

The Lives of David T. Cowher and Julia Ann Stonebraker, his Wife

David T. Cowher was a veteran of the Civil War. Although his military career was disjointed, the injuries and ailments sustained and contracted during his service would affect him for the rest of his life.

*My third great grandfather, **David Timothy Cowher/Cowfer**, son of **James Cowher** and **Eleanor "Ellen" Barlow**,¹ was born on 25 October 1842² in Centre County [Worth or Taylor Township], Pennsylvania,³ and died on 24 March 1915 in Osceola Mills, located in neighboring Clearfield County.⁴ He married **Julia Ann Stonebraker** on 15 February 1866 at Gardner Station.⁵ She was born on 31 January 1847 at Bald Eagle [Valley]⁶ a daughter of **Valentine Stonebraker** and **Susan Thompson**.⁷

With the exception of a few years as a young child and his time during the Civil War, David spent his entire life within a 30 or so mile radius of his place of birth. Throughout the course of his life he would live in Worth Township near Port Matilda, Powelton and Sandy Ridge, Graysville in nearby Huntingdon County, Bald Eagle in Blair County, Houtzdale and Osceola Mills, both in neighboring Clearfield County.

*Unless otherwise noted, all locations above are in Centre County, Pennsylvania.

David's Early Years, 1842-1862

In 1850 he was found with his parents and all but one of his surviving siblings in a very unexpected place; Venango Township, Butler, Pennsylvania.⁸ James "Bowker", not Cowher, was enumerated with his wife, Ellen, and children Mary A., Thomas, Sarah J., David, now aged 7, and William. The household enumerated next to James' was that of Catherine and David Turner. Catherine was David's (Cowher) oldest



Area where David would live most of his life in Centre, Blair and Clearfield Counties⁹

¹ Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Department of Health, Death Certificate No. 32803 (1915), David T. Cowfer [Cowher], Division of Vital Records, New Castle.

² David T. Cowher, Cowher Family Bible record, transcribed by John Scollins, Justice of the Peace (Houtzdale Borough, Clearfield, Penn., 15 August 1913); Julia A. (Stonebraker) Cowher, widow's pension application no. WO1,044,740, certificate no. WC795,626; for service of David T. Cowher (Pvt., Co. H, 56th Regiment, Pennsylvania Infantry, Civil War); Case Files of Approved Pension Applications of Widows and Other Dependents of Civil War and Later Navy Veterans, ('Navy Widows' Certificates'), 1861-1910; Civil War and Later Pension Files; Department of Veterans Affairs, Record Group 15; National Archives, Washington, D.C.

³ Compiled military service record, David T. Cowher, Pvt., Co. H, 56th Regiment Pennsylvania Infantry; Carded Records, Volunteer Organizations, Civil War; records of the Adjutant General's Office, 1780-1917, Record Group 94; National Archives, Washington, D.C.

⁴ Commonwealth of Pennsylvania death certificate no. 32803 (1915), David T. Cowfer [Cowher].

⁵ Julia Ann Cowher, "Declaration for Widow's Pension" (3 April 1915); Julia A. (Stonebraker) Cowher, widow's pension no. WC795,626, Civil War, RG 15, NA-Washington.

⁶ Julia Ann Cowher, Statement of Birth (Osceola Mills, Clearfield, Pennsylvania, 1916); Julia A. (Stonebraker) Cowher, widow's pension no. WC795,626; Civil War, Record Group 15; National Archives, Washington, D.C.

⁷ Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Department of Health, Death Certificate No. 91635 (1928), Julia A. Cowfer [Cowher], Division of Vital Records, New Castle.

⁸ 1850 U.S. census, Butler, Pennsylvania, population schedule, Venango Township, p. 358B, dwelling 806, family 813, Household of James Bowker (Cowher); digital images, *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 11 Mar 2011); citing National Archives and Records Administration microfilm M432, roll 760.

