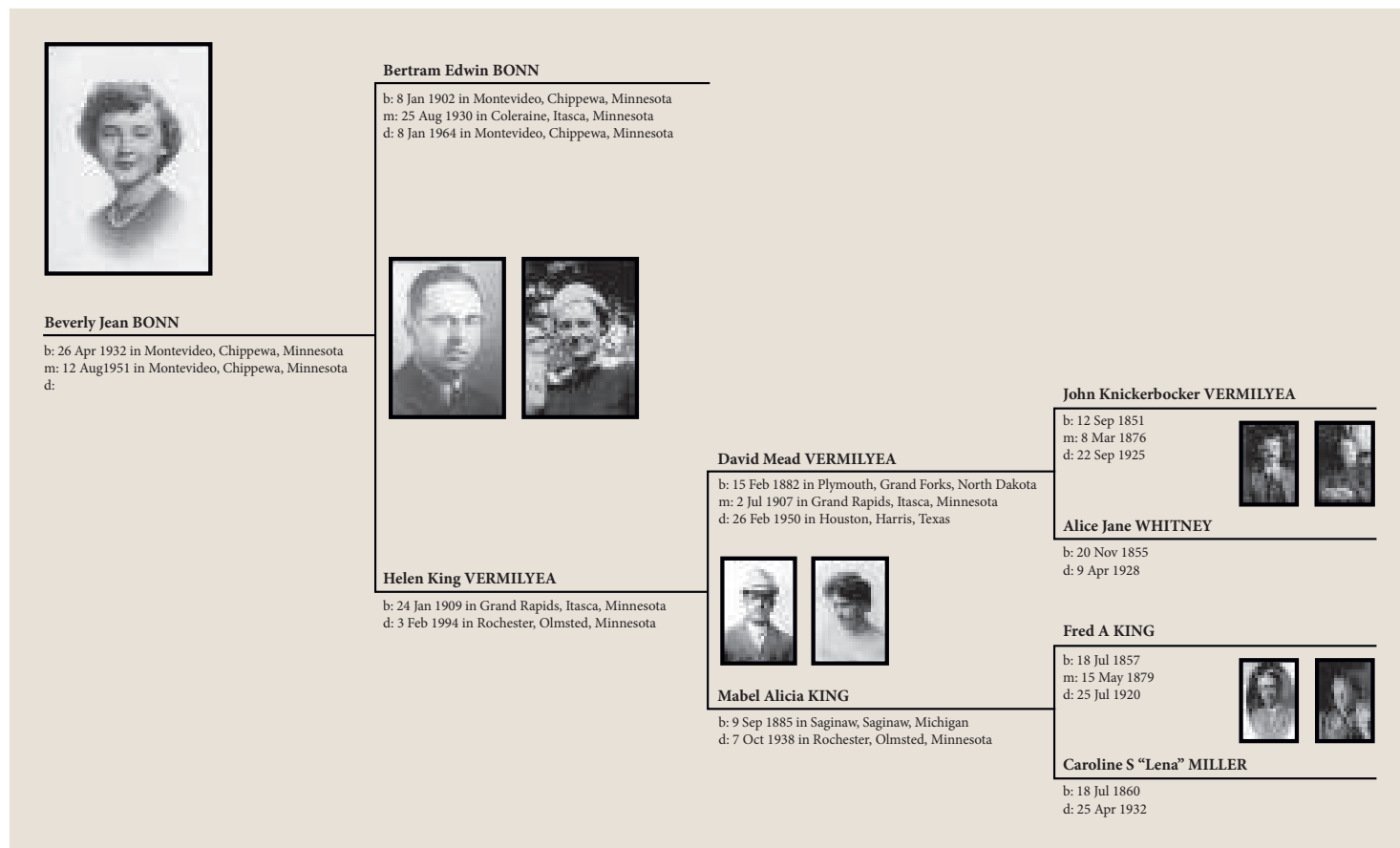


Searching for the Parents of Fred A. King of Saginaw, Michigan

Steven Nelson Jonnes

Author's Note: *Fred A. King (1857-1920) is my second great-grandfather – my maternal grandmother's maternal grandfather. This pedigree chart shows Fred's relationship to my mother, Beverly Bonn Jonnes.¹ As can be seen, Beverly's mother was Helen King Vermilyea (1909-1994), and her mother was Mabel Alicia King (1885-1938), who was a daughter of Fred A. King. The accompanying article reports research aimed at identifying Fred A. King's parents.*



