-1 and NC-3 to land in the open sea, with the NC-4 being the only aircraft to successfully complete the mission.



Admiral Byrd to Get Medal At Statler Banquet Thursday

Elwood H. Seal, Society of Virginia dinner chairman, displays a plaster model and lead proof of the Gold Medal of Achievement, to be given to Admiral Richard E. Byrd, Antarctic explorer, at a society banquet Thursday.

—Star Staff Photo.



1/25/1948 - In the Sunday edition of the Washington Star

Nearly 12 ounces of gold have been contributed by more than 100 members of the Society of Virginia families for a Gold Medal of Achievement, to be presented by the society to Rear Admiral Richard Evelyn Byrd, Antarctic explorer.

The presentation will be made at a reception and banquet honoring Admiral Byrd in the Statler Hotel at 7 p.m. Thursday. More than 300 society members and guests will attend.

The medal is the first to be presented by the society, although it has given citations to distinguished Virginians in the past. The society hopes the medal will establish a precedent for future presentations.

Designed by Mrs. Cummings.

The medal was designed by Mrs. Christabel Cummings, Washington and Philadelphia artist who lives at 2032 Belmont road N.W. The gold piece and six bronze medals were struck by the United States Mint in Philadelphia, and more bronze ones may be made for society members.

The obverse side of the medal

comprises the name and likeness of Admiral Byrd, the words "Explorer, Scientist and Patriot" and a Latin motto, "Sic igitur ad astra" ("So therefore to the stars"). The medal's reverse side includes a female figure with a wreath, symbolizing the spirit of Virginia, hovering over Antarctic mountains. In the background are a ship and an airplane; in the foreground, a dog sled, penguins and the American flag.

The gold donations for the award consisted of various family heirlooms, including some from descendants of George Washington and Robert E. Lee. One of the gifts was a gold watch that has been handed down in the family of Louis M. Sheers, 106 Westmoreland road, Falls Church, Va., for several generations. The watch was to have gone to Mr. Sheers' son, William Poe, on his 21st birthday. He was lost at sea on that day during the war. His mother and father donated the watch for the Byrd medal.

Robertson to Present Medal.

The medal will be presented to Admiral Byrd by Senator Robertson, Democrat, of Virginia, honorary dinner chairman. Chairman for the dinner is Elwood H. Seal, Washington attorney who was formerly District of Columbia corporation counsel. The society's president is John W. Rixey Smith, Bureau of Internal Revenue.

The following will be among the guests of honor: Chief Justice Vinson of the United States, Justice Jackson of the Supreme Court, Speaker Martin of the House, Senator Minority Leader Barkley, Senator Byrd, Democrat of Virginia, brother of the admiral; Gov. Tuck of Virginia, Colgate W. Darden, former Governor of Virginia and president of the University of Virginia; Mrs. Nellie Tayloe Ross, director, Bureau of the Mint; Mrs. Woodrow Wilson, widow of President Wilson; Mrs. Cordell Hull, wife of the former Secretary of State, and Rear Admiral Richard H. Cruzen, who accompanied Admiral Byrd to Antarctica last year.

Admiral Byrd was born at Winchester, Va., in 1888. He was graduated from the Naval Academy in 1912 and became a naval aviator in World War I. In 1926 he made a flight over the North Pole and for the flight received the Congressional Medal of Honor. He led four Antarctic expeditions: In 1928, 1933, 1939 and 1946. During World War II he was stationed in Washington in the office of the Secretary of War as consultant for cold climate clothing development. Admiral Byrd retired in September and lives in Boston.

Citation Pays Tribute.

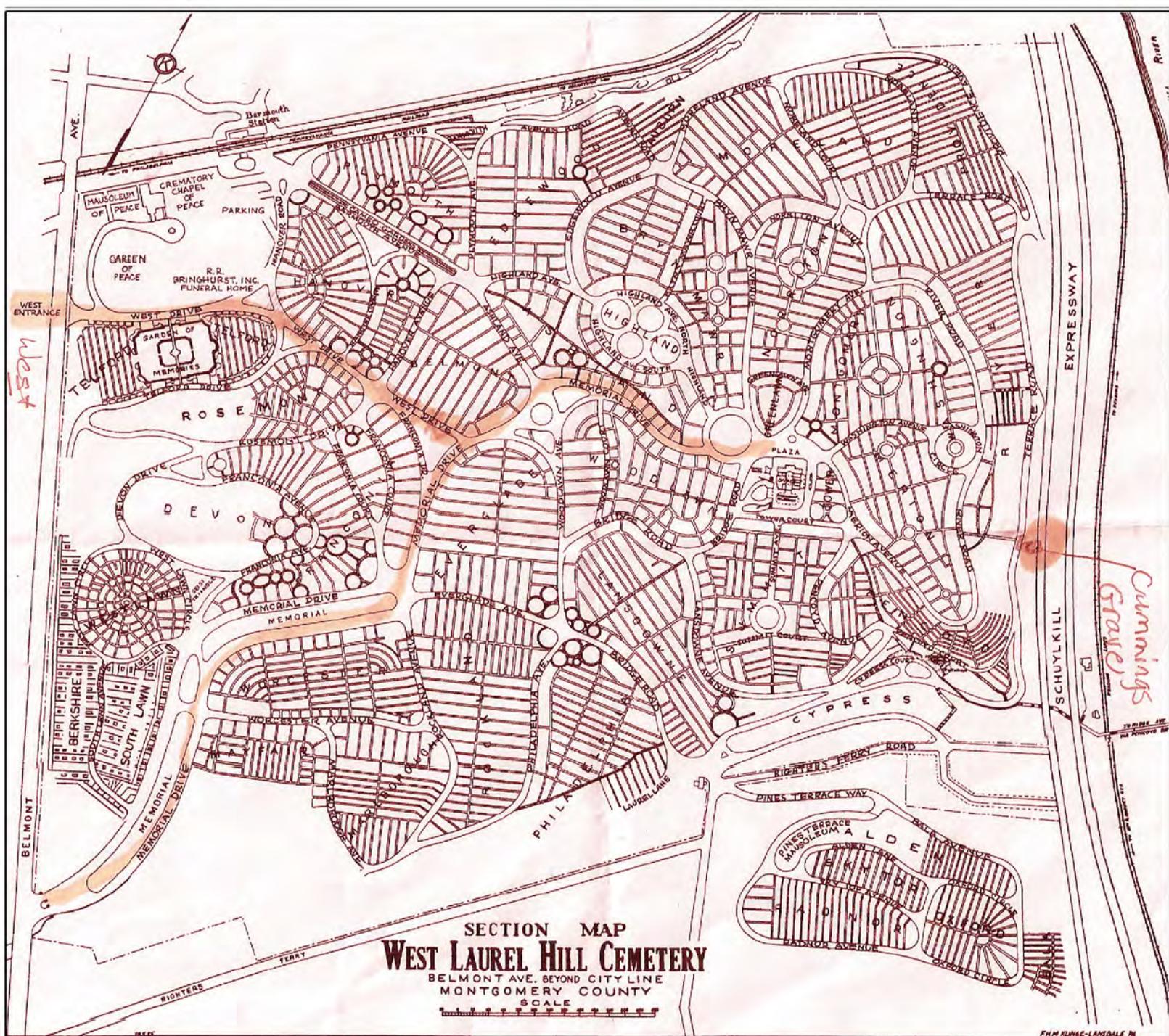
The citation which accompanies the Society of Virginia's medal hails Admiral Byrd as the only man to fly over both poles and as a man who has looked upon more square miles of unexplored territory than any human being in history. The citation pays tribute to his contributions to science and calls him "the only living American who has added one square mile of territory to his country's empire," and the only American since Lewis and Clarke who has extended the American domain by exploration and discovery.

"* * * He has made himself a scientist notable in an age of science, a patriot outstanding in an age of patriotism, and an explorer high in the rank of all time, and second to none in the world today."



Mary Christabel Bates Matheson Cummings (9/1/1873 - 4/1954) is buried in lot 6 of the River View Section of West Laurel Hill Cemetery, Bala Cynwyd, PA next to her 2nd husband, Edwin Clinton Cummings (1883 - 2/1925)





SECTION MAP
West Laurel Hill Cemetery
 BELMONT AVE. BEYOND CITY LINE
 MONTGOMERY COUNTY
 SCALE

Mary Christabel Bates Matheson Cummings
 (9/1/1873 - 4/1954)
 is buried in lot 6 of the River View Section of
 West Laurel Hill Cemetery, Bala Cynwyd, PA
 next to her 2nd husband,
 Edwin Clinton Cummings (1883 - 2/1925)

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Janet Cummings (nee Matheson) – 6/7/1893 – 9/10/1924

By Janet Elizabeth Luther (nee Matheson) b. 5/24/1939 – written in May 2008

My dad's mother Janet – she never was given a middle name – was only 18 when Dad (Harry) was born 2/25/1912 in Spring Valley, NY where Ray was a produce merchant. She was apparently named after her aunt, her father's sister Mary Janet Matheson. Janet was born in Pittsburgh PA. Her parents were Frederick James Matheson and Christabel Matheson (nee Mary Bates and later Christabel Cummings). Dad's father was Raymond King Cummings (8/4/1887 – 1/23/1957).

In 1912 the family moved to New York and in 1915 ran Raijan photography studio, 128 Washington Place (at 112th St and Morningside Park), which produced news photography and did freelance work. Friends visited including Theodore North Denslow (who married a woman named Josephine) and Maynard Owen Williams who was a National Geographic feature writer. For many years Mom and Dad had an enormous framed photograph of a man climbing a coconut palm in our living room: This photo had been intended for the National Geographic, but a paper clip had been left on the negative, so we inherited the blow-up with a white mark about 10" long in the corner.

