

SOME CONCLUSIONS

The Huntington family in America was founded by people with true pioneering spirit. From the earliest known ancestors in the 17th Century into the 20th Century, members of the family have demonstrated to a high degree a spirit of independence and self-sufficiency. Leaving England for the “wilds” of the Colonies must have taken tremendous courage. As time passed, our ancestors helped establish communities in Connecticut then eventually left New England to settle in New York State. In a very adventurous move, Hallam followed his brother Nathaniel to Indiana in the early 1820's, shortly after Indiana became a state. He then moved with his family to territory that had just recently been opened for settlement in northern Indiana. The desire to find new land extended to his later life when in his sixties he moved west of the Mississippi River to Minnesota. His son Nathaniel and Sophia followed in the 1870's moving from Indiana to Iowa Lake, Iowa, where they were among the first settlers. In the 1880's they then took the momentous step to leave civilization behind and strike out for what was still the “Wild West” in Wyoming. In the 20th Century, the four sons of Nathaniel and Sophia eventually moved to the West Coast.

This desire to move westward and explore new possibilities has sometimes been described as wanderlust—an urge to wander or travel. I have reached a different conclusion. I believe it was more than a just a desire to travel that our ancestors shared with a large segment of the population who moved west to expand the settlement of our country. They were part of one of the greatest migrations in history. While the desire for more land may have been the primary motive, I believe there was also a great feeling of adventure and accomplishment involved. Having been born and raised near the mountains, I can also understand the desire of some of the family to live in that environment. An example may have been Hallam's son Nathaniel, who traveled west in 1852 in the wake of the Gold Rush, and would have followed the trail through mountains in southern Wyoming, Utah and California. When thirty years later, the opportunity arose to acquire land near a beautiful mountain range in northern Wyoming, he moved the family there.

The Huntingtons valued education to a very high degree for the times in which they lived. In the early years that attitude was probably influenced by the high level of literacy in much of the population of New England in the 17th and 18th Centuries. The fact that Joseph was given responsibilities for surveying and was a Deacon in the church at Windham suggests that he was an educated man. Starting with Hallam there is evidence that the young men in the family were given the opportunity to pursue an advanced education. This tradition was continued with Hallam's son Nathaniel, born in 1828, who attended College in Indiana and earned a Law Degree. Even though his father was a successful farmer and could afford the expense, it was unusual at that time for a farmer's son to attend college as it was more common for a son to stay home and help work the land. At least three of Nathaniel's sons received some advanced schooling in order to pursue their chosen professions.

The Huntington men had attitudes about women that were far ahead of their time. There is evidence that the women in the family were well educated and treated with great respect as equals. Evidence that the men treated their wives as equals is found in land records viewed from 1822 to the present. It is possible that women shared property ownership earlier, but this was not investigated. Penina's name appears on a deed with Hallam dated 1822. From this time on, the

records show that the Huntington men shared land ownership and water rights with their wives and in many cases these records show names of the women alone.

Many of the Huntington men in our branch were interested in public service and politics. This was evidenced in the early generations with church and community involvement. Simon helped settle Norwich, Connecticut, representing the town in the general court, and serving as deacon of the church there. Simon's son Joseph helped survey and settle the town of Windham, Connecticut, was active in community matters and was chosen deacon of the church there. Later we find that Hallam had the rank of Colonel, which was probably earned in an Indiana Militia. His son Nathaniel served as the first Justice of The Peace in the newly organized township of Iowa Lake, Iowa. Later in Wyoming Nathaniel was elected as a Democrat from Johnson County to the House Of Representatives of the Territorial Legislature of Wyoming where he served as Speaker of The House in 1888. His son Harry Mortimer was elected as a Republican to the State House of Representatives in 1909 from the same area, now changed to Sheridan County. He served as the Sheridan City Surveyor, Sheridan County Surveyor, was a charter member of the Sheridan Rotary Club in 1919, and was appointed to the Wyoming State Board of Equalization in 1926. Roy Huntington was active in community affairs in Powell, Wyoming. E.O. "Ted" Huntington served as a legislative assistant in the late 30's and although he was unsuccessful in his bid for the Wyoming House of Representatives in 1942 as a Democrat in largely Republican Big Horn County, he continued to work tirelessly for the local and state party organizations. He was very active in community affairs in Lovell, Wyoming and served on the city council. These are the examples I found—undoubtedly there are others—that demonstrate that these ancestors were able to shape and change life in their communities. They were the "shakers" and the "movers" of society.