

# Knights of Pythias Cemetery Crawl

July 25, 2014, Central City, Colorado

Written by Dennis Mayfield, Gr Gr Grandson

Spoken by Gloria Gaines

"Hi everyone. My name is *Levinia Perry Champion*. I came to this mining town from Cornwall, England in 1863, at the age of 25, to marry my Cornish sweetheart, Hugh. We were married the day I got off the stagecoach from Denver City. Hugh, a hard-rock miner, had come 2 years earlier to make his fortune. Well...it didn't work out that way.

However, along the way we had quite a life...mostly centered on our children. Stands to reason, as we had 10 over the next 19 years.

Hugh, who is buried here next to me, died on New Years day...1886, at age 47....just 4 years after our tenth, and last child was born.

Life was so harsh back then that four of our children had died before Hugh. Despite losing those children, I considered myself lucky to have had Hugh that long, as most miners died much earlier.

Boy, do I remember the day Hugh was buried. It was in early January of 1886. It was so cold that Hugh's brother used dynamite to break the frozen ground where we now stand. I recall his concern that the blast might disturb the graves of our four children, buried nearby. They are William John 1 d. 1865, Lillie 1 d. 1868, Edith 1 d. 1877, and John Sherman d. 1880.

There was so much snow that day that the horse drawn hearse couldn't even reach the cemetery. The pallbearers had to carry the casket from an area just below City Cemetery where there was space to turn the horses. Even then, the space was so narrow due to the drifted snow that they had to move the tongue of the hearse to the opposite end so it could be pulled back into town!

I lived all my adult life in this area, which would include Nevadaville and Caribou. I recall town fires, floods, grasshopper plagues, murders, mine disasters, several booms and busts, the trains, and the opening of the Opera house.

My life was full of love of family, my Cornish background, our St. James Church, and I even loved very hard work. Hugh was typical Cornish stubborn, but he had the best interest of his family in mind with each job he took.

By the time I died on Easter Sunday 1912, at the age of 75, and 26 years after Hugh, two more of our children had died. Emily is buried in this row next to Hugh and me. William John II d. 1906 and was buried in his family lot, in the adjoining City Cemetery row. I now know that Hugh's brother Thomas and his daughter Emily Jane Johns, and sons, Richard and Tom, are also buried in this row spanning both cemeteries'. I also have learned that my four remaining children are buried in California.

It is sad that only one of my children's graves remains clearly marked. That is of Emily...our daughter who was a cripple and died at age 18. The other children are here, although their grave markings are long gone. I know they are near me, and I hold them closely.

The last place I and three of my children lived is also long gone. It was at the intersection of Miner and Lawrence Streets...right where Miner Street is shored up with timbers. There I took in boarders and laundry after Hugh died. As I mentioned earlier, we were not wealthy. In fact, I hear that after I died, my children sold the house for taxes during a particularly difficult depression in the mining business.

I am rewarded in knowing that my descendants have not forgotten me and my family.

My granddaughter Amy took quite an interest in my life and I was able to re-live much of it for her. She apparently recorded much of it in an unpublished manuscript she aptly titled "*No wealth for Levinia.*" Her grandson Dennis discovered that manuscript years after she died and, so I am told, has updated it and published it for all to read.

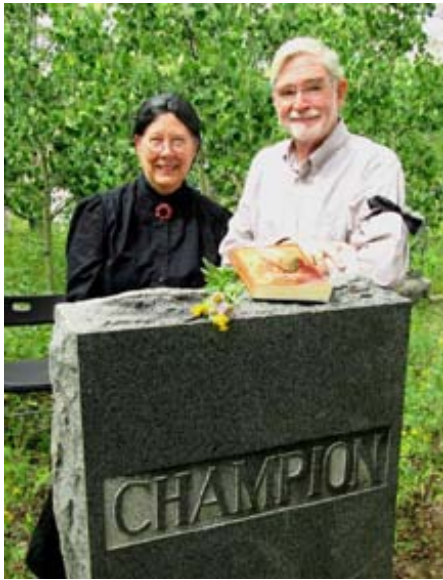
I am so glad I had given away many of my family keepsakes to my children before I died, because everything was either sold or given away. I now know that my old striking clock, that I asked to be passed on to each new female generation, still ticks in my second great granddaughter's house.

And maybe most rewarding of all...I learned that our family Bible...that was left with our youngest daughter and ended up in an estate sale in California has been returned to my great great Grandson Dennis by a person who vowed to find its rightful descendant. Last year Dennis brought the Bible here for me to sense. That was 99 years after my death. That was and remains one of the most wonderful joys of my life.

I am glad to be here today and to tell you a little about me and my family.

Please give a nod to all my family.

Thanks for listening."



Gloria Gaines – Levinia  
Dennis Mayfield  
Gr Gr Grandson



Plaque placed by the family  
September 1999