

William Graham (1873-1948)  
Oral History

When we began researching our Graham family history, our family oral history was fuzzy on William's birth date, and where he was born or who his parents were. So, we started this process to help us capture the family's stories, which could help us research the facts around William's family origins.<sup>1</sup> We are always looking for more family participation in this process.

The following are stories we captured from family members. It's our intention to preserve the memory of William Graham and his wife Sadie Greenawalt. We also provide a context for each story, where our research findings let us know the accuracy of each story.

1. Calvin Graham: as a young boy, drove cattle down Route 11, from Shippensburg to Carlisle Pennsylvania.<sup>i</sup>

- This story was told to Calvin's grandson, Bob, in the early 1960s when Calvin, and his sons, Robert and Keith, and Calvin's grandsons were members of the Williams Grove Steam Engine Association.
- During the late 1950s and early 1960s the Graham family operated a pony ride, and had a 19<sup>th</sup> century bedroom display and train set layout in the association's museum. Calvin also worked in association's camp kitchen.
- Calvin and Robert also had an early 20<sup>th</sup> century Hart-Parr Tractor, and the family has a photo showing Calvin's grandson, Bob, at the wheel. The train sets have been preserved and are maintained in the family archives.<sup>2</sup> In the bedroom display were two photos of a young Calvin Graham: 1.) a young Calvin with his sister Florence, this photo has been preserved and is retained in our family archives;<sup>3</sup> 2.) a young Calvin wearing a ragged straw hat, bare foot, driving a few cows from behind with a stick, this photo has been lost.

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<sup>i</sup> Up until the early 1950s, there were only two direct routes between Shippensburg and Carlisle Pennsylvania; Ritner Highway and Walnut Bottom Road. Both roads connect to Shippensburg's East King Street. Ritner Highway is known today as State Route 11, and begins at Carlisle's West High Street travels directly to Shippensburg's East King Street. Walnut Bottom Road starts at Carlisle's South Hanover Street on present day State Route 465 for about 8 miles, and then becomes State Route 174. Rt. 174 continues until it connects with East King Street in Shippensburg. At this connection point is also known today as the Rittner Highway and State Route 11.

2. Robert Graham: Britton Greenawalt is Calvin Graham's half-brother<sup>ii</sup>.<sup>4</sup>
  - This is a common story known by all of the family members. However, no one knows exactly how Britton is a brother of my father.
  - Sadie Greenawalt had a son Earl Britton Hostetter.<sup>5</sup> Britton, as he was known by the entire family, took the Greenawalt last name. He was born in 1889 before Sadie married William Graham in 1901. There is no record in Cumberland or Franklin Counties of Sadie being married before William. Britton Greenawalt's marriage application lists his father as dead, and his mother as Sadie Greenawalt.<sup>6</sup>
3. Robert Graham: Calvin, never wanted to talk about his own father William, or his family, and that Calvin didn't like his father; cared much for him or something to that effect.
  - This story was told to Robert's son, Bob, when Bob asked about his grandfather's family.
  - Robert's son also asked his grandpa in the early 1970s, as a school project, about Calvin's family, and Calvin was his usual gruff demeanor, and short in his reply; there's nothing to tell.
4. Pat Graham-Napoli and her brother Robert Graham: William was illiterate, having little or no education.
  - This story was told to Robert's son, Bob, when Bob asked about his grandfather's family.
  - All the documents where William was to sign his name, there is a mark of an "X", and a witness's signature attesting to William's name and mark. All federal censuses records indicated William could not read, but could write.
  - On the 1940 federal census, under the category of, highest grade of school completed; William was listed as 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, and Sadie as the 6<sup>th</sup> grade.
5. Robert Graham: The Hoffman family of Harrisburg Pennsylvania, of the Harrisburg Hoffman Ford Car dealership, was in some way related to his father, Calvin Graham.

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<sup>ii</sup> A half-brother is one that shares a parent with you. For instance, either your father, or your mother, is also the natural parent of that person. A sister or brother with the same father, but a different mother, or the same mother but a different father.

- This story came from the many late 1950s and early 1960s Saturday morning trips Robert and his son Bob would take to Harrisburg's Abram's Scrap Yard on Cameron Street. During this period the Hoffman Ford dealership was located at the intersection of Paxtang and Cameron Street Harrisburg Pennsylvania. This is the route Robert would take to reach the scrap yard.
- Sadie Greenawalt's younger brother, Thomas Albert Greenawalt, married Ella Lizzie Michael on December 14<sup>th</sup> 1883. Their 2<sup>nd</sup> daughter was named Pearl Greenawalt, who married Boyd Hoffman of Hopewell Township, Cumberland County Pennsylvania.<sup>7</sup> Boyd is the great-grandfather of the current (2013) Earl Hoffman, who is the local Harrisburg Pennsylvania area Ford dealership; Hoffman Ford.<sup>8</sup>

The remaining two stories are important in our search for William's biological parents, his birth date, and his whereabouts during his childhood. No family member knows who William's parents were.

