

The Luc(k)raft Newsletter

January 1996

Edition 1

An Occasional Newsletter

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But I did not want to get into the hassle of a regular newsletter, with subscriptions and mailing lists, which make work, and reduce the number of people who read the newsletter. So I'm doing a "freebie", with a tear-off reply slip on the back page. There won't be a charge for this style of newsletter, and I don't think the circulation will be ever big enough to justify a paid subscription.

So... if you want to be kept on the mailing list for future issues, you'll have to fill in the reply slip on the back page, and post it to me.

Keep those details coming !

One of the most helpful things people do is to write occasional letters to me, up-dating me on births, marriages, deaths and other events in their particular family. This helps enormously in keeping the main Luc(k)raft one name study up-to-date.

In the One Name Study, there is a card for every Luc(k)raft of whom I have knowledge, starting with Richard de Loccroft of Ashwater, Devon, who was taxed 18 pennies in 1332. The cards include spouses who take the Luc(k)raft name.

Every Luc(k)raft or descendant, who can be fixed then into a tree, is written in, and the tree is made available to whoever is interested. There are over 2000 people with cards so far, across the centuries, but there are quite a few modern people for whom the information is not yet available.

If you haven't seen your tree, please send for a copy, (free), and see if you can help fill out the details

What names are covered?

The main study covers the Luckraft and Lucraft names. There are other even rarer names, which I think are variants, Luckerift, Locraft, Loccraft, Lovecraft, Luccraft. On the back page is a short piece about the distribution of the names.

The Latest News

Inside this first edition, you'll find brief details of the major developments over the last year or two. Rather than write up the full details of each story, I'm giving you a précis of each of them, and if you want further details of any particular story, then let me know, and I'll send you what I have.

- The Luckerifts of Devon, Yorkshire and Jersey
- Lucrafts in Australia
- Locrafts in America
- Lucrafts in the Deep South
- Suicide, or Murder?
- H P Lovecraft
- Tony Benn's family connections
- Luckrafts from Preston to Canada
- Lucrafts in the Media
- Woodworker in Devon

Woodwork in the genes !

There have been many generations of woodworkers in the Lucraft family, in Devon, and in London. John Luckraft was a Master Cooper in the Dockyard at Plymouth in the 1700's. Joseph Lucraft was the cooper in Broadclyst in the early 1800's. Benjamin Lucraft was a woodworker, his son Benjamin was a chairmaker, and his grandson George Sealey Lucraft set up the company of G S Lucraft in London, making furniture.

Now Nigel Lucraft has set up a company making handmade furniture, called Appledore Crafts Company in Bude Street, Appledore. He is GS Lucraft's great great grandson.

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The Luckerifts of Devon, Yorkshire and Jersey

The Luckerift surname is very rare, and I always thought it might be a variant of Luckraft. Through the help of Hilary Bouteloup, in Jersey, and John William Joseph Luckerift in Barnsley, Yorkshire, we now have a tree going back to William Luckerift in Diptford in 1800. John was in his 80's when he helped me, and sadly died recently, but he was very pleased to see the tree develop, and go back into his family history.

Jersey Royals

John described his father, John Shillibeer Luckerift, born 1848 Diptford. John S was married three times, and was one of the 12 original growers of Jersey Royals, which were then imported into England by the importers called Nightscales one of whom was married to John S's niece Evelyn Lucraft.

Horse Buses

John S also ran one of the horse buses in Jersey, and a George Shillibeer ran horse buses to the Bank in London, in 1829. The building George used in London, to make the horse buses, is now called Shillibeer's Brasserie, at Carpenter's Mews, North Road, north of Kings Cross.

Sarah Luckraft of Diptford

The other end of the story begins with Sarah Luckraft, born about 1790 who left a will in 1869 when she died in Diptford, Devon. It's a complicated will, leaving small bequests to a number of nephews and nieces. Sarah was married to William Luckraft, a labourer, or husbandman, and when she died left a house, a garden field and an orchard at Curtisknowle. Curtisknowle is a large house, in a small hamlet, where the surrounding houses have been beautifully restored.

On their two tombstones, William in 1837 and Sarah in 1869, however, their name is spelt Luckerift. It appears that the Luckerifts that follow flow from the change of spelling at this time.

Local Contacts

Hilary Bouteloup in Jersey, descended from John S's brother, has done a lot of Shillibeer and Luckerift work on Jersey.

Clive Shillabeer in Bournemouth has done more work on Shillabeers, in all their variant spellings.

There is a Luckerift in Australia and one in Devon, with whom I've not yet managed to make contact.

Lucrafts in Australia

One of two known emigrants to Australia was Arthur Lucraft, who settled in Perth, Western Australia, in about 1890, and from whom a family of Lucrafts is descended, now living around the Perth area. One son was a famous doctor in Australia, and the family story of Arthur's beginnings in Australia, with his wife Annie Stephenson, make interesting reading.

