

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF OUR ANCESTORS ...

WESTWARD, HO — A FAMILY'S MOVEMENT IN SEARCH OF LAND, WEALTH, AND A PLACE IN THE AMERICAN DREAM

**Isaac Hershey
(c. 1745 – 1814) &
Barbara Stauffer
(1756 – 1845) /
Martin Rohrer
(1751 – 1806) &
Christiana Myer
(bef. 1755 – 1816) /
David Hershey
(1786 – 1860) &
Christiana Rohrer
(1787 – 1857) /
David Hershey
(1797 – 1859) &
Mary Magdalene
Hershey (1805 – 1852) /
Ezra David Hershey
(1827 – 1906) &
Amanda Guthridge
(1833 – 1921) /
Walter Ritchie Hershey
(1862 – 1935) &
Fannie Emma Cage
(1862 – 1914)**

— Bradley Rymph

The American historical story is a story of evolution — cultural evolution, religious evolution, geographic evolution, family evolution. Our ancestral story on the North America continent is no different. Initial immigrants crossed the Atlantic to preserve their specific family's cultural and religious traditions, beliefs, and ways of life, frequently against persecution and the threat of death. Then, as generations went by, families lived next to and intermarried with descendants of other immigrants who themselves had come to America to preserve their own heritages. As the family branches expanded with each generation, so did the need for new homes, more land, and new attempts at profession and wealth. As each generation passed, cultural and religious identities which had once seemed firm and immovable gave way

VISITS TO HERSHEY DESCENDANT SITES:

"Antietam Hall," Washington County, Maryland: October 21, 2012

"Eye Trap," Washington County, Maryland: June 24, 2012 (with José Baquiran)

Hershey Family Cemetery, Comus, Maryland:

October 10, 2010 (with Albert James Rymph and Edna Mae Rymph)

Eden Cemetery, Milton, Kansas: June 15, 2013 (with José Baquiran, Albert James Rymph, Edna Mae Rymph, and Karen Rymph Smarsh)

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Bradley B. Rymph.

to the ever-changing realities of life in the United States.

Perhaps no branch of our family heritage illustrates this evolution more than does the Hershey branch of our ancestors.

As described in the profile “Mennonite and Huguenot Immigrants to Lancaster County, Pennsylvania” (in the section, “Early American Immigrants: Mid-Atlantic Roots”), the immigrant Andrew Hershey (1702–1792), with his brother Benjamin, came to America from Switzerland, via Germany, as part of a wave of devout Mennonites determined to live in a manner consistent with their strict religious values of pacifist and “simple” living. The Hershey brothers settled with others of their faith in what later became Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. They toiled hard as farmers and also served as Mennonite ministers. Andrew married Mary Catherine Schnabley (1703–1759), the daughter of another Mennonite immigrant couple in Lancaster County.

Within just one generation, the evolution into American identity and culture had begun. Two of Andrew and Mary Catherine’s sons — John (1741–1811) and Isaac (c. 1745–1814) — moved a few miles south, across the Pennsylvania-Maryland line into