⁹ Newton, J.H., C.O. Mann, J. A. Underwood, J.D. McKissin, E. Franks, "State Map", *Caldwell's Illustrated Historical Combination Atlas of Clearfield County, Pennsylvania*, (J. A. Caldwell, Condit, Ohio, 1878), Scale not identified, The PaGenWeb Project, (<http://pagenweb.org> : accessed 2 January 2012).

sister and had married Mr. Turner in 1845.¹⁰ Because of the incorrect spelling of the Cowher name, had it not been for Catherine and David Turner, the "Bowker" family may not have been located.

The Cowher and Turner families migrated to Butler County some time after Catherine's marriage but before 1850. Typically people moved because of better economic or land acquisition opportunities. But James, a collier by trade, found himself living in a community of farmers and renting a home. Thus he decided to move his family back to Centre County by at least 1854 when his daughter, Mary A., married George Moore on 11 January 1855,¹¹ a resident of Taylor Township.¹²

David's family has not been found in any locale on the 1860 census but it seems clear that David spent his teen years living in Worth or Taylor Township. His father, living in Taylor according to the deeds, sold 2 tracts of land, each 106 acres in Worth, to Clement Beckwith and John Melchor on 19 May 1860¹³ and David's sister, Sarah Jane, married a Snyder Township, Blair County resident, Mr. Daniel Worts/Wertz on 15 October 1861.¹⁵ This Township borders the southern edge of Taylor. Probably the most indicative piece of evidence that David grew up in the Worth/Taylor community was found in his Pension File. On 29 July 1915, Christian Sherer [Sharer], a lifelong resident of Taylor Township, signed a General Affidavit attesting to the fact that he had known David for many years. He stated, "I have been acquainted with David Cowher since we were young boys. He was one of my school mates. While attending school, we lived [as] neighbors for a great number of years."¹⁶

David's Civil War Years, 1862-1865

By 1862, David, like many young men in the United States, was feeling the pull of nationalism and hearing the cry for soldiers. A "stout and hardy boy,"¹⁷ 5'10" tall with blue eyes and brown hair and a miller by trade, he began his Civil War military career on 5 January 1862 when he enlisted at Port Matilda at the age of 19.¹⁸ He mustered in on the 25th day of January with a Company that was initially called Captain Brown's Company, 56th Regiment Pennsylvania Infantry, but was later changed to Company H of the same Regiment.

David's military life was less than ideal. He left with his Regiment on the 8th of March from Harrisburg and went to Washington. He participated with his Company in the Battles of South Mountain, Antietam and Fredericksburg, all in 1862. This was followed by the Battle of Chancellorsville, not far from Fredericksburg in Virginia, the following May. After this battle, David marched with his Regiment to

¹⁰ David T. Cowher, Cowher Family Bible record; Julia A. (Stonebraker) Cowher, widow's pension no. WC795,626, Civil War, RG 15, NA-Washington; "David Turner was mared to Cathren Cowher inn the year 1845" [spelling errors as per transcribed Bible Record].

¹¹ David T. Cowher, Cowher Family Bible record; Julia A. (Stonebraker) Cowher, widow's pension no. WC795,626, Civil War, RG 15, NA-Washington; "Januerey the 11, 1855 Georg Moor and Marey ann Cowher was mared" [spelling errors as per transcribed Bible Record].

¹² 1850 U.S. census, Centre, Pennsylvania, population schedule, Taylor Township, p. 563 (penned), 282 (stamped), dwelling 30, family 30, Household of Samuel Moore; digital images, *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 24 Apr 2012); citing National Archives and Records Administration, microfilm M432, roll 763.

¹³ Centre, Pennsylvania, Deeds, X 00002: 0536 [could be 556 which is the page number hand written on the image copy], James and Ellenor Cowher to Clement Beckwith, 19 May 1860, recorded 21 May 1860; digital images, Centre County Government, *Centre County Online Access* (<http://webia.co.centre.pa.us> : accessed 8 Feb 2012). Centre, Pennsylvania, Deeds, D 00032: 0257, James Cowher and Elenor his wife, of Taylor Township to John Melchor of Worth Township, 19 May 1860, recorded 28 August 1871.