Born in Hoxton

Arthur was born in 1867 in Kingsland Road, Hoxton, London. His father, George, is said to have owned a (gas) mantle factory and he is recorded as a chairmaker. George came to London with his parents in the 1830's. George's older brother was Benjamin Lucraft, the Radical reformer.

Coal and Wood Merchant

Arthur first went to America. (Did he meet other earlier emigrants from his Devon family?) He then emigrated to Australia, where the official obituary lists his rise through the ranks of an evangelical church, until he settled in Freemantle. He became a municipal councillor, and was a well-known merchant and business-man, trading in wood and coal.

Arthur's sister-in-law, Annie Stephenson, in her memoirs, recalls a more colourful young man, with a range of entrepreneurial skills!

Australian in the North Sea

Arthur's eldest child, Harry Stephenson Lucraft, was sent to Edinburgh to study medicine, and volunteered in 1914 to serve in the navy. He served on board destroyers in the North Sea throughout the war, and graduated in 1919 with a first and a string of gold medals. On his return to Australia, he worked in one of the gold towns, and returned to Edinburgh and London for his higher degrees, and studies in tropical medicine. He returned to Australia, and married Gladys Steward of London, in 1926. Eventually he became consultant in cardiology and during the second world war served with the RAAF as medical specialist to Western Command.

Harry and Gladys had two daughters, Pamela and Daphne, who both have families in Australia today

There is a family legend that Annie Stephenson's family is related to George Stephenson, of "Rocket" fame, but the family is slightly sceptical of this.

Contacts today

Harry Goff, great grandson of Arthur, now living in Perth, has helped enormously, being related to all the Perth Lucrafts.

Locrafts in America

One William Lucraft, born 1802 in Broadclyst, Devon, emigrated to America around the 1830's, and his name was changed, by accident, ignorance or accent to Locraft, and from him a family is descended who now live mainly around Washington DC and Maryland. William Locraft won the Gold Medal for bravery on the Union side in the American Civil War, when he fought in the 6th New York Cavalry.

The slowest letter

In 1993 I rang Thomas Locraft, in Rockville, Maryland, following up a letter Thomas had written in 1963 to Howard Lucraft in California, the former bandleader and writer on music. Howard sent that letter to his cousin Jack Lucraft in London, whose early interest coincided with the start of my studies. The letter came to me, and I rang up, much to Thomas's surprise.

Lucraft to Locraft

William was born in Broadclyst, Devon, in 1802, the 11th of 12 children of William Lucraft and Esther Newton. Esther's gravestone is still standing in Broadclyst churchyard. William's older brother, Benjamin, was the father of Benjamin Lucraft the London Radical of the 1860's.

When William emigrated to New York it's easy to imagine how a Devon accented Lucraft became Locraft. William became a grocer and Morocco dresser, and lived some time in Brooklyn. He married a woman called Margaret, born in Ireland, and was reputed to be a quiet and serious man.

The Civil War

William served in the 6th New York Cavalry during the Civil War, and was awarded the Gold Medal for bravery. Both William and Margaret are buried in the Cemetery of the Holy Cross, Tilden Avenue.

Locrafts today

William and Margaret had two sons and one daughter. (Both sons also married young women who had been born in Ireland.) There are surviving families from each of these children; the only ones still called Locraft are from the third child Bernard, and they nearly all live around Washington DC.

Thomas Locraft has sent me a tree his brother Matthew Locraft has done, many feet wide, showing all the American inter-marriages of their families

Lucrafts in the Deep South

From the American research come some census records from 1840 in Carteret County, North Carolina, showing Benjamin Lucraft, head of a household which had 9 free persons and 16 slaves.

I have been sent this census material by Ken Faig, in Illinois, who's researching his Lovecraft roots. He has found Lucrafts in North Carolina, Kansas and Illinois, none of whom I've been able to tie down yet. Has anyone any ideas where they may have come from?

They are:

Beaufort, North Carolina, 1860

Mary Lucraft, aged 60, Real estate \$3,000 Personal estate \$10,000.

Two young men, Lafayette Lucraft, aged 23, and Franklin Lucraft, aged 20, also live with her, together with Mary and Willy Arendell, aged 14 and 12. The four children have \$37,000 personal estate between them!

Oregon, Illinois, 1860

Joseph Lucraft, aged 37, Shoemaker, Personal estate \$150, born England.

With him is Sarah Lucraft, aged 23, born England, and three children, only one of whom could be Sarah's child: Sarah Lucraft, aged 1 born Illinois, Margery Hannah Lucraft, aged 12, born England, and Joseph Lucraft, aged 13, born England.

