

Portrait of A Lady In A Locket

My Family History

by Florence Langtry

Introduction by Barb Pearson



Sophia Matilda (Mercer) Weyman- “The Lady in the Locket!”

Sophia Matilda Mercer Weyman was born 23 December 1850, the oldest child of William Baxter Mercer and Margaret Asbell of Norton, Kings Co., N.B. Her parents had gone to Norfolk, Mass., USA where they were married about 1850. By 1853 William, Margaret, and family were back in Apohaqui, Kings Co., N.B. where eleven more children were born. William was one of the first shoemakers in Apohaqui and his shop was near the present day Jones’ brothers’ warehouse.

Sophia’s father, William, was a son of Joseph Jr. and Frances (Baxter) Mercer of Norton parish. Joseph Jr. Mercer was a son of Loyalist Captain Joseph Mercer, who came to New Brunswick with his family in 1783. Frances was a granddaughter of Captain Simon Baxter, a pre-Loyalist of 1782 who settled with his family at Bloomfield, Kings County. William and my g.g. grandfather, Joshua Mercer, were brothers. A cousin, Florence Langtry, of Ontario, had

inherited a locket from her grandmother, Juanita Victoria Weyman, Sophia’s daughter. This locket contained a portrait, although miniature, of Sophia Matilda (Mercer) Weyman. Although we have pictures of Joshua’s family, Sophia’s portrait is the first to be found in William B. Mercer’s family.

Sophia Matilda married Robert Colpitts Weyman, a son of Rev. Edward and Mary (Colpitts) Weyman of Lower Millstream, Kings Co., N.B. on 28 November 1867 in Apohaqui, by Rev. Edward Weyman, Robert’s father, with witnesses William B. Mercer and Samuel H. Weyman. The marriage was reported in the Religious Intelligencer of Saint John. Sophia and Robert had a family of nine children, six girls and 3 boys. The family lived in Apohaqui, where Robert also worked as a shoemaker. Then they moved to Moncton, and later Saint John, as he was a finished carpenter for the railroad. A daughter, Juanita Victoria, attended Normal School in Fredericton, graduating in 1895. In 1901 Robert and Sophia moved to Alsask, Saskatchewan with some of their family. The government was offering land to farm, 200 acres to develop for a registration fee of \$10.00 to males over 18 years.

Life was filled with hardship on the prairies in the 1900’s. This family shows the courage of the hardy pioneers who were not afraid to move on to a better life as is told by Flo Langtry in her story.

The family of Robert Colpitts and Sophia Matilda (Mercer) Weyman

Joicy Weyman, born in 1869 in Apohaqui, Kings Co., N.B.

Mary Helen Weyman, born 1870, Saint John, N.B.

William Wesley Weyman, born Sept. 1872, Saint John, N.B.

Juanita Victoria Weyman, born 12 Nov. 1873, Saint John, N.B. – Flo Langtry’s grandmother

Alice Maude Weyman, born 25 Sept. 1876, Saint John, N.B.

Joseph Edward Weyman, born 22 Aug. 1880, Saint John, N.B.

Margaret Mildred Weyman, born 27 July 1882, Moncton, N.B.

Sophia Elizabeth Weyman, born 15 June 1888, Saint John, N.B.

Robert Colpitts Weyman, born 20 Feb. 1894, Saint John, N.B.

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Robert Colpitts and Sophia Matilda (Mercer) Weyman's Family



Juanita Victoria Weyman
Graduation Prov. Normal School
Fredericton, 1895



Sophia Elizabeth Weyman



Robert Colpitts Weyman

Florence Langtry's Grandparents



Juanita Victoria Weyman and Ernest Daniel Schwartz

Juanita Victoria (Weyman) Schwartz's Story ~ by her granddaughter Florence Langtry

When I was in my teen years, Mom had told me her story of the tragic event of her mother's death and the difficulties that it created for her family. Mom had only loving good memories of her mother who was a schoolteacher, was very musical and played the piano. She was also very talented in handwork as is witnessed in the hand painted plates that my sisters and I have inherited.

Back in 1981 I began wondering how I could start my family research, as I knew so little of mom's background. I decided this would be a perfect retirement project for me, but if I waited until I retired to start compiling information, I probably would not have sources to draw from.

