

The Stover Family Story

I.

The Sisters and Brothers of George Henry Stover

By

His Great Grandson,
Richard Ira Hofferbert

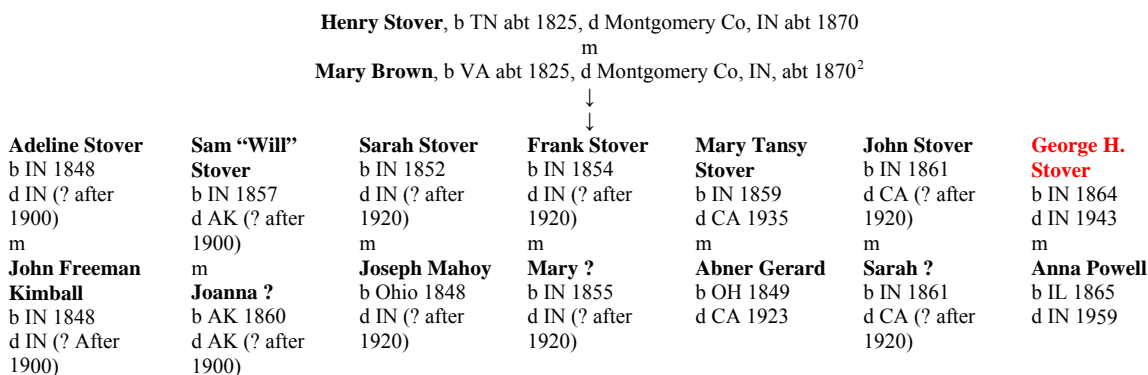


*George Henry and Anna Powell Stover,
On their farm in Ripley County, Indiana,
About 1940*

The Sisters and Brothers of George Henry Stover

My great grandfather, George Henry Stover, was the youngest child of at least seven born to Henry and Mary Brown Stover in the 1840s, 50's, and '60s. The children were orphaned around 1870. We do not know the cause of the untimely deaths of Grandfather Henry and Grandmother Mary. Much more, however, can be discovered about their children. This essay sketches in broad outline the lives of those children.

Consider this the first of what I hope will be several installments in the story of our Stover ancestors. My own link is through my mother, Margaret Elizabeth Stover Hofferbert (1916 – 1996).¹ Much of the narrative and springboard for my inquiry into the background of our Stover family came from conversations with my maternal grandfather, Glenn Stover (1889 – 1980) and from some remarkably accurate notes he left me when he died. Before introducing those records, however, it may be helpful to have an overview of the family of George's parents and his siblings:



[Known Children and Birth Years]

Helen - 1884	Thomas - 1887	Lora - 1882	Charles - 1877	Paul - 1878	Wilfred - 1889	Glenn - 1889
	Bertha - 1889		Daisy - 1880	Erle - 1879		Ancil - 1895
	Robert - 1891		Anna - 1882	Bessie ?		Eric - 1895
	Addie - 1893		Louis - 1897	Ruth ?		
	Eunice - 1896					
	Clarence - 1898					

¹ Daughter of Glenn Stover and Elizabeth Hazel Hudson Stover.

² Henry and Mary's birth dates are estimated, based on the date of birth of their first child. Most people in that time were married around 20 and had their first children in their early twenties. Adeline Stover was born in 1848, so I estimated the parents' births around 1825. Dates of death indicated "? after..." mean that the last census entry I have discovered is in that year. Actual death dates could be much later, since many people are not indexed accurately in the census services available to me. Further, for now, the last indexed U.S. Census available on the web is 1920. So these "after" dates should be read entirely as "no earlier than..."

Glenn Stover's Record: As we move along, please keep in mind a couple of considerations. First, *Stover* is a fairly common name. And the more common the name, the harder it is to sort through the strands of written record that may be available. The 1820 US Census, for example, lists 216 Stovers. For reasons I will spell out later, we can be reasonably confident that my second great grandfather was named *Henry Stover*. And since his son, my great grandfather George Henry Stover, was born in Indiana in 1864, we can be fairly certain that Henry and his wife (probably *Mary Brown Stover*) also lived in Indiana at the time of the 1860 census. And that Census lists three *Henry Stovers* in Indiana in 1860 – none of whom is of the appropriate age or origin to be our ancestor. So, we must rely a good deal on family lore and just try to match it to other evidence where possible.

The second consideration to keep in mind regarding this search is that my Grandfather Glenn Stover and his second daughter, my mother, were marvelous storytellers. They had a knack for narrative, and prized richness of content over mechanical accuracy. One time when I was in my fifties, Mother was relating a story from when I was about 12. It was a well-fitted-out tale. I quietly noted, “Mama, I was there, and it wasn't quite like that.” At which point, she patted me maternally on the knee and said, “Honey, any story worth repeating is worth improving.” And she probably got that rule from her father. So, perhaps a grain of salt and some skepticism is in order when consulting Grandpa Glenn's tales to fill out our history. Yet, as we shall see, he also had an uncommon memory for necessary details.