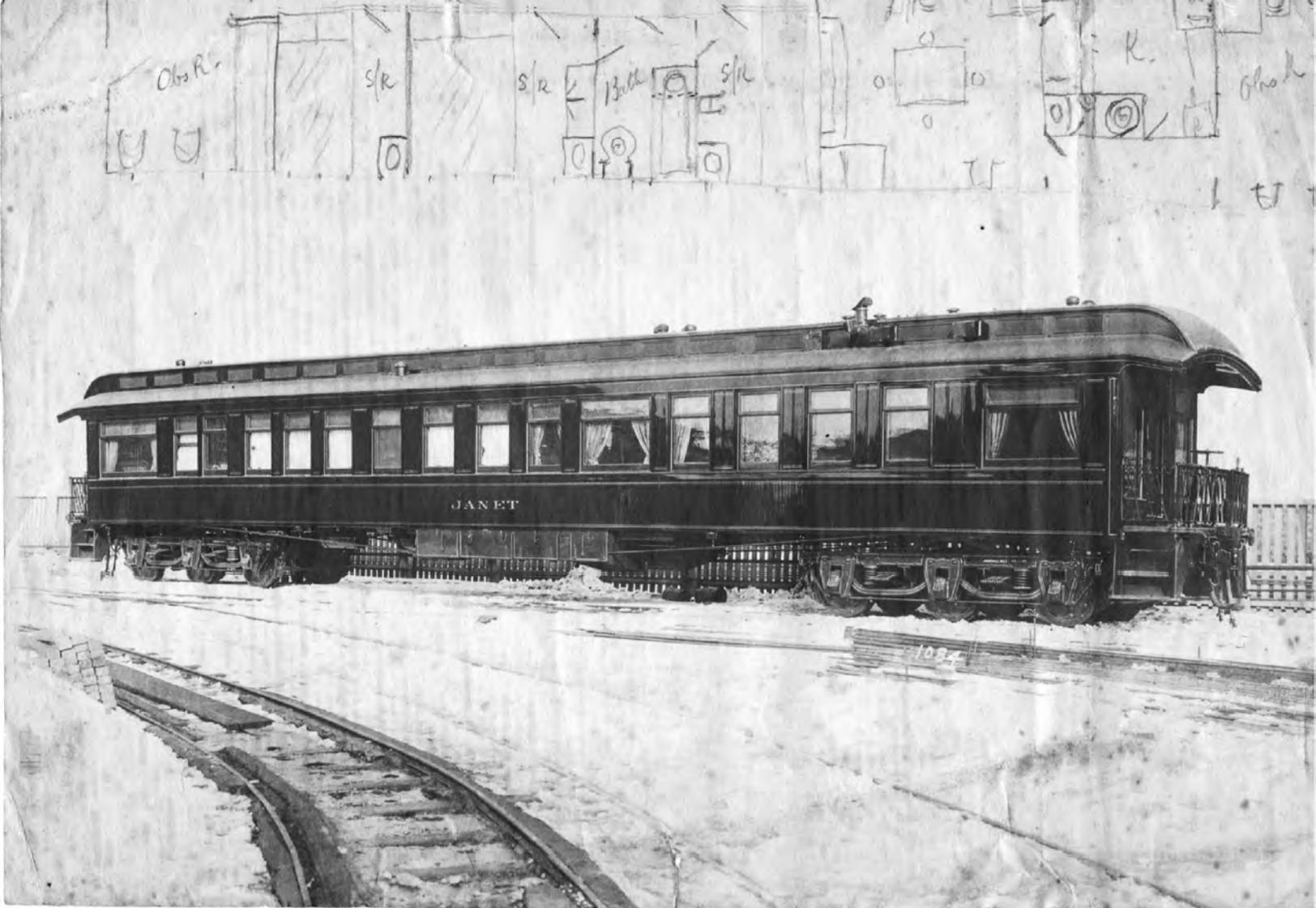
Janet and Ray separated in 1916 and divorced during the winter of 1919-1920 when Janet was living in New York City. Janet was granted sole custody of Hal a year later. (Ray married Gabrielle Wilson on 8/3/1920.) At this time Janet resumed her maiden name and also changed Dad's name from "Harry Matheson Cummings" to just "Harry Matheson", whether legally or not we don't know, but he was known as Harry Matheson for the rest of his life.

Janet worked for the rotogravure section of the New York Times. We have photos of her at her desk there, which must have been taken after Dad was born, because one of them shows a small photo of him tacked up behind her. She also worked for the YMCA in New York City and typed on a Smith-Corona typewriter. We also have patriotic photos of her taken during World War I and a certification from the National War Work Council of the YMCA testifying to her work as "Clerk Publicity Department New York City" from May 1918 to February 15, 1919. And we have her Washburn guitar with a label inside: "A-3947", probably a style 115 or 125 built somewhere between 1907 and 1915.

In August of 1920 Janet (age 27) visited her father's family in Oxford and wrote to her mother Christabel at 3025 N Broad St in Philadelphia.

We have an unsigned copy of Janet's will dated 1921 – when Harry was 9 - which indicates that at that time Janet lived in Manhattan. She left her estate to her son Harry with her mother Christabel (who at that time lived in Glenside, PA) as trustee.

Janet also remarried: an Italian named Di Fant (possibly Luigi). I remember Dad saying he'd "lost track" of him. At any rate, while pregnant, Janet died at age thirty-one when Dad was twelve. (A mystery: the cemetery lists cause of death as "gas".) She's buried in the Cripps family plot (along with her father's mother's mother, i.e., her great grandmother Elizabeth Cripps) at Green-Wood Cemetery in Brooklyn NY.



I'm assuming that these old photos I found after Mom's death are indeed of Janet so they would have been taken ~1894. I have no idea what to make of the train with its penciled notes. The three items were oddly a vivid blue color.



Christabel and Janet
c1896



Dictated by Janet Dec. 1899

"Dictated by Janet Dec. 1899"

(when Janet was 6-1/2) is written on the back of one of these two scraps of paper. I think it must be Christbel's handwriting.

Moon & Stars

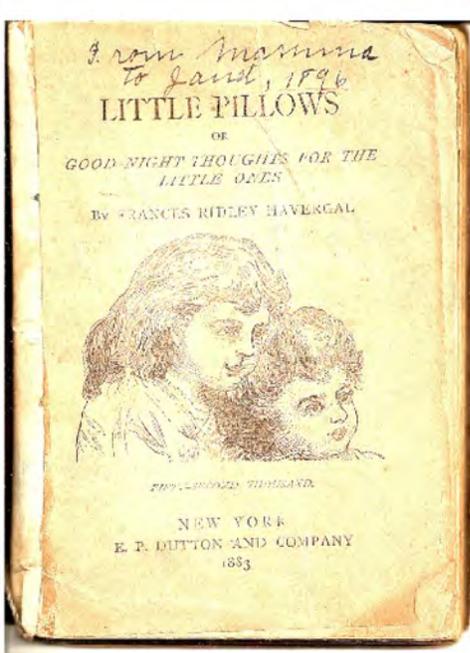
*If I owned all the moon & stars I
would sail on the moon across
the dark blue sky & look down
upon the little children in their
houses sleeping snug and tight.
On on they sleep till the morning
comes till I go in my snug &
bring my children with me.*

*little house and bring my
children with me. My children
are the stars. And the sun
comes out which has not any
children, and wakes the sleeping
ones up from their snug little
beds & get dressed and go to their
schools.*



Moon & Stars

If I owned all the moon & stars I would sail on the moon across the dark blue sky & look down upon the little children in their houses sleeping snug and tight. On and on they sleep till the morning comes till I go in my snug little hosue and bring my children with me. My children are the stars. And the Sun comes out which has not any children, and wakes the sleeping ones up from their snug little beds & they get dressed and go to their schools.



The inscription on this little book (dated 1883) is "From Mamma to Janet 1896" so Christabel gave it to Janet when Janet was 3



Janet Matheson (6/7/1893 - 9/10/1924)

Photos c. 1902



This is a strip of four photos. Maybe they were just printed that way.
I wonder about the Yale pennant.



Sharley Briggs 1850
 "Aunt Sharley" 1900
 To whom James Russell Lowell
 gave the set of silver knife, fork &
 spoon which she gave Janet
 Matheson who called her Aunt Sharley
 whose father Mr. Briggs was a great
 friend of Lowell

Charles Frederick Briggs died of a heart attack, having put in a full day at his writing desk. He and his wife and daughter, Charlotte Briggs, are buried in the Moravian Cemetery at New Dorp, Staten Island. Charlotte Briggs gave her father's letters to Lowell to the Houghton Library at Harvard.

The above says:
 Sharley Briggs 1850
 "Aunt Sharley" 1900

To whom James Russell Lowell gave the set of silver knife, fork & spoon which she gave Janet Matheson who called her "Aunt Sharley" whose father Mr. Briggs was a great friend of Lowell.

Charlotte Briggs with Janet Matheson, who was born in 1893, so would have been 7 if this photo was made in 1900.



Why are these are engraved "CM"?



We also have this (single) spoon of Janet's, engraved "Janet from Maraine", about which we know nothing.



OBITUARY.

CHARLES FREDERICK BRIGGS, JOURNALIST.

Charles Frederick Briggs, one of the oldest active journalists of this City, died suddenly on Wednesday night, of heart disease, at his residence, No. 150 Livingston-street, Brooklyn, in the seventy-third year of his age. During the day he performed his duties at the office of the *Independent* with his usual ability, and was apparently in good health when he left for his home in the afternoon. Mr. Briggs was born in Nantucket, and at an early age went to sea. Becoming dissatisfied with the life of a sailor, he abandoned the idea of leading a seafaring life after making two or three voyages, and came to this City and devoted himself to mercantile pursuits. This lasted for a short time, and leaving business he entered upon his literary career, which was only terminated by his death. He first wrote under the *nom de plume* of "Harry Franco," and in 1839 published a novel entitled *The Adventures of Harry Franco, a Tale of the Great Panic*, which was much read and admired. In 1843 he published another, *The Haunted Merchant*, and in 1847, *The Trippings of Tom Pepper, or the Results of Romancing*. In 1844 he commenced the *Broadway Journal*, in which enterprise he was joined by Edgar A. Poe, with whom he was very friendly, and for whom he predicted a brilliant future in his profession. Poe sought his advice on many occasions, and was introduced by him into New-York society. When Poe wrote his celebrated poem

"The Raven," Mr. Briggs read it with him, and assisted in its revision. Later the friendship was broken off on account of Poe's modes of life and habits. The *Broadway* was not successful, and Mr. Briggs next took charge of *Putnam's Magazine* in 1853, with George William Curtis and Parke Godwin for his assistants. He was afterward employed on *THE NEW-YORK TIMES* as managing editor, and during Mr. Raymond's absence in Europe, in 1859 was placed in charge of the paper. Leaving *THE TIMES*, Mr. Briggs was appointed to a position in the Custom-house, under Collector Barney, where he remained until 1870. Besides attending to his official duties, he had, for a number of years, assisted in editing the financial columns of the *Independent*, and when Mr. Henry C. Bowen purchased the *Brooklyn Daily Union*, he engaged Mr. Briggs to assume the position of financial editor of that journal, which he filled for three years. In 1873 the *Union* was purchased by Mr. B. F. Tracy, and Mr. Briggs was called to fill the editorial chair of that paper. He became dissatisfied, however, and Mr. Bowen desiring to have his services on the staff of the *Independent*, he connected himself with that journal, where he remained until the day of his death. Mr. Briggs was noted among his associates for his extreme modesty, and always preferred to write anonymously, not having, as one of his old friends remarked, the slightest particle of literary ambition. He was an indefatigable worker, and was remarkably well read, few men in this country being better acquainted with old English literature than he was. He was also very well acquainted with all the literary men of the country, by whom he was much esteemed and loved. Mr. Briggs was a gentleman of the old school, social to a high degree, and always with a jest or joke on his lips. He was noted for his excellent memory of past events, and for a general knowledge of all pertaining to the general make-up of a newspaper. Nothing escaped his eyes or pen. He was married and leaves a widow and an unmarried daughter. The funeral will take place from his late residence to-morrow afternoon, at 1 o'clock.