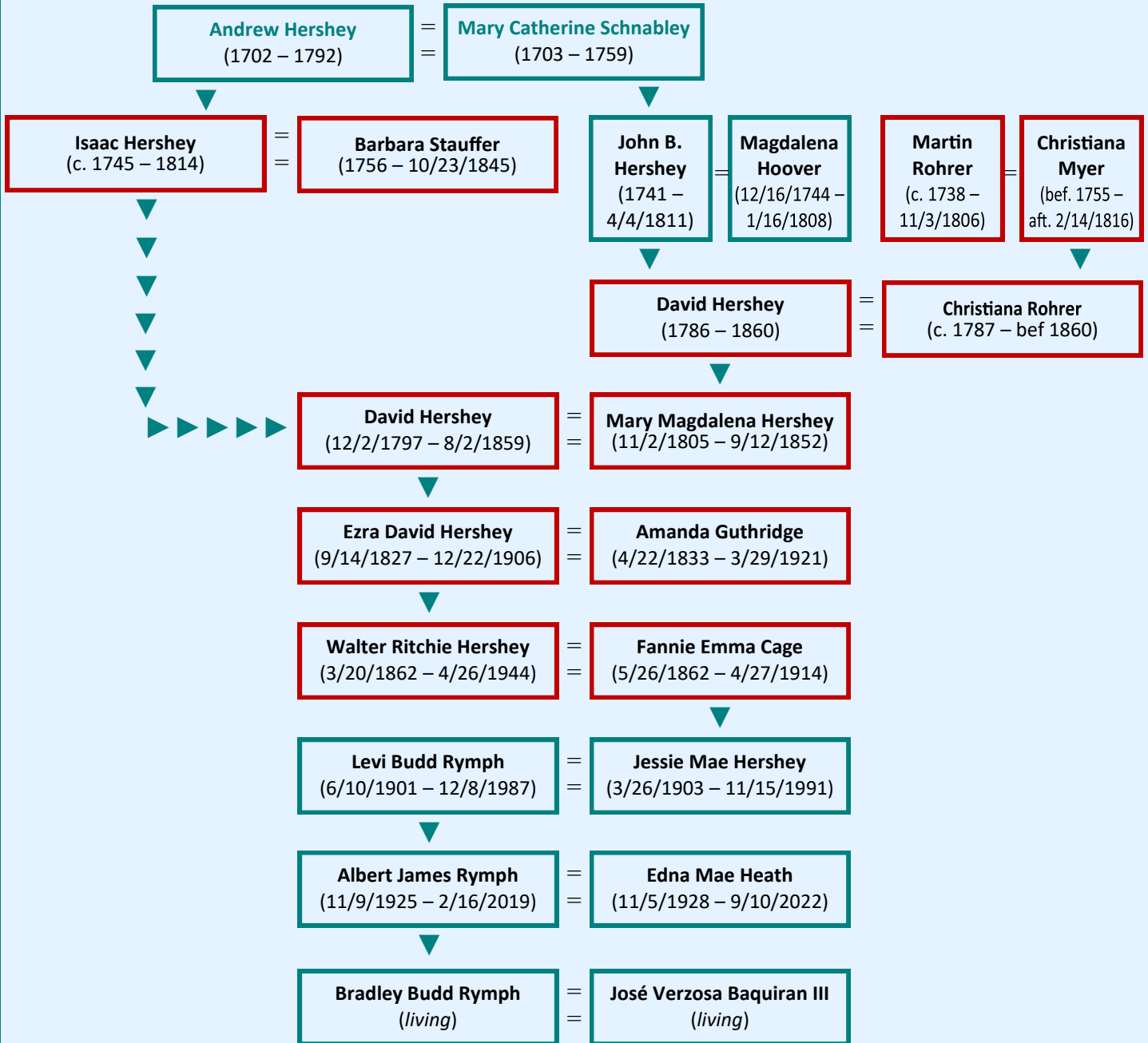
Washington County in western Maryland. John became involved in the religious “Great Awakening” that swept through much of United States around the Revolutionary era. He left the Mennonite faith, which had been core to his parents’ religious and cultural identity, and became one of the founding clergy in the first religious denomination birthed on American soil. His story is described in the profile “Devout ‘Founding Father’ of the United Brethren in Christ” (in the section, “Servants of God”).

In addition to these two Hershey brothers, several families sharing the name Rohrer also immigrated to the Mid-Atlantic region in the 1700s, settling in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, and Washington County, Maryland. The Rohrer family lines are quite complicated, and genealogists do not always agree on who descended from whom. One of these 2nd-generation-in-America Rohrers whose parentage is subject to disagreement was a Martin Rohrer (c. 1738–1806), whose daughter married the son of John Hershey and whose granddaughter married the son of Isaac Hershey.

From southeastern Pennsylvania to northwestern Maryland, to Missouri, to Kansas, John and Isaac Hershey, Martin Rohrer, and their descendants help tell the story of the American movement

HOW WE'RE RELATED

Isaac Hershey and his wife Christiana Rohrer, and David Hershey (1786–1860) and his wife Christiana Rohrer, were my great-great-great-great-grandparents through my father, Albert James Rymph. Martin Rohrer and his wife Christiana Myer were my great-great-great-great-grandparents.



westward in the hope of improved opportunities and lives.

ISAAC HERSHEY and BARBARA STAUFFER

In or around 1776, **Isaac Hershey** and **Barbara Stauffer** married in Lancaster



*"Eye Trap,"
residence of
Isaac Hershey.
Constructed in the
late 1700s.*

County, Pennsylvania. In 1794, he purchased 560 acres of land between what are now the towns of Hagerstown and Boonsboro in Washington County, Maryland. The purchase price for the land, known as "Eye Trap," was £3,000.

