

## The Little Brown Photo Album: The Pretty “Laura Hammer,” California

[Part of a series of articles about different photographs.]

By S.A. Mendenhall

Within my little brown album, is a photograph of the prettiest young lady, a cabinet card, with “**Laura Hammer**” written on the page corner. Was this lady a cousin of some sort, a school chum, or a childhood friend to either **Everett G.** or **Emma (Hare) Young**? I want a glimpse into this lady’s story, learn how she knew the Youngs.

Studying the photograph, I wrote down a detailed description of everything about it. It was mounted on a cabinet card with "Potter [photographer], Mansfield, O.," printed in gold on the black edging. Also, printed in gold on white, the backside reads, “E. J. Potter, The Leading City Photographer, No. 3-1/2 North Park St., Mansfield, Ohio.” The card measures 4-1/4 x 6-1/2 inches with dark borders.

Further, the photograph shows three-fourths of the subject’s oval face, her shoulders straight forward. Her dark hair is curled, the front curled up and towards the back, while her longer hair in the back is tucked upwards likely with hair pins, straight dark brows over dark eyes, nice shaped ears, forehead, nose, chin, and a delicate mouth. The clothing she wore was not fancy, not too plain, but a modest adult female style, which could have been an afternoon visiting dress or a Sunday go-to-church dress. The fabric appears to be heavy, with contrasting dark colored braiding going down the bodice front from each shoulder and buttons beginning at the neck in the middle of the bodice. There is a brooch at her neck on the bodice’s high collar. Against her skin underneath the collar is a light-colored stiff collar.<sup>1</sup> See Exhibit A. Cabinet cards were popular from the 1880s until around 1910.<sup>2</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Hammer, Laura, cabinet card, *Young Family Album*, Everett G. and Emma (Hare) Young the original owners, now in the possession of S.A. Mendenhall.

<sup>2</sup> EdinPhoto, home page, <http://www.edinphoto.org.uk/index.htm>.

From the photographer's imprint, I looked Potter up in the 1900 U.S. Census. I found **Elza J. Potter**, aged fifty-four, born in Pennsylvania, in Mansfield city, Richland County, Ohio. In the occupation column, the enumerator stated Elza Potter was a photographer.<sup>3</sup> I hoped from this photographer's information I might find Laura. Beyond looking carefully in Richland County, it has not.

Since I didn't know if "Hammer" was Laura's married name or her maiden name, I wasn't entirely sure where to start to find information about her. I began by searching online U.S. census records nationwide. In 1900 there were forty-four hits for women by that name. I narrowed the prospective ages to birth year between 1865 and 1885, which netted twenty-eight hits. As for Laura Hammer in 1900 in Richland County, all I found was a thirteen year-old named Laura D. Hainer, which besides not quite the same name, I felt was too young.

Back to the census, I searched for a Laura without a surname, born 1875 +/- ten years in 1880 Richland County. There were 107 hits. I checked surrounding counties, even looking at familiar surnames: Young, Walters, Miller, Baker, Bowser, and Beam. This project seemed very much like a brick wall! I had to focus my search.

Laura could be found in any state, because a few of the other old photographs in E.G. and Emma Young's little brown album, turned out to be in the states of Colorado, Kansas, Illinois, and Iowa. I hunted for women born in Ohio, who might live anywhere in the country. I had ten hits for Laura Hammer born in Ohio. I selected California and Ohio, as the two states where Everett and Emma Young lived in order to narrow my search. Then, I isolated the results to four women who lived in California.

It wasn't until I was looking for another family named Williams that I came face to face with the Laura Hammer I believe I wanted. It was surprising that earlier I had missed or even discounted her. She was in the household next door to the Williams family, another Young connection,<sup>4</sup> all neighbors to E.G. and Emma. The photograph album clearly included friends close to the Youngs.

From a second look at the 1900 U.S. Census for San Joaquin County. The enumerator **Ardolf L. Salbach** recorded these folks in Wrightman precinct including, "**Laura B. Hammer**," age twenty-four. That age appeared to be the correct age for the photograph image. An Ohio born girl, she was listed as the wife of thirty-five year-old **Andrew Hammer**.<sup>5</sup> This couple was married about two years before this census. They had one child, **Madaline E. Hammer**.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Potter, Elza J., household, Richland Co., Ohio, 1900 U.S. Census, population schedule, Madison Twp., Mansfield city, ward 2, enumeration district (E.D.) 119, supervisor's district (S.D.) 212, pg. 131/sht. 14B, lines 87-89, dwelling 308, family 361, located online at Ancestry.com 3/20/10, roll T623\_1316.

<sup>4</sup> Hammer, Laura, photograph subject, found in Andrew Hammer's household, San Joaquin Co., Calif., 1900 U.S. Census, population schedule, Wrightmans, precincts 1-2, enumeration district (E.D.) 107, supervisor's district (S.D.) 4, pg. 162B/sht. 20, lines 82-84, dwelling 417, family 427, few doors from Everett G. Young's family, #419, located online at Ancestry.com and transcribed 3/22/10, roll T623\_108.