Beverly Bonn family tree

Background

Fred was born and raised in Saginaw, Michigan, but moved to northern Minnesota at age 33, first to Grand Rapids, and eventually to Cass Lake, where he died. The family's understanding is that he was happily married to

Caroline "Lena" Miller (1860-1932). Together they had three children and eight grandchildren. He particularly doted on granddaughter Helen King Vermilyea (1909-1994), my grandmother, and built a log playhouse for her on Star Island in Cass Lake, where it still stands today.

¹ Fred is the author's Grandma Bonn's maternal grandfather. Grandma Bonn was born 24 January 1909 in Grand Rapids, Minnesota as **Helen King Vermilyea**. She married **Bertram Edwin Bonn**

in 1930 and had four children: **Beverly**, **Stephen**, **Susan**, and **David Bonn**. This image was created by author from his Ancestry.com family tree (Jonnes Family Tree).

Fred appears to have led a productive, satisfying life. He was a businessman, real estate agent, banker, politician, fundraiser, and baseball booster. His main area of expertise was real estate and land management. Some descendants have the impression that he was an “Indian Agent,” but there is no record of such activity. However, his work as a realtor and federal land agent would have placed him in contact with many local Indians.



*Fred A. King,
Grand Rapids Minnesota*

The only sorrowful note about Fred’s life is that his parents died when he was just a boy. Also, Fred himself passed somewhat prematurely at age 63. Here are three photos of **Fred A. King.**² An article in the next issue of *Minnesota Genealogist* will describe Fred’s life in Minnesota.

The Stephen King Family of Saginaw, Michigan

Fred was born 18 July 1857 in Saginaw, Michigan. He died 25 July 1920 in Cass Lake, Minnesota.³ Before the research reported in this article, the identity of his parents was unknown. Even Grandma Bonn did not know her great-grandparents’ names. Her recollection – from what her

mother told her – was that Fred’s father died young and that Fred might have been adopted by a stepfather.⁴

An obituary for Fred A. King is a key document that unlocked a chain of discoveries.⁵ Although the obituary did not provide a specific name, it gave clues about the father’s occupation and the timing and location of his death:

“Fred A. King, who was 63 years of age on July 18, was born in Saginaw, Mich., where his father was a prominent lumberman. The father died while the children were still too young to look after their financial interests with the result that they were thrown upon their own resources while still young.”⁶

The obituary’s description of events is consistent with Grandma Bonn’s statement that Fred’s father died young. More importantly, the obituary led to other records which provided a name. The 1860 U.S. census enumerated a Stephen King, 35, in Saginaw, Michigan. With him in the household were his apparent wife Rosanna, 33, three children, including Fred King, 3, Mary H. King, 12, and Burton King, 9. Also in the household were two domestic servants: Mary Darling, 60, and Martha Darling, 16. Stephen King was a lumberman, born in Ohio.⁷ The age of apparent son Fred was consistent with the 1857 birth date given in Fred King’s obituary.

The census reported the value of Stephen’s real estate at \$6,000 and the value of his personal estate at \$5,000, which is consistent with him being a successful businessman at that time.

² The first photograph is from my mother’s collection. The other two were provided by the **Itasca County Historical Society** (ICHS).

³ Minnesota Division of Vital Statistics, Certificate of Death, 1920-MN-2,077, Fred A. King; Minnesota Historical Society microfilm.

⁴ Grandma Bonn’s recollections are taken seriously because her memories have typically proven to be quite accurate. All the family history cited in this report comes primarily from her, either because I

heard it myself or am repeating what her children (my mother and aunt and uncles) have told me. In some instances, those recollections are documented in a formal interview of Grandma Bonn, conducted by daughter Beverly Jonnes in 1992.

⁵ The obituary was obtained from the Itasca County Historical Society, whose archivists Jean Harkins and Lilah Crowe kindly provided much assistance during the August 2014 visit of Steven Jonnes, Beverly Jonnes, Susan Quella, and David Bonn.