"Eye Trap" included a large fieldstone house that survives today. Nomination papers written in 1975 for placing Eye Trap on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) noted that the house was on its original site, in "excellent" condition, and less than 50% altered from its original state.* The nomination

paper noted the historic significance of the property:

This house is significant for its architecture and for its association with prominent early families in Washington County.

The structure is possibly one of the oldest dwellings extant in the Manor Church road vicinity. Constructed of stone in the four bay off center front

* Eye Trap's nomination to be on the NRHP was apparently unsuccessful as it does not appear on the Register's list of sites in Washington County. Eye Trap is listed on the Maryland Historical Trust's Inventory of Historic Properties.

*Obituary of Barbara
Hershey in the Hagerstown,
Maryland, Herald of Freedom,
October 29, 1845.*

DIED,
At his residence in Chambersburg, on the 19th inst., Mr. John Henneberger, a Soldier of the Revolution, in the 91st year of his age.
On Thursday the 23d inst., at the residence of her son-in-law, Mr. John Hershey, in this place, Mrs. Barbara Hershey, consort of the late Isaac Hershey, near the close of her 89th year.

door plan, this house is representative of a major architectural group in the Cumberland Valley and Western Maryland. This type of structure appears most frequently in areas where Pennsylvania German influence was strong.... The 1792 date inscribed in the cellar could be the year that the house was built. The appearance of the house suggests a date between 1780 and 1800.

In his will dated June 6, 1811, Isaac Hershey splits the bequest of his land and dwellings between his sons Isaac and David, stating:

I give and bequeath unto my sons, David and Isaac ... the rest and residue of my afore said plantation containing about 292 acres to be divided between them.... David to have the part with the old buildings which I appraise at £12 per acre.... It is to be understood that the stone house and barn on the place divided to my son David shall be appraised....

Isaac Hershey died in 1814. His wife Barbara died on October 21, 1845. They were both buried in a small family cemetery southwest of the primary house at "Eye Trap." The cemetery existed until the late 1900s, when the property's then-owner sold the land on

which the cemetery stood as a subdivision and the headstones were removed.

MARTIN ROHRER and CHRISTIANA MYER

As is noted above, the history of Rohrer immigration in the early 1700s into southeastern Pennsylvania from Germany and German-speaking areas of France and Switzerland is fairly confusing, and family genealogists disagree on how or even whether different family lines with the Rohrer name link to each other. For example, at least three separate lines of Americans are descended from immigrants who went by the name of "John" Rohrer. Similarly, multiple Rohrer lines expanded from southeastern Pennsylvania in the mid- to late 1700s into what became Washington County in northwestern Maryland. And at least two of those lines included a **Martin Rohrer** who lived in the late 1700s and early 1800s in the area that became the town of Hagerstown, Maryland — and who became major property holders there.

One of these two Martin Rohrers was the father of the Christiana Rohrer who married David Hershey (1786–1860, son of the Rev. John and Magdalena Hoover Hershey) and moved east with him to set up a farm in Montgomery County, Maryland (see below). One primary

genealogist of Mid-Atlantic Mennonite-immigrant genealogy, Richard W. Davis, persuasively argues Christiana Rohrer's father was the Martin Rohrer who would have been born c. 1738 in Germany and arrived in Philadelphia in 1747.

At some point, this Martin Rohrer and his wife **Christiana Myer** moved to the area that became Hagerstown. In 1769, Martin bought 100 acres of land along Antietam Creek, east of Hagerstown. This land was part of a parcel known as "George's Lot." Over time, he bought several adjoining parcels, as well as other land in the Hagerstown area.

In 1776, Martin Rohrer (like several other Mennonites, including other Rohrers) was fined for his refusal to bear arms in support of the American Revolution.

Probably during Martin's ownership of George's Lot (and certainly before 1800), a two-story, six-bay brick dwelling was erected. At some point, a smaller, one-story house was also built nearby; this small house may actually have been the original dwelling on the property.

Together, these two houses and the land around them became known as Antietam Hall, after the creek that ran nearby. Patricia Schooley notes, in her chapter on Antietam Hall in *Architectural & Historic Treasures of Washington County, Maryland*, "Since brick was an expensive building material in the 18th century, Rohrer must have been a wealthy man."