It is indeed his recollections that have provided the foundation for my report on the Stover story. Little of what I have written here would have been possible without that record. Thus, I introduce the following:

Stover Family Genealogy
As Related by Glenn Stover
 [1889 – 1980]
On or About November, 1976
(and later)

As he had nearly annually for the previous 15 years, in the winter of 1976-77, Grandpa Stover stayed with us for about three months on our farm in Vestal, NY. He was then 87. I asked him to begin writing a few recollections about our family. Below is what he was able to record before his death, at 90, in the spring of 1980. The title, above, minus the italicized parts, was his own. I have not edited the text, except for occasional capitalization or to place inserted items where Grandpa indicated they should go. Any editorial comments are italicized and enclosed in brackets [...].

Glenn Stover and Elizabeth Hazel Hudson Stover, my mother's parents, were married in 1911, produced eight children (of whom, sadly, only five survived), and were divorced when I was about four years old. For many years after that I had only infrequent contact with Grandpa, my last childhood visit was spent with him and his second wife, Mary, in Indianapolis when I was five. Later, I visited him when I was sixteen and again when I was nineteen, as a student at Indiana University in Bloomington. After Rosemarie Besemer (b. 1936, South Bend, IN) and I were married, in 1957, we visited Grandpa and Mary. Mary died in 1962, shortly before I completed my doctorate in Bloomington. Rose and I attended the funeral. Grandpa visited us a few weeks later. That set a pattern of regular visitation to our various homes in Massachusetts, Kansas,

Michigan, and New York State. He spent a few weeks with us nearly every year thereafter until his death in 1980.

Although I had virtually no childhood relationship with him, Grandpa Stover became an important part of our family over the last several years of his life. He was important to our boys, Mark (b. 1958, South Bend, IN) and Samuel (b. 1963, North Adams, MA), as they grew up. He was not a "sweet" or doting great grandfather. But he was an interesting man. He had a vivid memory -- perhaps supplemented by an equally vivid imagination. He was analytical about his experiences. He was quick with an aphorism or an epithet. He was a good story-teller. To have in our house regularly a man who grew up with American industry during that period of awesome change -- who built automobile engines at a bench for the Apperson Brothers in Kokomo, and retired, nearly half a century later, from the Allison Division of General Motors, which manufactured jet aircraft engines -- was a marvelous experience.

One of those many November 22nds, when we still counted the years since President Kennedy's assassination, the family was sitting around the table reflecting on what we were doing when we heard that the President had been shot. Grandpa discussed his reactions, with some reference to his level of political interest as a youngster. We all looked puzzled, to which he answered: "Oh, I was talking about the shooting of President McKinley!" Grandpa made history real for our family.

We miss Grandpa Stover. And we are grateful to him for these brief notes on our origins. I hope others in the family will also profit from this record. It could describe the ancestors of millions of Americans. And it shows why, when people ask me my nationality, I have to answer "American."

*Richard Ira Hofferbert
[b. Grant County, Indiana
April 2, 1937]*

[Here begins Glenn Stover's narrative]

([Family] Name was originally Stauffer. Pennsylvania (Stoverville) near Oil City. Two Stauffer brothers came to Georgia (from where? names of two brothers?) Approximately at the time of Oglethorpe prominence. Migrated to Mansfield, Ohio and stayed one winter.

Some Stauffers went to Virginia, 2 Carolinas -- some stayed in Georgia. Some to Pennsylvania. Our ancestors were the Oil City "Stovers" (who founded Stoverville, Pa.). Approximate occupations: artisans and land holders. [Much of the foregoing is almost certainly factually in error with regard to our specific ancestors, but I shall not insert further such observations, lest it confuse Grandpa's narrative. Documentable corrections will be apparent in the rest of the text.]

Migrated to Indiana and settled near Potato Creek near Lafayette (Battleground -- before Civil War. Names?). There is a plaque that tells that George Washington Stover was the first man from Tippecanoe County to die in Civil War. Cemetery has old Stover farm where [Glenn's] grandfather and grandmother were buried. Names on gravestones: Henry (?) and Mary Stover [Paternal grandparents of Glenn; His father is their 7th child -- George Henry Stover.]

Stover Family succession [Progeny of Henry and Mary]:

1. Sarah (Aunt Sade) married Joseph (Joe) Mahoy. Lived near Clarksville [?], Ind. One child (adopted) -- Lora. married Everett Wendelborn; moved to Chicago -- no progeny. George made his home with Aunt Sade. George had an altercation with Uncle Joe and knocked him down the stairs. George ran and worked his way to Oregon. 1865 [?]. Stayed about a year -- came back to Indiana and married Anna [Powell] (appr) 1887. [George and Anna are Glenn's parents].

2. Mary (Aunt Mary) married Abner Gerard (18??) from Crawfordsville, Ind. Approx 1900 migrated to Long Beach, Calif. -- Paul, Earl [*Gerard Children*]. Paul went to Sp. Am. War. Came home and died a few years later / never married -- Gerard daughters -- Bess, younger sister (?). Bess, Crawfordsville area school teacher, died in a fire with her husband (?).

Earl (approx 1879) married 3 women, all 18 at the time. 1st wife had several children. Earl went California as child. All children by first wife.