#### Where is William From

6. Robert Graham: Roxbury in Lurgan Township Franklin County Pennsylvania is where his Graham family was from, and buried.
  - Robert told this story to his son, also named Bob, back in the early 1960s while Robert took his son to Roxbury and other areas. Robert Graham worked for the Department of Army in New Cumberland Pennsylvania. He also worked for a brief time in the Letterkenny Army Depot in Letterkenny Township Franklin County Pennsylvania, which is not far from Roxbury. The family library has preserved Robert's Army Civilian certificates and photos of his time at Letterkenny.
  - Robert told his story to his son; Bob, in the 1990's when Bob asked about his grandfather's family. During this conversation Bob asked his father about the time they visited the Roxbury area. Robert reaffirmed his belief in the origins of the Graham family being from Roxbury, and added the Graham family also lived in the Shippensburg and Newburg areas of Cumberland County. Robert wasn't sure about William being given up by his parents.
  - A Graham family reunion newspaper story of Elmer Graham's family dated 1972 was in the personal effects of Robert Graham. The reunion was held in Ohio. Elmer Frank Graham was born to James Graham (1835-1911).

- The geographical areas where William lived and moved about are within a ten mile section west and north-west of Shippensburg Pennsylvania. It includes Lurgan, Southampton, and Letterkenny townships of Franklin County, and Hopewell and Southampton Townships of Cumberland County. The borough of Shippensburg is split between both Franklin and Cumberland counties.

7. Robert Graham: William's middle name is Henry.

- This story was told to Robert's son, Bob, when Bob asked about his grandfather's family.
- The June 21<sup>st</sup> 1880 census record for Southampton Township Cumberland County indicated that a Henry Graham, 13 years old, was a servant living in the home of Lenard and Catherine Thrush.
- There are no other records that indicate William's middle name as Henry. The middle name may or may not be correct.

8. Robert Graham and his sister Pat Graham-Napoli: Pat recalled being told that her grandfather William was given up by his family at a young age to another family because William wasn't wanted by his family, the family was too large and poor, and couldn't keep William.

- Robert told his story to his son; Bob, in the 1990's when Bob asked about his grandfather's family.
- Pat's story was told in 2010, about William being given up by his parents, but she didn't know anything about where William or of his parents origins.
- We clearly have our grandfather William from the time he married Sadie Greenawalt in 1901.<sup>9</sup> This also allowed us to use the federal census to locate William in 1900 living in Shippensburg Pennsylvania.
- William was born September 12<sup>th</sup> 1873 in R.R. Shippensburg.<sup>10</sup> This birth date and birth location came from his funeral memorial sign in book and pamphlet. All of our research and family stories indicate that William was born 1872-1873 in the Shippensburg Pennsylvania area. On identifying William's Birth Date, the following was what we currently have uncovered.

- William’s birth date and place of birth matches the August 27<sup>th</sup> 1870 federal census record for William and Mary Graham living in District 179 of Shippensburg Township, post office Shippensburg Pennsylvania.
- William was previously married, and that’s a whole new story that helped us locate William’s parents. He married Dellia Catherine Killinger February 5<sup>th</sup> 1896, while she was four months pregnant. On the marriage application and license William indicated he was 23 years old. He would be 24 years old in September 1896, making his birth year at 1872.
- The June 7<sup>th</sup> 1900 census record for Southampton Township Cumberland County indicated William was born May 1872; he was 28 years old, which also equates to an 1872 birth date.
  - William lived with the Hock family, a farmer by occupation, and who had children named Alice C., and Florence M. Names William and Sadie would later use for their children, which may be just a coincidence. This census is pivotal in getting to know if the William who married Della is the same William who married Sadie.
  - Here we have another census taking issue with the marital status of William, which I don’t think is an error, but a hesitation by the census taker on how to record William’s marital status. I keep looking at the record, and I think it is an “M”, meaning he’s married. Is this an S, D, W, or M?



- Also listed on this census record, about eight homes away, working as a servant in the home of George and Carrie Strohn, was Anna Graham, 15 years old, no listed birth date. As I later discovered this Anna is William’s cousin, the daughter of a David Theodore Graham.
- In the fall of 1901, Dellia file for divorce in Franklin County, charging William with desertion. The divorce hearing was held April 1902, and later decreed on July 11<sup>th</sup> 1902. <sup>11</sup>
- William’s October 1901 marriage application and license to Sarah Greenawalt recorded in Cumberland County indicated he was 27, and with his September birth month, he would have been born in the year 1873. That’s right, married in

Cumberland County, before the divorce was final in Franklin County. This part of William's life is a must read.