Martin Rohrer lived in these houses (presumably in the larger dwelling) until his death in 1806, and his widow Christiana continued living there after



"Antietam Hall,"
residence of
Martin Rohrer.
Built c. 1780

his death. In 1807, 500 acres of Martin's land, including Antietam Hall, passed to his son-in-law Christian Newcomer. *

Antietam Hall was nominated in July 1977 by a Maryland State Historic Preservation Officer for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places. It was formally placed on the NRHP on September 24, 1979.

DAVID HERSHEY (1786–1860) and CHRISTIANA ROHRER

The Rev. John and Magdalena (Hoover) Hershey had six sons and five daughters. **David Hershey** was the youngest child. Like his older siblings, he was born in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. He was approximately 10 years old when his parents moved their family south to Washington County, Maryland. One April 24, 1804 (at 17 or 18 years old), he married **Christiana Rohrer**.

In about 1828, David Hershey moved his family eastward to Montgomery County, Maryland, to a farm near a small village that eventually was named Comus. He purchased four lots (531½

acres) of a tract of land called "Wilson's Inheritance," plus another 50 acres in a tract called "Sapling Ridge." In the mid-1800s, David Hershey built a farm house and established a small family cemetery on a hilltop about ¼-mile east of the house.

Like David's parents, David and Christiana were devoutly religious. However, when they moved to Montgomery County, there was no United Brethren in Christ congregation anywhere nearby. They became active in the small Mountain Church (a Methodist Episcopal congregation) located a few miles north of their farm. Both David and Christiana remained active in this parish for the remainder of their lives, and raised their children in the congregation.

Christiana Hershey died on August 28, 1857, at the age of 69, and was buried in the family cemetery on their farm. David died a few years later, on March 11, 1860, at age 77, and was also buried in the family cemetery. The author of his obituary in a western Maryland newspaper observed:

Of the state of his mind in his last moments, the writer has not been apprised, but his hope was in Him who has said for the comfort of his people, 'I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.' The writer has heard

* This Christian Newcomer (1765–1832) — married to Martin and Christiana Rohrer's eldest daughter, Ann — was not the Bishop Christian Newcomer (1749–1830) described in the separate profile about John B. Hershey, the father-in-law of Martin's daughter Christiana Rohrer Hershey, my ancestor. However, Martin and Christiana Rohrer's second daughter, Mary, was married to Bishop Christian Newcomer's son, David.



Hershey Farm Family Cemetery, Comus, Maryland, in which David Hershey (1786–1860) and his wife Christiana (Rohrer) Hershey (c. 1787–1857) are buried.



DIED,
In Boonsboro', on Saturday, the 13th inst., Infant Child of Adolphus and Mary Jane Devilbiss.
DAVID HERSHEY, the subject of the following sketch, was a highly respectable member of the Methodist Episcopal church, on Montgomery circuit Baltimore Conference. He was born in the year 1784, near the town of Harrisburg, Pa., of pious parents, who were members of the United Brethren Church. His father was for many years a devoted minister of that Church, both in Pennsylvania and Maryland, into which latter state he removed with his family in 1796, taking up his residence in Washington Co. At what period David was converted and joined the United Brethren Society, is not known, but it probably was in early life. About the year 1828, then a man of family, he removed from Washington county, and settled in Montgomery co., near what is known as the Mountain M. E. Church, a building it is said that was planned by Bishop Asbury. Knowing the great utility of church membership, and having been a member of a society that both taught and enjoyed vital godliness, he, along with his wife, cast in his lot with the Methodist people at the Mountain, there being none of the U. B. Society in Montgomery. They both remained in the M. E. Church, until their departure to the church above. Brother Hershey's death occurred March 11th, 1860, in the 77th year of his age. Of the state of his mind in his last moments, the writer has not been apprised, but his hope was in Him who has said for the comfort of his people, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." The religious emotions of brother Hershey were very tender and strong. The writer has heard him speak of his hope and trust in God with great favor. When able he was a punctual attendant at the house of God. He died, no doubt, as he lived—looking unto Jesus. In all the relations of life brother Hershey was a man worthy of great praise; whether we consider him as a citizen, a neighbor, a friend, a husband, or a parent, he was one in whom confidence could be placed. The wants of the poor ever found a warm response in his generous heart—for he turned none empty away. It was a pleasure to him to render kindness to all, to alleviate human pain, and to increase the aggregate of human joy.
May, 1860.