3. Will Stover migrated to Sevier, Arkansas (c--central western) -- married -- 1. Thomas 2. Bertha 3. Robert 4. Eunice 5. Commodore (died as child -- dysentery) 6. Willa. 1. Thomas died age approx. 30 -- no progeny, 1899. 2. Bertha (Sept 13, 1889) married Burton Keese (Fort Wayne) -- Everett and Dale (retarded). Bertha died in childbirth -- infant died too. 3. Robert (Tippecanoe Co), lived and died a farmer. 4. Eunice --married, no progeny. 5. Commodore died (with his parents of the bloody flux). Willa migrated to California (???)

4. Frank K. Stover -- farmer Tipton Co., near Frankfort. Married (?). Children - 1. Charles, became blacksmith and metal analyst -- taught at Purdue. Married ? 2. Lewis -- railroader, no progeny. 3. Daughters between sons --

5. Adeline Stover -- married Freeman Kimball. 1 Daughter, married a medical MD (skin cancer specialist). Lived on Mill Creek (owned a sanitarium on the family farm). Brother-in-law mentally ill from California, same area as Gerard.

6. John, 1 child Wilfred (1888 -- California -- same area as Gerard) Wilfred became shocked by earthquake of '01. Married Mexican woman, no progeny, died young.

7. George Henry Stover, 1860-1940 [*numbers scratched out and written over -- should be 1865 -- 1943*] Tippecanoe or Montgomery County, Indiana ...[*last*] child of Henry (?) and Mary Stover -- orphaned at age of 4 or 5 years old. Lived with various sisters (Sade and Mary) (see note on Joe Mahoy) -- approx 17 rode the rails to Oregon. Lived there about 1 yr, coming and going. Came back to Crawfordsville (Mary's). Married (1887) Anna Powell. Progeny: 1: Glenn, born 10/1/89 -- Wingate, Ind. Montgomery Co (on a Saturday in a little brick house. Moved 16 times in 16 years then built house for \$750 on a \$200 lot at 517 (513 now) East Grant about 1901. Wingate, Newmarket, Brookston, Chalmers, Marion, Indianapolis (rented Marion home). Back to Marion 1905. Glenn stayed in Indianapolis with Grandma Sawyer. Traded Grant St property for 75 acres in Ripley County. Added 15 acres of woods later -- 1910. Moved to Ripley Co. 1911-12. Glenn stayed in Indianapolis age 16. Finished sophomore year of high school. Worked for Western Electric as office boy for 1 ½ years, worked for Dillings Candy for 2 years. Grandma Sawyer moved back to Marion. Glenn was 19-20 -- went to work for Marion Shoe Co., 2 years. Married Elizabeth Hazel Hudson Oct `` , 1911. Went to work for MacBeth-Evans Glass Co., little short of 2 years. Marianna born 1/2/1914. Home Avenue near cemetery - ?(look up address). Indiana truck just after U.S. entered WWI... [*Here Grandpa lists the names and birth dates of his and Grandma Hazel's children, the birth dates of his brothers, and a list of their wives and children.*]

This brief narrative serves as an excellent springboard for further search into our background without actually accepting the factual accuracy of all it contains. Some doubt should in no way be seen as disrespect or lack of appreciation for Grandpa's effort. Few people could do a better job from memory about their backgrounds -- especially at a very advanced age and in frail condition. For example, he may be entirely accurate about some Stovers having been *Stauffers*. Many names were changed as they passed through the generations, and spelling often became phonetic, especially if there were a couple of illiterate folks in any particular generation. And it may indeed be the case that Stovers figured in the colonists accompanying or following Oglethorpe into Georgia, or that

almost certainly somebody named Stover is behind the name of Stoverville, PA. But it is unlikely that any of these facts figure in our specific ancestry.

Our record is frayed by the fact that my Great Grandfather George Stover and his siblings were orphaned when he was very small. As Grandpa's narrative suggests, George was shipped, as we would say, from "pillar to post." His siblings scattered about, eventually all the way from Indiana to California and many places between. Still, Grandpa's narrative does give an excellent starting place.

I have taken the names of his uncles and aunts and searched various sources. The first stop is always the decennial US Census. Many libraries subscribe to *HeritageQuest*, which has indexed and put on line most of the census between 1790 and 1920. Prior to 1860, these sources are limited in that the census records gave only the name of the head of household, usually male, along with simply numbers of other residents fitting into several age groups. Even spouses names were not listed until 1860. But from 1860 onward, a great deal of useful information is offered. In addition to the names of all household residents, those censuses also give occupations and state or country of birth of parents, plus ownership and value of property. The decennial U.S. Censuses from 1860 up through 1920 have proved to be a godsend in the search for Stover ancestors.

Special Thanks to Two Wonderful Ladies. I need here to acknowledge a co-conspirator and fellow family history nut, without whose help and prodigious memory, I would not have recognized some of the key clues to the Stover odyssey. My Aunt Eunice Mae Stover Althouse has been a companion and source of oral history on several forays to central Indiana.³ We have spent many special days together driving in my pick-up truck from one to another cemetery and local library in and around Grant County.