<sup>5</sup> Hammer, Laura, photograph subject, found in Andrew Hammer's household, San Joaquin Co., Calif., 1900 U.S. Census, population schedule, Wrightmans, precincts 1-2, enumeration district (E.D.) 107, supervisor's district (S.D.) 4, pg. 162B/sht. 20, lines 82-84, dwelling 417, family 427, few doors from Everett G. Young's family, #419, located online at Ancestry.com and transcribed 3/22/10, roll T623\_108.

<sup>6</sup> Hammer, Andrew, household, San Joaquin Co., Calif., 1900 U.S. Census, population schedule, Wrightmans, precincts 1-2, enumeration district (E.D.) 107, supervisor's district (S.D.) 4, pg. 162B/sht. 20, lines 82-84, dwelling 417, family 427, located online at Ancestry.com and transcribed 3/22/10, roll T623\_108. The first time Madaline was found, her name was spelled this way. During the course of my research, her name was spelled in various

Madelaine was born 6 October 1898 in California, Andrew was born 11 November 1864 in California, and Laura was born 25 August 1875 in Ohio.<sup>7</sup> Andrew owned his own farm without a mortgage and raised crops and livestock. Both adults in their household could read and write.<sup>8</sup>

Just to present a clear picture to evaluate this find, there were seven other possible Laura Hammers found in 1900. For example, of the seven white women named Laura, born in Ohio between 1865 and 1885, one was in California, one in Pennsylvania, and five in Ohio. One woman lived in Jackson Township, Seneca County, Ohio, born May 1883. Another born 1875, was married with three children in Clinton County.<sup>9</sup> Seneca County was close to the Youngs former home in Wyandot County, while Clinton County was farther away. Certainly old enough, Mrs. Laura Hammer in Clinton County could be the woman in the photo. I eventually discounted her because of data in her 1917 death record.<sup>10</sup> From these women I tried to correlate data to the photograph details. For example, this woman's age in the image, seems to be in her early twenties. The photograph date appears to be the mid-1890s. Lastly, three women were born in the 1881, 1882, and 1883, which seemed too young, given the young adult Laura in the photograph circa 1890s.

Another consideration was, if the Laura Hammer had been a school chum, either E.G. or Emma would have written Laura's maiden name, maybe in addition to her married name, but perhaps not her married name only on the photograph. Last, from the research on the subjects in the album, it was clear that the Youngs had formed close relationships with their Wrightman precinct neighbors; **Hohenshell, White, and Williams**. More about those folks in future papers. I concluded this neighbor, Mrs. Laura B. Hammer, was too much of a coincidence compared to the women in Ohio.

From this analysis, I proceeded to study the Hammer family in San Joaquin County. From the 1910, 1920, and 1930 census, voter lists compiled in the *San Joaquin County Great Register*, and the *California Death Index, 1940-1997* records I learned a number of things about Laura Hammer and her family.

15 April 1910 San Joaquin County, California, Laura B. Hammer was age thirty-four, her father was born in Pennsylvania and her mother was born in Ohio. Her husband, Andrew

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ways. Subsequently to maintain accuracy, I used her name as spelled in the records I found as written in each source.

<sup>7</sup> Hammer, Andrew, household, San Joaquin Co., Calif., 1900 U.S. Census, population schedule, Wrightmans, precincts 1-2, enumeration district (E.D.) 107, supervisor's district (S.D.) 4, pg. 162B/sht. 20, lines 82-84, located online at Ancestry.com and transcribed 3/22/10, roll T623\_108, provided birth months and years for Madaline, Andrew, and only the year for Laura Hammer. Full birth dates were provided by the online *California Death Index, 1940-1997*, for Laura, Madelaine, and Helen, and by transcribed death certificates and scanned obits for Andrew and Laura Hammer, were provided by Charles Lambaren, researcher, San Joaquin Genealogical Society (SJGS), e-mail 3/26/10, e-mail address, chasmellamb@gmail.com I used the definition of "General farming" found on UCB website.

<sup>8</sup> Hammer, Andrew, household, San Joaquin Co., Calif., 1900 U.S. Census, population schedule, Wrightmans, precincts 1-2, enumeration district (E.D.) 107, supervisor's district (S.D.) 4, pg. 162B/sht. 20, lines 82-84, dwelling 417, located online at Ancestry.com and transcribed 3/22/10, roll T623\_108.

<sup>9</sup> Hammer, John, household #1, Seneca Co., Ohio 1880 U.S. Census, population schedule, Jackson Twp., Fostoria City, enumeration district (E.D.) 106, pg. 32/sht. 3A, lines 36-43, dwelling 54, family 59, roll T623\_1320. Hammer, Curtis, household #2, Clinton Co., Ohio, 1880 U.S. Census, population schedule, Green Twp., enumeration district (E.D.) 61, pg. 11A, roll 623\_1248, located online at Ancestry.com 3/20/10.

