Thomas W Canning (alias James Harlow Carlton)

NOTE: there is a lot of research and conflicting findings, as well as strong emotion, about the identity of this man. An extensive explanation and more details of his life may be found in the book New Brunswick to Mexico, the Story of Thomas W Canning aka James Harlow Carlton, by Joseph Ralph Hawkins, 2000 (Available at Familysearch.org)

Thomas W Canning was born 18 March 1842 in St John, New Brunswick, Canada.\(^1\) He was the tenth of eleven children of William Canning and Nancy Ann Withrow. The family moved to York, Maine when he was seven years old. At age fourteen they moved to Lodi, Columbia, Wisconsin. He was living with his elderly parents in West Point, Columbia, Wisconsin, in 1860.\(^2\)

Thomas went to Madison, Wisconsin, to enlist as a private in Company H, 2\(^{nd}\) Regiment of Wisconsin Volunteers Infantry, on 24 April 1861.\(^3\) The regiment was mustered into service 11 June 1861 and transported to Washington DC. Their first combat was at Bull Run. Thomas was honorably discharged 20 October 1861 due to a gunshot wound in his left hand, received at that battle.\(^4\) He received a pension of $4 per month, which stopped when he later reenlisted.\(^5\)

He married Nellie Helen Jones 4 November 1862 in Ravenna, Portage, Ohio.\(^6\) He reenlisted 27 November 1862 at Cleveland, Ohio, in Company D, 10\(^{th}\) Ohio Volunteers Cavalry.\(^7\) The company left for Nashville, Tennessee; they were at the siege of Atlanta and the famous march to the sea.\(^8\) Thomas mustered out as a sergeant on 24 July 1865 at Lexington, North Carolina.\(^9\) Nellie had died during the war in September 1863 when she fell on an icy walk during her pregnancy.\(^10\)

Thomas traveled west to Nevada in 1866. He spent several years as a prospector and butcher, and then built a saw mill in Eureka, Nevada, California. He spent some time in Grass Valley and San Francisco in California.\(^11\) About this time, he changed his name to James H Carlton, and enlisted in the Navy for three years on 27 November 1868 in San Francisco. He was described as five foot ten inches tall with hazel eyes, dark hair, and a fair complexion. He had a bullet scar on the left side of his chest.\(^12\) He was a stone mason, registered as a voter in Eureka, Nevada, California, between 1868-1871.\(^13\)

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\(^1\) US Passport Applications, 1795-1925; Deposition before the pension bureau in 1888, at Familysearch.org
\(^2\) United States Census, 1860.
\(^3\) Interview with Ethel Hawkins Mangum, at Familysearch.org
\(^4\) US Civil War Soldier Records and Profiles, 1861-1865; American Civil War Soldiers; Letter from the Veterans Administration, at Familysearch.org
\(^5\) US Veterans Administration Pension Payment Cards, 1907-1933.
\(^6\) Ohio County Marriages, 1789-2013.
\(^7\) US Revolutionary War Pensioners, 1801-1872.
\(^8\) Wikipedia: 10\(^{th}\) Ohio Cavalry.
\(^10\) Interview with Ethel Hawkins Mangum, at Familysearch.org
\(^11\) New Brunswick to Mexico, the Story of Thomas W Canning aka James Harlow Carlton, by Joseph Ralph Hawkins, 2000. Available at Familysearch.org
\(^12\) US Naval Enlistment Rendezvous, 1855-1891.
\(^13\) California Voter Registers, 1866-1898.
James served as a ship corporal in the Navy on the *Jamestown, Independence* and *Saranac*. The *Independence* was a receiving ship—an obsolete ship that is used for new recruits. It was decommissioned in 1912 after 54 years, the oldest ship in the US Navy. He sailed to Panama, Fiji, and the Marshall Islands. He left the ship when it returned to San Francisco in 1870 and lived in Gilroy, Santa Clara, California.

He moved to Kanab and then St George, Washington, Utah Territory, about 1871. He was acquainted with members of Major John Wesley Powell’s Expedition and traveled with E. O. Beaman, a photographer. He joined the Mormon Church and married Diadamia Wheeler Johnson in 1872 in Johnson, Kane, Utah Territory. She was the daughter of Joseph Ellis Johnson, a well-known businessman in the area. She was fifteen years old, he was thirty; they had eleven children together.