My uncle Eric, Mom's brother, was still alive at that time and I wrote him asking what family information he could give me. He told me that grandfather Schwartz was born in Fehmarn, Germany and that he married our grandmother, Juanita Victoria, in Halbrite, Saskatchewan, on December 25th, 1907. She was teaching school in Halbrite, Saskatchewan in 1906. I have yet to find out they met! After their marriage they were homesteading in Halbrite. In 1910 grandfather Ernest sold his homestead property in Halbrite and received property at Alsask Saskatchewan. Here they raised their young family of three sons and two daughters; Ernest, Eric, Carl, Margaret and Christine.

Uncle Eric told me that sometime in 1900 Robert Colpitts Weyman and his wife Sophia had left Saint John, N.B. and travelled west to Alsask, Saskatchewan where land was being developed and homestead property was being offered free. Juanita, two of her brothers, Joseph and Robert, all travelled west with their parents. Sister Joicy joined them later on. Juanita's brother, Robert C. Weyman worked in the Globe General Store in Alsask, Saskatchewan. Eric remembered Uncle Bob!

Uncle Eric also said that In 1910 Juanita's brother, Joseph, received homestead property adjacent to that of his parents. He remembered that Joseph died 21 January 1916, a young man of 36 years of Typhoid and general wasting from the hardships of farming in this harsh land.

It was in 1924 that tragedy struck the family, said Eric. Grandmother Juanita Victoria (Weyman) Schwartz, was in menopause and was having a very difficult time coping with depression. She also had the medical problem of severe colitis that would have become much more aggravated due to the depression. Doctors at that time didn't have the knowledge to treat menopausal depression, thus grandfather was left alone to deal with the situation. He thought that perhaps a change of scenery and a connection to relatives might help her. A decision was made to move to Victoria where grandmother Juanita had several cousins. It was on this trip by ferry to the Island, that Grandmother and mom's sister Christine went missing. They had gone overboard. Their bodies were never found.

I later found out too, through my research, that grandmother's mother, Sophia Matilda (Mercer) Weyman, who farmed on a nearby homestead at Alsask, Saskatchewan, had died of cancer in April of 1924. Sophia had lost her husband, Robert, in 1914 and then her son Joseph in 1916. I wondered how Sophia survived those ten years on the farm. This must have made the situation much more difficult for Juanita to lose her mother at a time in her life when she would have needed her understanding, caring and advice.

Unfortunately my mother, Margaret, died before I started researching our family history in earnest and I never had talked to her at length about her early childhood. Mom had said that her mother's people were United Empire Loyalists and had been in America for many years. In fact they may have come over on the Mayflower. I remember mom laughing when she told me this was a bit of an exaggeration, but nevertheless it did tweak my interest in her family roots. There were so many questions I could have asked her back then if I had just known the questions! This had always been on my mind and I thought that someday I would research my mother's ancestry. Little did I know that her lineage was going to be so HUGE and so very interesting!

Homesteading in Alsask, Saskatchewan, 1914



Ernest and Juanita Victoria (Weyman) Schwartz, Ernest Jr. with his dad, Eric with his mom, Margaret in front, Carl in carriage, and Juanita's sister, Joicy Weyman.

But almost twenty years passed before I began actively searching my family roots. My first step was to write the Saskatchewan Vital statistics for a copy of the Registration of Marriage of my grandparents. This provided me with the names of grandfather's parents, Henry Schwartz and Christine Schuldt, as well as grandmother's parents, Robert Colpitts Weyman and Sophia Matilda Mercer. Early in my searching I was able to find my Sophia Matilda Mercer and the United Empire Loyalist, Captain Joseph Mercer of Kings County, New Brunswick. However, proving that Sophia belonged to this family would take several years of diligent digging and searching. I had documentation of Sophia's marriage stating that she was given permission to marry by her father, William B. Mercer. I was certain that this William was a son of a Joseph Mercer but I needed documented proof and until I was able to find this proof, searching Joseph Mercer's family would have to be put on hold. Sophia was born in the USA and no birth record had been found for her. I had numerous communications with museum staff, genealogists and librarians in New Brunswick and was told the unregistered births were not all that unusual at that time as many young men married and went to the forests of Maine, USA, to work, taking their new brides with them and beginning a family while there. This explanation was logical, but not much help in proving Sophia's parentage.