<sup>10</sup> Hammer, Laura E., Death Certificate, Cuyahoga Co., Ohio, vol. #3315, certificate #41334, located online at [www.ohiohistory.org](http://www.ohiohistory.org), 3/31/10.

Hammer now age forty-five, was born about 1865 in California. He was a white, male, whose father spoke German, was born in Germany, and, his mother spoke French and was born in Germany [Alsace]. As head of the family, Andrew was a farmer in O'Neal Township, north of Stockton. He continued general farming and still owned his farm without a mortgage. This couple had to work daily on farm duties, either routine or seasonal, but it was hard manual labor. Laura and Andrew had two daughters, who attended school in 1910. The girls were Madelaine and **Helen J. Hammer**, the later was born about 1902. From the census record I learned Laura had three children, but only two lived to 1910.<sup>11</sup>

After learning that Laura had three children, I found two references from San Joaquin Genealogical Society cemetery transcription texts, probably to the same child. However I did not get an obituary or death notice.

**Howard Hammer**, child, died 15-16 Sep. 1901, wht., age 5y, 3m, 25d.

Howard Hammer, 0y, 3m, 25d., male, single, b. Calif., died on lower Sacramento Rd.<sup>12</sup>

The burial records for Hammer, state Howard was five years-old. I wonder if this is Laura's third child?

Later, in November 1910 Andrew was a registered Republican voter, a "Stockton farmer."<sup>13</sup> In addition to voting, Andrew participated in jury selection, although he was dismissed from duty because he was "prejudiced against one opposed to the liquor traffic and advocated Sunday closing."<sup>14</sup>

Between 1911 and 1916 the Hammers quit farming and moved into Stockton, the county seat. From the *1912-18 San Joaquin County Great Register of Voters*, Hammer's home address was provided. 1916 had Andrew Hammer a registered Democrat in Stockton's ninth precinct. Now, his home address was 1231 N. Monroe. His occupation was a "machinist." With suffrage, beginning as early as 1916, Laura registered to vote with him in subsequent elections, she registered as a Republican and housewife.<sup>15</sup> The 1918 register showed Andrew Hammer was in Stockton's ninth precinct. However, his occupation had changed to a "benchhand."<sup>16</sup> Socially active, Hammer's daughters participated in activities young people enjoy. For example, Helen

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<sup>11</sup> Hammer, Andrew, household, San Joaquin Co., Calif., 1910 U.S. Census, population schedule, O'Neal Twp., enumeration district (E.D.) 123, supervisor's district (S.D.) 6, pg. 114/sht. 7A, lines 33-36, dwelling 135, family 139, located online at Ancestry.com and transcribed 3/22/10, roll T624\_102, image 1242. Married, both adults could read and write.

<sup>12</sup> Hammer, Howard, *Death Records, San Joaquin, Co., Calif.*, vol. II, 1895-1905, compiled by SJGS, (c)1999, p.59, located 3/23/10. The burial records for Hammer, state Howard was 5 yrs. Is this Laura's third child? Lower Sacramento Rd. was north of Stockton, near East and West Hammer Lane. I question if Laura's child was 5 yrs. old in 1901, if so, she might have been married previously or had the child out of wedlock.

<sup>13</sup> Hammer, Andrew, #32, *San Joaquin County Great Register, 1910*, County Clerk, Eugene D. Graham, Wrightmans Precinct, pg. \_\_, col. 1, California State Library, accession #160510, call No. qc929.3, "California Voter Registrations, 1900-1968," located online 3/22/10 at Ancestry.com and transcribed.

<sup>14</sup> Hammer, Andrew, *The Lodi Sentinel*, Tues., Oct. 24, 1911, pg. 18, c.3, Stockton, California

<sup>15</sup> Hammer, Andrew, #73, Mrs. Laura B. Hammer, #76, *San Joaquin County Great Register, 1916*, County Clerk, Eugene D. Graham, Stockton, ninth precinct, second ward, pg. \_\_, California State Library, accession #1, call No. qc929.3, "California Voter Registrations, 1900-1968," located online 3/22/10 at Ancestry.com and transcribed.

<sup>16</sup> Hammer, Andrew, #78, *San Joaquin County Great Register, 1918*, County Clerk, Eugene D. Graham, Stockton, ninth precinct, second ward, pg. \_\_, California State Library, accession #24465, call No. qc929.3, "California Voter Registrations, 1900-1968," located online 3/22/10 at Ancestry.com and transcribed.