him speak of his hope and trust in God with great favor. When able he was a punctual attendant at the house of God. He died, no doubt, as he lived — looking unto Jesus. In all the relations of life, brother Hershey was a man worthy of great praise; whether we consider him a citizen, a neighbor, a friend, a husband, or a parent, he was one in whom confidence could be placed. The wants of the poor ever found a warm response in his generous heart — for he turned none empty away. It was a pleasure to him to render kindness to all, to alleviate human pain, and to increase the aggregate of human joy.

Obituary of David Hershey (1786–1860) in the Hagerstown, Maryland, Herald of Freedom and Torch Light, May 23, 1860.

The Hershey family cemetery remains in existence. The farmland on which it stands has been in private ownership outside of the Hershey family for over a century. The most recent tombstone in the cemetery bears a death date of January 31, 1901.

DAVID HERSHEY (1797–1859) and MARY MAGDALENE HERSHEY

David and Christiana (Rohrer) Hershey's child, **Mary Magdalene (or Magdalena) Hershey**, was born November 2, 1805, in Washington County, Maryland.

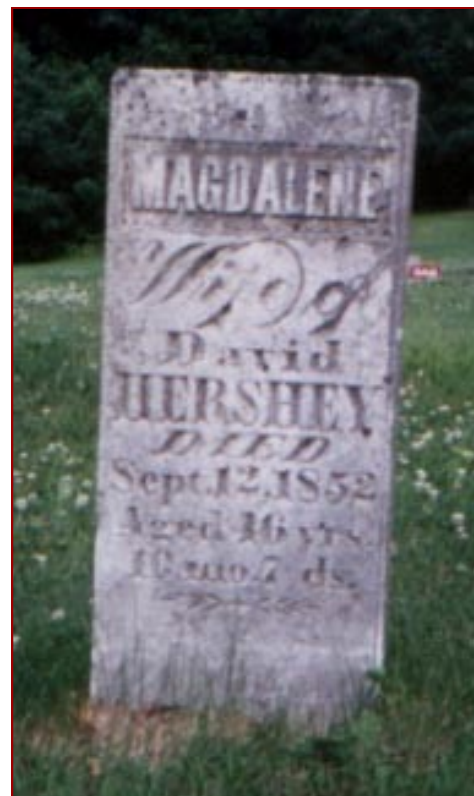
On December 14, 1822, shortly after turning 17, she married her father's cousin, also named **David Hershey**. This second David was the son of Isaac

Hershey, the Rev. John Hershey's younger brother.

The second David Hershey and Mary Magdalene lived in Maryland (probably Washington County) for the first 18 years of their marriage. In 1841, they left Maryland and moved west to Missouri. They first settled there in Howard County, purchasing land about four miles west of Fayette. After four years, David sold their property, and the family moved to Chariton County, Missouri, near the forks of the Chariton River at Prairie Hill. After living on that site for approximately another four years, David bought half of section 31 in Chariton County's Keytesville Township, and the family moved once again.

Mary Magdalene Hershey died on

*Tombstones of David and
Mary Magdalene Hershey,
Mount Pleasant Cemetery,
Keytesville, Missouri*



September 12, 1852, at the age of 46. She was buried in the Mount Pleasant Cemetery near Keytesville. Her husband, David, had given the land for the cemetery to Keytesville as a gift, and Mary Magdalene's grave was the first in the cemetery.

David Hershey died about seven years after his wife, on August 2, 1859, at the age of 61. Like Mary Magdalene, he was buried in the Mount Pleasant Cemetery.

