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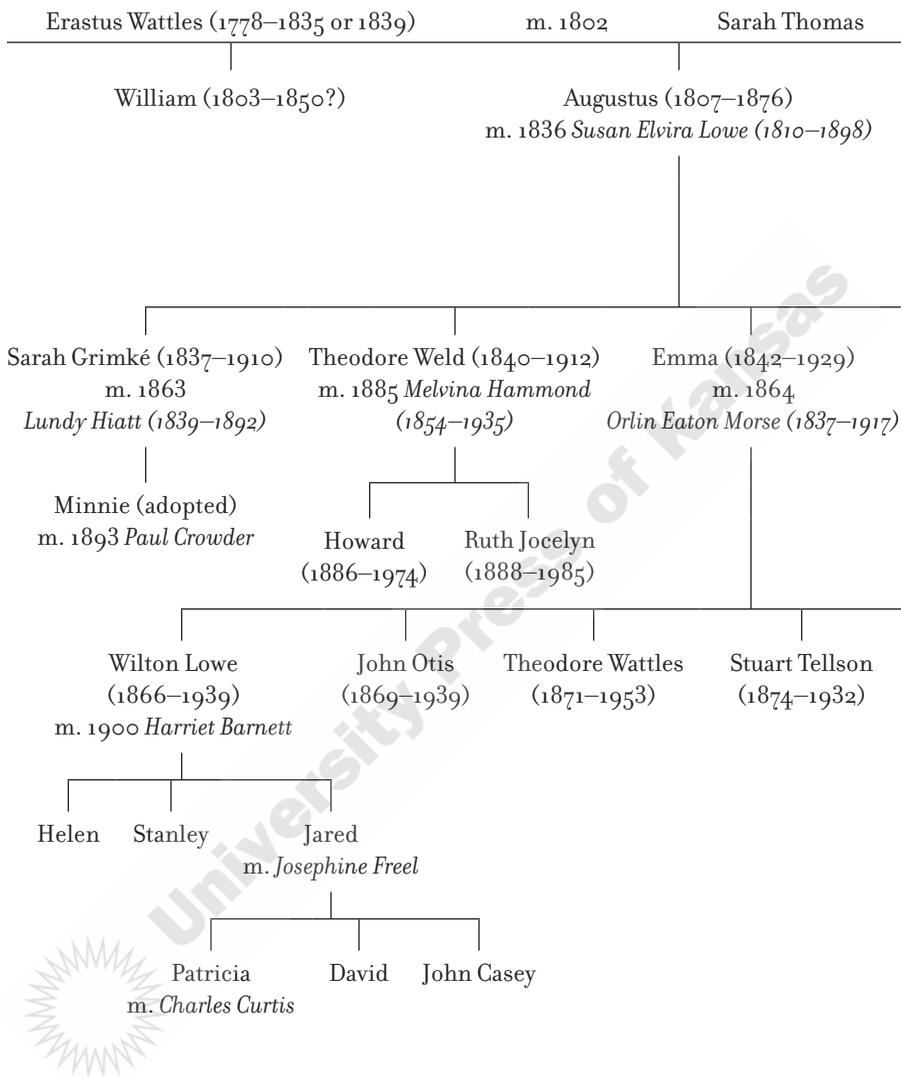
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