¹⁴ 1860 U.S. census, Blair, Pennsylvania, population schedule, Snyder Township, p. 133 (penned), 487 (stamped), dwelling 917, family 944, Daniel Werts [Wertz] in the Household of Elizabeth Werts; digital images, *Ancestry* (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 24 Apr 2012); citing National Archives and Records Administration microfilm M653, roll 1073.

¹⁵ David T. Cowher, Cowher Family Bible record; Julia A. (Stonebraker) Cowher, widow's pension no. WC795,626, Civil War, RG 15, NA-Washington; "Daniel Worts and Sarah Jane Cowfer was married October 15, 1861."

¹⁶ David T. Cowher, General Affidavit of Christian Sherer; Julia A. (Stonebraker) Cowher, widow's pension no. WC795,626, Civil War, RG 15, NA-Washington.

¹⁷ David T. Cowher, General Affidavit of Sarah Jane Wertz; Julia A. (Stonebraker) Cowher, widow's pension no. WC795,626, Civil War, RG 15, NA-Washington.

¹⁸ Compiled military service record, David T. Cowher, Pvt., Co. H, 56th Regiment Pennsylvania Infantry, Civil War, Record Group 94, NA-Washington. David incorrectly stated he was 18 at time of enlistment.

Gettysburg, a distance of about 135 miles by today's maps. Upon arriving at Gettysburg, the 56th was the first to open fire. After Gettysburg, they assisted in the pursuit of General Lee across the Potomac.

By October 1, 1863, Company H was in northern Virginia when David's life as a soldier took a turn. In his Compiled Military Service Records, he claimed that he had become ill and left his Company for home. Once he arrived, he chose to stay instead of returning to his Company. It would be another 15 months before his life as a soldier would resume.

On the 19th of January 1865, David either reported in to an officer in Philipsburg, Centre County, or he was apprehended. From there he was taken to Harrisburg where he was pronounced a deserter and was then taken to Prince Street Prison in Alexandria, Virginia. He was court martialed on the 4th of February and sentenced on the 15th. The General court Martial proceedings found him guilty and David was fined \$10 a month of his \$11-16 monthly pay for 15 months to make up the time lost by his desertion.¹⁹ During his court martial, David offered no defense.²⁰

David was returned under guard to his Company, now at Petersburg, Virginia on the 21st of March but what was he doing between February 15 and March 21? Was he ill? Did the Military give him a job to do at the prison? Was he imprisoned? There was absolutely nothing in his Compiled Military Service Records, Court Martial Records or Pension File that gave any information or clues to answer these questions. He later stated that it was during 1865, while in Virginia, he either severely dislocated or broke his right shoulder.²¹ Was this the reason for the delay in returning to his Company? This injury never healed properly and would be a wound that would plague him for the rest of his life.

Upon leaving Appomattox at the end of the war, David and his regiment marched to somewhere near Washington D.C. and mustered out on July 1. He was then honorably discharged on 26 July 1865 in Philadelphia. When David arrived back in Worth Township the stout and hardy boy of January 1862 could "scarcely walk".²²

Life After the War, 1866 – 1890

Seven months later on 15 February 1866, David married Julia Ann Stonebraker. The ceremony at her parents' home at Gardner Station was performed by William Plumber, Justice of the Peace. In attendance, aside from immediate family members, were Mary E. Mathews, William Cowher, and John Moore.²³

David and Julia began their lives together as immediate neighbors of David's father in Worth Township. Almost 10 months later, Julia gave birth to their first daughter, Mary Ellen, followed by another daughter, Martha Ann just 16 months later. They were enumerated in Worth Township on July 1, living next to David's parents and caring for a niece, Sarah Moore, age 10 and a nephew, William Turner, age 7.²⁴ Sarah's parents lived relatively close by so it seems that she may have been there to help Julia with her young daughters. William was a son of David's sister, Catherine, who may have

¹⁹ Compiled military service record, David T. Cowher, Pvt., Co. H, 56th Regiment Pennsylvania Infantry, Civil War, Record Group 94, NA-Washington.