This past winter, I met my e-mail distant cousin, Barb Pearson, of New Brunswick. She immediately answered my query and gave me the proof I had all but given up hope of ever finding. She confirmed that my William B. Mercer was married to Margaret Asbell and had moved his family to Paris, Ontario around 1877. He died in Galt in 1894. His obituary provided the proof I was looking for. It stated "he leaves a large number of relatives in N.B. including his daughter, Mrs. R. C. Weyman, Saint John." I was elated! After so many years of searching and wondering if I would ever prove my Sophia, success at last! Barb's first words were, "Yes, we are related!" began a wonderful

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friendship and a relationship that has done so much in connecting our Mercer line and assisting in searching our Weyman family.

I must pause here for a moment-Thank you Derek, for “our” Christmas present of two years ago. Derek thought we should have a computer, so that was our present that year. Up until that time, my research consisted of letter writing, phone calls, the LDS Church library and the local library computers as well as many hours spent ordering and looking at microfilms. Having “my” own computer really advanced my genealogy research to a whole new level and with so much success! A little over a year ago, while internet searching, I found the Fehmarn Genealogy site by John Kostick. I sent off a letter to him stating that my grandfather was Ernest Daniel Schwartz, born February 16, 1877, on the Island of Fehmarn, Germany, and was the son of Henry Schwartz and Christine Schuldt. To my amazement, he wrote back immediately and said that he had my complete line, some of it dating back to the 1400’s. He had researched my grandfather’s line for a very close friend of his and who is a distant cousin of mine. I hadn’t planned on searching grandfather at this time, as I knew he came from Fehmarn, thanks to Uncle Eric, and that his ancestry was probably all on that Island of Fehmarn. Anything I would find would likely be in German-needless to say, a difficult task. Imagine my delight to have this complete history of the Island of Fehmarn and a family history given to me with so little work involved. What a gift that was! The event of note in this story is that grandfather’s parents both died within one week of each other, at Christmas time in 1847, leaving their only son Heinrich an orphan at the tender age of ten years. Under this unfortunate circumstance, “he was a Dienstknecht or just short of being a slave on a large farm. His family and descendants had no future on the Island. They were the first ones to leave for a better life in North America.” (John Kostick)

From my early correspondence with Uncle Eric, I learned that grandfather’s brothers, Jake and John and sister Kate came to America-first to the German settlement in Iowa. Aunt Doris thought that grandfather Ernest was about 19 years old when he came to America so that would be about 1896. Grandfather’s mother Christine Schultz died in 1895 in Fehmarn.

At this point in my research I asked myself these questions: Should I wait to look into all this when I have a lull in Grandmother’s history? Did the father Heinrich come to America with his children as no death is recorded for him in records from Fehmarn? On what ship did the Schwartz children come to America? Is there a manifest listing the family members? Did they come through Ellis Island? What became of the children after they came to America?

This is what I have come to know to date. I have a picture of Jake and John at grandpa’s farm in Alsask, Saskatchewan. Kate died in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Now back to great grandmother Sophia Matilda (Mercer) Weyman and her story. These are the rewards of genealogy searching. As one mystery is solved (Sophia), another unfolds and presents itself with all its questions and very few answers. About the same time that I found Barb, I was renewing my acquaintance with Scott Weyman of Florida; a ggg grandson of Charles Wesley Weyman of Lower Millstream, Kings Co., N.B. Charles was a brother to my ggg grandfather, Robert Colpitts Weyman. Both were sons of Rev. Edward Weyman, Baptist Minister. Several years ago, Scott and I had communicated but had lost touch with each other. Neither of us had made any progress in tracing our Weyman ancestors from New Brunswick back to the USA. Our search got more intense and I asked Scott if he had any objections to my asking Barb if she would be willing to help us as she lives in the immediate area where our young Henry Weyman emigrated with his widowed mother, Patience Chapman about 1874.

We found that Henry Weyman, a Baptist minister, married Elizabeth Foster of Millstream in 1799, and had one son, Edward in 1801. Henry died in 1807 at the young age of 33 years. We believe he is resting in the Old Fenwick Cemetery in Millstream but have no proof. In 1811 Elizabeth remarried

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Robert McLeod of Lower Millstream and had a second family of five children. Another mystery! We know Henry's mother, but not his father. Was he killed in the Revolutionary War? Who was he?