The New York Times

Published: June 22, 1877

Copyright © The New York Times



On the back of the photo below is written: "Left-hand side of sitting room as you enter from the library. It also shows a little of the book case in the library. Janet on the divan." We don't know who wrote it or what house is being described, but note that the large picture in the middle is the same one (inset) that Christabel gave my brother Jim (which is now Paula's).

Janet Matheson (6/7/1893 - 9/10/1924)

Photos: c. 1896 to 1902





Janet Matheson (6/7/1893 - 9/10/1924) Photos: c.1902 - 1905





Above: c. 1902

I don't think this looks like Christabel with Janet, but don't know who it could be.



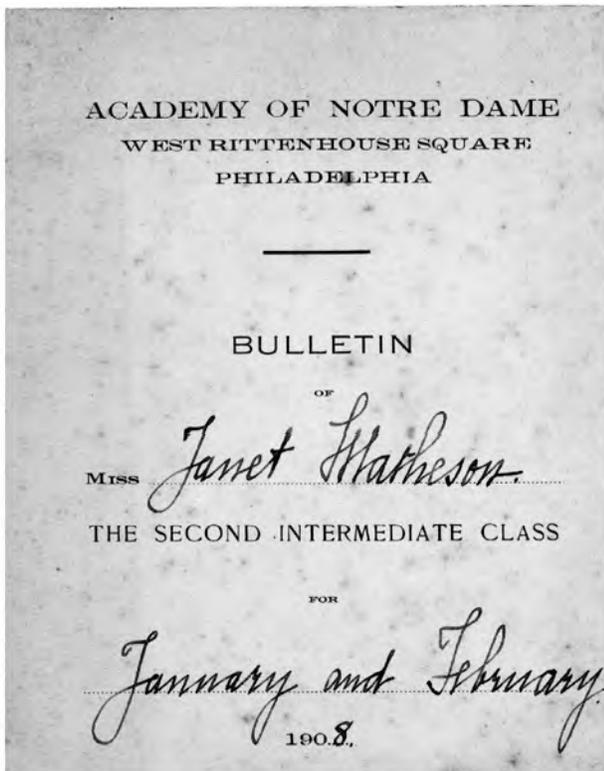
This may have been taken at the Academy of Notre Dame. I think this is Janet.

Janet Matheson
(6/7/1893 - 9/10/1924)



c. 1904

January and February, 1908 - apparently Janet was a fairly good student as a 15-year-old.



ABSENT	9	DAYS
GOOD CONDUCT	95	
CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE	87	
Spelling	80	
Grammar	70	
Reading	98	
Elocution	97	
Composition	78	
Arithmetic	75	
Geography	60	
History	70	
French		
German		

Sr. Marie du Sacre Coeur

Janet Matheson
(6/7/1893 -
9/101/1924) - circa
1899



circa 1901





Janet Matheson
(6/7/1893 - 9/10/1924)

Photos: c.1913



I think this is Janet with maybe
Christabel and Fred. I wonder where it
could have been taken.





Janet Matheson (6/7/1893 - 9/10/1924) Photo: c.1917



Janet Matheson (6/7/1893 - 9/10/1924) Photo: c.1911

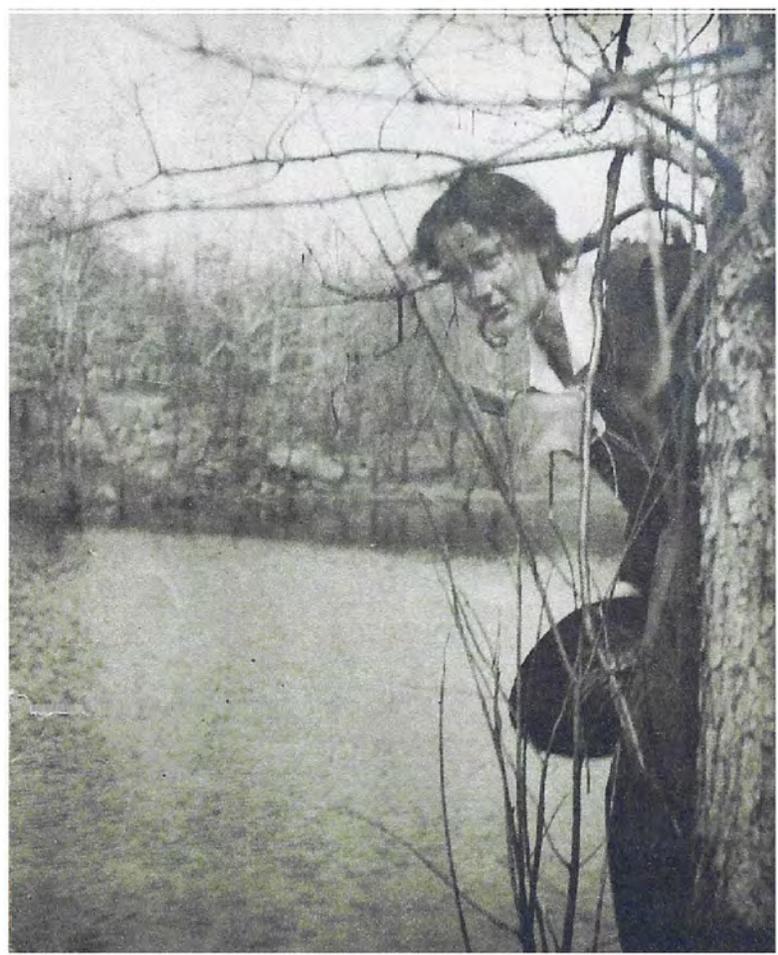


Janet Matheson
c 1911 - 16





1912: Janet Matheson (6/7/1893 - 9/10/1924) and her son Harry (Hal) Matheson Cummings (2/20/1912 - 12/7/1977). Janet's mother, Christable, made a statue of Janet holding Hal from this photo. The statue also had a six-year-old Hal tugging at Janet's skirt.



Janet - circa 1911

Below: Christabel, Janet and Harry - c. 1917





I (Janet E. Luther) worked for the Fannie E. Rippel Foundation from 1975 to 2004. My father was Harry (called Hal) Matheson Cummings. He dropped the name Cummings when his parents divorced. I was named after my grandmother, Janet, shown here.

Hard at work:

Janet Cummings (nee Matheson)
(6/7/1893 - 9/10/1924).

Janet worked for the rotogravure
section of the New York Times

Photo: c.1914

and

her granddaughter,

Janet Luther (nee Matheson)

(b 5/24/1939).

Photo: 2004



I wonder where this brass plaque
came from.



Here's a copy of the photo of Hal, aged
about 2, on the wall behind Janet in the
middle photo.



A series of patriotic photos circa 1916 - The photo on the left is called "A Soldier's Vision" - Janet is the "vision" (There was apparently a poem by the same name.) Center: Harry age 4

The
National War Work Council
of the
Young Men's Christian Associations
of the United States
Certifies that

Mrs. Janet M. Cummings of **New York City**
has rendered Loyal Service to our Country under the National War Work
Council of the Young Men's Christian Associations of the United States
from May 1918 *to* February 15, 1919
-serving as Clerk Publicity Department
New York City



J. Mott
General Secretary

Paul Sloan
Chairman

My father, Harry Matheson Cummings was born on 2/20/1921, in Spring Valley, NY. His mother, Janet, sent a letter (in pencil) dated 2/21/1921 to her mother, Christabel, announcing the arrival.

Feb 21 – 12

Dear Mummy –

The baby came at eleven o'clock yesterday morning & he is a little dear, of course. He weighs seven pounds but has small bones so is quite plump. He has hair about an inch long & dark & large blue eyes. His name is to be Harry Matheson Cummings – doesn't it sound familiar? There was a slight laceration near the outside of the womb & it took four stitches. I have no fever or any pain. The water broke at twelve thirty & the pains began at two thirty.

I am tired now so I won't write any more.

With love.

Janet

So how did we get the letter? My dad's grandmother, Christabel, sent the letter addressed to my dad, Mr. Hal Matheson 116 Emerson St N.W. Washington DC and postmarked 7/20/1943, with this covering letter:

CHRISTABEL CUMMINGS STUDIO
1920 S STREET NORTHWEST
WASHINGTON, D.C.

The postmark on the envelope was "Spring Valley February 21 1912" and it was addressed to

Mrs. E. C. Cummings
550 Riverside Drive
New York City

The Alabama

So Dad saved it and later on Mom saved it. Remarkable!

Letter dated 8/20/1920 from Janet Matheson (aged 28) who was visiting relatives in Oxford England to her mother, Mrs. E. C. Cummings (Christabel), 3025 N Broad St, Philadelphia, Pa, U.S.A. (Notes: The stamp is for Two Pence; Christabel would have been 47 on 9/1/21.)