Hammer and a dozen teens went to a porch dance given at **Eva Eccles** home west of Lodi on a Saturday night, July 26th.<sup>17</sup>

By 1 January 1920, "Andrew Hammer" was age fifty-four. This time the census reported Andrew's father was born in Bavaria, spoke German, and his mother was born in France, spoke French. As household head, Andrew owned the family home at 1231 N. Monroe, Stockton, where he lived with his forty-four year-old spouse, "Lura (sic) B.," and daughters, Madelaine and Helen J. The two girls' ages were twenty and seventeen, both were recorded in school. The whole family could read and write. Interestingly, this home was less than two blocks from the Youngs home on West Magnolia. At the time, this neighborhood was very pleasant for families. That year Andrew Hammer worked as a "Bench man, in a Manufactory, for wages." While Madelaine worked, likely an after school job, as a "Stenographer, for the Chamber of Commerce, for wages." Across the street from the Hammers was the **John Doty** family, who lived at 1220 N. Monroe. Their son, Laura's future son-in-law, was 19 year-old **Sumter M. Doty**, born in Arkansas. Young Sumpter worked for wages as a salesman in a clothing store.<sup>18</sup>

As registered voters, Andrew, Laura, and their daughter, Madeline, were listed in the 1920 election rolls. The following election years 1922, 1924, and 1926, showed Andrew and Laura continued to register.<sup>19</sup> Between 1922 and 1926, their daughters married. It appears Helen married Mr. Thomas F. Baxter Jr., moved to Sonoma County, where Hammer's grandson, Thomas F. Baxter III, was born.<sup>20</sup> Madelaine married Sumter Monroe Doty on 16 September 1922 in Stockton.<sup>21</sup> Shortly afterwards, they moved to Stanislaus County, where Hammer's granddaughter Joanne Doty was born.<sup>22</sup> Hopefully, Laura enjoyed relationships with her grandchildren, with visits often enough to watch them grow.

Hammers were still in their home at 1231 N. Monroe, in Stockton City for 1 April 1930 census. Now sixty-four years-old, Andrew Hammer was still the household head and Laura was his wife. She was fifty-four years-old. Andrew was not a veteran. They owned their home, valued at \$7,500.00, yet they did not have a radio. Were the economic times a bit of a struggle?

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<sup>17</sup> Social Notes column, *The Lodi Sentinel*, Tues., July 29, 1919, pg. 3, c.3, Stockton, California.

<sup>18</sup> Hammer, Andrew, household, San Joaquin Co., Calif., 1920 U.S. Census, population schedule, Stockton, ward 2, precinct 11, enumeration district (E.D.) 164, supervisor's district (S.D.) 3, pg. 53/sht. 5B, lines 92-95, dwelling 118, family 129, enumerator provided daughters' middle initials, Andrew was a white, male, located online at Ancestry.com and transcribed 3/22/10, roll T625\_144, image 108. Checked Google maps for homes locations, 5/17/10.

<sup>19</sup> Hammer, Andrew and Laura, 1920; Hammer, Andrew and Mrs. Laura B., 1922; and, Hammer, Helen, Andrew, and Laura B., 1924, *Precinct Index of the Great Register of San Joaquin County, California, 1920-24*, County Clerk John D. Finney, Woodlee-Pulich Printing Co., Record Building, Stockton, Calif., California State Library, accession No. 41082, call #qc929.3 1920. Also, Hammer, Andrew and Mrs. Laura B., 1926, *Precinct Index of the Great Register of San Joaquin County, California, 1926-28*, County Clerk John D. Finney, Woodlee-Pulich Printing Co., Record Building, Stockton, Calif., California State Library, accession No. 81546, call #qc929.3 1926, "California Voter Registrations, 1900-1968," located online at Ancestry.com and transcribed 3/22/10.

<sup>20</sup> Baxter, Thomas Francis, mother's maiden name Hammer, provided date and county, located online, *California Birth Index, 1905-1995*, Ancestry.com, 4/11/10 and transcribed.

<sup>21</sup> Doty, Sumter, household, San Joaquin Co., Calif., 1930 U.S. Census, population schedule, Stockton City, O'Neal Twp., enumeration district (E.D.) 39-63, supervisor's district (S.D.) 9, ward 6, pg. 127/sht. 3A, lines 26-28, dwelling 32, family 33, located online at Footnote.com and transcribed 5/9/10; also, Doty-Hammer marriage, *Marriage Records San Joaquin County*, Vol. 39, pg. 130, officiated by R.H. Sink, located and transcribed by SJCGS research staff, emailed 5/26/10.

<sup>22</sup> Doty, mother's maiden name Hammer, *California Birth Index, 1905-1995*, provided the date and the county, located online Ancestry.com and transcribed 3/22/10.

Perhaps with the depression, Andrew lost his job at the factory, because in 1930 he was earning a wage as a sexton for the Congregational Church.<sup>23</sup> The newly completed Congregational Church, located at 116 West Willow Street, was finished in 1929.<sup>24</sup> Having moved back to Stockton, Sumter and Madeline Doty resided at 144 East Ash Street with their daughter. Little Joanne was three years, ten months-old, she must have been born about May 1926. Sumter provided for his family working as a salesman for an Auto Insurance Association.<sup>25</sup> Listed as Republicans, their voter registrations reflected the same home address and occupations.<sup>26</sup>

During the depression and through World War II, Laura and Andrew continued to register to vote in the elections. Over the years 1930, 1932, 1936, 1938, 1940, 1942, and 1944 she registered as a Democrat, while he registered as a Republican.<sup>27</sup> Their household must have been either very silent regarding politics or very lively discussing the merits of the two political platforms each election year. The Hammer family was close, demonstrated by the birthday celebration noticed in "Women's Feature Section," of the *The Lodi News-Sentinel*, Wednesday, 16 December 1936, as follows:

#### **Birthday Dinner Party Given For George Hammer**

The home of Mr. and Mrs. George Hammer near Lodi was the setting for a pleasantly planned dinner party Tuesday evening, the gathering honoring the birthday of Mr. Hammer. Decorations for the event were a timely arrangement of hollyberries.