²⁰ Court Martial Record, David T. Cowher, Feb 1865, Pvt., Co. H, 56th Regiment Pennsylvania Infantry; Civil War; Records of the Office of the Judge Advocate General (Army), Record Group 153/7E3/14/14/F/Box 1972 Tabbed, Case No. 00-389; National Archives, Washington, D.C.

²¹ David T. Cowher, Dr. J. W. Dunwiddie, Surgeon's Certificate (15 Aug 1900); Julia A. (Stonebraker) Cowher, widow's pension no. WC795,626, Civil War, RG 15, NA-Washington.

²² David T. Cowher, General Affidavit of Sarah Jane Wertz; Julia A. (Stonebraker) Cowher, widow's pension no. WC795,626, Civil War, RG 15, NA-Washington.

²³ David T. Cowher; Julia A. (Stonebraker) Cowher, widow's pension no. WC795,626, Civil War, RG 15, NA-Washington. See Julia's Declaration of Widow's Pension, General Affidavits of Mary E. (maiden name ?) Marshall (knew Julia since girlhood), William Cowher, John Moore.

²⁴ 1870 U.S. census, Centre, Pennsylvania, population schedule, Worth Township, p. 13 (penned) 827A (stamped), dwelling 99, family 95, Household of David Cowher; digital images, *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com>); citing National Archives and Records Administration microfilm M593, roll 1322.

been deceased by this time. Very soon after David must have found work in Graysville, Huntingdon County, about 10 miles away, because on the 25th of August Julia gave birth to another daughter, Nancy Jane, at this location,²⁵ and then their first son, George Washington in 1872.

The move from Worth to Graysville would be the first of many for the next three to four decades. After returning from the Civil War David worked primarily as a laborer and it seems that he just kept following the work. What is not known is whether he worked as a laborer in a mill or mine. On his death certificate in 1915, his daughter, Mary Ellen, claimed that his primary occupation was a Miller. As stated earlier, this also was his occupation before he entered the Civil War. By 1870 the railroads were making their way into this part of the State and mining for coal became a big industry.

In 1873, David's father passed away intestate leaving behind a wife, 6, but possibly 7, children and many acres of surveyed land. David's eldest brother, George, administered the estate.²⁶ This record primarily dealt with a particular 30 acres of land that James had sold to Jacob Flick. The original Deed had been lost or misplaced and in 1876, Mr. Flick took George to court to produce another one. Mentioned as heirs needing to comply with the courts in this matter were George and William Cowher, Mary Ann (Cowher) Moore, Sarah (Cowher) Wertz and the seven minor children of Catherine (Cowher) Turner, now deceased. Because next to nothing is known about Catherine and her children it is unfortunate that these children were not mentioned by name. Conspicuously missing from this list of heirs named in the Records of Administration were David and another brother, Thomas. Why? Neither one of them were living any significant distance away.

By November 1876, they were living at Bald Eagle furnace, just south in Blair County.²⁷ A couple of years later and shortly before he lost his mother in 1879,²⁸ David moved his growing family several miles north back to Centre County to the Powelton/Sandy Ridge area.²⁹ David finally planted some roots and remained there for at least 15 years. Powelton, difficult to locate on a current map, was a mining community with ready access to the railroads. While living in Powelton, David and Julia had seven more children totaling 13 in all.

David's Later Years, 1890-1915

In 1890, David would begin his long and arduous process for receiving a Civil War pension due to disabilities. By this time his health started to be bothersome. His shoulder injury suffered back in 1865 which gave him limited use of his arm, intermittent bouts of diarrhea and rheumatism that began during his Civil War years, were beginning to interfere with his ability to work and provide for his family. In July of this year, he filed his first "Declaration of Soldier for a Disability Pension."³⁰ This request, however, was rejected due to insufficient disability. This would be the first of many submittals and rejections.