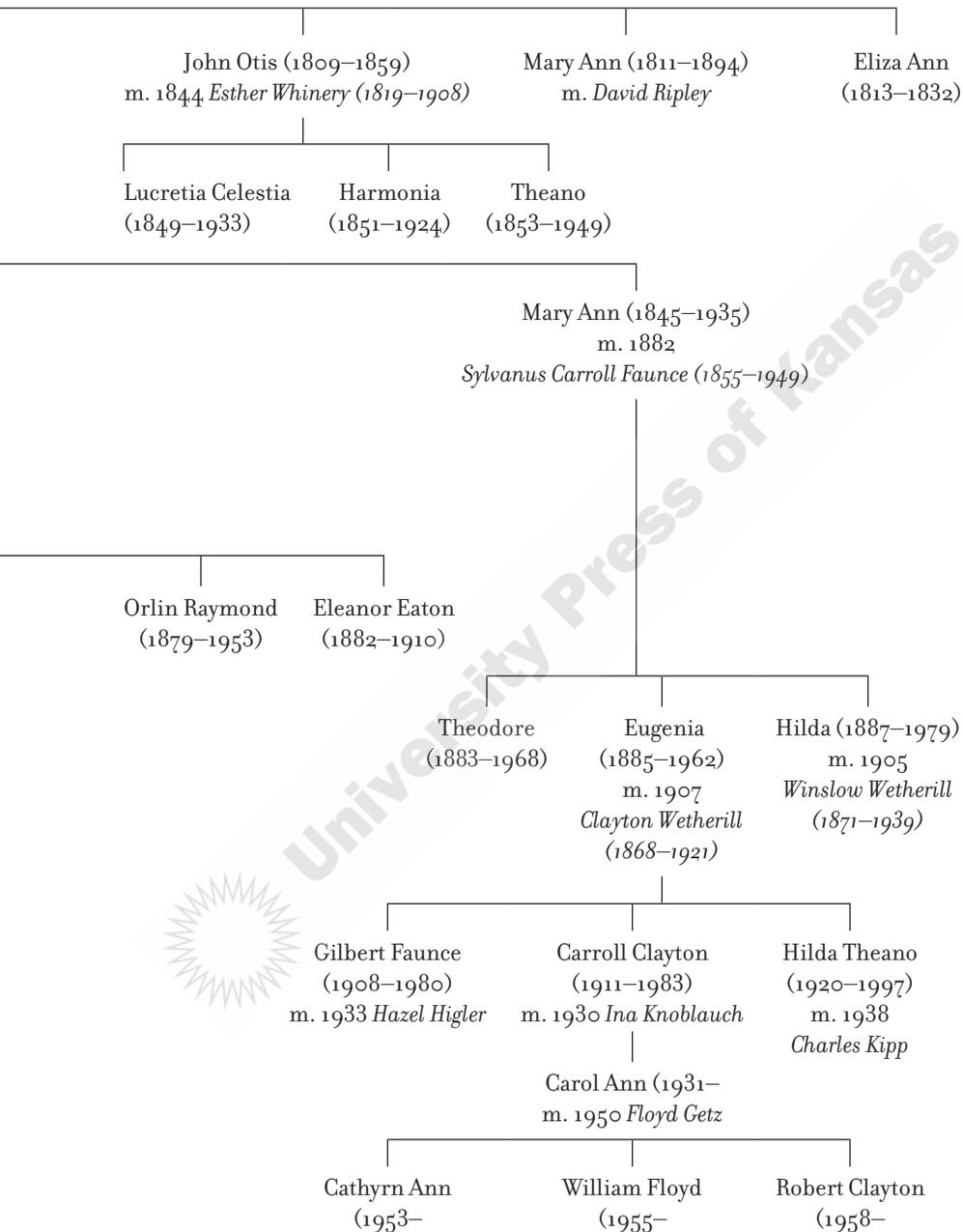
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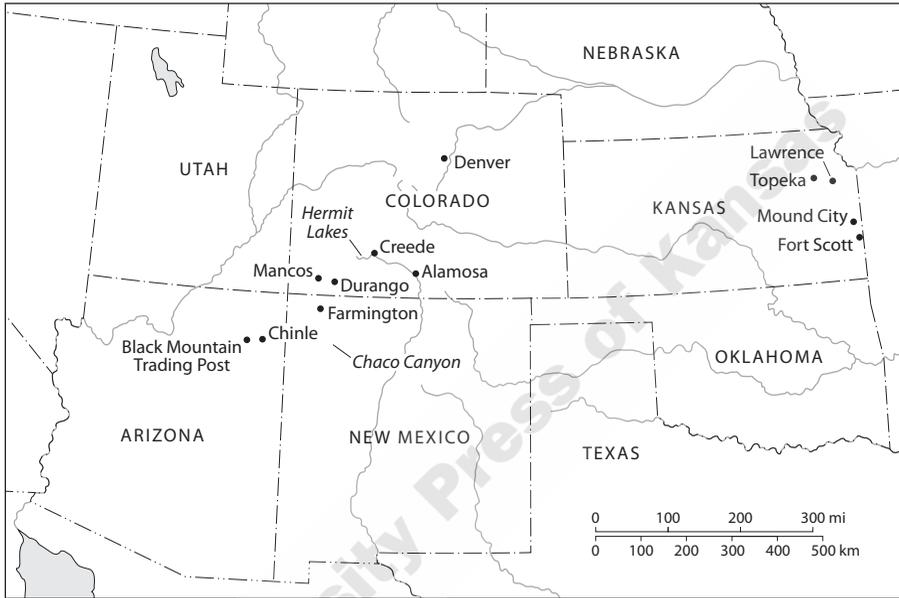


