

Ohio Lows

I have never been to Ohio so this is no travelogue, or an account of Midwestern melancholia. It is however an account of a number of like named families from the Buckeye state.

I came to these families of Lows/Lowes when an Australian Lowe was DNA linked to a Lowe in the USA. My distant relative has been searching after the ancestors of her great-grandfather who had migrated to Australia in the latter half of the 19th century and was hopeful that this genetic match would be key to unlocking his ancestors. Thus far little is known of her great-grandfather other than that he hailed from Denmark or some North Sea islands.

Unfortunately the family of the American Lowe has roots in the republic that go back at least to the 18th century making it very unlikely that the two have shared Scandinavian ancestry. Nonetheless I have undertaken enough research to discover what I have determined are a number of errors in many of the Low/Lowe family trees recorded on Ancestry.com. I hope this paper goes some way to correcting those errors. Please accept my apologies if all I do is add to the confusion – my efforts are presented here in good faith.

My fellow American researcher is a descendant of Elmore Cemore Lowe (1884-1950). Elmore was the eldest son of Isaac Lowe (1864-1930) and Etta Williamson (1865-1931) of Ohio. Isaac was also an Ohioan however it is not so clear-cut for his father, Benjamin Henry Lowe born 1827. The 1850 census records Benjamin, living with his parents John and Sarah, as having been born in Ohio and the same birth state is given for his younger siblings. The family was living in Huntington, county Gallio. John and his wife Sarah were both recorded as having been born in Pennsylvania.

Whilst Benjamin's census returns consistently record him as being born in Ohio the 1880 return gives both his parents as hailing from Ohio and not Pennsylvania. Conversely his younger sisters Mary E and Rosanna are both recorded in censuses as having been born in Pennsylvania while his brother William is predominantly recorded as being born in Ohio¹.

Sarah was about 33 when Benjamin was born while his father was 40yo. Did the couple have other children earlier in their marriage? If so, were the woman and the man in their 20's residing in the Lowe's 1840 Morgan township household, older siblings of Benjamin?

I've not yet found a marriage record for John and Sarah either in Ohio or Pennsylvania. Nor do I know when John and Sarah died but I presume both died some time between the 1850 and 1860 censuses. Benjamin and his younger siblings were all married by 1858.

¹ William's birth state is given as Ohio in federal census records 1850, 70, 80, 1900, 10, 20, and his marriages 1904, 08, 10 but his civil war draft record states he was born in Pennsylvania.

What I am confident of is that this couple had the following 4 children;

- Benjamin Henry born circa 1827 married Nancy TRESSLER (likely early 1850s);
- Mary Ellen born 13 May 1832 married John William SANFORD on Christmas Day 1854;
- William born circa 1835 first married Priscilla HENRY on 6 December 1857, 2nd Barbara PAUL in 1904, 3rd Addie ALEXANDER in 1909 and 4th Catherine STRAUSBAUGH in 1910; and
- Rosanna born circa 1837 married Andrew Jackson WHITE on 1 June 1857.

Other lows

There are a number of trees on Ancestry.com that record John as the son of James LOWE (1755-1835) and Rosanna HAWBACH (1776-1850). I can see the attraction with concluding this, particularly since John had a daughter named Rosanna. However, there are serious problems with this presumed relationship.

Firstly, while this James did have a son named John that John (b.1797) was 10 years the junior of our John (b.1787) and was married to a different woman. Records of the 'Daughters of the American Revolution' list 2 granddaughters of this John, namely Eva BROWN and her sister Christina BROWN (daughters of Mariam LOWE).²

In the 2 census records for our John, 1840 and 1850, he is consistently recorded as being older than a 1797 birth year would suggest. In the 1840 census he is between 50 and 60 years of age and in 1850 he is recorded as 63y.o. The son of James and Rosanna was in fact John William LOWE born in Virginia and living with his wife Hannah AYLES in Aurelius, Washington county, nearly 90 miles away from our John, father of Benjamin, who was living in Huntington, OH.

Benjamin's mother

The only record I have found of Benjamin's mother is the 1850 census, which records her name as Sarah born in Pennsylvania circa 1794 (56yo). In the 1840 census she is surely the woman in John's household aged between 40 and 49.

Some Ancestry trees variously claim this woman to be Sarah Aldoffer, or Sarah Strait. I will deal with each of these claims in turn.

Sarah Aldoffer – this claim seems to be rooted in an 1817 marriage of a John Lowe and Suhah ALDOPFER. This marriage took place 12 September 1817 in Columbiana, OH and was officiated by John Croser. It is likely this couple are the same LOWs who are recorded in the 1820 Federal Census as living in Fairfield township, Columbiana Co. Their celebrant John 'Crozier' was living in the same town. The 1820 Census records this couple with a boy and a girl under the age of 10.

Also in Fairfield in 1820 are two 'Alderfer's, John and John junior. I think it is a far bet that these men are respectively Sarah's father and brother. According to *The*

² See #42537 & #48676 Lineage Book of the Charter Members of the Daughters of the Revolution. Vol 043

Alderfers of America: history and genealogy written by Helen Alderfer Stanley in 1972 these Alderfer's hailed from Germany via Pennsylvania and Virginia and were settled in Ohio by the 19th century. John senior had a daughter named Sarah who married a John 'Lower' in 1817. This, I believe, leaves little doubt for who 'Suhur Adolpsfer' was but of itself it does not demonstrate whether or not she was the mother of Benjamin.

In the 1930 Federal census there is no John Low (or Lowe or Lower) heading up a household in Fairfield Township. I cannot seem to find any other census records for this couple. However I would like to propose a theory for what became of John Lowe and Sarah Alderfer.