The mystery of Henry Weyman is ongoing. We have a very active circle searching our Henry and as Scott says they (our ancestors) want to be found, we just have to find that missing clue they left us. We have not been able to find Henry and his mother on any ship manifests for the Loyalists. We cannot find a burial site for Henry. We cannot prove Henry's parentage but have several strong possibilities – we just need the proof! I have recently searched the Muster Rolls of the New Jersey Volunteers of the American Revolution and found where a Henry and an Edward Weyman were both in the same battalion. Henry was killed while in active service in that battalion. But is he our Henry's father and the husband of our widowed Patience?

We have several other scenarios that we are exploring. Scott has been searching in the USA and has several contacts that have produced some interesting facts that when we prove our Henry's ancestry we may be able to add to our history.

We have added another distant cousin to our circle. Linda Grunder in Ottawa is a direct descendant of Rachel Weyman who is a sister to our Robert and Charles Weyman. Now we have three children of Edward Weyman accounted for. We have found where Patience had remarried a David Bloomfield and had a second family. We have also found three girls that are near our Henry's age and who could be siblings of our Henry. Barb has access to many resources and is either related to or knows people that have an interest in our Henry. She has tromped through every cemetery she can find and has taken photos of many headstones of "family". Almost weekly she came up with a new lead, be it a newspaper article, a family history, pictures, or new contacts. We are very optimistic and we will find our Henry even though he is giving us quite a difficult task.

Family connections: A bit of history on the lineages in my family tree.

Heinrich Stief (Henry Steeves)

Heinrich and Regina Stief left their homeland of Munsingen, Germany in 1749 with their two infant children. Both of these children died on the trip to America. They settled in Germantown, Pennsylvania. From there they migrated in 1766 with their three young sons and with a small group of settlers to the Petitcodiac River area of New Brunswick. Four more sons were born to Heinrich and Regina in N.B. In the first few years they were faced with starvation, frigid winters and abandonment by their sponsors, among them Benjamin Franklin. The settlers defied the odds by not only surviving, but also prospering. Steeves descendents now number upwards of 150,000 worldwide. Our ancestor, Christian Steeves, son of Heinrich, married Rosanna Trites, daughter of Jacob Treitz, who was one of the original five families to come to New Brunswick from Philadelphia.

A note of interest-Les Bowser has published a fascinating read entitled "The Search for Heinrich Stief" ISBN 1-55109-375-8. This book traces his and my family's roots from their pioneer settling of South Eastern New Brunswick to Philadelphia and finally back to the Steif ancestry's origination in Munsinger, Germany.

Esther Clark Wright has written the book "Sapphire Greens" which is a story of the Steeves. This book has recently been reprinted and is now available and can be obtained from the Steeves Family Inc. Box 3055, Hillsborough, N.B. E4H 4W5

Jacob Treitz

Jacob and his wife Elisina also were from Germantown and part of the original five families in the

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group that migrated in 1766 from Philadelphia. He settled on land that became the city of Moncton and later he would be called "The father of Moncton". At this time, I have not researched the Treitz ancestry but I understand that it is also quite a dynasty.

Robert Colpitts

Robert Colpitts was born in England in 1745, had been a captain of militia, and about 1775 visited Canada in what had been reported as being a trip to scout the Bay of Fundy, N.B.

At that time he had made a small clearing and built a cabin in the Moncton area. He returned to England to settle his affairs and then made ready to bring his family to Canada. The American Revolutionary War broke out and he had to wait 7 years before he could make the journey. His wife, Margaret Wade, was the daughter of wealthy people, but she was cut off from the family because she chose to come to Canada with her husband and seven children. When Robert returned to Canada in 1783, he discovered that the property he had improved some seven years prior had been taken over by other settlers; thus, he and his family pushed on to the Little River where they made their settlement. Ironically the settlers to take over his property were the Steeves. In 1961, Esther Clark Wright wrote, "A century and three quarters has not wholly eradicated the feeling of bitterness against the land-grabbing Steeves."