⁶ “Former Resident Buried Tuesday: Fred A. King Passes Away,” *Grand Rapids Herald Review* (Grand Rapids, Minnesota), 28 July 1920, p. 1.

⁷ 1860 U.S. census, Saginaw County, Michigan, population schedule, Saginaw City, p. 97, dwelling 739, family 707, Stephen and Rosanna King; digital image, *Ancestry.com*, citing NARA microfilm publication M653, roll 558.

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A Stephen W. King listed in an 1863 Civil War draft registration was clearly the same man. It named Stephen W. King, a 39 year-old lumberman born in Ohio.⁸

Three Civil War tax assessment records further document the presence of Stephen W. King in Saginaw during the mid-1860s and bolster the perception that he was well-to-do. Two of the assessment records include the middle initial "W.," the other does not. The dates of the three records are May 1864, October 1864, and May 1865. The May 1865 assessment record shows that Stephen owned a piano and paid \$85 tax on his income and \$4 tax for the value of his piano.⁹

Evidence from Fred's siblings. Because the Saginaw family was a solid match for Fred King, research was now

daughter of "Mr. And Mrs. Stephen King, pioneers in the Saginaw Valley."¹¹

Mary Helen's own 1907 obituary provides the final proof that Stephen W. King (1824-1865) was Fred A. King's father.

"Mary Helen King was born July 6, 1847. Her father, Stephen King, came to Saginaw in the same year and the family arrived two years later..."

"Besides her husband, there are two sons surviving, Roy K. and Claude B., and one brother, Fred A. King of Grand Rapids, Minn."¹²

No.	NAME	AGE	SEX	OCCUPATION	PLACE OF BIRTH
1	Stephen King	35	M	Lumberman Gen. Serv.	Chic
2	Joanna	33	F	H.	Mich
3	Mary H.	12	F	H.	"
4	Burton	9	M	H.	"
5	Fred	3	M	H.	"
6	Mary	6	F	Domestic	A.C.
7	Martha	16	F	H.	Mich

1860 U.S. Census, Saginaw, Michigan

No. of LBR.	DATE	NAME	LOCATION	ARTICLE OR OCCUPATION	No. IN ABSTRACT	QUANTITY	VALUATION	RATE OF TAX	AMOUNT OF TAX UPON PARTICULAR ARTICLE	TOTAL
1		King, Stephen	Saginaw	Income	241		\$1,700.00	3%	\$51.00	\$62.49
2		"	"	Piano	268	1	\$100.00	4%	\$4.00	\$66.49

May 1865 IRS tax assessment

extended to the other two children in the 1860 household: Mary Helen King and Henry Burton King

The oldest child, Mary Helen King, married Joel Delos Resseguie (1842-1926) in 1867 at age 20.¹⁰ Her husband's 1926 obituary confirms that this Mary Helen King was the

Mary Helen's obituary also states that Stephen W. King died in 1865, further substantiating the family story of his early demise. Moreover, there are no listings for any Stephen Kings in the 1870 census for Saginaw County. Neither a death record or gravestone has been

⁸ U.S., Civil War Draft Registrations Records, 1863-1865, State of Michigan, Sixth Congressional District, Saginaw Ward 3, Stephen W. King; digital image, *Ancestry.com*; citing ARC Identifier: 4213514; Archive Volume Number: 3 of 3.

⁹ U.S. IRS Tax Assessment Lists, 1862-1918, Michigan, District 6; Annual Lists, May 1865, Stephen King; digital image, *Ancestry.com*; citing Record Group

58. The National Archives at Washington D.C. (Ownership of a piano in the 1860s would indicate a family of means.)

¹⁰ Return of Marriages in the County of Saginaw (1967), no. 78, Joel Resseguie [indexed: Resseguie] and Mary Helen King; *Ancestry.com*. Michigan, Marriage Records, 1867-1952 [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2015. This seems to be the accurate date, although

an obituary for Joel Resseguie states the marriage occurred in 1863, Mary Helen's own obituary gives 1865, and another record indicates it was 1869.

¹¹ "Joel D. Resseguie," obituary, *Saginaw News Courier* (Saginaw, Michigan), 15 July 1926, p. 10, Oakwood Cemetery.