Beyond the direct assistance of Aunt Eunice I have been heavily dependent on the local history and genealogy section of the Marion Public Library (Marion, Indiana). I have, in the course of my inquiry into family history, visited over a dozen local libraries, but none comes close to the quality of holdings, organization, and staff motivation as that section of the Marion Library. And its quality is a direct result of its having been founded and guided by Mrs. Barbara Love. That Barbara is also a close friend of Aunt Eunice has simply enhanced the experience for me. Barbara Love has been both an inspiration and a teacher for me in this endeavor. She knows more about genealogical research than could ever be equaled by a half dozen putterers such as I.

Adeline Stover Kimball. Henry and Mary Stover's first child was a girl, Adeline, born in 1848. Regarding his Aunt Adeline, Grandpa Stover wrote:

³ Eunice Mae Stover was born in Miami, Indiana in 1924. She served honorably in the Women's Army Corps during World War II. She married Maurice Althouse of Marion, Indiana in 1950. Widowed for many years, she now resides in Wichita, Kansas near her son, Edwin Althouse, and his family. Her daughters, Josi Althouse Louis and Tina Althouse, reside respectively in Oregon and California. Aunt Eunice is the fourth of five daughters of Elizabeth Hazel Hudson and Glenn Stover to survive into adulthood. My mother, Margaret Stover Hofferbert [1916 – 1996], was the second of those daughters. My love and respect for Aunt Eunice has grown steadily over the years.

Adeline Stover -- married Freeman Kimball. 1 Daughter, married a medical MD (skin cancer specialist). Lived on Mill Creek (owned a sanitarium on the family farm). Brother-in-law mentally ill from California, same area as Gerard.

I have learned a lesson in the search to verify Grandpa Glenn's record regarding Adeline. I searched the census via numerous routes to find "Adeline Stover," "Adeline Kimball," or "Freeman Kimball." No luck. Now I have discovered that whoever is indexing the census for *HeritageQuest* is rather casual in noting spouses and children. My experience has found that most local indices, such as those in the Marion Library, are much more thorough than the web-based services. However, since I cannot pop over to Marion or elsewhere in the Midwest every time I have a new query, I am most often bound to the latter. So no sweet Adeline or Freeman.

Then, however, I had an inspiration – one that should have been obvious from the start. People often prefer to be addressed by their middle names. Thus, for example, my Grandmother "Hazel" is, in fact, "Elizabeth Hazel." And the same held true for Great Grand Uncle "Freeman." A thorough search of the Census for Indiana reveals a "John F. Kimball", 52 years old and living in Indianapolis in 1900, along with his wife Adeline. My response was, "Ah, Sweet Adeline! So there you are." And they have a daughter Helen, who, in 1900 is 16. No longer doubting my Grandpa Glenn, I am happy to accept the fact that Helen is the one who later married an MD, who owned a sanitarium on the family farm land, and had a brother from California who was a tad "off". Uncle Freeman's father was born in Maine, and his mother in New York (1900 Census).

Sarah Stover Mahoy. Next in birth order, is Sarah Stover --Aunt Sade -- born in 1852, and about whom Grandpa Glenn wrote:

Sarah (Aunt Sade) married Joseph (Joe) Mahoy. Lived near Clarksville [?], Ind. One child (adopted) -- Lora. married Everett Wendelborn; moved to Chicago -- no progeny. George made his home with Aunt Sade. George had an altercation with Uncle Joe and knocked him down the stairs. George ran and worked his way to Oregon. 1865 [?]. Stayed about a year -- came back to Indiana and married Anna [Powell] (appr) 1887.

Aunt Sade shows up in the 1900 Census. She is married to Joseph Mahoy. The parents of Sarah ("Aunt Sade") are recorded as being born in Tennessee and Virginia.⁴ This is important information regarding the settlement pattern for our family as they came to Indiana, and it tells us much of Henry and Mary Brown Stover's history. In 1900, Joseph Mahoy is 47, born in Indiana of parents from Virginia and Ohio. Uncle Joe is operating a restaurant in Crawfordsville.

In spite of or perhaps because of their having no children of their own, Joe and Sade Mahoy opened their door to the unfortunate children of others. One finds many households in those years that include extended family members or even persons for whom no relationship is apparent. In 1900 the Mahoy household includes a young woman, the census record for whom is only partially legible. It appears that her name is "Mary" or "Amy" L. Cauford. A relationship is indicated, but it too is illegible. I am

⁴ Providing further validation of the tactic first discovered in regard to Mary Tansy Stover Gerard, below.

almost certain that this is the person Grandpa Glenn refers to as “Lora.” She may have preferred her middle name. In which case, she is the adopted daughter of Joe and Sade. Indeed, the 1910 Census reveals an Everett Wendelborn and his wife Lora living in Indianapolis. She is 28 in 1910, precisely the age that the young woman listed by the earlier census as living with the Mahoys would have been. Husband Everett Wendelborn in 1910 is working as a billing clerk for the electric company. His mother was born in Indiana, and his father was born in Germany. Grandpa’s recollection seems to have been right on the money.