Assembled were Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Hammer, Mr. and Mrs Ed Hammer, Dr. and Mrs. Lee Dunne, Mrs. Annie McDade, Mrs. Edith Dolan, Mr. William Hammer, all of Stockton; Miss Ora Hammer, Miss Lavina Dodds, and Mr. and Mrs. George Hammer.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Hammer, Andrew, household, San Joaquin Co., Calif., 1930 U.S. Census, population schedule, Stockton Twp., enumeration district (E.D.) 39-34, supervisor's district (S.D.) 9, ward 2, pg. 157/sht. 9A, lines 23-24, dwelling 234, family 240, located online at Ancestry.com and transcribed 3/22/10, roll 211, image 316.0, Andrew was born about 1866 Calif., wht., male, father born in Germany, his mother was born in France.

<sup>24</sup> [First Congregational Church, Stockton, CA, 1929](#), William Wilson Wurster, Architect, sketches from *Collection of William W. Wurster/Wurster, Bernardi & Emmons Collection, 1922-1974*, contributing institution Environmental Design Archives, 230 Wurster Hall #1820, University of California, Berkeley, Calif. 94720-1820, located online 5/17/10 at University of California, Calisphere website < <http://content.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/hb6j49p0vj/>>.

<sup>25</sup> Doty, Sumter, household, San Joaquin Co., Calif., 1930 U.S. Census, population schedule, Stockton City, O'Neal Twp., enumeration district (E.D.) 39-63, supervisor's district (S.D.) 9, ward 6, pg. 127/sht. 3A, lines 26-28, dwelling 32, family 33, located online at Footnote.com and transcribed 5/9/10.

<sup>26</sup> Doty, Sumter, and Madelaine E. Doty, also, Hammer, Andrew and Mrs. Laura B., 1930, Stockton, sixth ward, fifth precinct, pg. 362, *Precinct Index of the Great Register of San Joaquin County, California, 1930-32*, Stockton, Calif., County Clerk Eugene D. Graham, California State Library, accession No. 119045, call #qc929.3 1930, "California Voter Registrations, 1900-1968," located online at Ancestry.com and transcribed 3/22/10.

<sup>27</sup> Hammer, Andrew, and Mrs. Laura B. Hammer, 1930, pg. 219; 1932, pg. 243, *Precinct Index of the Great Register of San Joaquin County, California, 1930-32*, Stockton, Calif., County Clerk Eugene D. Graham, California State Library, accession No. 119045, call #qc929.3 1930; 1932; "California Voter Registrations, 1900-1968," located online at Ancestry.com and transcribed 3/22/10; *Precinct Index of the Great Register of San Joaquin County, California 1936-1938*, Stockton, Calif., County Clerk Eugene D. Graham, California State Library, accession No. 162583, call #qc929.3, 1936; accession No. 175143, call #qc929.3, 1938; also, Hammer, Andrew and Mrs. Laura B., pg. 285, *Precinct Index of the Great Register of San Joaquin County, California, 1940*, Stockton, Calif., County Clerk Eugene D. Graham, California State Library, accession No. 190286, call #qc929.3 1940; and, Hammer, Andrew and Mrs. Laura B., pg. 240, *Precinct Index of the Great Register of San Joaquin County, California, 1942*, Stockton, Calif., County Clerk Eugene D. Graham, California State Library, accession No. 202752, call #qc929.3 1942; and last, Hammer, Andrew and Mrs. Laura B., 1944, pg. 249, *Precinct Index of the Great Register of San Joaquin County, California, 1944*, Stockton, Calif., County Clerk R.E. Graham, California State Library, accession No. 235926, call #qc929.3 1944, "California Voter Registrations, 1900-1968," located online and transcribed 5/17/10.

<sup>28</sup> Editor unknown, *Lodi News-Sentinel*, Wed., Dec. 16, 1936, p. 4, c.5.



Other social activities in which Laura Hammer joined are evidence that her interests were diverse and she actively participated. The following was also in the “Women’s Feature Section,” of *The Lodi News-Sentinel*, 11 November 1936:

... **County Clubwomen** ...

San Joaquin County Federation of Women’s clubs met in an interesting session yesterday in Stockton at the First Congregational church, the president, Mrs. R.J. Custer of Lodi, presideing. ...