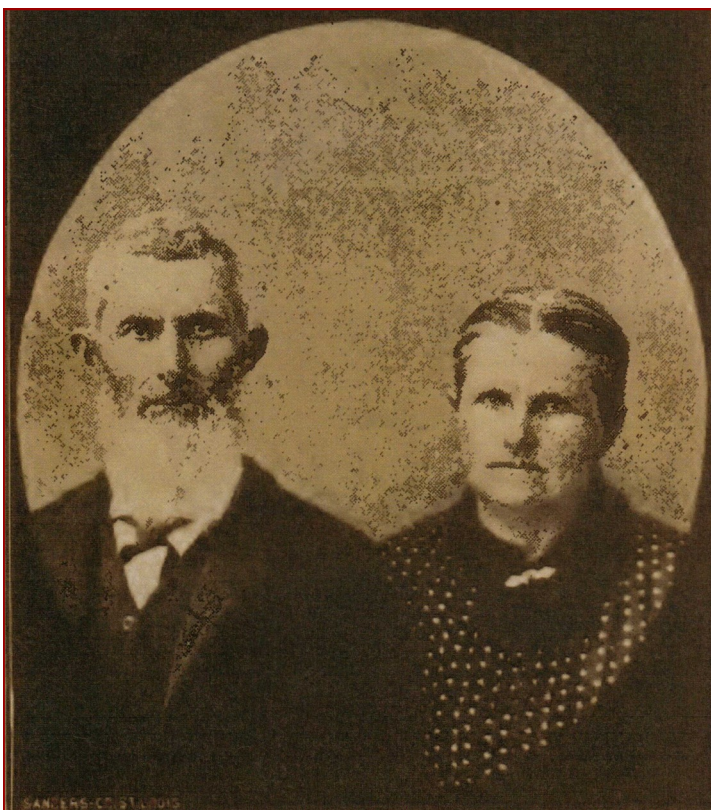
EZRA DAVID HERSHEY and AMANDA GUTHRIDGE

David and Mary Magdalene Hershey had two daughters and four sons. The next-to-youngest, **Ezra David Hershey**, was born September 14, 1827. He would have been approximately 13

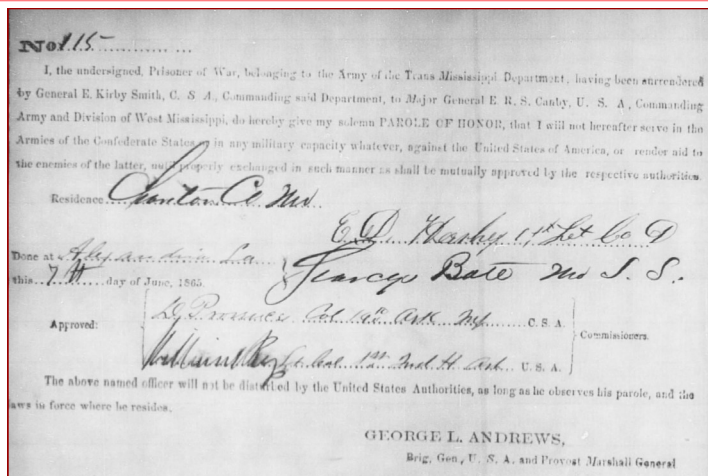
years old when his family migrated from Maryland to Missouri.

This David exhibited a restless wanderlust at a fairly young age. In 1850, he left his parents and went to California, lured by the Gold Rush of 1849. He returned to Keytesville the following year — after becoming ill and apparently enjoying very limited success as a gold miner. Ezra resumed farming with his family.

On February 9, 1854, he married **Amanda Guthridge**, who had been born in Chariton County on April 22, 1833. As my grandfather Levi Budd Rymph wrote in his family genealogy, Ezra “must have been a very adventurous person for in 1859, leaving a wife and several small children, he again followed the lure of



Ezra David and Amanda (Guthridge) Hershey



Parole certificate granting release from prisoner-of-war status to Ezra David Hershey, dated June 7, 1865.

gold and crossed the plains for Pike's Peak. In 1860 he made a second trip to Pike's Peak."

With the arrival of the Civil War, Ezra and his brothers became involve in military service, first on behalf of the Union and then, later, in support of the Confederacy. In July 1862, Missouri's government began establishment of an Enrolled Missouri Militia (EMM), separate from the U.S. military but committed to service on behalf of the Union. All male residents of the state who were fit for military service were expected to enroll in the EMM. As described by historian Mark Lause:

The EMM would be funded by the state and subject to the call of the governor but receive orders from the regular Federal military. Its members would continue to pursue their civilian lives, contributing such service as would be needed,

sometimes for months at a time.

Records in the Missouri State Archives document that Ezra David Hershey enrolled in the EMM's 35th Regiment in Brunswick, Missouri, on October 13, 1862, and was "ordered into active service that same day." His brothers Thomas and Josephus were enrolled and ordered into service in the same regiment one week earlier on October 7, 1862. Only two months later, on December 6, 1862, all three brothers were "relieved from duty."