Rock Creek, Nebraska, 1890

Joseph Lucraft, Private, 46th Illinois Regiment, enlisted 1864, discharged 1865, disability kidney trouble.

(This looks like it could be the boy Joseph in the Oregon listing.)

As well as these Lucrafts, Ken has found the Lovecrafts he's interested in, and some Leaycrafts, Leycrafts, Leycroft and Lecrofts, though whether there are any connections no-one knows.

One of the Leaycrafts, Sarah Leaycraft, was born about 1830, in England. I haven't found a Sarah born around that time at all.

HP Lovecraft

Readers of Gothic horror novels will know of the American writer, HP Lovecraft's work, a cult among the genre. There are no links to our trees, but I have a very interesting book on his genealogy from America. He claimed his descent from the Lovecrafts of Devon.

A Suicide, or was it Murder?

Elizabeth Luckraft, wife of John, the Land Steward, at Oldstone House, Blackawton, Devon, found the body of the daughter of the house, in the lake, in 1884

Gwen and I were visiting Blackawton a few years back, to do some searching of churchyards, and we were staying on a lovely caravan site within the grounds of what had been Oldstone House Estate. When we were reading though the booklet about the estate, we found that John

The Death of Laura Dimes

Luckraft's wife had found the daughter of the estate, Laura Dimes, dead in the pool soon after her forbidden and secret marriage to a somewhat disreputable character, Hugh Shortland earlier that year. The circumstances lead to a verdict of suicide, but there were suspicions of something worse, and the booklet describes the various theories and investigations.

Ursula Dimes, now Ursula Khan, of Totnes, has written a booklet about her family and the history of the estate. It mentions the Luckrafts, and where they lived on the estate. In 1899, for the Jubilee, the family celebrated the hay-making, and William Dimes notes in his diary that "Luckraft was overcome by the heat." John Luckraft was 72 at the time.

Blackawton Luckrafts

I was able to sort out quite a bit of the Blackawton Luckrafts during that holiday. John and Elizabeth's gravestone still stands in Blackawton Churchyard. Their son, William George Luckraft, was a shoemaker, and insurance agent, and a Trustee of the Wesleyan Sunday School; his name is on the tablet of the wall of the building. William George's daughter, Laura, named after her mother, Laura Ann Best, married Fred Cousins, who was the baker in Blackawton.

The Blackawton Luckrafts are a large branch of the family in South Hams, and the earliest record is of Peter in 1675. But it's a bit vague until the 1700's, when several generations are recorded with large families in Blackawton. Some of them are related to the Tuckers in Dartmouth.

Where are they now?

I'm in touch with David Cousins, grandchild of John and Elizabeth, but I've not found any other living relatives of what was a large family. Does anyone know of Blackawton connections?

Bits and Pieces

Tony Benn has replied to some queries with some interesting background material. When Benjamin Lucraft, the Radical reformer, was buried, one of the mourners was Tony Benn's grandfather, John Williams Benn, then of the London County Council. When Benjamin's grandson, the second George Seeley Lucraft, died young in 1886, leaving a young wife with six children, the Benn family took one of the boys in to live with them as family.

From Carpets to Canada is the line of one branch. Richard Luckraft, appearing in Preston in 1831, to marry Ellen Hoskisson, is the start of a tree that now spreads through Basildon in Essex, Croyden in Surrey, Preston in Lancashire and one branch emigrated to Canada in the 1890's. I think this Richard stopped off in Kidderminster on his way from Devon, but I can't find where he came from. Kidderminster is a carpet weaving town, so he may have learnt a new trade there.

Made it in the Media Names to notice. Lesley Chamberlain, g.g.g.grand-daughter of the reformer Benjamin, worked for Reuters, and wrote the Penguin "Best of Russian Cookery". Jamie Lucraft is the smallest child in "Next of Kin" with William Gaunt and Penelope Keith on BBC1. Which Jamie is this, please?

What's going to happen to the records? A copy of the biographical details of Benjamin Lucraft, made up into a booklet, has been deposited at the British Library. A copy of the full set of trees, together with the source documents and record cards, will be deposited at the Society of Genealogists at a future date.

Guild of One-Name Studies I'm going to re-activate the membership of this guild, and re-enter myself as the holder of the records for the Luc(k)raft One Name Study. If anyone wants to work with me on this, I'd be delighted.

Next Issue Ideas for the next issue of this newsletter include:

a list of the family trees already worked up
a brief biography of Benjamin Lucraft
a note on how, when and where the versions of the name changed

any other ideas, or even better, stories or information for inclusion would be welcome.

I'm aiming to do another newsletter in the middle of 1996, so get your ideas and material to me by June, please.

Thank you

Finally, a big thank-you to everyone who over the last 20 years has helped with information and encouragement. Without your help the study would not have got off the ground.