Dear Mummy – Many happy returns and a big birthday kiss – what a fraud you are. Not one line from you since I left New York yet you'll probably scold me for not writing!

We had a glorious week at the Hotel de la Zamise with the people from the boat and then a wonderful crossing from Calais to Dover. Since we got here it has all been the family and you would be terribly surprised to see how they have changed. They are all so old & tired & drawn. Financial conditions have changed so that they have none of them much to live on & it must be bitter to try & change one's style of living at fifty. However I'll tell you more about all that when I get home.

We expect to sail on the Fouraine of the French Lines from Havre on the 28th of Sept. That will get me to N. Y. about the 8th or 10th of October & between you & me & the lamp post the statue of so-called Liberty will look alright!

England will never go dry – Everyone would freeze to death if it did! There have only been three days in the month we've been here that the thermometer was over 60° & then rain! Good Lord! The climate seems to suffer from melancholia superinduced by its own impotence!

Everyone seems well but a bit grayed. Vernon & Norman ware well, the latter is perfectly dear – He sails on Sept 7th for Calcutta – a good job with a future larger than London can offer but I wish he'd wait till I leave!

Best Love,

Jan

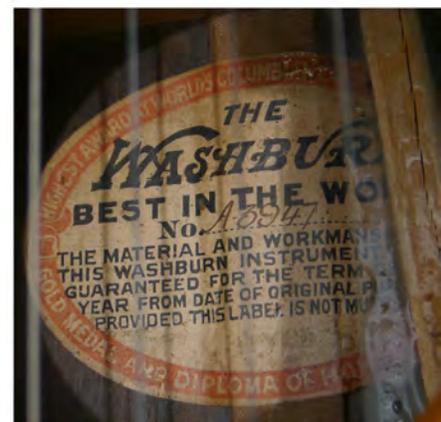
We are both very well, thank you & as you didn't answer my cable I presume you must be – I don't dare think anything else. - Jan



Janet Matheson Cummings ~1914



12/09 note to David Luther from his grandmother Janet Luther: The Washburn guitar which mom gave you originally belonged to my grandmother Janet and was probably made between 1907 and 1915.



My father, Harry Matheson, used to play the ukulele, and sang this song to us when I was little. Maybe Janet had sung it to him when he was young.

Played her Guitar



She sat in the ham - mock and played her gui - tar,



played her gui - tar, played her gui - tar,



She sat in the ham - mock and played her gui - tar,



Played her gui - tar.

He sat down beside her and smoked his cigar . . .

He said that he loved her, but oh how he lied . . .

They were to be married, but she up and died . .

She went up to heaven, and flip-flop she flied . . .

He went to the funeral, but just for the ride . . .

He sat on her tombstone and laughed 'til he cried...

The tombstone fell over and squish-squash he died...

He went down to Hades, and sizzled and fried . . .

The moral of this story is, "Don't tell a lie" . . .

If you want anymore, you can sing it yourself . . .

Washburn guitar

From: **Larry Scott White** (lsw@elderly.com)
Sent: Thu 5/29/08 12:49 PM
To: Janet Luther (janeteluther@hotmail.com)

Hi Janet,

Thank you for sending the pictures. Based on the label inside the guitar and the guitars appointments I feel it was built somewhere between 1907-1915. The bridge is replaced and it appears to have at least one repaired top crack. This might be a Style 115 or 125.

We would sell this for \$700.00 to \$750.00. To purchase it is worth around \$400.00 to \$425.00 to us.

Please note: To maintain customer trust and satisfaction, we require that all instruments we sell be structurally sound and meet certain standards of playability. Should your instrument(s) need any significant repair or setup work we will provide you with an estimate of the work needed, and may reduce our offer(s) accordingly (if we didn't know about the needed work in advance). In the case of consignment we would expect the work to be done and paid for before we could offer the instrument(s) for sale.

Thanks for your inquiry. If you have further questions please feel free to call me.

LSW

Elderly Instruments 1100 North Washington Lansing, MI 48906 888-473-5810 517-372-7880	Larry Scott White Appraisals / Guitar Instruction 517-334-5858 lsw@elderly.com
---	---

At 08:50 PM 5/28/2008, you wrote:

Hi Larry -

The attached PDF file shows 4 views of the guitar. (Let me know if you need others.) It's 36-1/2" long and 12-1/4" at the widest. I realize from the photo that the "serial number" is actually A-3947. As you see it's not in good shape and has been repaired. I would just like to know how old it is.

Thanks.

Janet

From: larjan@rcn.com
To: janeteluther@hotmail.com
Subject: Fw: old guitar
Date: Wed, 28 May 2008 10:15:03 -0400

----- Original Message -----

From: Larry Scott White
To: Janet and Lars Luther (by way of Juan Lopez <elderly@elderly.com>) (by way of Anthony Marsala <anthony@elderly.com>)
Sent: Tuesday, May 27, 2008 6:32 PM
Subject: Re: old guitar

At 03:12 PM 5/27/2008, you wrote:

I have my grandmother's old Washburn guitar A-0847. She lived, if believe in Brooklyn, 6/7/1893 to 9/10/1924. Is it possible to learn how old this guitar is?

Janet E. Luther
larjan@rcn.com

Yes. Please send me some photos and I'll try and help you.

I don't know anything about this poem or the poet, but it at the bottom is says "Raijan Studio, 128 Washington Place, New York City" I think Raijan was the photo studio run by Janet and her husband, Raymond King Cummings.

POEM COPYRIGHT BY MARGARET E. SANGSTER, Jr.
SOLD FOR ONE PUBLICATION ONLY. MUST NOT BE SYNDICATED.

THE CHANCE.

By Margaret E. Sangster, Jr.

Life was just a game to me -
Just a game I, somehow, started,
Open handed, reckless hearted.....
Just a game I played and played,
Never heeding where I strayed -
Life was just a game to me:

Just a game - and I was losing -
That which seemed at first all choosing,
Grew on me until no daring
Could have made me break away.
On I played, I was not caring
For the score that I would pay!

Then the war came - unexpected
As a summer thunder shower;
Dreams that long had lain neglected
Rose before me, vividly,
And my half-dazed mind could see
That it was my country's hour -
That my country needed me !

Needed me - the words rang slowly,
On a brain be-numbered with play -
Rang like church bells, solemn, holy;
And, as night-time mists of gray
Sweep away before the dawn,
So my doubts were swept away!
Like a pilgrim soul re-born,
Like a child, new taught to pray,
I could see God's mighty plan -
And my chance to be a man!

Poem submitted with photograph from Raijan Studio
128 Washington Place, New York City

Online I found that this was
published in The Virginia Guide,
Volume 44, Number 7, 15
December 1917

More material indicating that Janet was active during World War I. On the back of this photo is typed:

HOME FOR SOLDIERS' MOTHERLESS BABIES

Some of the little guests at the home established by Lady Maud Barrett at Rustington, Sussex, where babies whose fathers are at the front and whose mothers have died are being reared with loving care.

In some cases the little ones have not yet seen "Daddy".

There is also a rubber stamp reading:

YOUR COURTESY
IN RUNNING CREDIT LINE WILL BE APPRECIATED
PHOTOGRAPH from JANET M. CUMMINGS
70 FIFTH AVE., NEW YORK CITY

70



I found this along with the photo online (no mention of Janet):

Home for soldiers children, Lady Maud Barrett Home, WW1
The indoor playground at the home established by Lady Maud Barrett at Rustington, Sussex. The Lady Maud Barrett Home was founded for the purpose of looking after children whose fathers were at war and who had no mothers to take care of them during their fathers absence. Lady Maud was the daughter of Major-General, the Earl of Cavan, and was in charge of the home. Date: 1916



On the back of this photo is pencilled "The little box was handed over 'to make babies well' " (page 180)

as if it were an illustration for a book.

Also the same rubber stamp asking that Janet be credited.



THE GREEN-WOOD CEMETERY
 500 25th Street, Brooklyn, NY 11232-1755
 Tel: 718.768.7300 / Fax: 718.788.1101
 www.greenwoodcemetery.org

-A NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK-

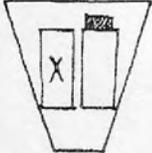
Name		Born 6/7/1893	
Di Fant. = Janet M.			
Late residence			
210 Albemarle Road, Brooklyn, N.Y.			
Age		M S W	
31		Married	
Date of Death	Date of interment	Birthplace	
Sep 10, 1924	Sep. 12, 1924	U.S.	
Lot	Grave	Section	
20420	N see register	23	
Cause of death		Undertaker	
Gas.		James F Decker.	
Remarks			
Library Bureau			

Died 9/10/1924

-Est. 1838-



No. THE GREEN-WOOD CEMETERY, Apr. 12, 1872. 19
The remains of Elizabeth Cripps. were this day
interred in Lot No. R T Section No. Grave No.
20420. June 6, 1872.
Undertaker, T. W. Barnum. \$ paid.
Remarks, Superintendent

No. 401941 THE GREEN-WOOD CEMETERY, Sept 12, 1924 19
The remains of Janet M. Di Fant. were this day
interred in Lot No. 20420 Section No. 23 Grave No.
Undertaker, James F Decker. \$ 15.00 paid.
Remarks, Superintendent




Janet Matheson (1893 - 1924) is buried beside her father's mother, Elizabeth Cripps (1804-1872)

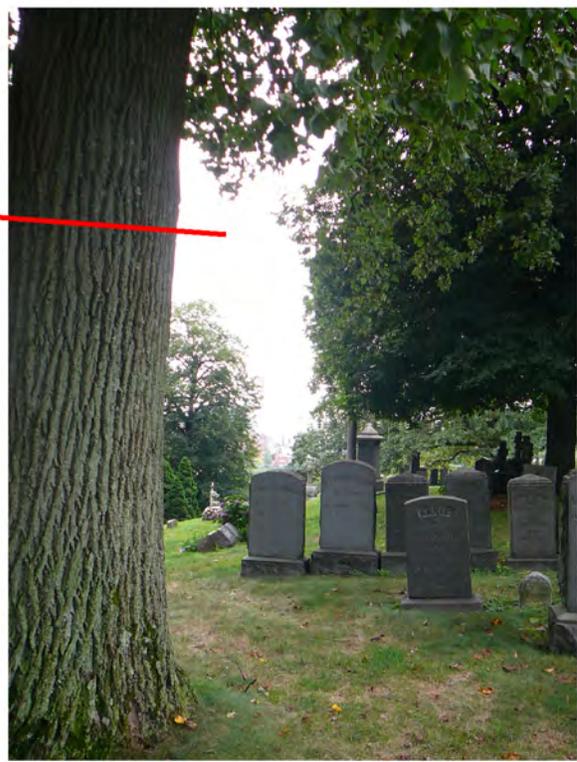


8/12/13 - Above: Looking down toward the road from behind the two graves; Below: Looking up the hill from the road toward the graves (circled in red).



