

# THEIR ODYSSEY – TO SAN DIEGO

By Randy Seaver © 2006.

A cross-country airplane ride gave me an opportunity to appreciate the hardships of travel in the 19th century. My mother's ancestors were in New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania during the Revolutionary War, and started a westward migration after the war.

The first to migrate were the SOVEREIGN and KEMP families, who were Loyalists, and ended up in Norfolk County, Ontario on the north shore of Lake Erie in the early 1800's.

The KNAPP family was in Dutchess County, NY in 1775, then Sussex County, NJ. The AUBLE family was in Sussex County NJ, then Vigo County, Indiana, then in Chicago, Illinois where Charles AUBLE married Georgia KEMP in 1898. Their family moved to San Diego in about 1911 with their daughter Emily Kemp Auble.

The SMITH and VAUX families were in Jefferson County NY until about 1850, when they migrated to Dodge County, Wisconsin, to Taylor County, Iowa before 1870, to Concordia, Cloud County, Kansas by 1875, and finally to McCook in Red Willow County, Nebraska by 1885.

The CARRINGER and FEATHER families were in Mercer County PA (just south of Erie PA), while the KING and SPANGLER families were in York County PA in 1800. My Carringer line migrated to Louisa County, Iowa, then Boulder, Colorado, and finally to San Diego in 1887, where Austin and Della (Smith) Carringer had a son Lyle Carringer in 1891. Lyle Carringer married Emily Auble in 1918 - my maternal grandparents.

As I left Hartford, Connecticut on a flight to San Diego, I tried to look for familiar landmarks. On the north side of the plane over New York were:

- \* The east bank of the Hudson River opposite West Point - my KNAPP family lived there doing I know not what!
- \* The eastern end of Lake Ontario - where Ranslow Smith grew up farming in and left from Jefferson County, New York.
- \* Schenectady and Ballston Spa, New York where the Kemp family was before going to Canada as Loyalists.
- \* A little further on, in Aurora township just east of Buffalo NY is where my VAUX family lived in 1850, recent immigrants from England.
- \* Then west of Buffalo on the north shore of Lake Erie is Long Point, Ontario where the Sovereign and Kemp families settled and lived for many years.

On the south side of the plane, off in the distance were:

- \* Newton in Sussex County, New Jersey where the Auble family lived for 100 years.
- \* German Valley in Hunterdon County, New Jersey where the Sovereign and other families were before the Revolutionary War.
- \* York, Pennsylvania where the King and Spangler families were doing quite well in their businesses around 1800.
- \* Mercer County, Pennsylvania where the Carringer family settled in 1795, and left in 1858.

As we approach Chicago, to the south is Terre Haute, Indiana where David Auble plied his cobbler's trade for 30 years and lies buried. To the north is Dodge County, Wisconsin where the Smith and Vaux families were in 1860, but not for long!

Further on is Louisa County, Iowa where Henry Carringer lies, and where DJ Carringer's farm went bankrupt in 1873. There is Taylor County, Iowa where Ranslow Smith in 1870 is farming with his son, Davier.

Over Kansas, I see to the north the Republican River with McCook, Nebraska nestled on it's bank, where Davier Smith had a livery stable and sold snake oil on the side, and where the Vaux family had a beautiful home in 1880. I can't find the ghost town of Wano tucked in the northwestern corner of Kansas, where Austin Carringer met and married Della Smith in 1887, and left for San Diego on the train on their honeymoon. But I can see Boulder, Colorado over near the Rocky Mountains, where DJ and Rebecca (Spangler) Carringer lived out their days after moving from Iowa, losing their daughter in 1876, and finally coming to San Diego about 1900.

Approaching San Diego, to the south of our flight path is the cemetery where DJ and Rebecca Carringer are buried, and directly under the plane are the resting places of my great-grandparents and grandparents. I can see to the right the block where the Carringers built the house I was raised in, the schools I attended, and now we're over Balboa Park - the playground of my childhood. I look ahead and see the twinkling lights of Point Loma where my grandparents and then my parents lived overlooking San Diego Bay and the airport. Up on the ridge of the Point is Fort Rosecrans National Cemetery where my parents lie overlooking "my" Pacific Ocean. The plane touches down - I am home.

It took me about five hours flying time to traverse 2,500 miles - while it took my maternal ancestors 100 years or more to make the same trip. I complain about the discomfort of my plane ride. I cannot imagine the endless miles of riding on a horse, in a wagon, or on foot, along with all the belongings, trekking to an unseen and sometimes unknown place with dangers, hardship and adventure constantly lurking.

In December of 1940, my father left Leominster, Massachusetts. He drove for three days straight and ended up in San Diego, arriving just before Christmas at the home of his aunt and uncle. His ancestry goes back to colonial New England - his Seaver line moved about 40 miles in 300 years. He never returned, having met and married my mother in San Diego.

It is quite a contrast! 100 years for one family to move west, three days for another to drive west, and five hours for me to fly coast-to-coast.

Why did they come west? For the promise of a more healthful or more prosperous life? For the adventure or opportunity to succeed, or to find meaningful work? To be with family, brothers or grown children? Did they flee the cold of winter, the heat of summer, unproductive farms or failed relationships? These are the questions to be asked and answered by a family historian. To find out the answers to these questions, and to honor their effort, is why I "do" genealogy.

Thank God for these simple, humble, industrious and educated people who planted my roots in San Diego. I am so thankful!