Taking in the children of departed or impoverished siblings in those days was very common. In 1910, Uncle Joe is no longer operating a restaurant, but rather has taken up farming, in Sugar Creek Township of Montgomery County. And they now have living with them a niece, Lucy M. Stover, age 8, born in Arkansas. Lucy is almost certainly one of the orphaned children of Will and Joanna Stover, who had moved to Arkansas, and whom I shall discuss shortly. By 1920, Uncle Joe is still farming. Their niece Lucy has married Ira Horney, whom Joe and Aunt Sade have also taken in. Ira is 27 years old, born in Indiana of Indiana parents.

And do not forget: Joe and Sade also, for a few years in the 1870s and ‘80s, provided a home to my Great Grandfather George, before he had his altercation with his brother-in-law and then “rode the rails” to Oregon. Even though I find no record of Great Grandfather George living with Sade and Joe, it is plausible, as Aunt Sade and Uncle Joe were born in 1852 and 1851, respectively.⁵ If Great Grandfather George’s parents died about 1870, when he was six, his elder sister Sade would have been 18, and could well have been already married to Uncle Joe. Or, perhaps, George was taken in by someone else for a time before moving in with Sade and Joe Mahoy. Grandpa told me that his father, George, was about 16 when he knocked Joe down the stairs, precipitating the apparently hasty departure.

In spite of such a disagreement, it is obvious that Joe and Sade Mahoy were generous people who willingly opened their doors (and hearts) to the children of their extended family. I suspect that niece Lucy and her husband Ira, throughout their lives, held a loving memory of their time in the Mahoy household. Such a home must surely have helped heal the wounds that little Lucy must have suffered at the time of her parents’ death, so far away. But she learned that she was never so far away as to be out of the mind and heart of the family.⁶

⁵ The obvious place to look would be the 1880 U.S. Census; however, the web-based records do not yet include that set of documents. And, as anyone interested in the period knows, the 1890 Census documents, sadly, were nearly all destroyed by fire in Washington, D.C. in 1921.

⁶ I find a much earlier record, 1870, of a Joseph Mahoy, born in Ohio and living in the same township and the same county as the later record shows for the husband of Sarah Mahoy. And he is the same age as the one in the later record. It has to be our Joe. But the 1870 Census indicates that a lady named Manda, 25 and born in Indiana, also lives in the house, along with a five month old baby boy, James M. The 1870 census does not indicate relationships. At first, I thought that perhaps Uncle Joe had a wife and baby who died, and that Aunt Sade was his second wife. But the mystery is more complicated: Also living in the same house is a George Mahoy, 25 and born in Ohio. So I figure maybe George is actually the husband,

Frank Stover. Grandpa's record has fared well so far. And he seems to get most of it right regarding his uncle Frank:

Frank K. Stover -- farmer Tipton Co., near Frankfort. Married (?). Children - 1. Charles, became blacksmith and metal analyst -- taught at Purdue. Married ? 2. Lewis -- railroader, no progeny. 3. Daughters between sons --

The 1900 Census records Frank, then 46, and his wife Mary, 44, living in Coal Creek Township, Montgomery County (not Tipton). There Frank is recorded as a file manufacturer, not a farmer. In addition, in the house are Charles, age 23 and a blacksmith (no reference to being a teacher at Purdue); Edith, 19, Charles' wife; Daisy, age 20; Anna (? , minimally legible), 18; and Louis, age 7. So the girls whose names Grandpa could not remember are Daisy and (probably) Anna. He got Charles and Louis right.

We can trace Charles through his marriage and family via the 1920 Census. And Louis is recorded in 1920, working as a "stokeman" for the railroad, just as Grandpa Glenn wrote. He is married to a 21-year-old lady named Mabel, who was born in Indiana. And they have an 11-month-old son, Max. Grandpa says that Louis had no progeny. Perhaps little Max did not live long.

Louis, however, intrigues me. After Grandpa died in 1980, I came into possession of a shoebox of mementos, including a broken Timex wrist watch, a non-functioning Benrus pocket watch, and another non-functioning pocket watch that had broken hands and a badly stained face, attached to a worn leather strap. The watch looked like it might be interesting. I took it to a jeweler in Endicott, New York. He identified it as a *Railroad Standard* watch, used because of their extraordinary accuracy by railroad timekeepers, and widely sought by collectors today. On the basis of that assessment, I had it reconditioned.

I had been puzzled, however, how Grandpa Glenn might have come into possession of such a timepiece. Later, as I examine the picture of Great Grandfather George, on the front of this essay, I see that the leather strap that accompanied the watch is linked to his belt, with the watch apparently in his pocket. Now recall that his uncle Lewis worked for the railroad, that he died young, and that he had no progeny. I strongly suspect that it is George's departed nephew Louis's railroad watch, which came into Grandpa Glenn's possession from his father George. Of course, it is equally likely that Great Grandfather George simply bought it because he liked it.