¹² "Obituary," *Saginaw News* (Saginaw, Michigan), 14 June 1907, page 10.

found,¹³ but an obituary was published for a Stephen R. King, described as a “pioneer lumberman” who died 18 June 1865. Although the middle initials do not match, this is certainly the same man. The occupation, age, and date of death all fit.

“Stephen R. King of the firm of Curtis & King, lumbermen, of Saginaw City, died suddenly of an attack of bilious cholic [sic] at his residence on Sunday evening last. Mr. King was one of the pioneers in the lumber business in this Valley, a stirring, energetic man, and well known throughout this section as elsewhere in the range of lumbermen’s transactions. He was about forty years of age, and leaves a family to mourn his loss.”¹⁴

No other records can be found in Saginaw, nor in the entire state of Michigan, between 1840 and 1870 which mention a Stephen King with the middle initial “R.” One can only assume it was a misprint.

Search for Fred King’s mother. Research now turned to Stephen King’s earlier life, in hopes of verifying his reported Ohio birthplace and determining when he moved to Michigan. The 1850 U.S. census enumerated a *Stephen King*, 26, wife *Ann*, 23, and three-year old daughter *Mary* in Milford, Oakland County, Michigan. Milford is about 70 miles south of Saginaw and 35 miles northwest of Detroit. (It is an outlying suburb of Detroit today.) Stephen’s occupation was listed as “Wool Carder.”¹⁵

The ages of Stephen, Ann, and Mary are good matches for the 1860 Michigan household. Both censuses report Stephen born in Ohio and Mary born in Michigan. Ann could be the same woman as Roseanna, but the 1860 Roseanna was reported born in Michigan, while the 1850 Ann was reported born in New York.

This was the right family. An 1890 obituary for son Henry Burton King states that Henry was born in Milford, Michigan, child of *Stephen King*, and that the family moved to Saginaw late in the year 1850 when he was but an infant.¹⁶ The family was enumerated 8 October in Milford, so the move to Michigan was after that date. Mary Helen’s obituary, states that her father came to Saginaw in 1847 and that the family followed two years later – two years earlier than stated in her brother’s obituary.¹⁷

Fred King’s father was Stephen W. King, but the identity of his mother is less certain. The names “Ann” and “Roseanna” could refer to the same woman – in fact, their 1850 and 1860 ages are compatible with such a conclusion. However, the 1850 census states that Ann was born in New York and the 1860 census states that Roseanna was born in Michigan. Alternatively, they could be two different women with similar names, about the same age, but born in different locations. This might explain the seven-year age gap between Fred and his two older siblings, Mary Helen and Henry Burton, who would be his half-sister and half-brother if that scenario is correct.

The obituary of Mary Helen (King) Resseguie adds another complication. It identifies her mother as *Josie King*, who died about 1869.

“Miss King was married to Joel D. Resseguie in 1865, her father dying the same year, and the mother, Josie King, following four years later.”¹⁸

Mary Helen’s marriage was in 1867, not 1865, according to Michigan state records, so her family’s recollections of these dates some forty years later could easily have included other errors. Various sources have now given three different names for Fred King’s mother – *Ann*, *Rosanna*, *Josie* – who could have been one, two, or three separate individuals.

¹³ It would also be useful to view the birth records for any of Stephen’s offspring, but none have been located.

¹⁴ “Death of a Pioneer Lumberman,” *East Saginaw Courier* (Saginaw, Michigan), 21 June 1865, p. 3. (Lorenzo B. Curtis was the other owner of Curtis & King. Curtis family records stored at the University of Michigan Bentley Library and Saginaw City

Library which go back as far as 1847 and may house information which could verify whether Stephen R. and Stephen W. are the same man.)

¹⁵ 1850 U.S. census, Oakland County, Michigan, population schedule, Milford Township, p. 274B, family 1499, Stephen and Ann King; digital image, *Ancestry.com*; citing NARA microfilm publication M432, roll 360.

¹⁶ “Henry B. King,” obituary, *Saginaw Courier Herald* (Saginaw, Michigan), 15 January 1890, p. 7.