In the morning session reports were given by the following chairmen: Mrs. Andrew Hammer, American Citizenship; Mrs. J.V. Craviotto, amenities; Mrs. Irma L. Tilden, drama; Mrs. Howard Crittenden, legislation; Mrs. E.M. Meroux, publicity; Mrs. Frederick M. Braddock, international interests; Mrs. Wendell R. Hoar, art; Mrs. James G. Smith, forests and parks.

At luncheon... afternoon session... appropriate musical accompaniment, ... .<sup>29</sup>

The family also toasted special events, also in “Women’s Feature Section,” in 1941, was written:

**George Hammers Observe ‘Ruby’ Anniversay**

The fortieth wedding anniversary of Mr. and Mrs. George Hammer of Lodi was celebrated last night with a dinner party given in their honor by Miss Ora Hammer and Miss Lavina Dodds at The Fountain.

Following the delightful affair for which the decorations were in red in honor of the “ruby” celebration, the party adjourned to the home of Miss Hammer for conversation and entertainment.

Guests included: Mr. and Mrs. George Hammer, the honored couple; Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Hammer of Stockton, Mr. Will Hammer of Stockton, Mr. Ed Hammer of Santa Cruz, Mrs. Edith Dolan of Santa Cruz, ... Miss Ora Hammer and Miss Lavina Dodds, hostesses to the event.

Mr and Mrs. George Hammer are prominent and well known Lodi residents. They were married 40 years ago in Stockton.<sup>30</sup>

On a more somber note, around September 1943, Laura was diagnosed with cancer.<sup>31</sup> As Laura and Andrew were growing older, they made the difficult decision to move again. After 1944 they moved to what was to be their final home, maybe a rest home, on North California Street in Stockton across from St. Joseph's Medical Center. In May 1945, Andrew was diagnosed with heart problems.<sup>32</sup> After Andrew died, Laura did not appear to exercise her right to vote again.<sup>33</sup>

Having discovered those more recent resources, I hoped to find older records to learn something of Laura’s background, maybe even learn about Andrew’s life before their marriage. I looked at 1880, 1870, and 1860 U.S. Census records, and checked other California genealogical

<sup>29</sup> Editor unknown, *Lodi News-Sentinel*, Wed., Nov. 11, 1936, p. 4, cols.1-2.

<sup>30</sup> Editor unknown, *Lodi News-Sentinel*, Fri., Apr. 4, 1941, p. 8, cols.3-4.

<sup>31</sup> Hammer, Laura, Death Certificate, San Joaquin Co., Calif., district #3901, registrar's #93, Dr. William Lynch provided diagnosis and signed death certificate, with decedent’s home address. Transcribed death certificate information provided by Charles Lambaren, researcher, San Joaquin Genealogical Society (SJGS), e-mail 3/31/10, e-mail address, [chasmellamb@gmail.com](mailto:chasmellamb@gmail.com)

<sup>32</sup> Hammer, Andrew, Death Certificate, San Joaquin Co., district #3901, registrar’s # 400, Dr. William Lynch provided diagnosis and signed death certificate, with decedent’s home address. Transcription provided by Charles Lambaren, researcher, San Joaquin Genealogical Society (SJGS), e-mail 3/26/10, e-mail address, [chasmellamb@gmail.com](mailto:chasmellamb@gmail.com)

<sup>33</sup> Hammer, Andrew and Mrs. Laura B., pg. 249, *Precinct Index of the Great Register of San Joaquin County, California, 1944*, Stockton, Calif., County Clerk R.E. Graham, California State Library, accession No. 235926, call #qc929.3 1944, “California Voter Registrations, 1900-1968,” located online and transcribed 5/17/10; Hammer, Andrew, Death Certificate, San Joaquin Co., district #3901, registrar’s # 400. Transcription provided by Charles Lambaren, researcher, San Joaquin Genealogical Society (SJGS), e-mail 3/26/10, e-mail address, [chasmellamb@gmail.com](mailto:chasmellamb@gmail.com)

links I found online. I found in the *California Death Index, 1940-1997* Laura Blanche (Swartz) Hammer. Now, armed with her maiden name, Swartz, and mother's maiden name, Ripley, I still failed to find the exact Swartz or Schwartz family in Ohio records.<sup>34</sup> However, Andrew's earlier history was revealed in the 1880 census. Once I secured that information I was able to pursue additional details about Andrew's family. Those details will appear in an article about Laura's in-laws in the next newsletter issue.

After my preliminary research, I contacted the San Joaquin Genealogical Society (SJGS). With my thanks to them, they helped me with more information pieces that could only be learned in San Joaquin County, for example obituaries, city directories, and transcribed death certificates.