Sam W. Stover. Here is what Grandpa wrote of his Uncle Will:

Will Stover migrated to Sevier, Arkansas (c--central western) -- married -- 1. Thomas 2. Bertha 3. Robert 4. Eunice 5. Commodore (died as child -- dysentery) 6. Willa. 1. Thomas died age approx.

even though Joe is listed first, where the "head of household" was normally listed for each address. For further complication, living next door to Joe, Mandy, little James, and brother George is a "Henry Stover." He is 23 and born in Indiana. I invite any dedicated soul to try to sort this all out.

30 -- no progeny, 1899. 2. Bertha (Sept 13, 1889) married Burton Keese (Fort Wayne) -- Everett and Dale (retarded). Bertha died in childbirth -- infant died too. 3. Robert (Tippecanoe Co), lived and died a farmer. 4. Eunice --married, no progeny. 5. Commodore died (with his parents of the bloody flux). Willa migrated to California (???)

I really thought that with regard to his uncle "Will" Stover I had caught Grandpa up in a somewhat tall tale. I searched the Arkansas census records and for no year could I find anything close to a "Will" -- no William, no Wilfred, no Wilbur, no Wilson, no Willard, no nothing like that. I did, however, find a Thomas Stover who was just about the right age, and was born in Indiana. He didn't live near Sevier or Sevier County, Arkansas. But he fit other features. Grandpa had said that his recollection of Uncle Will's family included a son, Thomas. So I figured Grandpa got it mixed up. I was really wrong.

Now recall how I found Adeline Stover's husband, Freeman Kimball, by looking for Kimballs with an "F" for a middle initial, finding him as "John F". I did that after having tried first for any Stover in Arkansas with a middle "W" who was born about the right time in Indiana. And there, in 1900, emerged "Sam W", born a Hoosier, 46 years old. That was the clue that I later used on "John F. Stover", in Indiana. The Arkansas Sam W. (aka "Will") also had some of the right kids. And he lived in Sevier County, just east of the line between Arkansas and the Choctaw Indian Territory / Oklahoma. It is all pretty much as Grandpa wrote. And if he has observed me finding all of this he has probably simply shaken his head and then gazed upward in mock disgust. "How could this kid doubt the expert?"

Will was born in Indiana in 1857. His wife Joanna was born in Arkansas in 1860. According to the 1900 Census, they had six children: Thomas, 1887; Bertha, 1889; Robert, 1891; Addie, 1893; Eunice, 1896, and; Clarence, 1898. Bertha and Clarence, the oldest and the youngest were born in the Indian Territory. Now, admittedly, Grandpa said there was a "Commodore" and a "Willa". So maybe Commodore was Clarence and Willa was Addie. And Robert indeed moved to Tippecanoe County, Indiana, where he appears in the 1920 census, working as a molder for a safe works, and married to a lady named Harriet. And one of the girls, other than Bertha, must have been nicknamed "Lucy", the 8-year-old taken in by Joe and Sade Mahoy after Will and Joanna's death.

The birth of the children more or less alternately in Arkansas and the Indian Territory would not have required a long distance move back and forth into Sevier County. And, given the land situation around that time, it may not have involved any moving at all -- just land acquisition. My guess is that Will and Joanna were "Sooners."

"Sooner" . . . is the name first applied about six months after the Land Run of 1889 to people who entered the Oklahoma District (Unassigned Lands) before the designated time. The term derived from a section in the Indian Appropriation Act of March 2, 1889, which became known as the "sooner clause." It stated that no person should be permitted to enter upon and occupy the land before the time designated in the president's opening proclamation and that anyone who violated the provision would be denied a right to the land.

Illegal claimants were initially called "moonshiners," because they entered the area "by the light of the moon." Sooners or moonshiners hid out in brush or ravines, then suddenly appeared to stake a claim after the run started, giving them clear advantage over law-abiding settlers who made the run from the borders. [<http://www.ok-history.mus.ok.us/enc/sooner.htm>]

Will and Joanna's lives may have been adventuresome, but they were also relatively short. The "bloody flux" to which Grandpa attributes their deaths, along with that of the elusive Commodore, was most likely dysentery (or perhaps cholera, a disease probably not uncommon in 19th century Arkansas.). In any event, some time around the turn of the century, the surviving children were scattered about, probably among family from either Will's or Joanna's side. The only ones I have been able to trace are Bertha and Robert.

Part of my persistence in pursuing evidence of Will Stover and his Arkansas family was in response to the specificity of Grandpa Glenn's record of that branch of the family. It was too believable to dismiss. In the notes given earlier, Grandpa actually listed Bertha's specific birth date – September 13, 1889. So she was born just a couple of weeks before Grandpa (October 1, 1889), which would make it memorable for him. Further, in a note from a 1990 conversation with my mother I find that Bertha came, as a teenager, to live for an extended period with Glenn's family. Mother said that her Dad considered his cousin Bertha the closest he had to a sister. That, and the proximity of their birthdays, would certainly explain the clarity with which he remembered Bertha's date of birth.



Bertha married Berton E. Keese, born in Tennessee 1888. She is pictured here with her husband and two sons. Even in this damaged picture, taken around 1923, it is clear that she was a pretty lady.