Later that year, on 11 October, George and Jane Cowher, Thomas Cowher, Sarah (Cowher) Wortz [Wertz], David and Annie Cowher, and William and Martha Jane Cowher conveyed to their sister, Mary (Cowher) Moore, 66 acres for One Dollar. Their father, James, owned at least 400 acres in Worth Township, some of which had been sold off at varying times. The sixty six acres sold to Mary was part of these 400 acres. On 12 April 1895, while now living in Taylor Township, David Cowher and wife Anna, Thomas B. Cowher, William Cowher, Mary Ann Moore and Sarah Wirts [Wertz] conveyed 52

²⁵ "Mrs. Jane Harris," obituary, *The Progress (Clearfield, Pennsylvania)*, 8 May 1943, p. 5, col. 8; digital images, *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 2 Oct 2011); Her obit states that she was born in Graysville, Centre Co. Graysville is in Huntingdon.

²⁶ Centre County, Pennsylvania, probate Case File No. 827, James Cowher (1873), Register of Wills and Clerk of Orphan's Court, Bellefonte. This file contains documents through 1 Sept 1882.

²⁷ "D. Irvin Cowfer," obituary, *The Progress (Clearfield, Pennsylvania)*, 21 April 1960, p. 10, col. 2.

²⁸ David T. Cowher, Cowher Family Bible record; Julia A. (Stonebraker) Cowher, widow's pension no. WC795,626, Civil War, RG 15, NA-Washington; "Elen [Eleanor/Ellen] Cowher died March 28 in 1879..."

²⁹ "Edward (Wall) Cowfer", obituary, *The Progress (Clearfield, Pennsylvania)*, 5 Feb 1958, p. 6, col. 3.

³⁰ David T. Cowher, "Declaration of Soldier for a Disability Pension" (30 July 1890); Julia A. (Stonebraker) Cowher, widow's pension no. WC795,626, Civil War, RG 15, NA-Washington.

acres to their brother, George, for "maintenance of mother before she died."³¹ In January of the following year, David purchased as high bidder for \$350, 65 acres in Taylor Township [Hannah Furnace]. This land had been owned by John Shively, Benjamin Weaver and Andrew Weaver who lost it due to various legal problems. This land bordered on the properties of Theopolis Moore, J.A. Hunter and Abram (*sic*) Elder.³²

On 27 April 1896, while living at Hannah Furnace and working as a laborer, David again filed for a Disability Pension. This third request was also denied. In January, 1899 David and Julia sold their 65 acres to Mr. Clement Dale for One Dollar (\$1.00) and for cancellation of debts David owed to Mr. Dale.³³ The 1900 census for Bellefonte, a town not far away from Taylor, showed a Clem Dale, attorney-at-law. It is not known if this was the Clement Dale that David was indebted to, but it is a good possibility. Why did David owe so much money to Mr. Dale? Was it due to health issues that limited David's ability to work? Had David borrowed money from him for various purchases or to make improvements on his land? These are questions that may never be answered. After selling their property, David, Julia and their 8 unmarried children relocated to Osceola Mills in Clearfield County.³⁴ On 2 June 1900 during the next census taking, David was working as a day laborer implying that he was not working steadily for the same employer.³⁵ His declining health may have been responsible for this. Their oldest son, George W., was living next door, married to Mary F. [Garman] and they had a one year old daughter, Mary.

The following month and for the sixth time, David again filed an application to receive a Civil War Disability Pension accompanied by a Medical Affidavit from physician J. W. Dunwiddie who stated that David, 58, was suffering from "a right shoulder injury ... that limited his motion ..., chronic rheumatism of his left hip and sciatic nerve ...valvular trouble of the heart. He is disabled for the performance of manual labor fully one half (1/2) ... I am personally acquainted with him and know him to be a man of correct habits." This affidavit was followed by another exam on 15 August by Doctors L. C. Harman and J. W. Dunwiddie and a General Affidavit signed by J. A. [Julia Ann] Cowher and M. E. [Mary Ellen (Cowher)] Mease.