**Green-Wood Cemetery
Brooklyn
NY**

When you stand at Janet's grave and look between the trees you can see the Statue of Liberty.



Raymond King Cummings (8/4/1887 – 1/23/1957)

By Janet Elizabeth Luther (nee Matheson) b. 5/24/1939 – written in May 2008

My dad was born Harry Matheson Cummings on 2/25/1912 in Spring Valley, NY. His mother was Janet Cummings (nee Matheson); his father, Raymond, was then 24 and a produce merchant. After Dad's birth the family moved to New York and in 1915 ran Raijan photography studio, 128 Washington Place (at 112th St and Morningside Park), which produced news photography and did freelance work. Janet and Ray divorced during the winter of 1919-1920 – Dad was about 8 – when Janet was living in New York City, and she was granted sole custody of Hal a year later. At this time Janet resumed her maiden name and also changed Dad's name from "Harry Matheson Cummings" to just "Harry Matheson", whether legally or not we don't know, but he was known as Harry Matheson for the rest of his life.

Ray soon remarried: Gabrielle Wilson, daughter of Cecil Wray Wilson of Bronxville NY, (whom I knew as my "Granny Gay") on 8/3/1920 in Morristown NJ. They lived in White Plains NY and had one daughter, Elizabeth Starr Hill (nee Cummings) – my Aunt Betty Hill – born November 1925 so she was 13 years younger than Dad.

Ray's biographer, Mike Ashley writes that Ray was born in New York City (on Times Square at 43rd and Broadway in a second floor apartment – above where there used to be a restaurant called Toffenetti's), to Ida Virginia Cummings (nee King) and Henry Martyn Cummings. He was the youngest of three sons. George was, I think, ten years older and Harry twenty years. Harry died suddenly in 1901 of tuberculosis at the age of only 33. Ray was very fond of Harry, after whom he named Dad, but didn't get along with George.

Ray's father and his two older brothers were entrepreneurs, moving into any area where there was a chance for development. Ray studied extensively with a tutor in his youth, then began studying physics at Princeton University beginning at age 16, but had been there only two months when he was hauled off to orange plantations in Puerto Rico, which his brothers were developing and his father was selling. They made a lot of money and spent the winters in Puerto Rico and the summers in New York City. Before he was twenty Ray went with his family to work in oil fields in Wyoming, seek gold in British Columbia and Alaska and go timber cruising in the Canadian Forests.

Although initially the family fortunes were reasonably good, they subsequently declined, and Ray needed to make a living for himself. At one time he ran a photography business and also played piano in a band.

We don't know Ray's profession when Dad was born in 1912; his daughter Betty thinks he didn't start writing until he was about 30. In 1914 he began working for Thomas Alva Edison at his lab in Menlo Park NJ, and stayed for five years until 1919. Ashley writes that, although Ray has been described as Edison's "personal assistant", he actually worked for Edison Phonograph Company where he arranged albums and wrote the labels – Ray himself said he was "editor of house organs". As far as I know Dad never lived near Menlo Park NJ. Did Janet and



Harry stay in Spring Valley NY during this time; surely Ray didn't commute from Spring Valley where Dad was born to Menlo Park, NJ.

Ray started writing in earnest in 1919 at age 32 and was one of the founders of modern science fiction during the 1920's – 1940's, both for pulp magazines and also novels. His first published story, "*The Girl in the Golden Atom*", appeared in *All-Story Weekly* in 1919 and was published in book form in London in 1922 and in the US in 1923. By 1937 his stories were appearing in five or more magazines each month. His work comprised some 40 novels which also appeared in magazines, as well as hundreds of novelettes and short stories, mostly science fiction and fantasy, but also detective stories and comics. He wrote under his own name, but also used many pseudonyms: Ray King, Gabriel Wilson, Ray P. Shotwell (which was a "house name"; i.e., used for stories by many authors), John Campbell and possibly Rae King, Barent Van Waldron, and Victor K. Ray.

Betty wrote

My father told me he got the idea of "*The Girl in the Golden Atom*" when he saw an ad for Quaker Oats, with a picture of a girl holding a box of Quaker Oats, that had on it the picture of a girl holding a box of Quaker Oats, that had on it a girl holding a box of Quaker Oats, and so on, with the figures getting smaller and smaller. He felt that if he could look deeply enough into the picture, the girl would become "infinitely small", as he put it, and the idea for the story began to stir in his mind.

He was solitary by nature. His religious affiliation was Episcopalian (although his father had been a Quaker) and politically he was a Republican. He collected fine prints of paintings and mounted and catalogued a library of over 3,000 such prints and was charmed by the Impressionists. He was very interested in weather phenomena and in opera, operettas, light Classical music and Broadway plays. (He loved *Carmen*, *Madame Butterfly* and *Pagliacci*.) His favorite recreations were chess and pencil sketching, and he also collected stamps. He read encyclopedias for fun, and could recite the latitude and longitude of virtually any place in the world.

Ray's writing was an ideal occupation since it didn't tie him to any one location. Betty remembers that they never put down roots, living only in hotels, rented houses or apartments, and she did not attend school regularly until she was almost nine. They lived in New York City from the time she was about 7 until age 11. The family spent a lot of time in Florida and also visited Betty's aunt in Bermuda.

About Ray's writing Betty says:

He wrote in a comfortable chair, usually in the living room, with his feet up on a hassock. He used an ordinary pencil (a number one, the softest lead) and wrote his first draft on a lined yellow pad propped against a desk blotter on his lap. He didn't care how much commotion was going on in the room, as long as no one spoke directly to him. He typed the final draft of his work, making a few penciled corrections. The typewriter was set up on any convenient table. He almost never retyped anything.

Betty makes clear that he was not a businessman:

He was an extremely persistent person in some ways, but not a forceful one in business, which upset my mother. For example, the slogan of the 1939 World's Fair was "The World of Tomorrow", a title my father had originated for a series of articles in *Liberty* magazine. A legal representative of the fair's management got in touch with him and asked him to sign a waiver, giving up all rights to the title, which he cheerfully did. My mother felt – rightly, I believe – that he should, and could, have been paid for the use of it, if he had exerted the most elementary sort of pressure on the situation. In such ways, he seemed quite unworldly, often annoying so.

Thyril L. Ladd visited Ray and Betty in 1944 or 1945 (Ray, tall and snowy-haired, was about 58 and Betty, blond, slender and very pretty at 20). By then Betty was also an established writer, having been first published in *Liberty* magazine when she was only thirteen. There was a framed letter on the wall from Eleanor Roosevelt congratulating Betty on this feat. This is his report: He arrived at their hotel at 12:05 pm. Ray had left orders that he was not to be disturbed before noon. He joined them for their breakfast (his lunch); then they went up to Ray's suite where they remained all afternoon talking as Ray chain-smoked and described his typical day: He and Betty arise at noon, spend the afternoon doing anything that interests them, have dinner in the late evening and then after midnight go home to write until daybreak fueled by coffee and cigarettes.

By the early 1950's the market for monthly short stories had mostly evaporated. From being a popular writer with a good – often very good – income, Ray was scrabbling to sell his work. His health, always poor, worsened as he suffered from bronchial and lung disorders and became quite breathless from emphysema, although he never stopped smoking. Ray had a cerebral hemorrhage and ruptured aorta at age 67 and died at 69.



Ray Cummings
c. 1950. Painting
by Elizabeth
Starr Hill



The insert in the third paragraph reads "no drinking around the house here, which I guess you all remember was a factor. (Forget all this personal life angle in talking with Betty etc.)"

Note: I, Janet, was 3 and my brother Jim had been born 12/16/1941.

867 Riverside Drive
N.Y.C. June 25 1942

Dear Son:

Your letter must have sent an aura in advance of it. I woke up thinking of you this morning, making rosy plans not yet possible of accomplishing--and there was your letter. Want to answer it now--or, as usual, a lot of days might slip by.

No chance yet for Betty and me to get away. We'll know well in advance--will have corresponded with you regarding exact time etc., certainly a week ahead...God forbid I should ride on a bus! The most I can stand is down 5th Ave. for an hour, which Betty loves--and which is horrible. We'll come by Penn. R.R. Probably one of those afternoon trains so that we can have dinner en route--and arrive I suppose in early evening. In time to rout the grandchildren out of bed and feed them popcorn and castor oil...

Here is how we stand. Betty and I have a very nice three room, kitchen and bath apartment here. Gay comes in once or twice a week or so--much less--really none--of the "emotional strain" now--everything very amiable. In effect, Betty and I are living alone. We are always just about to get the kitchen working for "housekeeping", so Betty will get training in wifely duties. But we never do.

I'm now about 1/4 along in quite a sizable story--two or three weeks yet...And Betty is hustling at the radio. Not yet landed. When she does, financially that will change everything--two incomes instead of one. And the way things are laid out now--no domesticity--runs very high. It ought not--but it does. Everything Betty does--has to do--when you are thinking in modest-income terms, is high...We're vaguely hoping to wind ~~xxx~~ up at Bretton Hall next Fall...Maybe...

So while I'm doing this husky story--which will bring a decent lump of cash--maybe--if, but and we hope--here's a sketch of Betty's outlook...She auditioned for the Director of "Pepper Young's Family"--N.B.C. (Mrs. Carrington's main program.) This is tops in radio-serials. He, the Director, was enthusiastic. Said she was the best aspirant. Accepted her, without further audition-competition. She gets the first Pepper Young Part available. But--for six years that serial has been going along--and everybody holds their part like grim death, because they're little goldmines. So the Director suggested that Mrs. Carrington twist the story as it goes along so that a new character enters the daily troubles--which would be Betty....So she has been after Mrs. Carrington. And Mrs. Carrington's husband has been starting for War, her boy has to be put in camp, her daughter just graduated etc. She has been flying around like Mrs. Roosevelt--and writing two installments of serials a day simultaneously. Betty nabs one of her secretaries--who also are nimble as flees--about once a week. Mrs. C.--so the Sec. said, promised three weeks ago to line up the character--lay the plants in the plot, and get the thing working. She forgot it, put it off, God knows what. Anyway, up to last Sat., the daily dictation showed no signs of it. Betty wrote Mrs. C. few days ago--she's supposed to alight momentarily at her Long Island home this week. No answer yet.