Why all three brothers were relieved of duty on the same date is not clear. The most common standards for EMM service were six months or one year. Historian Lause may offer a glimpse at one possible explanation with his observation, "At one end of the spectrum, the EMM included men whose Unionism was, at best, conditional. Some members enrolled under protest, promising only to fight guerillas and not Confederate regulars."

Two years later, in 1864, Ezra Hershey enrolled in the Company D of "Searcy's Battalion," part of the Missouri Sharpshooters who served as special armed forces on behalf of the Confederacy. Records of the Arkansas History Commission list, as fellow members of Co. D, three Hersheys who likely were Ezra's brothers — Corp.

Isaiah, Pvt. John, and Pvt. Josephus. In his genealogy, Levi Rymph wrote, "Family tradition relates Ezra's place of enlistment as Pea Ridge, Arkansas. It is believed he participated in one of Price's raids into Kansas, which group had previously engaged in border warfare with John Brown, Quantrill and Lane."

At some point during the war, Ezra Hershey was captured by Union forces and taken as a prisoner of war. After signing a statement that he did "hereby give my solemn PAROLE OF HONOR that I will not hereafter serve in the Armies of the Confederate States, or in any military capacity whatever, against the United States of America, or render aid to the enemies of the latter," Ezra was granted a parole as POW in Alexandria, Louisiana, on June 7, 1865.

He was released to return home to Missouri. Levi Rymph states, "Tradition tells us he was given a horse upon discharge which he rode home."

Thus, within a mere four generations in America, our Hershey ancestors evolved from a devoutly Mennonite family passionately opposed to both war and slavery to a group of brothers who fought as sharpshooters in a war in an attempt to preserve slavery in the United States.

Ezra and Amanda (Guthridge) Hershey had eight children. In 1883, Ezra moved his family to western Kansas, then in 1885 moved everyone further west to Colorado. At some point, however, the family moved back to Keytesville, Missouri, where Ezra and Amanda remained for the rest of their lives. Ezra died on December 22, 1906, and

*Tombstone of Ezra David and
Amanda (Guthridge) Hershey,
Mount Pleasant Cemetery,
Keytesville, Missouri.
Tombstone had toppled over onto
the ground;
in 2012–2013, it was restored
by my uncle and aunt,
Raymond and Diane (DD) Rymph.
Photos by Diane Rymph.*



Amanda died on May 29, 1921. Both were buried in the Mount Pleasant Cemetery.

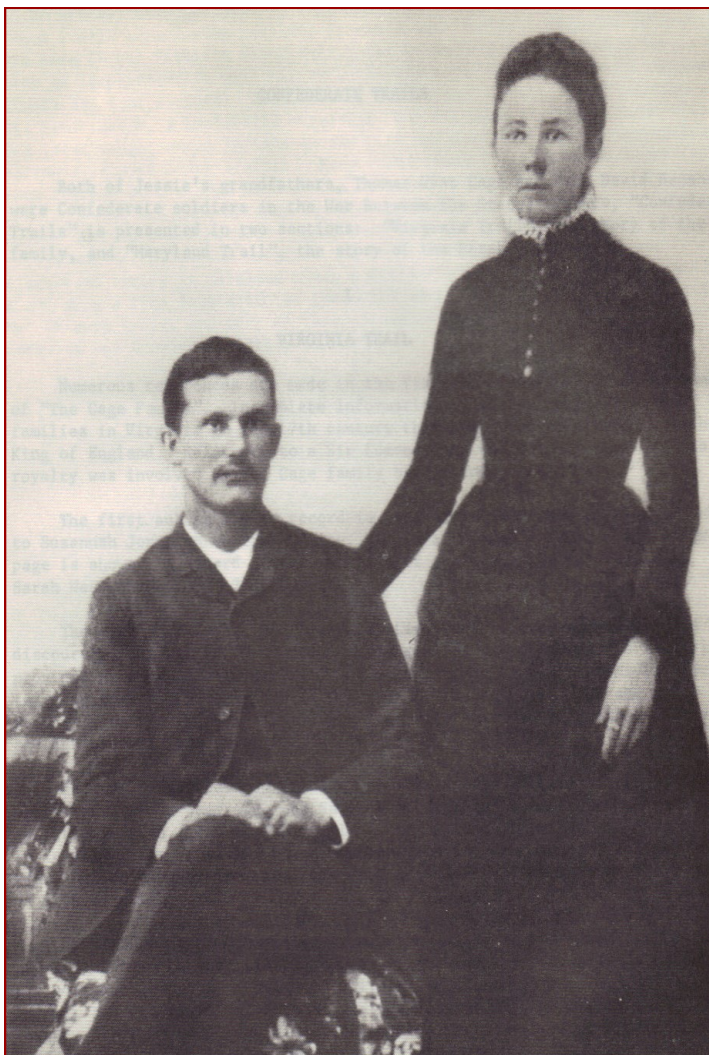
In one obituary for Ezra Hershey, the writer described him as “one of Chariton County’s oldest and most highly esteemed citizens.... an upright, God-fearing man, for many years a member of the Methodist church, and his loss will be widely mourned.”

