

INTRODUCTION

Both of my grandfathers were born in foreign countries, not in the United States. My paternal grandfather James F.M. Yonge was from Plymouth, England, and died in California. He didn't come to Hawaii.

My maternal grandfather Robert William Cathcart came to Hawaii from County Down in Northern Ireland. This is his story, gathered from various sources.

- primarily from family lore handed down from my mother Heleualani Eva (Cathcart) Yonge and my aunt Helen K. (Cathcart) McPherson. My aunt spoke more freely than my mother, supplying many of the more intimate details. She was pleased that someone in the family was actually interested in recording the family history.
- family tales and records from other Cathcart descendants.
- publications on the history of the people and events of County Down, Ireland, gleaned by a professional genealogical researcher.
- records in the Hawaii State Archives provided verification of many dates, vital statistics, occupations and events.
- my story about John H. Wilson came from him personally. In the early 1950's, my mother took me to visit him on several occasions. Although in his 80's, his mind was clear, his voice strong, and he spoke with little hesitation. It was obvious that he enjoyed recalling events of his early youth for an eager listener. Mr Wilson died a few years later.

Apparently Robert William Cathcart did not share many stories with his children about his early life and his family back in North Ireland, for his descendants have very little personal information to hand down to coming generations. His daughter Helen remembered something she had once heard that her father "went to college" in Belfast where he studied mathematics. We now know it wasn't "college". Published records of the Belfast Royal Academy reveal the names of R.W. and his brother Charles Cathcart on lists of "students and scholars" in the original Roll Books for the year 1869. Robert William was then only 13 years old and it is said he left Ireland 5 years later. His education served him well, for he held excellent positions as a bookkeeper or in today's classification, an accountant.

I did not know my grandfathers. Grandfather Yonge died before I was born. Grandfather Cathcart died two days after my first birthday. Robert William Cathcart, native of Banbridge, County Down, Northern Ireland, has many descendants all of whom are part Hawaiian.

ROBERT WILLIAM CATHCART

In Northern Ireland, in the County of Down, not too far south of Belfast, lies the town of Banbridge. There on the 20th of January 1856, my maternal grandfather was born. He was Robert William Cathcart, a namesake of his father Robert who was listed in a directory as a linen and woolen merchant. We know from other records that Robert W. had two brothers Charles and George, and three sisters Eleanor, Adelaide and Annie, but I am not yet aware of Robert's place in the family group. I feel it unlikely that he was the eldest son who by filial tradition was usually committed to family responsibilities and probably would not have left home as a very young man as Robert did. Although he often boasted of being an Irishman, the Cathcart family was of Scottish descent like many of the other early settlers of Northern Ireland.

Robert W. arrived in Honolulu on October 24, 1881 aboard the American Barkentine "Ella" from San Francisco.** He was 25 years old just a few months short of age 26, listed as a "clerk" from Great Brittain. There were 8 other passengers none of whom appeared to be related to him, or his traveling companions. There is nothing to tell us how or when he arrived in San Francisco after leaving Ireland, which leads to interesting speculation. According to a grandson, Robert W. arrived in the U.S. March 28, 1874 so where was he during the next seven years before he arrived in Hawaii?

I can't help but wonder what prompted him to leave everyone and everything familiar in his native land and journey far, far away to settle on a little island in the middle of the vast Pacific Ocean. Two possibilities come to mind:

- a search for the opportunity to acquire wealth
- someone from his home land had moved to Hawaii and sent back glowing accounts of the opportunities in paradise.

That "someone" could have been George Galbraith also from County Down who had arrived in Honolulu some 20 years earlier. Was there some distant relationship between the two, for they became fast friends and when Galbraith died in 1904, Cathcart's children were among the beneficiaries. I have also heard a number of times that Cathcart wrote Galbraith's will.