The 1920 Census entry lists Bertha Keese, with her husband "Bert" (and son Everett), indicating her birthplace as Oklahoma. Bertha and

Bert's family was star-crossed. Their eldest son was mentally retarded, and spent most of his life in a state institution. They had a second son who was fine. But then Bertha became pregnant again and died, along with her third baby, in childbirth. .

Mary Tansy Stover Gerard. In 2003, Aunt Eunice, Barbara Love, and I took a little day-trip from Marion over to Crawfordsville, to explore the Montgomery County records in search of the elusive Henry and Mary Stover. Commonly, the genealogy section of local libraries has an "open file", into which patrons may enter material under family name folders. In the Crawfordsville Library, Aunt Eunice leafed through the open file, encountering a name that tickled the tendrils of her memory. The name *Gerard* caught her eye. She remembered that one of her Grandfather George Stover's siblings had married a man named *Abner Gerard*. In the Gerard file was a copy of a document

someone had placed there entitled “Descendants of Rev. John, Elias, & William” Gerard. Included was an entry for *Abner Harvey Gerard Jr.*, as follows:

“**Abner Harvey Gerard Jr.**, ... b.1849 Shelby Co., Ohio, m. 7 June 1877, in Montgomery Co. Indiana, **Mary Tansy Stover**, b. 1859, Indiana, d. 24 Jun 1935, Compton, Los Angeles Co. California. Abner died 6 Nov 1923, Long Beach, Los Angeles Co., California. Sometime after 1900 Abner and Mary moved to California. Mary’s middle name was Tansy, which she was very proud of as it was so different. The name appears on her tombstone also. The middle name for Abner has been given as Hathaway and Harvey. The descendants of Abner say the name was Harvey.

Children:

- i. **Paul Gerard** b. 1878, Indiana, m. 4 Oct 1899, in Montgomery Co. Indiana
Elsie Linn. Paul died 25 Dec. 1900, Montgomery Co. Indiana, cemetery: Oak Hill, Crawfordsville, Montgomery Co. Indiana.
- ii. **Erle Gerard** b. 25 Oct 1879.
- iii. **Bessie Gerard**
- iv. **Ruth Gerard**”

Now for one who has spent as much time as Aunt Eunice or I digging up dead relatives, such a discovery as this is a gold mine. Let me walk you through the reasons. First, it stimulates memories. Thus, I remembered an incident from when I was about four years old, while my parents and I were temporarily living with Great Grandfather George and Great Grandmother Anna Stover in Ripley County, in the southern part of Indiana. A visitor driving a new car was Erle Gerard. It had to be in 1941, since I recall noticing that his car did not have running boards, a feature last seen in the 1940 models.⁷ And only a very few cars were manufactured in 1942, and none for ’43, ’44, or ’45, all of the country’s industrial capacity being turned over to war production. Cousin Erle took me for a ride in that marvelous new car. He had a young wife. And, being from a place called “California”, their very presence had an aura of the exotic about it. That aura is only enhanced by Grandpa Glenn’s recollection (verified by various census entries) that Erle was married three times, each bride being 18 years old at the time of the marriage. His repeated widowhood may have been very painful, but he somehow managed to find what would seem to be pretty darned good solace.⁸

⁷ Running boards were significant for small farm kids. It was a common treat to stand on the running board, hanging onto the door, while being driven around the farm.

⁸ Aunt Eunice discovered in one of those ubiquitous boxes of “stuff” a copy of Erle Gerard’s funeral program: *In memory of Erle Gerard, born October 26, 1979. Date of death: May 23, 1945. Services from White’s Funeral Home. Clergymen Officiating: Bellflower Masonic Lodge No. 523, F. & A. M. Final Resting Place: Inglewood Memorial Park.* Opposite these entries is a rendition of Alfred Lord Tennyson’s well-known poem, “Crossing the Bar”

Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me.
And may there be no moaning at the bar,
When I put out to sea.

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound and foam,
When that which drew from out of
The boundless deep
Turns again home.

But beyond being a stimulus to memory, the Crawfordsville Library finding also made possible confirmation and discovery of additional data. By having dates for the birth, marriage, and death of one of Great Grandfather George's siblings – Mary Tansy Stover – and her spouse, we can begin verification via the US Census. Now keep in mind that we are still trying to track down Mary's (and Great Grandpa George's) parents. Who were they? Where were they born? Georgia? Stoverville, Pa. (which, if it ever existed, is no longer acknowledged by Rand McNally)? Elsewhere?

Taking a fairly sound guess, I then consulted the 1910 Census for California. There they were:

Abner Gerard, born in Ohio; Father's place of birth – illegible; Mother's place of birth – Ohio. Occupation, carriage painter.

Mary T. Wife, born in Indiana. Father's place of birth - **Tennessee**; Mother's place of birth - **Virginia**,

At this point, I scrawl *Eureka!!* across my printout of the census record. Mary's parents -- and those of all those siblings, including Great Grandfather George – were born in Tennessee and Virginia. That almost certainly places them among the massive Scotch-Irish migrations of the early 19th Century.⁹ Listed as residing in 1910 with Abner and Mary Tansy are their children Erle, then 30 (evidently between wives); daughter Bess, 28; granddaughter, Mary D., age 7, born in Indiana; and grandson Jesse, age 5, born in California. Mary and Jesse were Erle's children, by his first wife. Erle is also listed as a carriage painter, evidently helping out in his father's business.

