

The Upshaw Family Journal, Volume 9, issue 4 contains an interesting article titled “*They Met Challenges ... With Memoirs* – an annotated commentary.” At the suggestion of Robert W. Upshaw, we have reproduced it here for the benefit of researchers who wish to avoid any confusion that may be caused by relying on this book for Upshaw genealogy information.

- Tom Upshaw and Ted Brooke, Nov. 2003

They Met Challenges ... With Memoirs: An Annotated Commentary

- Background and Historical Information -

by Ted Brooke

Readers of *The Upshaw Family Journal* and, indeed, many Upshaw family researchers are familiar with the book *They Met Challenges ... With Memoirs* written by Grace (Heminger) Jared and privately printed in 1968. At that time, Mrs. Jared was one of the major Upshaw researchers, having begun in the 1930s, corresponding with family relatives to collect information for nearly four decades. She was descended from the second marriage of George Washington Upshaw to Elizabeth Denby (Denbigh) in 1848. Their daughter, Josephine Eva Upshaw, married Adam P. Heminger in 1877, and their daughter, Grace Heminger, married Ray V. Jared. (See transcripts of the Upshaw lineage portions of this book in UFJ, Vol. 1, page 46-55, 68-77, 94-99 and Vol. 2, pages 9-23).

In her book, Mrs. Jared endeavored to trace her Upshaw line back to Captain William Upshaw and did a great amount of research toward that goal. Genealogical research was vastly different in the mid-twentieth century than it is today; additional records have been discovered and made publicly available and many records have been abstracted, indexed and published, which were not available to past researchers. Her book includes miniature biographies of those she believed to be her ancestors from Captain William Upshaw to her generation, along with general summaries of the various related lines. Unfortunately, although she began with the correct lineage, she became disoriented and misidentified a key ancestor. As a result, much of her lineage was incorrect. It is the purpose of this article to show where and how this happened and to present the factual lineage for the benefit of future Upshaw researchers who might be inclined to use her book as a reference.

Mrs. Jared began her lineage with Captain William Upshaw and his second wife, Hannah Forrest, and correctly identifies their children as having been Jeremiah, Hannah, Ann, Sarah, Richard, William, John, Margaret and Forrest, even though listing them in an improbable order. Mrs. Jared’s objective was to link her known grandfather, George Washington Upshaw (ca. 1802-1875) to this family.

- The Incorrect Lineage -

Apparently, from statements in her book, Mrs. Jared did not have direct personal information about the parents of her grandfather, so she began searching for a “George Upshaw” who would fit into that time frame. She did have direct contact with her grandfather’s son by his first marriage, Thomas Jefferson Upshaw (1844-1915), but he had left home at the young age of 13 and had very few recollections of his family and was of no help in identifying his father’s parents. As a result, Mrs. Jared’s investigation of the current research materials led her to incorrectly identify George Upshaw, the grandson of John Upshaw, the fourth son of Captain William Upshaw, who seemed to fit her specifications. (See *They Met Challenges ... With Memoirs*, pages 42-47).

Tracing this George Upshaw's lineage, Mrs. Jared correctly identified John Upshaw's wife as Mary Lafon (and she was pleased with the indications of French Huguenot ancestry) and she correctly identified their children as Edwin, Sarah, Lucy, Maria, Hanna, Cordelia, John H. and William. She correctly found that Edwin Upshaw (1777-1849) married Lucy Roane, which provided a connection to another aristocratic line, which Mrs. Jared developed in her book. She correctly identified the children of Edwin and Lucy (Roane) Upshaw as George, John, Roane, Samuel, Lucy, Edwin, Mary Ann and Thomas Roane Upshaw. Here, she thought, was the "George Upshaw", who must have been her grandfather, George Washington Upshaw, and she developed these various family links quite eloquently in her book.

Unfortunately or fortunately, subsequent research has proven that this "George Upshaw", the son of Edwin and Lucy (Roane) Upshaw, was actually George Augustus Upshaw, who was born in Essex County, Virginia in 1802 and died in Erath County, Texas in 1879. All of Mrs. Jared's lineage on the ancestors of her grandfather, George Washington Upshaw, back to Captain William Upshaw, was therefore in error, and she was not related to French Huguenots through the Lafon line, nor to English aristocrats through the Roane family. Obviously, Mrs. Jared never realized that this mistake had been made.

- The Correct Lineage -

Beginning with her last known ancestor, George Washington Upshaw, more recent research has identified his father as Parson Upshaw, born circa 1774 in Amherst Co., Va., the second son of Leroy Upshaw (circa 1750-1826), who was the oldest son of Forrest Upshaw (circa 1718-1759), who was the last and youngest son of Captain William and Hannah (Forrest) Upshaw. Therefore, there is a relationship to Captain William Upshaw but by a different lineage.