If Robert William Cathcart nurtured a dream of acquiring success and wealth in his new home, he did fairly well. He lived comfortably, owned a home in what was then a fairly nice middle-class residential district, and he saw to it that his children received an education. But despite ultra-frugal habits, he was not a really wealthy man. His daughter Helen described him as a penny-pincher who walked to and from work each day because he was too stingy to pay the five-cent fare on the street car. As a result, the wear and tear on his shoes far exceeded the savings in his pocket. To his credit, it is reported that he made a generous annual contribution to charities.

Although he was my grandfather, I have little respect for Robert W. Cathcart. I am disappointed that he was no different from many other haole men who came to Hawaii in the early days and demonstrated little respect for Hawaiians, or concern for the consequences of their actions. They exploited attractive young naive Hawaiian women, many

** Hawaii State Archives. Ship Manifests, microfilm of original handwritten documents.

still in their teens, taking them as common-law wives to provide the comforts and pleasures of a family home. But they also wanted an easy escape if they so desired. Since it was to their advantage to co-habitate without a registered marriage, that was a common situation in Hawaii. If conditions didn't turn out to their satisfaction, many just abandoned the woman and neglected to support their offspring. It was the age-old problem of male superiority coupled with racial discrimination.

Cathcart lived with three Hawaiian women, one after another, and had children with each. The first was Keolamauloa Pakalaka by whom he had a son Abel Kama Cathcart. The second was Kina Kahooilimoku from Kawaipapa, Hana, Maui, who gave him three daughters: Heleualani, Eva, Helen and Louisa. Heleualani, more widely known as just Lani, was my mother. The last "wife" was Ellen Kauilamakahaikalani Poaha from Molokai who bore him four sons. Ellen was the only one that he legally married, but marriage didn't take place until after their children were born. The story I heard went something like this: Cathcart worked for the Wilder Steamship Company for many years and when the company closed, Mr Wilder fulfilled Cathcart's wildest dream, tickets for a trip to Tahiti. Ellen was going with him but apparently there were legal obstacles if they were not husband and wife, so they were married so she could accompany him.

I do admit that Robert W. had some redeeming virtues. He acknowledged and supported most of his children and gave them his surname. When he and Kina separated, he kept two of her three daughters Lani and Helen and boarded them at St Andrews Priory where he paid their tuition and made occasional somewhat formal visits to see them. He said he didn't want the girls raised Hawaiian style among their mother's kin. Commenting on his visits and his frugality, my mother said he always took each daughter a gift: one apple or one orange.

Lani and Helen had a dutiful respect for him as their father, but they really didn't know him very well nor did they develop a genuine affection for him. I can't recall a single incident in our conversations in which either my mother or my aunt Helen expressed even a hint of an endearing feeling for their father. As a result I have a mental image of a rather stern, aloof, opinionated man preoccupied with his financial affairs and his personal friends and pleasures. On the other hand, my mother's feelings for her mother Kina seemed to stem from a sincere sympathy for the way Kina had been treated.

Cathcart was of slight build with a high forehead an elongated face and a straight rather prominent nose. He wasn't a handsome man nor was he bad looking. His hair which he kept closely cropped and his large shaggy mustache have been described as red, but I am not sure of the exact shade. It may have been a light brownish red and somewhat kinky. From his daughter Helen I learned that his mustache that drooped way over his upper lip, masked what probably was a slight hairlip.

It appears to me that his daughters Helen and Louisa showed more resemblance to him than to their mother Kina. Lani definitely took after Kina's family. She and her half-sister Flora could have passed for twins. They had the same mother, Kina, but Flora was not a daughter of Cathcart.

There were quite a few British subjects living in Honolulu when Robert W. Cathcart arrived in 1881 so it didn't take him long to meet others from the British Isles. One with whom he became friendly was Major Hills a former British army officer who had lived in Tahiti where he married a Tahitian woman. The Hills lived in the Waikiki area where they operated a soft-drink bottling company on Kalakaua Avenue mauka of what is now Kapiolani Boulevard. They called their premises "Sunny South" where every Sunday a group of their associates gathered for a day of pleasant relaxation. There were friends and relatives, many formerly of Tahiti, and visiting seamen from ships out of the South Seas, so the conversation often centered on Tahiti. Cathcart became one of the Sunday regulars and it was there amidst reminiscences of that South Sea island that he became obsessed with a desire to visit that fabulous land. The obsession held him in its grip until he finally realized the dream some 20 years later.