Additionally, SJCGS provided Laura Swartz's and Andrew Hammer's marriage date 20 October 1897. On the license, Andrew was thirty-two, a native Californian, and Laura was twenty-two, a native Ohioan. Andrew's sister, **Edith Hammer** and **J. Pitcher Spooner**<sup>35</sup>, residents of Stockton, were present and witnessed the ceremony conducted by **Rev. C. McLane**, Pastor of the First Cumberland Presbyterian Church of Stockton. Rev. McLane requested the county record the marriage.<sup>36</sup> This suggests that one or the other, or even both Hammers were members of the Presbyterian Church. As was the community custom, the issuance of the marriage license was published in the *Stockton Daily Independent*.<sup>37</sup>

The year before Hammers married, Andrew Hammer was listed in the *1895-1896 San Joaquin Directory*. He was a farmer in Wrightmans precinct, north of Stockton. It also provided his personal description with blue eyes, blond hair, and 6' 2" tall.<sup>38</sup> In 1900, it was probably the same place, but more specifically identified as a residence on Sacramento Road, two miles north of Stockton. Then again, 1902, 1904, 1906, 1908 through 1911, Andrew Hammer was on route 2, Box 67, Stockton Rural Route. 1912, Andrew changed the box number to 26. Then, 1914 through 1942 he and Laura were listed at 1231 North Monroe, Stockton. This provided more accurately when they moved to Stockton, 1912-1913. The next few years Andrew held various jobs. In 1915, he was a laborer, 1917-23 he worked as a machinist for H.M. Company, and later, 1924-1928 he was a salesman with Burnett-Gealy Company, which is a real estate and Insurance business.<sup>39</sup>

Andrew's death certificate was a transcription by SJGS research staff. It states Andrew was born 11 November 1864 in Stockton, to Michael Hammer, native of Germany, and Doratheia (Roerig), native of Alsace Lorraine. His father's name may have been Michael Andrew

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<sup>34</sup> Hammer, Laura Blanche (Swartz), *California Death Index, 1940-1997*, provided full birth and death dates, and parents' surnames, located online at Ancestry.com and transcribed 3/22/10. Even after I learned from Laura Hammer's death certificate the parent's full names, I couldn't find them.

<sup>35</sup> J. Pitcher Spooner was a Stockton photographer, in some way other than photography he fits into the Young's photograph album story, but it is not yet known how

<sup>36</sup> Swartz-Hammer, marriage date, transcription provided by Charles Lambaren, researcher, San Joaquin Genealogical Society (SJGS), e-mail 3/31/10, e-mail address, chasmellamb@gmail.com

<sup>37</sup> Hammer-Swartz marriage license, *Stockton Daily Independent*, Thurs., Oct. 21, 1897, p.3, c.2. Scanned image provided by Charles Lambaren, researcher, San Joaquin Genealogical Society (SJGS), e-mail 3/31/10, e-mail address, chasmellamb@gmail.com

<sup>38</sup> Vickroy, Betty, transcriber, *Great Register of san Joaquin County, California, 1896*, ©2008, Nancy Pratt Melton, Stockton, Calif., located online 3/23/10, at <freepages hosted by rootsweb/ancestry.com >; also, provided George A. Hammer's registration.

<sup>39</sup> Hammer, *Stockton City Directory(ies)*, 1902, pg. 101; 1906-1905, pg. 138; 1909-1910, pg. 189; 1926, pg. 166; and, 1928, pg. 161, compiled and published by R.L. Polk & Co., San Francisco, Calif., transcribed and forwarded by Charlie Lambaren, researcher, San Joaquin Genealogical Society (SJGS), e-mail.



Hammer, since I found records for his father using both Michael and Andrew. At “80 years, 11 months, and 25 days” Andrew died, having been in Saint Joseph’s Hospital for several weeks.<sup>40</sup> His death was caused by a cardiac decompensation (sic, decompensation), due to Myocarditis, which was first diagnosed 1 May 1945. Dr. William Lynch signed the death certificate. I learned Dr. Lynch later signed Laura’s death certificate, which may mean he was their family physician. The informant for Andrew’s death certificate was Laura, providing Andrew’s birth date, his parents’ names and their nativity, and probably she made arrangements for his funeral services.<sup>41</sup>

When SJCGS found an obituary for Andrew Hammer, it was clear Andrew was remembered as the “husband of Laura, father of Mrs. Madelaine Doty of Sacramento and Mrs. Helen Baxter of Healdsburg; grand-father of Joanne Doty and Thomas F. Baxter III,” the brother of, George A. Hammer of Lodi, and Mrs. Edith Dolan of Santa Cruz. Andrew died early Tuesday morning, 4 September 1945, in Stockton. Services were held the next day, Wednesday, the 5<sup>th</sup> in the chapel of B.C. Wallace & Son, 520 North Sutter Street, with Rev. Noel F. Breed officiating. This was followed by a private committal at Park View Crematory.<sup>42</sup>

The same physician, William Lynch, reported that Laura Hammer had been seriously ill for about two years. Andrew must have consoled and comforted Laura. However, after he died in September 1945, Laura may have been too sad to fight her illness. Four months later, 1 January 1946, she apparently received medical help. She was not doing well. Shortly afterwards, **Laura Blanche Hammer** passed away at home, 1545 North California [Street], Stockton. She died 2:00 a.m., Friday morning 1 March 1946.<sup>43</sup> Her father’s name was **Robert E. Swartz** and her mother’s name was **Jane Ripley**, were filled in on Laura’s death certificate, also stating they were both born in Pennsylvania. Laura was 70 years, 8 months, and 6 days old, having spent the greater portion of her life, fifty-four years in San Joaquin County, California. Over those many years her primary occupation had been housekeeper, or simply taking care of her family.<sup>44</sup>