Times got better for Erle, as is revealed in the 1920 Census. There, at age 40, he has a new wife, by then 27. He is an automobile dealer. And his children Mary and Jesse from the former wife are now 17 and 15, living with Erle and Laura, the new wife. One suspects that a 27-year-old stepmother of two teenagers had her hands full. She later died or divorced Erle, as he acquired yet another 18-year-old wife before himself shucking off the mortal coil.

Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness of farewell,
When I embark.

For tho' from out of our bourne of time and place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crossed the bar

⁹ At a later date, I will fit these folks into their historical setting, including an examination of the 18th Century Scotch Irish migration to the Appalachians, and then the subsequent 19th Century migration to the Midwest.

John Stover. Grandpa Glenn's record of his Uncle John was rather cryptic:

John, 1 child Wilfred (1888 – California – same area as Gerard) Wilfred became shocked by earthquake of '01. Married Mexican woman, no progeny, died young.

John Stover was Great Grandfather George's elder by three years. In 1900, when he was 38, John lived in Crawfordsville, Indiana with his wife, Sarah A. (39), and son Wilfred, aged 11. By 1920, John and Sarah have moved to Los Angeles County, California, where the Census shows that Uncle John is working as a laborer for the gas company. He and his family had apparently moved to be near his sister, Mary Tansy Stover Gerard, and her family. And we even have a picture of Uncle John, below.



*John Stover, b.
Montgomery County,
Indiana, September,
1861 d. Los Angeles
County, California,*

This photo, probably taken around 1905, when John was in his 40s, found its way through numerous relatives, finally coming to me from Aunt Eunice. On the back, is written in, I am fairly certain, Grandpa Glenn's handwriting, "Uncle John Stover, California". One can look at the picture and easily see the characteristic Stover facial features, especially the eyes.

John and Sarah's son, Wilfred, for whom we also have a picture (below) appears to have been a dashing fellow. How well life treated him, however, is questionable, in spite of his handsome visage. He is listed in the 1920 Census as a roomer in an apartment house where also reside 33 other roomers. He is then occupied as a mechanic with an auto company. Grandpa's notes say that he married a Mexican woman, and that he died young.



*Wilfred Stover, b.
Montgomery County,
Indiana, 1890 d. Los
Angeles County,
California*

Concluding Thoughts. I am sorry I cannot tell more about my great great grandparents, Henry and Mary Stover. They emerge from and then fade back into the fog of former time. They were the children of Appalachian migrants. They lived in central Indiana in a time of dramatic change and growth. But what they believed or how they made a living is unknown to us. Thanks to my Grandfather Glenn's extraordinary memory, I have been able to track down their children and most of their children's families. We have seen, through a narrow scope to be sure, some of the triumph and tragedy of the lives of those children and their own offspring.

Henry Stover and Mary Brown probably came to Indiana in their teens. From the time of statehood in 1816 through the mid-1840s, there was a large and steady migration of Scotch-Irish people into Indiana from the mountains of western Pennsylvania, from Virginia (including what would later be West Virginia), and from the Carolinas. Some came directly to Indiana. Others came in stages, stopping for a few years or a generation in Ohio, Kentucky, or Tennessee. It would appear that Great Great Grandmother Mary Brown Stover's folks were among those who made the migration in one step, coming directly to Indiana from Virginia. Great Great Grandfather Henry's folks appear to have stopped over for a time in Tennessee. Did they come on to Indiana, bringing him as a child? Or did he leave them behind and continue onward himself, in early adulthood? How did either of them come to settle in Tippecanoe County? How did they meet? Were they nice people? Could they read and write? Were they pious Christians? Were either Henry's or Mary's parents still alive when the couple met their untimely deaths in their 40s? Probably not, since the children seem to have been parceled out to aunts and uncles rather than to grandparents.

Keep in mind, gentle reader, the record of all of these people together is one of considerable moving about, not unlike that of millions of other 19th Century Americans. And how much more so must migration have been tempting for Henry and Mary's children -- a set of siblings orphaned at relatively tender ages, passed about to whomever would take them in? Those who did not leave Indiana tended to mill about within the state, seldom settling in any permanent way. Their parents were rootless and footloose. Their grandparents were likewise so. And, as we today illustrate, their descendants maintain the pattern.

Great Grandfather George was typical. He was shifted from one relative to another; took off across the West in his teens; and then moved 16 times in as many years after his marriage. Given that he is my direct ancestor, and that I remember him from my early childhood, I propose to devote a separate chapter to the life and times of George Henry Stover. However, I wish first to explore the fascinating ancestry of Great Grandmother Anna, George's wife, and particularly the story of her mother, "Grandma Sawyer."

Anyone who has any corrections or additions to this record is eagerly invited to send them along. My email address is: rhofferb@binghamton.edu. My postal address from June through mid-October is 609A Country Club Road, Vestal, NY 13850. From mid-October through May it is: 220 Santa Maria, St #138, Venice, FL 34285.