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Wattles-Faunce-Wetherill Family Tree







Kansas and the Four Corners Region. Map by Bill Nelson.



PROLOGUE:
FROM PLYMOUTH ROCK TO CREEDE,
COLORADO—A FAMILY OF LONG MEMORY



In 1741 the enterprising merchants of Plymouth, Massachusetts, decided to build a masonry wharf on top of a rock in the harbor. Hearing of the plan, ninety-five-year-old Elder Thomas Faunce demanded to be carried in his chair down to the harbor, where he proceeded to lecture the townsfolk on the significance of the rock. Onto this rock, he said, the first pilgrims stepped off the *Mayflower* in 1620, and he knew this because his father and other early settlers had told him this story when he was a young boy. Because Faunce's own father had arrived in Plymouth on the *Anne* in 1623, and therefore knew all the original settlers who had come on the *Mayflower*, and because Thomas himself had known these elders in his youth, Thomas Faunce's testimony was considered authentic, and Plymouth Rock was saved to play its part as an American foundational myth. The only problem with the myth was that there was no corroborating proof that Thomas Faunce's story was true. None of the original founders, nor anyone in Thomas's own generation, had ever before mentioned the rock. The basis for this foundational myth was the memory of a man in his dotage, recalling stories told to him in his youth by other very old men.¹

On April 9, 1979, Thomas Faunce's great-great-great-great-great-granddaughter, Hilda Faunce Wetherill, died in Pacific Grove, California, and upon her wishes, her remains were taken to Creede, Colorado, to be buried next to her beloved sister, Eugenia Faunce Wetherill.² Hilda and Eugenia had also told stories, including the story of their ancestors settling in the Massachusetts Bay Colony. For generations Faunces had been telling the next generation that the family arrived with the first settlers to America. Sometimes the story relayed that the family arrived on the

Mayflower itself. The message was more important than the truth. The stories had new meaning for each generation, a new understanding that fit the circumstances of that generation.

Beyond storytelling, families also preserve their memories by choosing to keep the records and letters of previous generations. Such memory keeping obviously privileges the literate and wellborn, the people who wrote letters and produced documents. The records of families who played a significant role in public life found their way into archives more often than the records of poor and illiterate families. Ordinary, middle-class, literate families who valued their memories might not readily think their family records belonged in the archives, but they might preserve the family letters at home and pass them to the next generation. The interest, they might think, would be within only the family. They might think family was important enough that they would trace the family genealogy. That is what the descendants of Thomas Faunce did. Eugenia Faunce Wetherill saved family letters, records, and memorabilia; Hilda Faunce Wetherill compiled the family genealogy, going back to Plymouth. Like their venerated ancestor, they were memory keepers of the family lore. The stories were not necessarily true and could not always be proven by the methods of the professional historian, using corroborative evidence to establish veracity within reasonable doubt. However, the stories had meaning nonetheless. As William Cronon has suggested in writing about family memoirs, history proves what is true, but memory tells us what is important.³