Their second eldest son Robert married Rachel Steeves of Hillsboro. They settled on Dickie Mountain near Bloomfield Station, N.B. and raised their 13 children, four boys and nine girls. At age 66, Robert became an ordained minister of the Free Christian Baptist Church. One of Robert and Rachel's daughters, Mary, born in 1802 married Edward Weyman. It is not surprising that there are many Colpitts descendants, as in the third generation there were already more than 100. Colpitts reunions that have been held regularly since 1900 at the homestead at Little River.

Henry Weyman

Henry Weyman was born about 1774 in New Jersey. At this time we have not proven his father, but his mother was Patience Chapman. Henry and his mother came to the Millstream, Kings Co., N.B. with the United Empire Loyalists. Henry married Elizabeth Foster of Millstream and had one son, Edward. Unfortunately, Henry died a young man of 33 years and to date has not left us proof of his parentage. His son, Edward, born June 9th, 1800, married Mary Colpitts of Midland, and had eight children, five sons and three daughters and died in 1882. He was ordained at the Free Christian Baptist Church in Millstream, N.B. in 1833. This past winter has brought so much to this little church. Scott Weyman donated to have the original tin ceiling of the church restored. Barb, Linda and I have contributed to having the pictures of the early ministers, including Edward, reframed. A Church Service in April of that year was dedicated to Edward Weyman and his family, as well as the other early Baptist ministers who served in the Millstream Baptist church.

Joseph Mercer

Joseph Mercer was the grandson of John Mercer who was born in Norfolk County, Virginia, USA about 1685. My information on the Mercers has been centered on Joseph Mercer and Sarah Shaw and their descendants, but from what I presently know, the Mercers have been in America between 300-400 years so one would have to consider this family amongst the earliest settlers in America.

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When Joseph had to flee for his life during the American Revolutionary War, he left a wife and family behind in North Carolina. He fled to New York and while there he married Sarah Shaw. The arrival of the United Empire Loyalists in the Spring Fleet of 1783 brought Captain Joseph, his wife Sarah, along with two children, Joshua and Lot, to a new life in New Brunswick. Their ship, the Sovereign, continued up the St. John River to Burton area with 16 other families who were to settle there. After two years, Joseph and his family came to Saint John to re-petition for a new land grant and received one in the South Bay area. Five more children were born between 1783 and 1790. Captain Joseph Mercer died in 1797 leaving Sarah with a young family. It is not known whether he is buried in Old Cedar Hill or the Old Loyalist Burial Ground. Later two of his sons, Joseph Jr. and Lot Sr., received land grants in the Norton-Bloomfield area, while Elizabeth, Joshua, Hannah, William, and John remained in Saint John.

Joseph Jr. Mercer married Frances Baxter in 1804, a granddaughter of pre-Loyalist Simon Baxter. They had fifteen children, one of whom was William, born 23 December 1814, the father of my great grandmother, Sophia Matilda (Mercer) Weyman. William married Margaret Asbell of Norton in 1850 and together they had twelve children of which Sophia Matilda was the eldest. William moved his family from New Brunswick to Paris, Ontario about 1877. However, his daughter, Sophia, was already married to Robert Colpitts Weyman and living in Moncton or Saint John at the time and did not go with the family to Ontario.

My Ancestry!

Our family can honestly say we are descendants from the pioneers of this country. South Eastern New Brunswick holds so much history for this huge ancestry. Freedom, land, and a hope of a better life seem to be what our ancestors were all about. Be it Henrich Steif who came to America from Germany in 1749 to start a new life with hopes of becoming a landowner and raising his family in freedom. Be it Robert Colpitts who was of means and well established in England, but had the pioneering instinct and wanted to start a new life in America for himself and his family. Be it Joseph Mercer who was true to England and had to flee for his life from his home in North Carolina to start anew in Canada.

When further study of our lineage is completed, I am sure the Treitz, Foster and Weyman families will all have similar stories to tell.

Thanks to Scott, I have copies of several letters written by Edward Weyman, and his wife Mary, providing details of the life of a Baptist minister in the early 1800's. Aunt Doris provided family information as well as sending me pictures of Grandpa Schwartz and his parents. These pictures are so much appreciated and a joy to share with family. They bring Grandpa's family to life.

