

CHAPTER II

THE HUNTINGTONS

NATHANIEL AND SOPHIA

IN

INDIANA

MINNESOTA

IOWA AND KANSAS

This information compiled from *Huntington Genealogical Memoirs* and other sources listed in the text.

Nathaniel and Sophia followed Hallam west in the 1870's, moving from Indiana to Minnesota where they probably lived with Hallam until they found land at Iowa Lake where they were among the earliest settlers. They then took the momentous step to leave civilization behind and strike out for what was still the "Wild West". They did not follow the most well traveled trails west, but headed to Northeast Wyoming to an area that had been Indian Territory with no white settlers. In making these moves they demonstrated that they were risk takers and confident of their ability not just to survive, but to carve out a successful life. To achieve this they were willing to give up almost all of their possessions and security, risking their family's future as well as their own.

Nathaniel 1.3.4.2.7.1.7.3

Nathaniel, the first of our ancestors to settle in Wyoming, was born near Terre Haute, in Vigo County, Indiana, September 12, 1828. He studied law at Indiana University, and practiced law for a time in Indiana. He is listed on the 1850 census as a student living with his parents at Hudson, Laporte County, Indiana. He attended Indiana University at Bloomington, Indiana. The Indiana University Assistant Archivist found Nathaniel's name listed in the 1851 catalog as a member of the Junior class of the Law School. His name does not appear in prior or subsequent years. It is not known if he attended a different university before 1851 to reach the standing of a Junior. After 1851, he either attended a different university or practiced law without a degree as it was not required at that time. Cheyenne, Wyoming, newspaper obituaries and his son Cecil's biography state that he received a degree at The University of Indiana, but no documentation of that has been found.

His obituaries also state that he "followed the tide west during the gold fever of '49 because of ill health and a desire to explore unknown fields". The writer for the *Cheyenne Daily Leader* refers to Nathaniel as an "argonaut," a term used to describe someone who ventures away from home then returns. This term can be found in many writings about the adventurers who followed the Gold Rush to California. Cecil Huntington's biography states about his father Nathaniel, "he crossed the plains with an ox-team in 1852 in the wake of the gold rush to California. He stayed two years and returned by the Isthmus of Panama and the Mississippi River". The obituaries continue with the information that he alternated mining, practicing law, farming and was engaged in the livestock business.

A Cutshaw relative, Waneta Batten, who is a member of the Galien, Michigan, Historical Association found the following article in an old newspaper from Olive Township, *The Southbend Tribune*.

Another teacher in New Carlisle was Nathaniel Huntington, a lawyer as well as a teacher. He taught school five days and on Saturday he practiced law. He was a very able teacher, a strict disciplinarian and a good lawyer as well. In 1862 he married Miss Cutshaw, went to Wyoming and there he was elected to the state legislature. He died very suddenly. He was speaker of the House of Representatives of Wyoming legislature at the time of his death.

Apparently the newspaper article was not dated, but she estimated it was from the 1920's. The date of the marriage is incorrect, and he didn't live in Wyoming until 1881, but most likely the other information is correct. New Carlisle was just a few miles from Hudson so he could have been teaching there from 1854 to 1870 when the family moved to Minnesota.

On September 26, 1858, Nathaniel and Sophia Cutshaw, born December 19, 1840 in Indiana, were married at the residence of her father Josephus A. Cutshaw in the Township of Galien, Berrien County, Michigan, by a Justice of the Peace. A copy of the marriage record is with the illustrations. A drawing of the house is included in the Cutshaw Chapter.

According to Waneta Batten, Sophia had a sister Malcenia age 27 who married Levi Marrow age 22 the same day as Sophia at their father's home. This was probably the sister listed as Mary on the Indiana census of 1850, as the age fits. The home that Josephus built near Galien, Michigan was evidently considered rather grand as a drawing of it was included in an area Atlas.

In 1860 Nathaniel and Sophia and their firstborn, Hallam Joseph, born September 7, 1859, in LaPorte County, appear on the census in Hudson Township, LaPorte County, Indiana, with Nathaniel's occupation listed as a farmer. Sophia attended the 1860 "Wigwam" Convention in Chicago to witness the nomination of Abraham Lincoln with her parents. There is a newspaper article about this event in the Cutshaw Chapter.

