

JOHN LEWELLING

LEW  
FAM

John Lewelling was born in Randolph County, North Carolina, on 16 Jan 1811. He was married in May 1832 to Miss Elvy Elliott, who was born near Richmond, Indiana, on 11 Oct 1815.

John had a severe attack of erysipelas, and one leg was so seriously afflicted as to lose pieces of the bone. But he recovered, and came across the plains to California, arriving at Hangtown (now called Placerville) on 7 July 1850. John immediately began mining, and continued his mining for several years.

Then in 1855, he went to San Lorenzo and planted a large orchard. The next year, he moved his family there. John was a member of the Alameda County Board of Supervisors for several terms.

The family lived in San Lorenzo until 1864, when, on account of John's poor health, he moved to Napa County and established his home near St. Helena. John was engaged in extensive enterprises, and by 1883 was president of the Grangers' Bank of California.

In December of 1883, John fell seriously ill with erysipelas again and his leg became badly swollen. On 26 Dec 1883, he died of erysipelas and dropsy combined. Surviving him were his two sons, Eli, who was still living on the old family farm in San Lorenzo, and Harvey J., who was living at St. Helena. John's body was taken to Vineland Station, and escorted by pall bearers to San Lorenzo, where the funeral services were held.

[NAPA COUNTY REPORTER, 21 Dec 1883, page 3, column 1; and 28 Dec 1883, page column 4]

---This column researched and reported by Ida DeMay Wilson---

If you are actually looking at the census records, and can't find your people, begin to play around, visually, with the capital letters, especially if the census taker liked to use initials rather than full names. The "W" and the "H" often look very much alike, as do the "L" and "S". If you are having difficulty reading something, look up and down at other names to see if you can match the letter you are trying to figure out. The "I" and "J" are occasionally impossible to tell apart, by the way, because some census takers did not bring the "J" down below the line; thus these two capital letters would end up exactly alike. Also, watch out for the similarity between the "F" and "T".

If you think you have found the family you are looking for, but your particular ancestor isn't listed with the family, make sure that your ancestor wasn't listed under their middle name. If a boy was named Frank Thomas Johnson, he could have appeared on the census as Frank Johnson, as Frank T. Johnson, as Thomas Johnson, or as Thomas Frank Johnson.

This particular problem points up the absolute necessity of always writing down the full name of each of your ancestors; for all you know, the names could have gotten switched around, either by accident, or by design.

For that matter, a last name can get indexed as the first name, and vice versa. So you should check under the first name in an index if you can't find the person you are after. And if that doesn't work, break down the surname you are working on into syllables and try that way, especially if you are looking for a long surname - maybe the census taker didn't hear part of the name - or maybe the family "swallowed" it!

Any way you look at it, there are all kinds of tricks you can use to find that ancestor who was "temporarily misplaced" - good luck!

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