This is a book about families, identity, and memory. I have taken a particular family and followed it through three generations, showing how the members of each generation acted in response to the historical developments they faced. The narrative is about the family identity and how that evolved from generation to generation. Circumstances competed with memory in determining the identity of each new generation and each different individual in each generation. To a great extent circumstances often won out, but the stories told, the character traits reinforced, and the family connections maintained all served as a check to keep the family identity from careening too far astray. Family stories, like all personal stories, are notoriously unreliable and serve the purpose of constructing meaning rather than truth. However, this is a book of history, not a compilation of family stories. I have documented every detail I could using the evidence left behind by members of this family, the people who knew them, and

the institutions of their society. Where the family stories enter into the narrative, they primarily show how family members chose to remember the stories and what meaning those stories held for those who told them.

As with all history, the availability of sources determined the scope of the book. I was incredibly fortunate to have access to several large collections of family letters. My aunt Carol Ann Wetherill Getz, the granddaughter of Eugenia Faunce Wetherill, first introduced me to this family line when she shared with me the letters of her great-grandmother, Mary Ann Wattles Faunce. Mary Ann and other members of her family saved hundreds of letters and other family memorabilia across generations. Later I found another branch of the family through Patti Morse Curtis, who had inherited and saved the letters of her great-grandmother, Emma Wattles Morse, sister of Mary Ann Wattles Faunce. At the Kansas State Historical Society, along with archives in Ohio and elsewhere, I found many of this family's letters scattered among various collections. Finally, at the Wilson's Creek National Battlefield in Republic, Missouri, I found another large collection of family letters saved by another branch of the family before being sold to a private collector, then acquired by the National Park Service. These collections together contain many of the letters sent and received within the Wattles-Faunce-Wetherill family over three generations, ranging from the 1830s to the 1930s.

Few historians have such a wealth of untapped primary source material to explore and interpret, and I am very grateful for this opportunity. Especially remarkable, however, is that such stores of family letters exist at all. Few American families, outside of the extraordinary and famous, preserve even a fraction of the material kept by the several branches of this family. Members of this family, however, saw their history as something significant and passed on the material legacy to the next generation along with an identity that rested on a unique family history. Such devotion to maintaining a legacy as a family is a rarity in the United States, where many people have no idea about their family history before their grandparents' generation.

Recently, however, there have been signs of an awakening interest in our past generations, perhaps catering to a yearning for some sense of identity beyond the individual self in a highly individualistic age. Interest in genealogy has skyrocketed with easy access to online sites such as Ancestry.com. People can now easily have their DNA tested through services such

as 23andMe and Family Tree DNA. Television programs have been created to respond to this spate of interest in family origins. Henry Louis Gates Jr.'s *Finding Your Roots* elicits a positive popular response by tracing the family lineage and even decoding the DNA of celebrities. Another television show, *Ancestry Roadshow*, invites ordinary participants to submit questions about their family history to professional genealogists and historians, who then track down the answers and share the results on the program.

Historians have also found a number of new ways to use the family as a framework for reimagining well-worn narratives of the past. A profusion of historical studies examining a wide variety of families has emerged, with attention given to the black descendants of Thomas Jefferson, the families of fur traders, seven generations of a midwestern working-class family, the African American families of New York City, a mixed white and Piegan family from Montana, and many others.⁴ Such approaches promise new understanding by acknowledging the family as a crucial site for historical agency and decision-making. These new studies focus less on broad demographic life-course patterns and more on families as the places in which personal interaction occurs in response to social and economic developments and in which people negotiate the most important questions of their lives.⁵ These “relational” histories reflect a yearning for identity rooted in time past and an awareness that connectedness across generations gives some meaning to people who might feel rootless and atomized in the incredibly mobile and fast-paced contemporary world.