Meanwhile Betty hovers around N.B.C. and C.B.S. several times a

Handwritten notes in the left margin:
"angle in talking with Betty etc."
"no drinking around the house here"

week, occasionally getting more auditions in other departments etc. (Tremendously big organizations. Hundreds of aspiring girls ~~their~~ around every minute. So far, in competitive auditions, each time Betty knocks out her adversaries...I guess she has the goods.) With Pepper Young as a springboard, other landings would come easier.

on the air
Mrs. Carrington now is dictating Pepper Young about three weeks ahead of the air. So, when and if she puts Betty in--Betty is in about three weeks later. (But, of course, she might make it a minor part. "The carriage waits, my Lord"--and after a few days, Betty would be out again. So we really don't know very much.)

Meanwhile also--since radio is a closed shop--Betty has had to contact the union. Horrible--a daughter of mine being unionized! American Federation of Radio Artists. A neat little hold-up of fifty bucks cash in advance, before they will clear you for the air. But Betty has somehow sidestepped that cash in advance business. She'll pay it out of her first checks. Anyway, she already has her clearance papers for N.B.C. (Pepper Young pays--no matter how small, or how big the part--minimum is \$34 per day.) There are also, allied to this, the one-minute daily commercials. That little minute interlude-- "Camay soap is so wonderful--I've only used it three days and my boy friend says etc." These pay \$15 per minute. They apparently get dealt out to you, when you know all the Directors and are established.

So there you are....And as soon as we get a bit out of this preliminary chaos and know where we stand, we'll bounce down.

Love to Alma and the grandchildren.

Affect.

Dad.

Letter from my grandfather to my dad, Harry, at 116 Emerson St N.W. Washington DC (I was 4, Jim was 19 months and Betty ~18.)

Postmarked July 9, 1943.

RAY CUMMINGS

Hotel Bretton Hall
86th St. & Broadway
NY City
Endicott 2-8000

Dear Son: Seems like a long time since we've written. I don't know who owes who a letter. I had no idea so much time would pass without Betty & me getting down there. Each week seems unpropitious for one reason or another. Mostly it's been unsystematized work so that a few days away would seem to result in loss of that week's check. . . However, that's about straightened out now – or at least, we hope so. . .

The immediate occasion of this letter: Betty and her former school room-mate have been invited by another girl friend to spend 2 weeks at her summer home in Vermont. I think it's a good idea for Betty to break the summer by getting away like this, so she plans to try and do some writing while up there. Anyway – the girls expect to leave next Tues. July 13th returning July 27th. Which leaves me largely alone here during that period, so it would be ridiculous for me not to mesh my work, rush my work ahead and bounce down and see you for a few days.

It occurs to me that quite possibly you may not plan to be in Washington during that time. Drop me a line return mail on that point.

If you are going to be at home – and if convenient to you – I'll arrange to come down. No formality. I'll just make some work – get a plot oked, 'phone you and come. Maybe Fri 16th or the following Mon. or Tues. Something like that.

The only possible hitch is that Betty awakened this morning with “bad sore throat” and obvious “start of a cold”. If that runs into anything, naturally I wouldn't let her go to Vermont.

Anyway – drop me a line return mail. Hope you're all well. Love to Alma and Janet. (Does Jimmy talk yet?)

Love from Betty.

Affect.
Dad

Letter from my dad's half-sister, Elizabeth Starr Hill, addressed to my dad, Mr. Harry Matheson 116 Emerson St N.W. Washington DC postmarked Jul 17 1943 from Woodstock, VT. (I was 4, Jim was 8 months and Betty ~18.) On the back Betty wrote: "Please don't bother to write while you're ill. B."

Friday night

Dearest Hal----

I was almost stricken—(almost, but not quite)—to hear about how sick you were. Seriously, I do wish you'd let me know when you get sick. I always tell you when I am, even when it's something completely unromantic like measles! Please don't think I'd rather not have to worry about, because now I'll have to worry even more, imagining that you're about to kick the bucket, unheard, at any moment! You are a pal, and my favorite brother, aren't you?

How are we supposed to win the war when you're not at the Bureau all the time? Or didn't you miss much work? If you didn't, you're a better man than I am. I've done only one lick of work since arrival in this hell-hole. (See Dad's letter by this mail, and make him tell you about it.) I honestly haven't time now, things of the most unpleasant nature keep cropping up, but will write you a long, oozyly sympathetic letter later on.

Give my love to the whole dear bunch, and tell them I wanted to get down this trip, will next time. You may keep a smattering of love for yourself.

Betty

Note from my dad's father, Ray Cummings, addressed to my dad, Mr. Harry Matheson 116 Emerson St N.W. Washington DC from New York. (I was 4, Jim was 19 months and Betty ~18.) Ray's date of arrival would have been Friday Jul 23, 1943.

Postmarked July 15 1943

RAY CUMMINGS

Wed. evening
At N.B.C.

Dear Son: Just a line –waiting at N.B.C. between shows.

I arrive Washington next Friday 2:25 P.M. (if on time)

Will grab a taxi and come right out.

Take care of yourself.

Affect.
Dad

Letter from my dad's half-sister, Elizabeth Starr Hill, addressed to my dad, Mr. Harry Matheson 116 Emerson St N.W. Washington DC from Woodstock, VT. (I was 4, Jim was 19 months and Betty ~18.) On the back Betty wrote: "Please don't bother to write while you're ill. B."

Postmarked July 17, 1943

Friday night

Dearest Hal----

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Give my love to the whole dear bunch, and tell them I wanted to get down this trip, will next time. You may keep a smattering of love for yourself.

Betty

Letter from my grandfather addressed to my dad, Harry Matheson Esq. 116 Emerson St N.W. Washington DC (I was 4, Jim was 8 months and Betty ~18.) Uncle Billy refers to our family physician, Bill Mauldin.

Postmarked July 21 1943.

RAY CUMMINGS

Tues p.m. again
at N.B.C.

Dear Hal:

I arrived Bretton Hall 2:30 A.M. last night! An hour late. And cold! I dug a sweater out of my suitcase to keep warm. . . Thanks to you and Alma for the nice time I had. Please assure Alma I'm confident your health is okay – but I do agree you're wise to rest up – and eat – eat! Sorry Alma & I couldn't have sneaked off to the movies. Better luck next time.

I bet Janet was thrilled at the train-leaving experience. Today I've worked! Am to see ye [?] Ed tomorrow. Betty will return probably next Tuesday. By that time I ought to have a good layout, because I'll work right through the weekend which [I] usually do not do. Then, when Betty gets back, we'll lay our plans. Oughtn't to take very long to get Betty straightened out.

I got a mess of "Hop Harrigan" radio scripts today from Superman – am studying them to see if practical to write 'em. Also – I'd like mighty well to land some sort of radio thing like that for Betty to write. Free lance fiction is pretty slow money for her and she hates comics.

When we come over I'll bring that "Lisbeth" fiction story of mine – and we'll block out a Lisbeth-Hal comedy. I think I'll take us to Mars and let Hal try his luck wringing the necks of the Martians.

Best love to you all. My regards to "Uncle Billy" when you see him Sat. Tell him if he gets you to 150 lbs I'll write him up for the Amer. Medical Soc. as the modern miracle worker. . . Wonderful publicity for him!

Affect.
Dad

1952

73 Claremont Ave.
Mt. Veron, N.Y.
Feb. 29th/

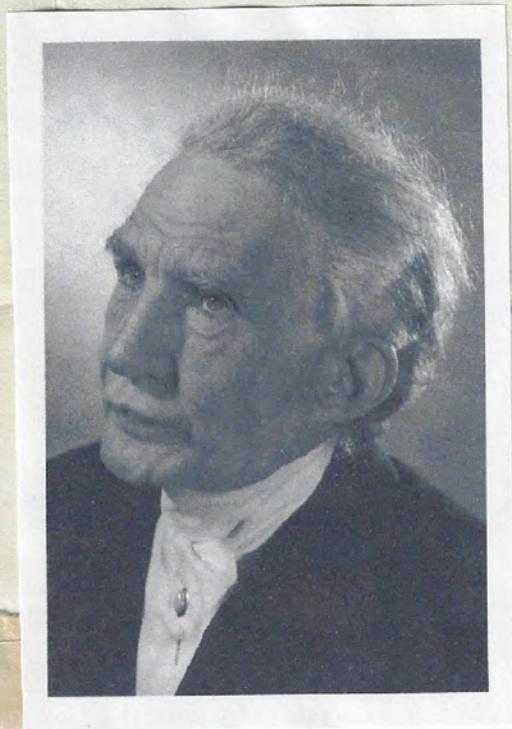
Dear Hal:

During the period from Lincoln's to Washington's birthday, I seemed to recall that you were born in there somewhere. Silly for a father not to be sure? Anyway, I had expected to write you what I was thinking, and this and that came up--and I didn't.

Seems now, I might as well set down the gist of what was in my mind. It seemed to me very nice to contemplate that I have a son who never has caused me any worry, of whose affection I am convinced--and of whom always I can be very proud. That was the general idea.

Affectionately,

Dad
Dad.



AFTER 3 DAYS, RETURN TO

Ray Cummings
73 Claremont Ave.
Mt. Vernon, N.Y.

MOUNT VERNON
MAR 13
4 PM
1952
N.Y.