A business directory for Hudson, dated 1862, lists Nathaniel as both a farmer and lawyer. It is at this time records show that Nathaniel's father Hallam purchased land in Winnebago Township, Minnesota, and he apparently moved there to be near his daughter Evaline and her family. Nathaniel, Sophia, and Hallam remained at Hudson.

Cecil James was born March 14, 1867 in Carlisle, which I believe is the town now called New Carlisle, La Porte County, Indiana. As New Carlisle is very close to Hudson Lake and according to the earlier newspaper article, Nathaniel had been a teacher there, I feel it is safe to assume this is the location, and not the Carlisle near Terre Haute, Vigo County, Indiana, as this would have been a considerable distance from their home.

Sophia had two brothers who served in the Civil War. James W. Cutshaw was 18 in the summer of 1861 when he enlisted in Company K, Sixth Regiment of Michigan Infantry. He was discharged in 1863 because of a gunshot wound received in Port Hudson, Louisiana, which disabled him for service. Mortimer M. Cutshaw 22, served in The Ninth Regiment of Michigan Infantry, raised in the autumn of 1861 and was mustered out September 15, 1865.

Harry Mortimer Huntington was born March 27, 1869, in Niles, Michigan. A Niles directory shows that Sophia's father Josephus owned property there and an atlas of the area shows where the property was located. It is probable that Sophia was visiting her parents at the time as Niles was just twenty miles from Hudson Lake.

A page from the family bible outlines the moves the family made. A copy of the page can be found with the illustrations.

Indiana to Minnesota.....1870
Minnesota to Iowa.....1874
Iowa to Kansas.....1881
Kansas to Wyoming.....1882

Nathaniel and Sophia remained on the property in Hudson, LaPorte County, until 1870 when they emigrated to Iowa via Minnesota. They may have been traveling while the census was taken as they do not appear in census records for Indiana or Minnesota in 1870. As no land deed records were found under their names in the area where Hallam lived, at Winnebago, Minnesota, they probably lived with him on his property on the Blue Earth River until 1874 when they moved about twenty five miles southwest into Iowa.

Their fourth child, John Roy was born May 17, 1875, in Iowa. He was most likely born at Iowa Lake, Emmett County, Iowa, where they owned approximately 150 acres in section 11 lots 1, 2 and 3. A map is included in the illustrations. The land they owned was near Iowa Lake, a lake that stretches from Minnesota into Iowa near State Highway 15. Their property was on the southwest part of the lake. As the pictures illustrate, this is still a beautiful area.

Iowa Lake was located in Iowa Lake Township in section 13 and there was a Post Office located there from 1873 to 1897. This information appears on page 42 of *The Annals Of Iowa*.

This area is still farm country and looks green and fertile with dark loam fields, gentle rolling hills, abundant vegetation with bushes and trees around the lake, and farm house. A luxury home has been built on the southwest lake front, and a state park is located on the south shore. A map and pictures are in the illustrations.

On pages 41 and 42 from *Remembering Armstrong A Centennial History* 1993, sent to me by G. Tostenson of the Emmet County Historical Society, Nathaniel is listed as one of three trustees elected for the new Iowa Lake Township. He was also one of the first Justices of the Peace in Iowa Lake Township. The newly created Iowa Lake Township was created when Fairview Township was divided and the first election was in October, 1875.

The same record states that the Federal Census taken June 10 and 15, 1880, shows 12 households in the township, four in one area and eight in another, with 44 residents. The census section includes the information that Nathaniel Huntington had brought his family to Iowa from Indiana, and that he and his wife Sophia had four sons: Halla J., Cecil, Henry and John.

About fifteen to twenty miles west of their Iowa property there is a very small town named Huntington. I could not find any information about the origins of the name or any land records at that location listed for Nathaniel or Sophia.