Beginning with Captain William Upshaw, the lineage goes not through his fourth son, John, but through his fifth (and last) son, Forrest (1718-1759), who married Ann Hunt (widow) and they had three children: Leroy, Mildred and John. This Leroy Upshaw (1750-1826) married Elizabeth Bradley and they had children: Elizabeth, Forrester, Parson, Richard, William, Adkins, Nancy Agnes, Martha, Drury, Leroy and Peter.

Parson Upshaw was born about 1774 and died about 1828, probably in Jackson County, Illinois, where nearly all County records were destroyed in 1843. He is first found named in June 1797 Oglethorpe County, Georgia, with Adkin and Forrester. He is documented in various records in Elbert County, Georgia in 1801 & 1802, received a land grant in Dickson County, Tennessee in 1814 and was in the 1820 census in Montgomery County, Tennessee where he had a male child age 16 to 26, who can be circumstantially identified as George W. Upshaw. Parson is further found in Gallatin County, Illinois in 1826 and lastly, in Jackson County, Illinois in 1828. We do not have any identification of Parson Upshaw's wife but we do know they had at least 10 children, as shown in the 1820 census of Montgomery Co., Tennessee. Note that George W. Upshaw married Mary Melinda Greenwood in 1825 Gallatin County where Parson signed a petition in 1826.

- The Individuals -

George Augustus Upshaw, the son of Edwin and Lucy (Roane) Upshaw, was born on 20 Aug 1802, as recorded in the Edwin Upshaw family record kept by Lucy (Roane) Upshaw (see UFJ Vol. 4 page 56). The 1810, 1820 & 1830 census for the Edwin Upshaw household in King & Queen Co., Va., show a male child consistent with the age of George Augustus; George A. Upshaw received 240 acres in St. Charles Co., Missouri in 1836 & was married in Polk Co., Missouri in 1840. George A. Upshaw served in the Mexican War, 3rd Missouri Mounted Volunteers. In 1848, his Mexican War discharge paper states that

he was born in “Essex County, Virginia”. The censuses for 1850 Dade Co., Missouri, 1860 Bell Co., Texas & 1870 Erath Co., Texas for George A. Upshaw consistently show his birthplace as “Virginia”. In 1857, a letter from G.A. Upshaw to “wife” conclusively proves that George Augustus Upshaw was a son of Edwin Upshaw. (see UFJ, Vol. 7, page 71-74).

George Washington Upshaw, the son of Parson Upshaw, appears as a male child in the 1820 census for Parson Upshaw in Montgomery County, Tennessee, at an age consistent for him. He was married in 1825 in Gallatin County, where Parson was also documented in 1826. The censuses for 1850 Peoria Co., 1860 Stark Co., & 1870 Piatt Co. for George W. Upshaw consistently show his birthplace as “Georgia” without exception. There are numerous records pertaining to this George W. Upshaw, including the license issued to him on 16 June 1864 by the U.S. Internal Revenue Service and the State of Illinois at Turnbridge, DeWitt County, Illinois, to practice medicine. He thus became the founder of a family of Medical Doctors which existed for more than one hundred years through three generations, in Illinois and Missouri. This was definitely the grandfather of whom Mrs. Jared was rightfully proud.

- Conclusion -

Although this unfortunate mistake is in print, hopefully this article will provide clarification and correction. The basic premises of her book were supported by her supposed relationship to the aristocratic Roane family. Additionally troubling is that this lineage to John Upshaw has, according to Mrs. Jared, been accepted by the National Society, Daughters of the American Revolution. She states on page 12 of her book that “My great, great grandfather, John Upshaw was a Revolutionary ancestor. I joined the D.A.R. on his record December 11, 1961. My National number is 478-789 ...”. Nevertheless, the lineage which is rightfully hers leads back to the same progenitor, Captain William Upshaw; his son Forrest was a Captain in the French and Indian War; his son Leroy was an officer in the Virginia Militia in the American Revolution; his son Parson was a pioneer settler, first to Georgia and then to Illinois. Perhaps these were not the aristocratic Roanes and Lafons, but they were pioneer American settlers who have made a meaningful and honorable contribution to the fabric of our country.

Photographs of primary sources shown in the Upshaw Family Journal to accompany this article include:

George Washington Upshaw census appearances: 1850, 1860, 1870

1850 Census, Peoria County, Illinois, dwelling #439, City of Peoria (21 August 1850)

1860 Census, Stark County, Illinois, dwelling #20, West Jersey Township (4 June 1860)

1870 Census, Piatt County, Illinois, page 328, dwelling #193, Cerro Gordo Township (1 July 1870)

G.W. Upshaw, Physician’s License

Turnbridge, DeWitt County, Illinois, 16 June 1864