Mr. Harry Matheson
3114 Jennings Road
Kensington
Maryland

Biography of RAY CUMMINGS

As it appears in "The National Cyclopedia of American Biography."
Volume XLIII, Page 561
James T. White & Co.
1961

"Cummings, Ray (mondjKing) science fiction writer, was born in New York City, Aug. 4th., 1887, son of Henry Martyn and Ida Virginia (King) Cummings. His father owned orange groves in Puerto Rico. Ray Cummings traveled extensively with a tutor in his youth, attended Princeton University, where he studied physics, and before reaching the age of twenty had worked in oil fields in Wyoming, sought gold in British Columbia, and engaged in timber cruising in the North. His horizons were further broadened by an insight into the tremendous possibilities of science during 1914--1919, when he was personal assistant to Thomas A. Edison (q.v.) In this period he arranged phonograph records, and facsimiles of his signature appeared on many of the labels. His first published story, "The Girl in the Golden Atom," appeared in All-Story Weekly in 1919. The story was published in book form in London in 1922 and in the United States in 1923. It was re-published innumerable times and was included in "The Giant Anthology of Science Fiction" (1954) From the time of publication of this story until his death, Cummings devoted himself to writing fiction. Recognized as one of the founding fathers of modern science fiction, he would not base a story on an impossible scientific premise, but would place real characters in a situation bound by an internal logic growing out of one of the possibilities inherent in modern scientific developments. His work comprised some forty novels which also appeared in magazines, as well as hundreds of novelettes and short stories, and certain of his writings were translated into Japanese, Spanish

and French. Cummings traveled extensively in search of background setting for his scientific tales. His 'Snow Girl' appeared in 1929 following several winters in Quebec, Canada, and his 'Sea Girl' was written in 1930 after a thorough study of the oceanography of its setting in Bermuda. Among the best known of his other books were 'Tarrano the Conqueror' 1930, 'Brigands of the Moon' (1932) 'The Shadow Girl' 1946), 'The Man on the Meteor(1947), and the 'Princess of the Atom' (1950)He originated the title, 'World of Tomorrow,' used by the New York World's Fair, 1939--40, having written a series of articles under the title for Liberty Magazine in the early 1930's. Cummings also wrote a number of detective stories, and his 'The Knife of Pedrito,' published in Detective Fiction Magazine in 1932, won an honorable mention for the O. Henry Award for distinguished writing in the field of the short story. He was a member of the World Science Fiction Club and the Manhattan Chess Club, New York City. His religious affiliation was with the Church of England, and politically he was a Republican. As a hobby he collected fine prints of paintings, and he mounted and catalogued a library of over 3,000 such prints. His favorite recreations were chess and pencil sketchin

At his death Cummings willed his eyes to the Eyebank for Sight Restoration, Inc., New York City, so that two blind persons could gain vision by cornea transplantation. He was married twice: (1) to Janet Matheson, and had a son, Harry Matheson by marriage; and (2) in Morristown, N.J., Aug.3, 1920 to Gabrielle, daughter of Cecil Wray Wilson of Bronxville, N.Y., a member of the New York Produce Exchange, and by this marriage he had a daughter, Elizabeth Starr, who married Russell Gibson Hill. Ray Cummings died in Mt. Vernon, N.y., Jan. 23, 1957."

Ray Cummings

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Ray Cummings c. 1931

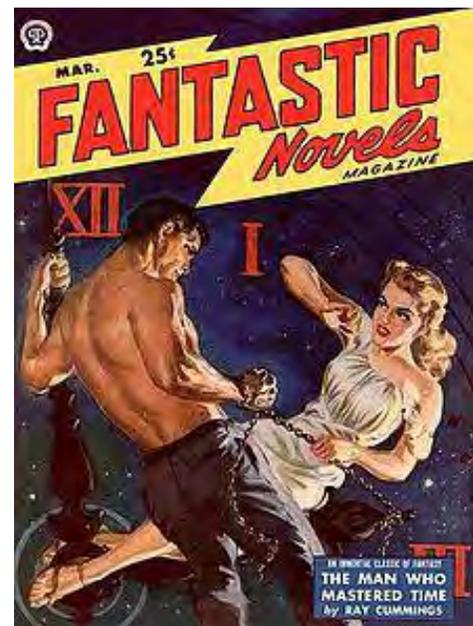
Ray Cummings (byname of Raymond King Cummings; August 30, 1887 – January 23, 1957) was an American author of [science fiction](#), rated one of the "founding fathers of the science fiction [pulp](#) genre".^[1] He was born in [New York](#) and died in [Mount Vernon, New York](#).

Cummings worked with [Thomas Edison](#) as a personal assistant and technical writer from 1914 to 1919. His most highly regarded work was the novel [The Girl in the Golden Atom](#) published in 1922, which was a consolidation of a short story by the same name published in 1919 (where Cummings combined the idea of [Fitz James O'Brien](#)'s *The Diamond Lens* with [H. G. Wells](#)'s *The Time Machine*)^[1] and a sequel, *The People of the*

Golden Atom, published in 1920.^[2] His career resulted in some 750 novels and short stories, using also the pen names Ray King, Gabrielle Cummings, and Gabriel Wilson.^[citation needed]

During the 1940s, with his fiction career in eclipse, Cummings anonymously scripted comic book stories for [Timely Comics](#), the predecessor to [Marvel Comics](#). He recycled the plot of *The Girl in the Golden Atom*, for a two-part [Captain America](#) tale, "Princess of the Atom". (*Captain America* #25 & 26) He also contributed to the [Human Torch](#) and [Sub-Mariner](#), which his daughter Betty Cummings also wrote.

Ray Cummings wrote in 1922, "Time... is what keeps everything from happening at once",^[3] a sentence repeated by scientists such as C. J. Overbeck,^[4] and [John Archibald Wheeler](#).^{[5][6]}



Selected Works[[edit](#)]

Cummings's novel *Beyond the Stars* was reprinted in the February 1942 issue of [Future](#) under a cover by [Hannes Bok](#)

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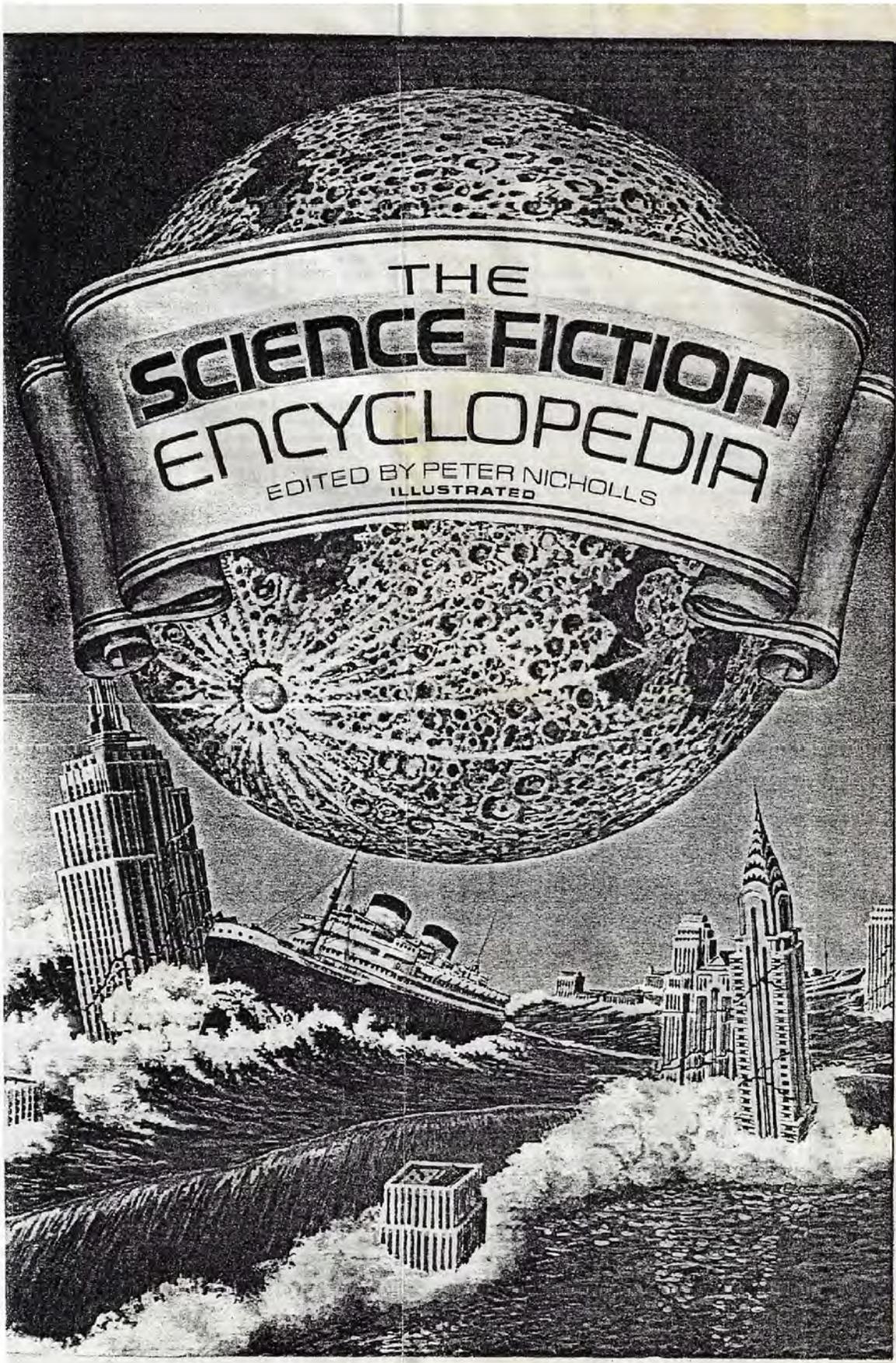
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References[[edit](#)]

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3. [Jump up](#) ^ *Cummings, Raymond King (1922). [The Girl in the Golden Atom](#). U of Nebraska Press. p. 46. ISBN 978-0-8032-6457-1. Retrieved 2011-04-09.* Chapter 5. Cummings repeated this sentence in several of his novellas. Sources, such as [this one](#), attribute it to his earlier work, *The Time Professor*, in 1921. Before taking book form, several of Cummings's stories appeared serialized in magazines. The first eight chapters of his *The Girl in the Golden Atom* [appeared](#) in *All-Story Magazine* on March 15, 1919. In the [novel version](#) the quote about time appears in [Chapter V](#).
4. [Jump up](#) ^ *International, Rotary (Aug 1973). “The Rotarian”. Published by Rotary International: 47. ISSN 0035-838X. Retrieved 2011-04-09., [What does a man possess? page 47](#)*
5. [Jump up](#) ^ *Daintith, John (2008). [Biographical Encyclopedia of Scientists](#) (third ed.). CRC Press. p. 796. ISBN 1-4200-7271-4. Retrieved 2011-04-09., [Page 796, quoting Wheeler from the American Journal of Physics, 1978](#)*
6. [Jump up](#) ^ *Davies, Davies (1995). [About time: Einstein's unfinished revolution](#). Simon & Schuster. p. 236. ISBN 0-671-79964-9. Retrieved 2011-04-09.*