¹⁷ “Obituary,” *Saginaw News* (Saginaw, Michigan), 14 June 1907, page 10

¹⁸ *Ibid.* No death record has been found for a “Josie King” in Michigan in that time period.

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Another record might refer to the mother. The 1868 Saginaw City Directory lists a *Mrs. S. W. King* as a widow living at the corner of Washington and Jackson.¹⁹ This likely was her.

An 1873 Saginaw City Directory lists an *S. W. King* at the same address (corner of Washington and Jackson) even though both husband and wife should have been deceased by that point.²⁰ If this is the residence of **Mr. and Mrs. Stephen W. King**, the comment that “folks not at home” raises all kinds of possibilities, including that of the house having been vacant because Stephen’s estate, or more likely his widow’s, was still in probate. The only death record found in Michigan that might relate to Stephen’s widow is for a *Rosan King*, who was buried in Detroit on 18 July 1868.²¹

King Mrs. S. W., (widow) res. cor. Washington and Jackson.
King Victor, laborer, res. Union near N. Washington.
Kinney Thomas, sawyer, bds. Exchange Hotel.

1868 Saginaw City Directory

King Paul, lab, wks Saginaw Barrel Co.
King S. W., res s w cor Washington and Jackson (folks not at home).
King Stephen, lab, res e s Harrison, cor Miller. 3.
King Wilson, ship-carpenter, res w s 11th, s of Congress. 2.

1873 Saginaw City Directory, page 338

Fred King’s siblings. By 1870, then, both Stephen W. King and his widow were almost certainly deceased. What about the children? Can they be found in the 1870 U.S. census? Yes, the 1870 U.S. census enumerates Joel and Mary H. Resseguie (indexed: Ressoegan) in Saginaw with two teenage boys in the household: Henry B King, age 19, and Fred King, age 12.²² Henry is described as a “raftsman” and Fred “attends school.” The fact that

Henry and Fred were living with their sister and her husband is another indication that their mother was no longer alive.

Joel Resseguie operated a retail piano store in Saginaw for more than 25 years, beginning about 1888. A photograph of Mary Helen, shows a resemblance with Fred, particularly in the length of the face, the high forehead, and the contours of the mouth. Joel and Mary Resseguie had two: Roy King Resseguie (1874-1957) and Claud Burton Resseguie (1877-1961). Roy King Resseguie became a real estate dealer and lived his entire life in Saginaw, Michigan.

Fred’s other sibling, Henry Burton King (1850-1890), married a teenage girl named Rose Arabelle Stevens when he was 23.²³ They were married 7 October 1873 in Northville, Michigan, where the couple lived. Northville is only 10 or 15 miles from Milford, where the King family lived in 1850, and where Henry Burton King was born.

One wonders how Henry Burton would have known Rose when his hometown, Saginaw, was 90 miles away. Possibly, his grandparents or some family connections were still living in the Milford area, and he met Rose while visiting in the Milford area.

Rose was not from Northville, but from the adjoining town of Plymouth, where her mother and step-father resided. Rose (or *Roselia*) died 10 March 1875 of unknown causes; there is no evidence of any children. Afterwards, Henry Burton moved back to Saginaw, where the 1880 U.S. census enumerated him living again with his sister’s family, Joel and Mary H. Resseguie, and their two sons, Roy and Claude.²⁴ His occupation in 1880 was “log scaler,” someone

¹⁹ *Holland’s East Saginaw City Directory, 1868-69*, p. 250, Mrs. S.W. King; digital image, *Ancestry.com*; cited in *U.S. City Directories, 1822-1989* [database on-line].

²⁰ *Brown’s Annual Directory of the Saginaw Valley, 1873*, p. 338, S.W. King; digital image, *Ancestry.com*; cited in *U.S. City Directories, 1822-1989* [database on-line].

²¹ *Find A Grave Index, 1600s-Current* [database on-line], Rosan King, July 1868, Mount Elliott Cemetery, Detroit, Michigan; digital image, *Ancestry.com*; Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2012.

²² 1870 U.S. census, Saginaw County, Michigan, population schedule, Saginaw City Ward 3, p. 74 (stamped), dwelling 628, family 569, Joel and Mary H. Resseguie; digital image *Ancestry.com*, citing NARA microfilm publication M593, roll 702.