Because I am using family history as a framework for understanding how Americans coped with the circumstances of social activism, migration, economic challenges, and war, I think it is important to contextualize family memory. French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs and other theorists on collective memory have suggested that personal memories survive and are shaped and reinforced only by the constant retelling and revisiting of them with persons who shared them. Anyone who has ever attended a family reunion will readily recognize the family as an ideal site for the reinforcement of constructed memories. Favorite stories are told, familiar photographs are passed around, and old memories are refreshed and refined. Family memories are socially framed, almost like group-think. Whatever the group—be it society at large or the family—considers important, the individuals will remember as true.⁶

Families reinforce memories through rituals they create. Families who stay in one place from generation to generation have the luxury of developing rituals that thrive on proximity. Many American families, however, experienced great geographical mobility and thus had to develop other means of preserving collective identities. Susan E. Gray has shown how collective identities were restructured as groups of New England families moved to Michigan, where they reinforced Yankee identity through settlement patterns and institution building.⁷

Historians have drawn upon these insights to demonstrate how families use the past for recovering particular identities. For instance, Joan M. Jensen documented the history of Wisconsin farm families to understand for herself a rural identity her immediate family had left behind.⁸ Looking at the context of the times in which ancestors lived can help us to understand our present responsibilities as we grapple with the consequences of past developments. Victoria Freeman explored how her European ancestors colonized North America so that she could fill in the gaps of family memory caused by what she calls the “amnesia of each generation.” Freeman felt a need to capture this lost history in order to understand her own responsibility toward indigenous peoples. “The psychic history of each family,” Freeman writes, “is embedded in both what is said and what is left unsaid; what is not talked about, repeated, or passed down can be as important, even more important, than what we are conscious of.”⁹ Family amnesia becomes social amnesia, enabling the shapers of national memory to forget or gloss over uncomfortable truths that live in the past. Tracing the truth embedded in family memory helps us to grasp the reality of the past while humanizing the behavior and decisions of the actors in that history.

Taking these frameworks as my starting point, I examine how an individual family demonstrates the process of maintaining certain aspects of an identity and creating new ones as this family moves geographically and occupationally across several generations. Within the Wattles-Faunce-Wetherill family, individuals altered personal identity in response to circumstances but maintained a family identity through letter writing, storytelling, autobiographical writing, and hagiographic writing about their ancestors. Memory keepers, mostly female family members who specialize in record keeping and storytelling, play a crucial role in families

who successfully construct and maintain cohesive family identities. The Wattles-Faunce-Wetherills are a good example of a family that has relied on important memory keepers from one generation to the next. Because of the memory keepers who preserved the letters and other materials relating to this family, I was able to write this book.

Access to such rich collections of family letters has driven this work, but the lives of interesting people unfold here. Members of the family were not only fascinating in their own right but also because they knew other interesting people and participated in important historical events. The first generation consisted of the Wattles brothers, Augustus and John, and their wives, Susan and Esther. As abolitionists in Ohio and Kansas, they became close associates of Theodore Dwight Weld, Sarah Grimké, and John Brown, among others in the antislavery and early women's rights movements. In their lives we see at the personal level how the issue of women's rights emerged from within the abolitionist movement. These couples married relatively late in life by the standards of their time, thus displaying what historian Mary Hartman has called the late-marriage pattern, which led to more status within their households for these women. Under this pattern, Hartman argued, women in their early to mid-twenties who married men of the same age or slightly older brought with them more property and life experience and thus exercised more authority within the family.¹⁰ I would argue that abolitionists also had an ideology of equality that contributed along with the late-marriage pattern to new thinking about gender roles. The antebellum reform movement in general and the women's rights movement in particular reflected the long process of men's and women's lives coming closer together and beginning to converge in common purpose. The recognition of the rights of women owes as much to their long-standing contributions to the household as it does to the rise of moral issues that propelled them into the "public" sphere.