When Mom, Margaret, was so sick with cancer, she had told me the story of her wedding band. She fondled her ring and said this ring was truly hers. It was a new gold band that father had bought her after her original one had worn out. She told me that her original ring had been intended for dad's girlfriend in Norway, who had fallen through the ice and drowned just a short time before they were to be married. This was the circumstance that made him leave all his family in Norway and brought him to Canada on the Stavangerfjord arriving in Halifax, Nova Scotia on April 21, 1928.

Aunt Doris revealed more of the story of my grandmother, Juanita's disappearance that awful day in 1924. She told me that Grandpa, grandmother, mom, and her sister went by vehicle to B.C. and then by ferry to the Island. It was on this trip over to Vancouver Island that grandmother went missing. Grandpa was frantic and a search was done of the ship and when there was no trace of her

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and mom's sister, Christine, the ship turned around and went back several miles. No trace of them was ever found. No one saw or knew exactly what had happened.

When they were travelling west, the boys, Ernie, age 14 and Eric, about 11, went by train with the furniture and possessions. Ernie had money from his parents for eating on the way but he was afraid to get off the train to eat for fear that the train would leave without them. Consequently, they had little to eat and were very hungry. A cook on the ferry to the Island was making donuts and took the boys under her wing and filled them up with donuts. Eric forgot his hunger and how good the donuts tasted. The family stayed in B.C. on the Island for about two years, then they left and went to the Peace River country. It was wintertime and Grandpa and Ernie went to work in a sawmill where they had to stay at the camp, and Margaret (my mother), Eric and Carl stayed in a small log house by themselves. My mother would have been about 15 at the time. They were left alone to fend for themselves. Grandpa Ernest would send money to mother for food and necessities. Eric said that mother did not know how to make bread but she was able to make tea biscuits. They heated the cabin with wood. Mother looked after her two younger brothers, and when Eric would go off to school, mother would give him a list of the things (groceries) he was to get from the General Store. It was a very difficult time for the family-especially for my mother, Margaret. They didn't stay in the Peace River country too long. Aunt Doris was not sure if they spent one or two years there. Then they headed back to Alsask. Grandpa then corresponded through the paper for his second wife, Laura Maude. She came from Nova Scotia. Eric had a picture of her that had the inscription on the back that said, "Do you think that you could love me?" I guess you would say that she was a "mail order bride" She had a daughter, Lottie. Lottie came west before her mother and worked as a housekeeper. She also had answered a newspaper advertisement, but for a housekeeper.

Grandpa married a second time to Laura Maude and he called her Honey. She was known to everyone as Honey. Honey insisted that mother go back to school to get the education that she had been deprived of. Mom had a horse and buggy to travel back and forth from the farm to school in Alsask. Aunt Doris said that Grandpa was very happy with Honey and that she was very well liked. Grandpa had a threshing machine and hired out to the farmers at threshing time.

This was the dirty thirties on the prairies and when they were no longer able to farm, Grandpa packed up his family and their belongings and animals (cattle) and came by train to the Rainy River District. Uncle Eric said that when the cattle arrived and had all that grass to eat, they could hardly handle the cattle as they had been deprived for so long. Grandpa first had a farm outside of Emo and then later moved to a farm on the river in Roddick Township. He sold milk, butter, cream, and eggs throughout the district. Honey had a heart attack while in town delivering farm products. Grandpa took her to the hospital but she died that night. He later met his third wife, Mrs. Nordman while delivering farm products in town. She was recovering from a stroke and only lived for about two years after being married. Life was full of hardships!

Aunt Doris told me that my great grandparents, Robert Colpitts and Sophia Matilda (Mercer) Weyman are resting in the cemetery at Alsask, Saskatchewan. I have yet to find what happened to my grandmother's sister, Joicy and brother Robert. Then there are grandmother's sisters who remained in Saint John, N.B. In Kings County, N.B. there are many Mercer cousins as great grandfather William had fourteen brothers and sisters. In Galt, Ontario, there are many cousins to search out.

My family history is a work-in-progress and I have put together the start of my family photo album that will be a part of my family tree book. I hope to add pages for each of our families to this album.

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My journey to find my family history began with the discovery of a tiny “Portrait of a Lady in a Locket”. A query placed in Ruby Cusack’s Genealogy column has brought me a whole new family.

Flo Langtry ♣