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THE
SCIENCE FICTION
ENCYCLOPEDIA

EDITED BY PETER NICHOLLS
ILLUSTRATED

CUMMINGS RAY(MOND KING)

(1887–1957). American writer, one of the few active during the heyday of American PULP-magazine sf (1930–50) who began his career before Hugo GERNSBACH began *AMZ* in 1926. His first sf of any note is also his best-known story, "The Girl in the Golden Atom" (1919), which appeared, as did much of his early work, in *All-Story Weekly*; with its sequel, "People of the Golden Atom", serialized in the same magazine in 1920, this famous story about a young man who takes a size-diminishing drug and has extraordinary adventures on a microscopic world became *The Girl in the Golden Atom* (fix-up 1921 UK; exp. 1923 USA), and proved the cornerstone both of RC's reputation and of much of his work from this time on, for he used the idea of the size-diminishing drug and the microscopic world, with many variations, for the rest of his long career (see GREAT AND SMALL). *The Girl in the Golden Atom* also constitutes the "Matter" segment of RC's "Matter, Space and Time" trilogy; the "Space" segment is comprised of *The Princess of the Atom* (1929 *Argosy*; 1950) and "The Fire People" (1922 *Argosy*); the "Time" segment is comprised of *The Man Who Mastered Time* (1924 *Argosy*; 1929), *The Shadow Girl* (1929 *Argosy*; 1947) and *The Exile of Time* (1931 ASF; 1964).

After the successes of his early years, RC remained prolific, but his mechanical style and the general rigidity of his stories gradually lost him popularity until some of his books were nostalgically revived in the 1960s. Typical of his journeyman

the 1960s. Typical of his journeyman prose and uneven quality are the "Tama" novels, *Tama of the Light Country* (1930 *Argosy*; 1965) and *Tama, Princess of Mercury* (1931 *Argosy*; 1966), the heroine of which does very well after being kidnapped from Earth to MERCURY. RC wrote 16 uncollected stories in various magazines — seven between 1920 and 1923 and a further nine between 1937 and 1946 — about a character named Tubby who displays his inventiveness in different situations. *Brigands of the Moon* (1931; later published in Canada with a mistaken attribution to JOHN W. CAMPBELL Jr) and its sequel *Wandl the Invader* (1932 ASF; 1961) are examples of his SPACE-OPERA output, in which space pirates tend to proliferate, and men defeat terrifying alien monsters. Another unreprinted RC novel is "Jetta of the Lowlands" (1930 ASF).

RC was fundamentally a pulp writer, one who, moreover, unlike some of those only a little younger than he, Murray LEINSTER and Edmond HAMILTON, for instance, was never capable of adapting himself to the changing times, either scientifically or stylistically; his latest works could be interchanged with his earliest with very little adjustment. He is a subject of historic interest only to readers today. [JC]

Other works: *The Sea Girl* (1930); *Tarrano the Conqueror* (1925 *Science and Invention*; 1930); *Into the Fourth Dimension* (1926 *Science and Invention*; 1943); *Beyond the Vanishing Point* (1931 ASF; 1958); *Beyond the Stars* (1928 *Argosy*; 1963); *A Brand New World* (1928 *Argosy*; 1964); *Explorers Into Infinity* (1927–8 *Weird Tales*; 1965); *The Insect Invasion* (1932 *Argosy*; 1967); *The Man on the Meteor* (1924 *Science and Invention*; 1952); "The Snow Girl" (1929 *Argosy*; in *Famous Fantastic Classics* No. 1, anth. 1974).

See also: CONCEPTUAL BREAKTHROUGH; FANTASTIC VOYAGES; ROBOTS; SCIENTIFIC ERRORS; TIME TRAVEL.

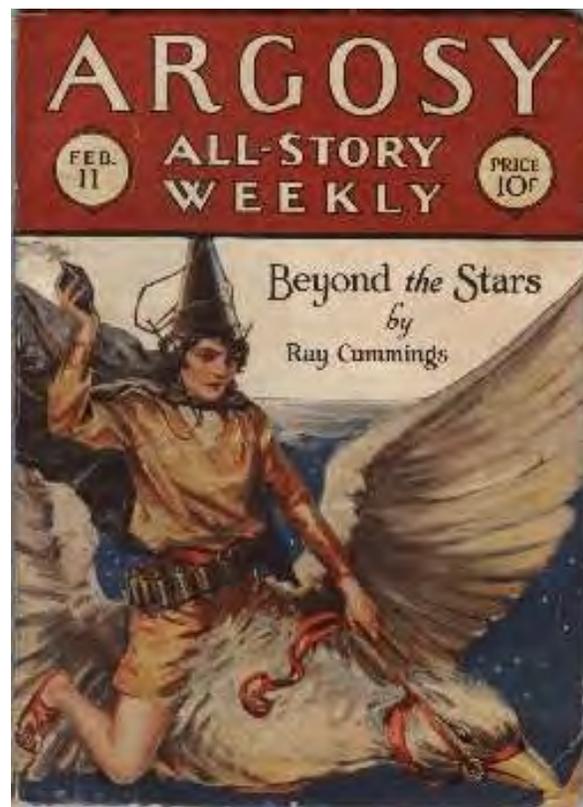
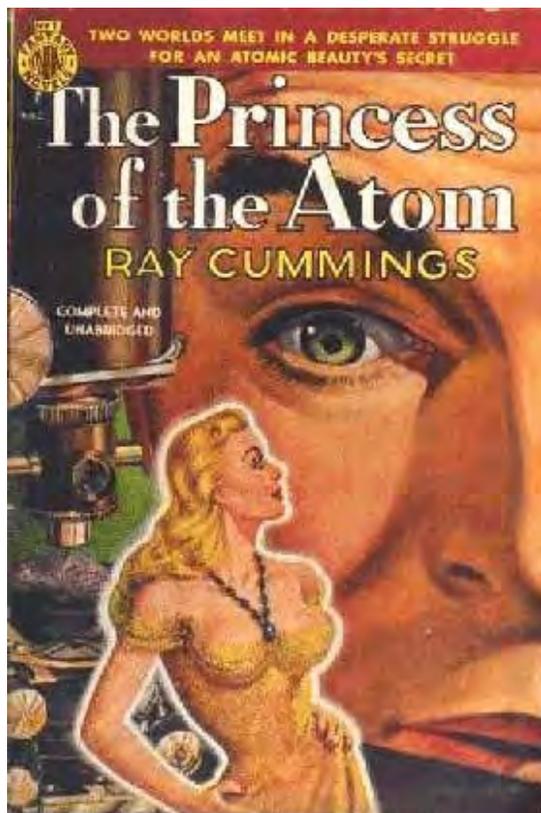
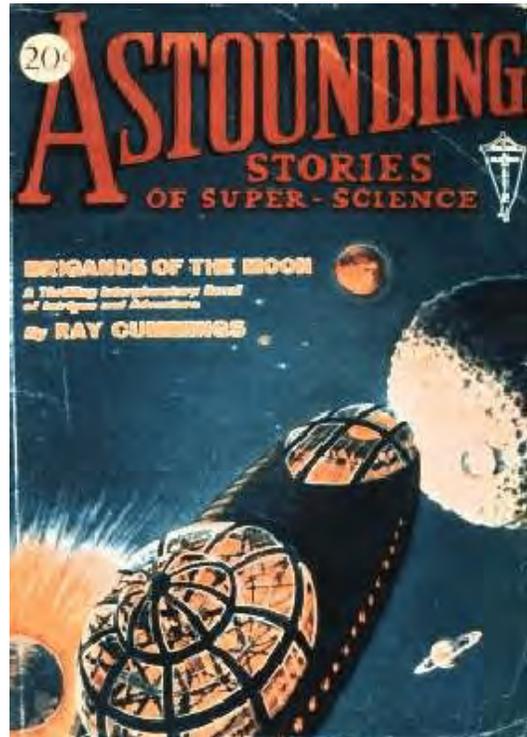
Ray Cummings (Raymond King Cummings) (August 30, 1887 - January 23, 1957) was an author of science fiction, rated one of the "founding fathers of the science fiction pulp genre". He was born August 30, 1887 in New York and died January 23, 1957 in Mount Vernon.

Cummings worked with Thomas Edison as a personal assistant and technical writer from 1914 to 1919. His most highly regarded work was the novel *The Girl in the Golden Atom* published in 1922. His career resulted in some 750 novels and short stories, using also the pen names Ray King, Gabrielle Cummings, and Gabriel Wilson.

A few of his works:

- *Beyond the Vanishing Point* (English)
- *Brigands of the Moon* (English)
- *The Fire People* (English)
- *The Girl in the Golden Atom* (English)
- *Tarrano the Conqueror* (English)
- *Wandl the Invader* (English)
- *The White Invaders* (English)

Used These Alternate Names: Ray P. Shotwell , Gabriel Wilson , Ray King , Raymond King Cummings



Ray Cummings, 1957 Science Novelist

MOUNT VERNON, N. Y., Jan. 24 (AP).—Raymond (Ray) K. Cummings, 69, who wrote a score of novels and hundreds of short stories in the science fiction field, died yesterday at Mount Vernon Hospital. He had suffered a stroke several days ago.

Before turning to fiction, Mr. Cummings served for five years as an assistant to Thomas A. Edison, arranging phonograph record albums and writing record labels.

Among his science-fiction novels were "The Girl in the Golden Atom," "The Princess of the Atom," "Tarrano, the Conquerer," "The Man Who Mastered Time" and "Into the Fourth Dimension." He also wrote a number of detective stories.

He is survived by his widow, Mrs. Gabrielle W. Cummings; a son, Harry M. Cummings of Kensington, Md., and a daughter, Mrs. Russell Hill of Bronxville.

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