²³ *Michigan, Marriage Records, 1867-1952* [database on-line]; Henry B. King & Roselia A. Stevens, 7 October 1873, Northville, Michigan; digital image, *Ancestry.com*. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2015.

²⁴ 1880 U.S. census, Saginaw County, Michigan, population schedule, Saginaw City, p. 94B, dwelling 100, family 123, Joel D. and Mary H. Resseguie; digital image, *Ancestry.com*; citing NARA microfilm publication T9, roll 602.

who measures logs and provides estimates of the amount of timber that would be produced before the logs go in the mill. Henry died of “consumption” (i.e., tuberculosis) in 1890 at the age of 39.25

Joel Resseguie for as many as ten years (1869-1879). While there was no legal adoption, this might have been construed as an adoption in subsequent family storytelling.

Name	Age	Sex	Occupation	Place of Birth	Place of Residence	Place of Employment
William H. H. H.	37	M	Farmer	Switzerland	Switzerland	Switzerland
— Mary H.	31	F	Wife	Switzerland	Switzerland	Switzerland
— Roy	5	M	Son	Switzerland	Switzerland	Switzerland
— Edward	2	M	Son	Switzerland	Switzerland	Switzerland
King Henry B.	29	M	Brother	Switzerland	Switzerland	Switzerland
— William H.	17	M	Servant	Switzerland	Switzerland	Switzerland

1880 U.S. Census, Saginaw, Michigan, Resseguie Family

Summary

Stephen W. King was born somewhere in Ohio about 1824 or 1825, was lived in Milford, Michigan, from about 1847 with wife *Ann* and young daughter Mary Helen, and then moved the family to Saginaw late in the year 1850 when first son Henry Burton was an infant. He might have been working in Saginaw two or three years before 1850, while his wife and children remained in Milford. Stephen eventually became a prominent lumberman in Saginaw and achieved affluence, but died unexpectedly in 1865. Stephen W. King probably either moved as a young man from Ohio to Michigan, or his parents moved to the Milford area from Ohio earlier in his life.²⁶

There is no evidence of Fred being adopted. However, it is conceivable that Fred lived as a ward of his brother-in-law

No more is known of Fred A. King's parents or siblings. The King surname is likely British, but how and when Fred's ancestors came to America remains a mystery. His given name is invariably spelled "Fred" not "Frederick," but it is not known what the middle initial "A" stands for in Fred's name.

Steven Nelson Jonnes is a native of Stillwater, Minnesota, who has spent most of his career in Washington DC as an FBI research analyst and manager. He speaks passable Chinese Mandarin, spent 20 years as a Little League coach, and loves golf. Steve became hooked on genealogy in 2011 and has been actively building his family tree since then. This is his first publication.

²⁵ “Henry B. King,” obituary, *Saginaw Courier Herald* (Saginaw, Michigan), 15 January 1890, p. 7, Oakwood Cemetery; digital image Find A Grave.com; *Find A Grave Memorial* #135013656.

²⁶ Stephen W. King's history is difficult to pursue because children's names are not listed in the 1840 or earlier censuses. It is difficult to find the correct family before 1850 because we do not know his father's first name and because King is an incredibly common surname. However, two 1850 census

records for Milford, Michigan, may enumerate relatives of Stephen W. King. A Charles King, age 33, could be Stephen's older brother or cousin. However, Charles is listed as born in New York, not Ohio. Far more promising is a listing for two girls, Mary King and Helen King, ages 18 and 15, living in Milford with the George Davis family, their relationship to George Davis is undefined. Both girls were born in Ohio and their first names resonate with our storyline. Could they be Stephen W. King's younger sisters? Were they living with the Davis family because George's wife Almira Davis, age 32,

was their older sister? The Helen King listed in the 1850 census in Milford could be the same person as Helen L. Terry (1836-1903) who died in Saginaw, Michigan in 1903. Helen L. Terry was also born in Ohio about the same time. Terry was her married name; her death certificate names her parents as Samuel King and Jane Hopkins. This is a good; it is possible that Samuel and Jane King were Fred A. King's grandparents. Samuel King was born in New York and Jane was born in Ohio.