In looking at records at the Historical Society Museum in Esterville, the County Seat of Emmett County, (about 18 miles southwest of the Huntington property) I discovered newspaper clippings about a startling event that took place on Saturday afternoon, May 10, 1879. A meteorite fell a few miles from Esterville, the Emmett County Seat. According to accounts reproduced for Centennial Celebrations:

**Witness Startled by
Red Streak in Sky**

"The resulting detonation seemed terrific, however to those in the immediate vicinity, causing the earth to tremble, jarring doors and windows, rattling furniture, and in some instances shaking the dishes in the cupboards. The concussion was heard for a distance of over fifty miles and the subsequent roar, as of a powerful tornado, was of indescribable proportions, deafening and shrill, producing a sensation of terror never to be forgotten by those who heard it."

Descriptions give the direction of the trail of smoke after the explosion as southwest to northeast, and reports were given of sightings from North Dakota to Minnesota. One amusing account tells of a dispute following a baseball game that afternoon in the public square in Esterville. 'At the end of the game a dispute arose and the argument waxed exceedingly warm. Just as the self-control of some of the partisans reached the breaking point there was a terrific crash above. Out of a clear sky came an explosion that shook the earth, followed by a deafening, rumbling roar and punctuated by a second detonation of less violence than the first. The noise, reverberating across the valley of the Des Moines river, gradually subsided, and after several seconds became inaudible. it was as if "the gods had taken a hand in our dispute," declared one who was present. Looking quickly up toward the west, whence came the awful roar, they beheld a strange spectacle indeed! There, against an almost cloudless sky, appeared a long trail of whitish smoke"

Hundreds of fragments were found, from an ounce to several pounds in weight, and all were sold as souvenirs to visitors who came to the town from all directions. The two largest pieces, 431 and 151 pounds--were bought by the British museum at a big sum, as they were considered among the most beautiful meteoric specimens in the world. The 160 pound chunk is in The Minnesota University Museum. As no actual parts of the meteorite were preserved in the area, a large boulder was erected in 1929 just 482 feet west of the spot where the largest piece of the meteorite fell and the inscription on the boulder reads:

"The Esterville meteorite fell 482 feet due east of this plot on May 10, 1879. It was one of the greatest 'falls' on record. Parts of the meteorite are found in important museums of the world, Erected 1929 by the Okmanpado Chapter Daughters of the American Revolution."

Unfortunately I have not heard any accounts of this momentous event by members of the Huntington family. They undoubtedly could have told some eyewitness stories themselves, perhaps they even obtained one or more of the many fragments of the meteorite that were scattered on a wide area of several neighbors' land only about 20 miles away.

Nathaniel and his family moved to Cloud County, Kansas, in 1880-81. Records show that Sophia purchased land in section 30, on November 17, 1880. Sophia's father and three brothers were living in Cloud County at the time. Her mother Phoebe had died in Jamestown, Cloud County on January 12, 1880. Nathaniel and Sophia may have decided to move from Iowa because there was not enough available land for the maturing sons to acquire. The same reasons may have motivated the move to Wyoming. Nathaniel's obituaries also state that he moved west because of poor health--perhaps this was also a reason to move. The very humid climate where they lived in Indiana and Iowa may have caused some health problems, and they may have been seeking a drier climate. Pictures of the Jamestown area are included with the Cutshaw chapter.

Land in northeastern Wyoming was first made available to white settlers in 1881, and as Nathaniel filed for water rights on Wolf Creek near the Tongue River in Wyoming in 1881, it is probable that he and Hallam J. went ahead to decide on what land they would claim and start the house that Sophia mentions in her Bible. She wrote that they emigrated from Kansas in April 1882, and arrived at their new home on the Tongue River in Wyoming on June 29, 1882.

The Homestead Act of 1862 provided any man, or single woman, either a woman who had never been married, or a widow, 21 years of age, could file on any 160 acres that was open. One year after the date of their filing, the homesteader was required to have a house of a certain size on the land (approximately 12 x 14). During the second year and third year he was supposed to do at least \$100 worth of fencing. Also during the second, third and fourth years he was supposed to reside on the place at least six months of each year. After four years from his filing date, if he continued improving the place, he could get a patent from the government by paying a small fee and having at least three witnesses swear that he had occupied the place and improved it as required.