

Mystery of Caroline Solved!

The substantial and distinguished marble monument surrounded by a lovely cast iron fence in the Old Auburn Cemetery bearing the name "CAROLINE" has been a mystery for years. The entire inscription reads:

This stone is placed by Col. Clayton Hale US Army in memory of his faithful servant and devoted
friend
CAROLINE
who died at Auburn
December 21, 1889

Col. Hale was the brother of Judge James Ellery Hale, a 49er, who lived in Auburn.

Auburnites have been speculating for years about the mystery, some espousing the idea that "CAROLINE" wasn't even a human but a beloved pet or favorite horse!

Several years ago a newspaper account suggested that she was Caroline Hall from Ft. Riley, Kansas where Col. Hale was posted. This account was based on the 1880 census and was quite a leap and soon dismissed by most because Caroline Hall, a mulatto servant, is not even in the household of Col. and Abba Hale (they have their own two servants) but instead she is living in the household of Brevet Major Galusha Pennypacker, the commander of the fort and though listed on the same page she is clearly the servant of the Major.

About two years ago, John Knox and I set about trying to solve the mystery and spent quite a bit of time researching our Archives records, we looked at death records, cemetery records, monument maker's records and newspapers from 1889. After several weeks we gave up the search coming to no satisfactory conclusion.

Mysteries are so often solved in a totally unexpected manner and this one is certainly an example. I was looking through the 1890 edition of the Placer Herald for an obituary for an entirely different project and as often happens when reading through the old papers, the eye wonders and you find yourself reading articles that aren't relevant to your search but interesting nonetheless. In a "Eureka" moment, there it was, the article we had been searching for for such a long time.

Faithful Service Remembered

Last December while Col. Clayton Hale, of Boston, was here on a visit to his brother, Judge J. E. Hale, his colored servant, Hannah Hall, who had been with him many years, was taken sick and died. She was buried here in Odd Fellows cemetery. Recently a handsome granite monument was placed over her grave at the instance of the Colonel, who was here last week to receive the work. He departed for his Eastern home again last Wednesday.

*Placer Herald
26 April 1890*

The dates fit, Col. Hale fit, the cemetery fit, all that differed was the name, Hannah Hall. So now the search was really on! We went back through all the places we had searched before but this time there was new information for Col. Hale at Ancestry.com. Someone had added Wills and Probate files from Iowa to his record. Searching that was the piece that finally put the puzzle together. In listing the property he owned, Col. Hale noted:

The northwest quarter of lot no. 195 in Odd Fellows Cemetery at Auburn, Placer County in the State of California, in which is buried the remains of my faithful and dearly loved servant - Caroline-

So the newspaper got her name wrong, and we should always remember that newspapers are secondary sources not primary ones, but if her last name was indeed Hall, then she was most likely the Caroline Hall listed in the 1880 census at Fort Riley when Col. Hale was posted there.

From the census we find that Caroline Hall was in the household of Col Galusha Pennypacker and that she was listed as a mulatto women aged 40 who could read and write. Her occupation was "keeping house." She was born in Mississippi, as was her father, while her mother was born in South Carolina.

1880 Census

But still WHO was Caroline really? How did she come to play such a significant part in Col. Hale's life that he would not only order a lovely tombstone but make the trip from Boston to see it placed at her gravesite? Unfortunately, we found no additional information about Caroline and can only speculate on her relationship to Col. Hale and his devotedness to her.

The two men she is associated with, Pennypacker and Hale are quite interesting men.

Galusha Pennypacker was raised by his Quaker grandmother after the death of his mother when he was 3 or 4 years old and his father's departure for the California Gold Rush, from which he never returned.

Pennypacker Memorial Commission at archive.org & Wikipedia

Galusha joined the Union army at the age of 16 or perhaps 17 and led an extremely distinguished career. His bravery at the battle for Fort Fisher resulted in a Medal of Honor for him after he stormed the Fort's defenses and planted his regiment's colors. He has been called the "Hero of Fort Fisher."

Confederate Goliath: The Battle of Fort Fisher, R. Gragg, googlebooks.com & mainlinetoday.com

Pennypacker received numerous wounds from his war service but continued serving in the peacetime army during Reconstruction and on the frontier. He was the commander of Fort Riley Kansas where he is found in the 1880 census with Caroline Hall, (M) age 40, Sarah Ann Reed (B) age 30, no occupation listed, Henry Hinton age 29, (W) hostler and Edward Slaughter age 44, (w) orderly.

1880 Census & Wikipedia.com

Pennypacker was one of the youngest men to be appointed General in U. S. Military history. (Many historians claim he was in fact the youngest) He died of complications from his war wounds and pneumonia on October 1, 1916. Some years after his death, in 1934, a quite

substantial 15-foot-high bronze monument costing over \$40,000, was erected in Philadelphia in his honor by his family and the state of Pennsylvania.

Pennypacker Memorial Commission Booklet at archive.org

Colonel Clayton Hale was also a Civil War veteran having enlisted in 1861. During the war he served with the 59th Illinois Volunteer Regiment. His regiment was engaged in the campaigns for Atlanta and Chattanooga. During the Tennessee engagement, when he was a captain, his horse was shot from under him while in advance of his regiment.

History of the 59th Regiment of Illinois Volunteers @googlebooks.com & civilwardata.com

Hale stayed in the Army and was posted in the West during “the Indian Wars.” He was at Fort Riley in 1880 along with Col. Pennypacker. Listed in that census are Clayton Hale 48 years old, his wife Abba Weld, 49 years old, and two servants, Mary Burns (W) 32 and William Rofo (W) 23 years old.

1880 census

Col. Hale retired in 1890 the year after burying Caroline. He lived in Boston in 1892 and in 1893 married his second wife Kate S. Foster *Duff, Murphy, Baumwort* Hale. By 1894 they were living in Des Moines, Iowa where in 1894, Clayton filed the will noted above. Clayton died in 1896 and was buried in Mt. Hope Cemetery in Boston next to his first wife Abba.

Blue Book 1892 & census reports, & Des Moines Daily News 20-Jan. 1896

April McDonald-Loomis

Additional Research by John Knox

September 2016

Some interesting items found along the way

Abba Weld Gilbreath (Gilbreth), Col. Hale’s first wife was the sister of John Hiram Gilbreath the father of Frank Gilbreath whose wife Lillian wrote *Cheaper By The Dozen* based on their work and family lives.

Abba’s sister, Olivia Gilbreath (Gilbreth) Flynt (Flint), became famous for designing and patenting “hygienic women’s under garments,” some have called her the inventor of the modern bra.