Moving into the second generation, I examine how this family coped with the Civil War by looking closely at the family members on the home front as well as the men who fought as soldiers. The experience of this family reflected both the typical pattern of Northern families whose men left for military service and that of Southern families who experienced not only the absence of men but also the threat of violence in their own vicinity. The Wattles households lay on the Kansas-Missouri border, an arena of intense guerrilla warfare, and yet the families managed to go about their

business with remarkable composure. The young men of the family, Eaton Morse and Theodore Wattles, enlisted in the Kansas Cavalry and participated in active campaigns in Missouri and Arkansas. Their letters home opened a window into the lives of soldiers that kept their loved ones not only informed but also actively engaged in the war.

I continue to follow this generation after the war, when Eaton and Emma Morse settled down to a conventional life but took an active role in shaping the family memory to emphasize the activist legacy of their parents. Emma's sisters, Sarah Grimké Wattles Hiatt and Mary Ann Wattles Faunce, attempted to live out that legacy by pursuing the nontraditional role of medical doctor. Mary Ann succeeded to a greater extent than Sarah in becoming a trained physician but faced the challenges of family life and child care with which professional women still grapple today. Mary Ann's colleagues, especially Emily Blackwell, Mary Putnam Jacobi, Sarah McNutt, and others created associations and networks to offer each other support as they dealt with the challenges of professional life. Finally, within the second generation, I focus upon Theodore Wattles, the only one of his generation to reject outright the family identity of progressive reformer. My analysis of Theodore places him squarely in the role of "settler colonist," not because he was the only member of the family who settled on western lands—he was not—but because he so clearly embraced the role. His case perhaps more than any other demonstrates how complicated family identity can become.

In looking at the third generation, I focus upon two women who started life on the East Coast but became the most quintessential of westerners. They also demonstrated one of the most complicated, and interesting, shifts in family identity formation by adopting the identity of their in-laws' family. Eugenia Faunce Wetherill and Hilda Faunce Wetherill married into a family whose members had been some of the first white people to explore and excavate the Ancestral Pueblo sites of Mesa Verde and other archaeological sites throughout the Four Corners region. The Wetherills helped to develop the western tourist industry by pioneering guiding and outfitting businesses, trading posts, and fish hatcheries. Choice and circumstances led Eugenia and Hilda to make identities for themselves that followed the Wetherill lead in catering to the public interest in western themes. Their sisters-in-law, Louisa Wade Wetherill and Marietta Palmer Wetherill, also followed the same pattern, each finding a means to survive

in a tough environment through resourceful exploitation of the western mystique.

It is not my purpose, however, merely to chronicle this family just because it happened to be in the right place at the right time to observe and participate in some interesting historical developments. I believe that the history of this family helps us to see this historical period differently. A number of women's historians have challenged us to ask how our understanding of history might be different if we ask what the women were doing while the men were doing all the activities that normally earn the attention of historians. Gerda Lerner, Susan Armitage, Betsy Jameson, and others have urged historians not just to add women to the narrative but to see how the inclusion of women changes the questions and the analysis. I believe that if we examine women's lives, we cannot help but see families, and in doing so, we see history in a new light.

When men alone were considered the proper focus of narrative history, it too often appeared that they existed alone, achieving all their wonderful accomplishments with no supporting cast whatsoever, or if any supporting cast did merit a mention, it was the clichéd strong woman standing behind every strong man. However, honest engagements with family history reveal more nuanced relationships between men and women, changing both the questions we ask about them and the analyses of their lives in total. In families, individuals work and live in tandem with others. Even in times when patriarchal models prevail, women absolutely participate in decision-making if one looks closely enough. Women always contribute to getting the work done and keeping the family going. Women have always been a part of the mix in family life, and historians would document this if only they asked the right questions of the source material available.