From the obituary, it was reported Laura Hammer was born 25 August 1875 in Ohio, if her daughter knew where in Ohio, it was not provided. The obituary named two surviving sisters, Mrs. Florence Davis of Ohio and Mrs. Elizabeth Pugh of Missouri.<sup>45</sup> Probably on

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<sup>40</sup> Hammer, Andrew, Death Certificate, San Joaquin Co., district #3901, registrar’s # 400. Transcription provided by Charles Lambaren, researcher, San Joaquin Genealogical Society (SJGS), e-mail 3/26/10, e-mail address, [chasmellamb@gmail.com](mailto:chasmellamb@gmail.com)

<sup>41</sup> Hammer, Andrew, Death Certificate, San Joaquin Co., Calif., district #3901, registrar’s # 400, cardiac decompensation is a condition of congestive heart failure in which the heart is unable to ensure adequate cellular perfusion in all parts of the body without assistance.

<sup>42</sup> Hammer, Andrew, Obituary, *Stockton Record*, September 4, 1945, p. 14, c. 7, 8. Scanned image provided by Charles Lambaren, researcher, San Joaquin Genealogical Society (SJGS), e-mail 3/26/10, e-mail address, [chasmellamb@gmail.com](mailto:chasmellamb@gmail.com)

<sup>43</sup> Hammer, Laura Blanche (Swartz), *California Death Index, 1940-1997*, provided full birth and death dates, and parents’ surnames, located online at Ancestry.com and transcribed 3/22/10.

<sup>44</sup> Hammer, Laura, Death Certificate, San Joaquin Co., Calif., district #3901, registrar’s #93, information provided by daughter, Mrs. Madeline Doty, 2256 9th St., Sacramento, CA, Dr. William Lynch signed death certificate, transcribed death certificate information provided by Charles Lambaren, researcher, San Joaquin Genealogical Society (SJGS), e-mail 3/31/10, e-mail address, [chasmellamb@gmail.com](mailto:chasmellamb@gmail.com)

<sup>45</sup> Hammer, Laura Blanche, Obituary, newspaper name, page, col., and publisher not provided, scanned image forwarded by e-mail from Charlie Lambaren, researcher San Joaquin Genealogical Society (SJGS).

Saturday, 2 March, the funeral was conducted at B.C. Wallace & Son, in Stockton. On that same day, Laura was cremated at Parkview Crematory in Manteca, California.<sup>46</sup>

Because Laura was such a pretty young woman, I hope she found life was rewarding. From bits and pieces learned, her life centered on her husband, Andrew, his family, and their two daughters, and their families. Those early days, the woman's work done on a farm was more demanding and different from a city housewife's chores. The last years, fighting health issues, Laura and Andrew sought long-term care. Beyond being a wife and mother, she seemed interested enough in politics to vote. Maybe, when her daughters were in school, education was an important issue to her, and possibly, as a member of the church, she had special activities she enjoyed doing.

The significant point was Laura Hammer was a farm neighbor, later a city neighbor to my great-grandparents E.G. and Emma Young. The Youngs felt a special relationship with Laura, enough to keep her photograph for over fifty years. Theirs was not a flitting friendship. This research offered a glimpse into Laura Hammer's life, the prettiest young lady in the little brown photographic album.

**Family Surnames: Hammer, Swartz, Ripley, Roehrig (variations), Doty, Baxter**

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I hope there is somebody out there who can tell me, if I got this information right so far? Did I make an error in my research? What might I have missed? Please let me know and I will gladly forward a copy of the Laura Hammer photograph to you.

*Questions not researched:*

1. What Property was owned or leased and recorded in San Joaquin County?
2. What Church membership did Laura or Andrew have in either of the two churches mentioned in the newspaper announcement and obituary?
3. What schools did their daughters attended?
4. What membership(s) did the family have to any fraternal or sorority organizations?
5. When did their daughter Helen marry Thomas Baxter?
6. What other years did the Hammers register to vote in elections?
7. What other newspaper stories about them can be found?
8. What information is available on the Social Security Application forms for the family?
9. What California immigration records would find the Hammer or Roerig families?
10. What information is found on the naturalization papers for Andrew's parents or maternal grandparents?
11. Were there any probate or guardian files from Andrew's parents or maternal grandparents deaths?

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<sup>46</sup> Hammer, Laura, Death Certificate, San Joaquin Co., Calif., district #3901, registrar's #93, information provided by daughter, Mrs. Madeline Doty, 2256 9th St., Sacramento, CA, Dr. William Lynch signed death certificate, transcribed death certificate information provided by Charles Lambaren, researcher, San Joaquin Genealogical Society (SJGS), e-mail 3/31/10, e-mail address, [chasmellamb@gmail.com](mailto:chasmellamb@gmail.com)