Six weeks after the 1820 census was taken there was an Ohio marriage of a Thomas ORR and 'Sary' LOW. Had John died soon after the census, and his widow, with a toddler and a baby to care for, married again?

The celebrant recorded that both Thomas and Sary/Sarah were from Fairfield County, OH. Thomas Orr was living at Pleasant, Fairfield co. and the 1820 census records him with 3 children, one aged under 10 and 2 aged 10-15. Thomas had been widowed in 1817.

I accept that Sarah Low nee Alderfer was living in Fairfield Township, Columbiana in August 1820 (and not Fairfield county) and that if her husband had just died it was likely she would have stayed in Columbiana where her family was. I can only find one Lowe family in Fairfield co. in 1820. However, the woman in that Richland town family was too old to be the woman that married Thomas Orr³. I can't find another candidate for this county Fairfield 'Sary Low' in the 1820 census.

One explanation could be that the Fairfield co. Lowe family were in fact John's family, and Sarah went to them following John's death, or they may even have been visiting these Lowes in Richland when John died. Pure speculation but it is worth noting that Richland is just 6 miles from Pleasant.

I believe Thomas and Sarah Orr moved to Ballville, Sandusky co. OH where they lived out their days. The census records declare Sarah to have been born in Virginia, the same state Sarah Alderfer was born in (Thomas Orr was from Ireland). The 1830 census shows they'd had 4 children since their 1820 nuptials. A child aged between 15-20 was from Thomas' earlier marriage to Kitty ARNOLD (1785-1817). What then happened to Sarah's 2 infants from her first marriage? If my theory is to be established beyond doubt this needs explaining.

In summary I believe there is sufficient evidence that Sarah, wife of Thomas Orr of Ballville was very likely Sarah Alderfer. They were both born in Virginia in the mid 1790s and both named Lowe, and in the absence of any other candidate for 'Sarah Low', or any other account for what became of Sarah Low nee Alderfer,

³ The 1820 census for the town of Richland lists a John Lowe Master. I do not believe that his middle name was Lowe but rather that his surname was Lowe and 'master' referred to something, in all other cases middle names were given as an initial. The only adult male was between 26 and 45 while the only a adult woman was over 45 years. There were 7 children under 15 years. In any event there is no scope for an unmarried Sarah Lowe in this family.

then I think my theory should be given careful consideration. In any event Sarah Alderfer/Aldofer was not the mother of Benjamin Lowe.

Sarah Straight – like our Sarah, Miss Strait was born in Pennsylvania in 1794 and ended her days in Ohio but there the similarity ends. Sarah Straight was the daughter of Jacob STRAIT(1765-1838) and Charity TRAUX (1771-184). Sarah [Strate] was married by Isaac Brown J.P to George AUKER⁴ on 23 January 1817 in Muskingum, OH. She died, Mrs Auker, on 10 April 1856 in Perry County, OH and is buried at Hazelton Cemetery.

Then who is Benjamin's mother?

The key to identifying Benjamin's mother is his brother William. William lived to the ripe old age of 93. Following the death of his first wife and the mother of his six children he had 3 further marriages within the first decade of the 20th century. Each one of these marriages recorded his mother's name as Sarah/Sally SMITH.

And frankly, that's as far as I have got. Both Benjamin's parents appear to have hailed from Pennsylvania. My guess is they were married there, had all or most of their children there, and moved to Ohio some time before 1840.

There is only one Pennsylvanian Federal Census record for 1830 that fits this family. That is, one where the named head is John Low/Lowe and that contains at least one male aged under five (Benjamin was born 1827) and one man 40-49 (John) and one woman 30-39 (Sarah). That family was living at Allegheny, Allegheny co. PA. They had additional children with them; two boys 5-9 years and one 10-14, one girl 5-9 and one 10-14. More research is needed to verify whether or not this family moved to Ohio but it may be a dead end since 10 years later in the 1840 census there is a John Lowe in Allegheny county that closely matches the 1830 family.

Other Lows

There is one other family of Ohio Lows that is sometimes confused with this family not least because they too hailed from Pennsylvania.

In the 1830 census there is a John Low living in Salem, Columbiana co. OH. He is aged between 30-39 with a woman, presumably his wife, aged 30-39 and three children under 10 also in the household. After recording this family the enumerator recorded a household headed by a widow Lowe and another by a James Lowe, presumably John's mother and brother respectively. By 1840 John and family had relocated to Unity in the same county. This family was made up of John LOWE b.1803 and Rosanna McMULLIN b.1804 and their eight children. Like Benjamin's family they did end up in Huntington, Gallio co. but I am unable to establish any connection between these Lows and Benjamin's family, except one. The first of Benjamin's brother's three 20th century marriages was to the widow Mrs Barbara Baker nee Paul. Barbara's first husband was Jacob Baker (1820-1898). Before he married Barbara in 1868 he had been married to Ellen Eleanor

⁴ A record made by Isaac Brown gives the spelling 'Aucar' as does a transcript of that record however a typed list of County Marriage Records for Ohio gives the spelling as 'Auer'.

Low (1827-1867) the daughter of John Low and Rosanna McMullin. That Jacob's widow would marry a Low[e] was, I imagine, pure co-incidence.

Conclusion

I still have no clue where John Lowe and Sarah Smith married or when. There was about 10 years difference in age between the two and if Benjamin was their youngest they were both relatively old to be starting a family. I suspect the key will be in identifying the 1830 federal census record, or even a state census record, for this family.

As ever I am grateful for the research undertaken into these families by numerous others from which much of the above analysis is based. And I am thankful for any corrections in what I have written. Just email me.

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