At "Sunny South" Cathcart formed a close friendship with Captain Chapman, a sea captain who operated sailing vessels between Tahiti and Hawaii. The captain's home was in Tahiti where his wife and children lived. My family tale relates that the captain was influenced by Cathcart to bring his two daughters to Honolulu to be educated at St Andrews Priory. I have a lingering memory of having heard that after the daughters returned to Tahiti, one married a Mr Hall and was the mother of John Hall who enjoyed a somewhat short career as a handsome movie star in Hollywood. The other married a French-Tahitian and was the mother of Augie Goupil a popular Hollywood musician and Polynesian dancer in the 1930's and 1940's. I met Augie in California in 1938 a few years before he died.

Also among the regulars at "Sunny South" in the 1880's was a young teenage boy whose part-Tahitian father was a relative of Mrs Hills. It was natural that Cathcart, trained in mathematics, noted that the teenager demonstrated an affinity for numbers and he soon became the boy's mentor. A close and lasting friendship was formed between the two. The boy was John H. Wilson, who in his old age told me about his association with my grandfather Robert W. Cathcart, for whom he expressed respect, admiration, and sincere affection.

Cathcart was convinced that Johnny Wilson had the potential of a great future as an engineer, and in 1891 he escorted Wilson to California to enroll at a brand new learning center just opening in Palo Alto, Stanford University. There Wilson joined good company. A classmate was Herbert Hoover who became the 31st President of the United States in 1929. Johnny Wilson is best remembered as a politician who served several terms as Mayor of the City and County of Honolulu.

At the time of the California trip in 1891, Robert Cathcart was living with Kina Kahooilimoku and their two young daughters, Lani who was almost 3 years old and Helen barely a year old. According to my family tradition, Kina accompanied Robert to California. This is verified by a document in the Hawaii State Archives, a ship's manifest that tells us R.W. Cathcart, Kahooilimoku and John Wilson left Honolulu aboard the S.S. Zealandia bound to San Francisco on the 8th of September 1891. Cathcart and Kina were gone a little over a month returning to Honolulu aboard the steamship Australia on October 13, 1891. I have two nice photographs of Kina taken in San Francisco by a commercial photographer.

When the trip to California was being planned, the most pressing problem was the care of the two young daughters. Cathcart made arrangements to place them at St Andrews Priory with a nursemaid Ana Harrison under the supervision of the two English nuns Sister Albertina and Sister Beatrice. This is a surprise, for the Priory was a school for girls in grades 1 through 12, mostly boarders. I have not been able to find any written statement about the care of infants and pre-schoolers at the Priory.

When the parents returned, the girls were left at the Priory where they resided until they graduated from the 12th grade. Both my mother and my aunt Helen told stories of spending the holidays and the summer months at the school.

It was not long before Cathcart and Kina separated. No one has offered an explanation as to when and why it occurred. It may have been somewhere near the birth of their third child Louisa in March 1892, for I believe the child was raised by Kina among her relatives from infancy.

Within a few years, Cathcart started a relationship with Ellen Poaha whom he eventually legally married after she had borne him four sons.

Robert William Cathcart died of a heart attack on the morning of May 17, 1915 as he was walking makai on Alakea street on his way to work. Soon after crossing the intersection of Hotel street, he collapsed on the sidewalk and died instantly. The spot that was pointed out to me in the 1960's was in front of what was then the entrance/exit to the Von Hamm Young garage. A large multistory building now occupies the adjacent area. He is buried in the old Oahu cemetery on the Judd street side. He was only 59 years old.