The family lived with his mother-in-law in Hillsdale, Arizona, and then St. George and Bellevue, Washington, Utah Territory. James was in the stock and butcher business, and made wine from the large vineyard on the Johnson farm. He bought an interest in a butcher shop in Silver Reef and the family lived there about two years. On the 1880 census, James and Diadamia were living with their three children in Silver Reef, Washington, Utah Territory, where he worked as a stone mason.

James’ daughter tells a story of their time in Silver Reef: “My mother had told me so many times to not take anything from miners. One evening mother sent me to grandfathers on an errand, on the way I met a miner coming from work and he offered us a piece of pie from his lunch pail. I would not take it. He tried to come up to me so I ran as fast as I could and ran through a restaurant and across the street to my grandfathers and I thought I had lost him but he followed me there. While he was talking to grandfather I ran home and told father and while I was telling father there came a rap on the door and when the door was opened the man walked in. I was sent into another room so I do not know what passed between them. But I was never again bothered.”

The family moved to Mesa, Arizona, in 1881. James built a grist mill, laid adobe brick and plastered rock walls. He bought a freight team and freighted from Prescott to Maricopa, Arizona. He hurt his back lifting and was advised by a doctor to leave that hot country and find a cooler climate, so they moved to Curtisville, Graham, Arizona, in 1883. They lived there for ten years. James started the long process to regain a pension for his first service in the Civil War in 1885. This process involved many years, with accusations from the local marshal and a former partner; investigations, interviews, depositions, physical examinations; all in an attempt to determine the true identity of the man known in the area as James H. Carlton. A pension was finally granted on the basis of rheumatism contracted from his military duties in 1864.

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14 US Civil War and Later Pension Index, 1861-1917.
15 US Naval Enlistment Rendezvous, 1855-1891.
17 Ibid.
18 Deposition before the pension bureau in 1888, at Familysearch.org
19 Autobiography of Harriet Ellen Carlton, Familysearch.org
20 United States Census, 1880.
21 Autobiography of Harriet Ellen Carlton, Familysearch.org
22 Ibid.
In 1888, he was registered to vote in Pima County, Arizona.\textsuperscript{24} By 1891, they were living in the Mormon colonies in Mexico, including Dublan, Juarez, and Chuichupa. Diadamia died three days after her eleventh child was born, in 1899 in Colonia Chuichupa, Chihuahua, Mexico. She was buried there.

James married Mrs. Mary A Baumann (Anglicized as Bowman) Judd in 1901 in a Mormon colony in Mexico. They had four children. James traveled between the colonies and Thatcher, Arizona, quarterly for at least thirty years, using his pension voucher as identification. In 1917, he was required to apply for a passport. He was returning to Mexico “this last time on account of not having sufficient means to live on. My pension was not enough to keep me and therefore I had to come to Mexico where my children are living so that they could help me.”\textsuperscript{25}

James died of stomach trouble or typhoid fever\textsuperscript{26} on 13 November 1920 in Colonia Dublan, Nuevo Casas Grandes, Chihuahua, Mexico. He was buried in the Colonia Dublan Cemetery.\textsuperscript{27} Mary received a widow’s pension, filed from Mexico.\textsuperscript{28} She lived with her daughter in Salt Lake City in 1930.\textsuperscript{29} She remarried and was living in Arizona on the 1940 census.\textsuperscript{30} She died 1943 in Mesa, Arizona, and was buried in the City of Mesa Cemetery.\textsuperscript{31}

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\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{passport_picture}
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\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{signature}
\caption{Signature on passport application, 1918 (image from Ancestry.com)}
\end{figure}

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext{24}{Arizona Voter Registrations, 1866-1955.}
\footnotetext{25}{US Passport Applications, 1795-1925.}
\footnotetext{26}{Autobiography of Harriet Ellen Carlton, Familysearch.org}
\footnotetext{27}{Reports of Deaths of American Citizens Abroad, 1835-1974.}
\footnotetext{28}{US Civil War and Later Pension Index, 1861-1917.}
\footnotetext{29}{United States Census, 1930.}
\footnotetext{30}{United States Census, 1940.}
\footnotetext{31}{Arizona Deaths, 1870-1951.}
\end{footnotes}
James Harlow Carlton with two grandchildren, about 1900 (image from Familysearch.org)

James Harlow Carlton with two grandchildren, about 1900 (image from Familysearch.org)

Research by Elaine Young, Silver Reef Foundation historian, 2016
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