Looking at families to tell the stories of the past does not lead to the exclusion of men, but it can lead to the decentering of men. Writing women's history, especially in an attempt to compensate for the lack of focus on women by past generations of historians, can sometimes place too much emphasis on what the women were doing and thus fail, as much historical writing does, to catch the interaction between people that is the norm of everyday life. When we learn to look at both men and women without any agenda or preconceived assumptions, then we can come closer to understanding human history as it really happened.

In her presidential address to the 2015 meeting of the Western History Association, Betsy Jameson spoke about women not included in the historical record even though they were interesting persons. She said, "They owe their absences, in part, to gendered assumptions about whose acts were important, whose stories worth saving, and to gendered historical categories."¹¹ When we look at families, it is hard to avoid asking questions about acts, stories, and historical categories perceived to be female and, in the past, considered uninteresting and unimportant. Jameson points to a number of categories devalued simply because they are associated primarily with women: domestic chores, household production, sexuality, and childrearing. Even when both men and women participated in some activities, such as labor organizing, the contributions of the women have been ignored, whereas the men's roles are highlighted. The categories in which men are grouped relate more often to big narratives such as nation building that occupy the attention of most historians and are deemed more important than the particular trajectories of families. However, I contend that the particular narratives of families will tell us quite a lot about how people interact with others and what they do within all these historical categories. Families are always part of the larger narrative because all the players belong to families. Even in the absence of traditional families, people form associations that act as families.¹² Nation building was not done by individuals acting alone but by persons who belonged to families and whose families helped to shape all their decisions.

Obviously, a single family's trajectory over time does not explain social change in itself. Great changes in society often come about because groups or individuals push for reforms or lead revolutions, often following the ideas of intellectuals or visionaries that defy their own family traditions. Social change occurs because of technological innovations, migrations, and natural events to which people must respond. However, over time people make decisions to follow certain ideas or practice different behaviors because it makes sense for their families. Thus, long-term social change could not occur without the involvement of families.

Family historians have focused on these broad changes, taking the demographic evidence of the conditions and behaviors of populations as the basis for examining how family life changes over time and what the circumstances of families might mean for society at any given time.

Often these analyses have implied that the family passively reacts to social forces, but family historian Tamara Hareven called upon historians to cast aside the stereotype of the family as a passive participant in historical events. Instead, she views the family as an active agent in social change.¹³ This study answers Hareven's call by asking what the circumstances of a particular family did to shape that family's identity and then how that family contributed to social change. If we cannot look at the circumstances of every family, it makes sense to focus on certain families and then to ask how they compare with the wider population, which must be examined statistically in demographic studies.

Giving so much attention to a family of such modest significance requires some justification. As Joseph Amato said when writing about his own family, "Abstractions do not furnish good legs for human understanding. . . . Justification for writing of an individual family history lies . . . in the power of one family to represent another—and the value of presenting a single life from the past to the living present."¹⁴ Thinking about the history of families should bring historical connections to life, enabling us to see a continuous past—if not from Plymouth Rock to Creede, Colorado, at least from some distant point of departure for our families to the present. Although technically not my own family, this is the family of my aunt and cousins, and as I grew up, we were all very close, living next door to each other on a large family ranch in Colorado. Like many extended families living in close proximity, our parents shared the responsibilities of child-rearing. As a child, I spent time with my aunt's family at Wetherill Ranch, the guest ranch built by Eugenia Faunce Wetherill above Creede, Colorado. I knew my aunt's family legacy, I heard her family stories, and I benefited from having as a role model a strong female descended from Susan Lowe Wattles, Mary Ann Wattles Faunce, and Eugenia Faunce Wetherill. I sincerely believe, however, that any historian worth her salt would see the merit of taking never-before-used collections of family letters and through them seeking the larger historical meaning gleaned from close examination of this one family. Besides, who would want to miss out on a great story?