

W. Farrington around the time of 1915-1918, probably as a vacation home since their primary residence was in Watford, Hertfordshire.

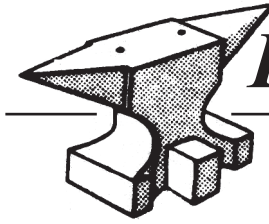
I wondered whether Wyndham Brookes Farrington had survived the war. After searching various spellings of his names I found that he did survive, he had married, and he and his wife were buried in England. I also discovered that a researcher in New Zealand had posted a query in 2008 on a genealogical discussion board about Wyndham's war service. So I sent an e-mail, hoping this person might have further information.

To my delight and immense gratitude he not only responded but turned out to be closely related to Wyndham's wife. He had access to some British records that I couldn't access, plus knowledge of British genealogical research sources. His knowledge proved to be invaluable. I described several of the photos in the album to him, and he was interested in some of them. I scanned those and sent them to him via e-mail.

To make a long story short, Wyndham Farrington had only one son, but that son had four sons who are now in their mid-to-late forties. My correspondent in New Zealand was able to find an e-mail forwarding service for one of the sons and suggested I try to contact him that way. I tried this and my effort was successful; the son was able to confirm that the portrait of Wyndham in his World War I uniform was indeed his grandfather. He sent me his mailing address, and I shipped the album off to him.

This, of course, does not explain how or why the album got to El Cerrito. That might remain a mystery forever. But thanks to the Internet, one person in California and one person in New Zealand were able to return a photo album to a family in England after more than 80 years.

Editor's note- Barbara not only volunteers in the Shadi Room but is a frequent volunteer at the California Genealogical Society office in Oakland.



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Vol. 31
No. 1

The Forge

March 2015

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Our Next Event: The re-opening of the main building at the Chung Mei Home

***5:30 PM Monday, March 23
1800 Elm Street, El Cerrito***

Education Matters, the owner of the Chung Mei Home historic site, and the Historical Society are working together to put on a grand re-opening and restoration celebration at the historic Chung Mei Home building in El Cerrito. Historical Society members and the general public are invited to come enjoy this special event. It will feature tours, historic photographs, refreshments, and more. We have also invited all known Chung Mei alumni and a number are expected. If you want to join us you must RSVP to information@ed-matters.org. If you don't have e-mail then please RSVP to Tom Panas at (510) 526-7507.

The El Cerrito Historical Society is a volunteer, non-political, non-profit corporation that has as its purpose the preservation and appreciation of the history of El Cerrito. It does this by providing educational and research opportunities; by the collection of historic photographs, documents, artifacts and cultural objects; by advocating the preservation of historic resources in the city; and by encouraging others to help further these aims. Anyone may join; dues are \$25 (Household member), \$60 (Sponsoring member), and \$300 (Life member).

The Wayward Photo Album

by Barbara Hill

After the El Cerrito Historical Society Archives were moved from the El Cerrito Library to the Shadi Room at City Hall in 2009, several volunteers set about sorting and organizing everything. One mysterious item that nobody seemed to know anything about was an album containing photos that did not resemble anything in this area.

One day I sat down with the album and examined it closely to see if I could find any clues. From the clothing worn by people in the photos, including a young man in a military uniform, the album appeared to date to a time around World War I and shortly after. The architecture of homes in the photos appeared to be English. Most of the photos did not have any captions, although a few did.

Tucked into the album were several loose snapshots, including pictures of two small children, a girl and a boy, with names and dates from 1925 written on the back. Their surname was hard to make out but appeared to be “Campion,” so I took the album home and tried to research these children. I was quickly able to find references to them on the Internet, and they were indeed a British family. Although I enjoy tracing family trees here in America, I was unfamiliar with British genealogical research. I hoped I could find some living descendants who might want the album.

The Campion daughter married a Smith, so that was a dead end. I found references online to probable descendants of the son, but was not able to locate any contact information for anyone. When I tried going farther back in time, looking for potential cousins and possibly a connection to California, I noticed the Campion grandparents’ family structure did not appear to match pictures of a family group in the album.

I had learned that the two Campion children’s mother’s maiden name was Margery Farrington, and another loose snapshot was inscribed “Margery’s wedding group” on the back. I decided to pursue the Farringtons next.

I learned that Margery Farrington’s parents were Frederick and Florence Farrington, and also that Margery had one brother named Wyndham Brookes Farrington. I then discovered that Wyndham had served in World War I. This family structure matched the family group in the album perfectly, and I guessed that Wyndham was the young man in military uniform. Another photo in the album was of a half-timbered house labeled “Red Brae Frinton.” Frinton turns out to be a small seaside town in Essex, on the southeast coast of England, and an archival website for Essex showed that Red Brae was the name of a house owned by an F.



Wyndham Brookes Farrington as pictured in the wayward photo album