WALTER RITCHIE HERSHEY and FANNIE EMMA CAGE

The third child and second son of Ezra and Amanda Hershey, **Walter Ritchie Hershey** was born March 20, 1862 in Chariton County, Missouri. At age 21, he went with his father, mother, and a cousin to western Kansas, then moved with them briefly to Colorado. Shortly after the family returned to Missouri, he married **Fannie Emma Cage**, born May 26, 1862. She was the daughter of Thomas W. Cage and Martha Julia (Shands) Cage. Thomas Cage is the subject of the profile “Civil War Prisoner of War” (in the “Soldiers” section of these genealogical essays).

Walter Hershey seemingly inherited his father’s wanderlust craving. He and Fannie tried farming in Chariton County after their wedding, but they soon moved to Kingman County, Kansas. While there, Walter and Fannie’s first child, daughter Anna, was born.

After a few years in Kansas, they returned to Chariton County again, and Walter resumed farming with his father. This time, he stayed in Chariton County for perhaps 12 years, but eventually he again headed westward. He returned to Kansas, moving frequently over a 10-year period and renting farms in Kingman and Sumner counties.



Walter Ritchie and Fannie Emma (Cage) Hershey



Tombstone of Walter Ritchie and Fannie Emma (Cage) Hershey, Eden Cemetery, Milton, Kansas

In the spring of 1912, Walter moved his entire family (by then, six daughters and two sons) to the town of Milton in Sumner County. By that time, Fannie's health had begun a slow but steady deterioration. At the time, the nature of her illness was not known. Later after her death, as several of Walter and Fannie's children developed the same symptoms and illness, it was understood that Fannie had been suffering the effects of the genetic nerve disease, Huntington's Disease. (The disease apparently was communicated through her father, Thomas Cage, and his ancestors, since Fannie's mother, Martha Shands Cage, never exhibited any symptoms before dying at age 78.)

Fannie died on April 27, 1914. At the time, Walter was in Idaho visiting the couple's three oldest children (Anna, Ezra, and Will), who had moved to that

state. Walter returned to Milton to be with his five youngest daughters (Irene, Emeline, Hazel, Jessie, and Lois). He took a job at a grain elevator company. As my Grandfather Rymph (who married my grandmother, Jessie Hershey) wrote in his genealogy,

As best he knew how, [Walter] tried to support and hold his family together.... Being a father to the girls was a frustrating experience. He showed a deep love and sense of responsibility but had little understanding of the problems of young girls. His discipline was severe.

By 1919, three of the Hershey girls — Emeline, Hazel, and Jessie— were taking turns attending Southwestern College in Winfield, Kansas. Walter moved to Winfield to be with his daughters.

Levi Rymph described the final years of his father-in-law's life:

As the Hershey girls completed college, Emeline, Hazel, and Jessie graduating together in 1923, he decided to move to Gravette, Arkansas, to a small wooden farm he had purchased years before and to which his wife and family had refused to move.... Walter lived alone the last twelve years of his life, and his Ozark home became a great haven for all his family as they made

frequent trips to visit him. He was greatly respected by his Ozark neighbors.... Integrity was the center of his philosophy and all the neighbors looked upon him as their friend. He died February 23, 1935, at age 73, and is buried in the Milton Cemetery. Though the world would probably say that Walter Hershey could hardly be termed as successful, he was indeed an honorable man and a "Missouri Gentleman" through and through.

TO LEARN MORE

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