ROBERT W. CATHCART



ADVERTISER: 18 MAY: 1915

Died: 17 May 1915

Well-Known Pioneer of Honolulu
Drops In Street and Dies
Immediately

Sent to me by Bill Lane, 1999

Robert W. Cathcart died yesterday morning, shortly after eleven o'clock. He was walking along the Ewa side of Alakea Street, opposite the Von Hamm Young garage. When he dropped dead. Persons on the street picked the body up and rushed it to the office of Doctor Herbert Walters. Doctor Herbert Walters after an examination, said that death had been made by a blow to the head and possible heart attack.

Born In Ireland: The deceased was born in County Down, Ireland on January 20, 1856 and was fifty nine years of age. He was an expert accountant and held positions in Honolulu and other parts of the Islands during his long residence here. He was at times connected with commercial concerns in Honolulu. Mr. Cathcart was head clerk and chief accountant of the finance department of the city government. He was a Democrat, who aspired to many political positions unsuccessfully.

Left Considerable Estate: The deceased was cited a man of considerable means, estimates of his estate running up as high as \$100,000, but it is believed that a quarter of the amount is more likely. While known generally as a very big man. Mr. Cathcart contributed liberally in proportion to his income a percentage of which he set aside yearly for the purpose to local charities. For many years past, he placed a goodly sum in the hands of Charles S. Crane, Manager of the Advertiser with directions as to how the amounts should be distributed among charitable and other organizations. Mr. Crane was, however, enjoined a seal of secrecy to divulge the instructions whenever the money Mr. Cathcart's death have removed that seal of secrecy so it may be distributed.

Survived by Family: The deceased is survived by a wife, Mrs. Cathcart residing at 362 North School Street and four sons, William Cathcart, clerk in the Local Post Office, Edward Cathcart, employed with the United States government, Pearl Harbor, Harold Anthony Cathcart and Arthur Cathcart. A Sister in Paris.

PLACE OF DEATH
 City of Honolulu
 Township of _____
 or
 Village of _____
 or
 City of Honolulu (No. Alaheia Street)

7307
 TERRITORY OF HAWAII
 RECORD OF DEATH

If death occurs away from USUAL RESIDENCE give facts called for under "SPECIAL INFORMATION."

FULL NAME Robert W. Cathcart

If death occurred in a hospital or institution, give its NAME instead of street and number.

PERSONAL AND STATISTICAL PARTICULARS

Sex Male Race White
 Date of Birth January 22nd 1856
 (Month) (Day) (Year)
 Age 58 years 3 months 27 days
 Single, Married, Married
 Widowed or Divorced
 Birthplace (State or Country) County Down, Ireland
 Name of Father _____
 Birthplace of Father (State or Country) _____
 Maiden Name of Mother _____
 Birthplace of Mother (State or Country) _____

Occupation of Deceased Clerk
 The above stated personal particulars are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.
 (Informant) J. C. Armstrong Bishop
 (Address) Quincy

Entered MAY 18 1915 ASMP

Filed MAY 14 1915 MTJ
 Registrar
 Territorial Board of Health.

MEDICAL CERTIFICATE OF DEATH

Date of Death May 17th 1915
 (Month) (Day) (Year)

I HEREDY CERTIFY, THAT I attended deceased from _____ 191_____ to _____ 191_____ and that death occurred on the date above stated, at _____ M. The cause of death was as follows:

Valvular disease of
Heart &
relaxation of brain

Duration: _____ years _____ months _____ days

Contributory: Intermittent nephritis
Auto-poisoning _____ days

(SIGNED) C. C. Cissel M. D.
May 18 1915 (Address) Honolulu

SPECIAL INFORMATION only for Hospitals, Institutions, Transients or Recent Residents.

Former or Usual Residence _____

How long at place of death _____ days.

Where was disease contracted, if not at place of death _____

Place of Burial _____ Date of Burial _____

Cable Cemetery May 19 1915

Undertaker N. H. Williams Address 1142-44 Fort St.