- On the April 20<sup>th</sup> 1910 federal census, William was 40 years old, not yet 41, birth year 1870. On the January 15<sup>th</sup> 1920 federal census William was 48, not yet 49; birth year 1872. On the April 22<sup>nd</sup> 1930 federal census William was 58, not yet 59; birth year 1872. On the April 29<sup>th</sup> 1940 federal census William was 68, not yet 69; birth year 1872.
- William's death certificate dated June 1848 estimated his age to be about 75, and his obituary indicated he was 75, making his birth date 1873. William was buried on June 15<sup>th</sup> 1948.<sup>12</sup> According to a birth date calculator, using his age and date of his death, William would have been born September 13<sup>th</sup> 1873.
- William's memorial booklet listed his birth date as September 12<sup>th</sup> 1873. The booklet also listed friends who attended his funeral: Mrs. W. J. Warren; Mrs. Bruce Warren; Mr. and Mrs. James Warren and son; Ester Clough; Bertha Clough; Gladys Davis; Mrs. Luther Miller; Mr. and Mrs. Robert Bender; Mrs. Cora Black; Edna Hoch; Bruce Hoch; Annie Wenger; C. C. Greenawalt; Kenneth C. Greenawalt; Jean Mathna; and Jean Wheler/Wheeler/Wlueler/Wlneler. Floral Tributes were made by: The Greenawalt Family; Calvin Graham; L. B. Smith Inc.; and the L. B. Smith Employees Association.<sup>13</sup>
  - Bruce Hoch was the son of Charles and Alice Hoch, who William lived with after he dissented his first wife Delia in 1898, and before he married Sadie Greenawalt in 1901.
  - Bertha Clough and her daughter Ester Clough
  - Calvin Graham worked for the LB Smith Company.

## End Notes

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<sup>1</sup> William Graham Parents Research, Taylor ~ Graham Library also maintains an extensive archives collection, Taylor ~ Graham Library 479 County Line Road York Springs Pennsylvania 17372.

<sup>2</sup> The Taylor ~ Graham Library also maintains an extensive archives collection, Taylor ~ Graham Library 479 County Line Road York Springs Pennsylvania 17372.

<sup>3</sup> Taylor ~ Graham Library, 479 County Line Road York Springs Pennsylvania 17372.

<sup>4</sup> Britton Greenawalt Relationship To William Graham: The information came from the 1911 Marriage Records, No. 200, Register of Wills & Clerk of Orphans' Court Services, 1 Courthouse Square, Carlisle, Pennsylvania 17013.

<sup>5</sup> Britton and Sadie Greenawalt relationship, and Britton's Paternal Hostettler Last Name: 1900 June 19-20, 1900 Federal Census for Southampton Township, Franklin County, Pennsylvania, Enumeration District 53, Sheet 1567-01. Roll: T623\_1413; Page: 15A; United States of America, Bureau of the Census; Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1900. T623, 1854 rolls.

<sup>6</sup> Britton Greenawalt Marriage: 1911 Marriage Records, No. 200, Register of Wills & Clerk of Orphans' Court Services, 1 Courthouse Square, Carlisle, PA 17013, Taylor ~ Graham Library, 479 County Line Road York Springs Pennsylvania 17372

<sup>7</sup> Greenawalt Family of Cumberland and Franklin County Pennsylvania, David Franklin Greenawalt, California, 1988, and Nicholas Greenawalt (1754-1831), Taylor ~ Graham Library, 479 County Line Road York Springs Pennsylvania 17372

<sup>8</sup> Graham and Hoffman Family Relationship: July 2006 telephone conversation between Bob Graham and Earl Hoffman, and the Thomas Greenawalt Obituary, The News Chronicle Shippensburg, November 8<sup>th</sup> 1940.

<sup>9</sup> William Graham Marriage to Sadie Greenawalt: 1901 Marriage Records, No. 228-13, Register of Wills & Clerk of Orphans' Court Services, 1 Courthouse Square, Carlisle, PA 17013, Taylor ~ Graham Library, 479 County Line Road York Springs Pennsylvania 17372

<sup>10</sup> William Graham's Birth: The only record of William's birth is written on his funeral memorial booklet record, dated June 15<sup>th</sup> 1948, from the M. Garfield Barbour Funeral Home, Shippensburg Pennsylvania. This record was likely written by a family member; William's birth is being recorded as September 12<sup>th</sup> 1873; Taylor ~ Graham Library, 4709 County Line Road York Springs Pennsylvania 17372.

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<sup>11</sup> Court Docket Index, 1902, Page 119, Divorce Case #20 dated April 1902, Reason- Desertion, Decreed July 11, 1902. Clerk of Courts, 157 Lincoln Way East, Chambersburg, PA 17201

<sup>12</sup> William Graham Certificate of Death: File Number 52764, June 12<sup>th</sup> 1948, Pennsylvania Vital Division of Vital Records, 101 South Mercer Street, Room 401, P.O. Box 1528, New Castle PA 16101

<sup>13</sup> 1948 People at William Graham's Funeral: Details on the people at his funeral, Taylor ~ Graham Library, 4709 County Line Road York Springs Pennsylvania 17372.