The August 15 exam showed his health to be deteriorating substantially. He was 152 pounds, had developed additional heart trouble, his right shoulder which had given him trouble for years was determined to have been dislocated and never reset causing deformation and limited motion, his arms and legs were showing signs of rheumatism which limited his mobility, his chronic diarrhea had him emaciated and his general debility was "considerable but not entirely complete". David, now a general laborer, was only able to perform light work. Julia Ann's and Mary Ellen's General Affidavit of 28 Sept 1900 indicated that David was very ill with diarrhea and rheumatism, was not able to get out of bed or eat without great distress and they felt that he was close to death. He was examined again on this same day and the physician, F. B. Read stated that in David's current condition, he was totally disabled from performing any manual labor.

On 8 December 1900, David's partial pension was finally approved. He would receive \$8 per month. A little less than a year later, in September 1901, David's next medical examination showed that he had improved little, was quite emaciated but was not showing any signs of senility. His doctor recommended that his pension be increased to \$10 per month and it was. Sometime during the next year David, Julia and family moved down the road to Houtzdale where they would live for about 11

³¹ Centre, Pennsylvania, Deeds, D 00101: 0199, David Cowher & wife Anna, of Taylor Township, Thomas B. Cowher, William Cowher, Mary Ann Moore, widow of George, and Sarah Wirts, widow of George, 12 April 1895, recorded 20 August 1908; digital images, Centre County Government, *Centre County Online Access* (<http://webia.co.centre.pa.us> : accessed 8 Feb 2012).

³² Centre, Pennsylvania, Deeds, J 00006: 0079, David T. Cowher, 5 Feb 1896, recorded same day.

³³ Centre, Pennsylvania, Deeds, D 00082: 0018, David T. Cowher to Clement Dale, 18 Jan 1899, recorded 8 April 1899.

³⁴ David T. Cowher, "Declaration of Soldier for a Disability Pension" (9 Mar 1899); Julia A. (Stonebraker) Cowher, widow's pension no.

WC795,626, Civil War, RG 15, NA-Washington. This was David's 5th attempt at filing for a pension. He stated he was living in Osceola Mills.

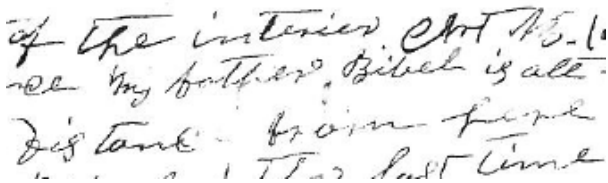
³⁵ 1900 U.S. census, Clearfield, Pennsylvania, population schedule, Decatur Township, enumeration district (ED) 59, sheet 2A (penned), p. 204 (stamped), dwelling 26, family 27, Household of David T. Cowher; digital images, *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com> :accessed n.d.); citing National Archives and Records Administration microfilm T623, roll 1395.

years. David's health had steadily improved and the Bureau of Pension office wanted to cut back his pension stating that they felt it was excessive considering David's current condition.

David was again examined 6 May 1903 at the age of 61. Information included in this exam spoke of the origins of some of his ailments. He indicated that in 1865 while in Virginia, he contracted chronic diarrhea, rheumatism, a fractured right side clavicle and kidney disease and that his hips and feet began to give out at this time, [a] weak knee in 1893 and heart disease in 1901. His health was again in a state of decline and the doctors recommended him for permanent disability at \$12 per month. This increase for "total inability to earn a support by manual labor" was approved on 21 October 1903.

Once David and Julia moved to their new community, the last name of Cowher slowly began to migrate over to Cowfer. Others have suggested that this particular line of Cowhers were not Cowhers at all but were "christened" with the name by early 1800 tax collectors because James had a similar sounding last name to known Cowhers living in the immediate area. Then supposedly decades down the road, James's descendents discovered the error and corrected it to Cowfer.³⁶

Tradition states that the name change may have happened because of David's handwriting and there is plenty of evidence to support this. A good example is found in David's Civil War Pension file. To the unsuspecting eye, his h's looked like f's. This may be why community members referred to him and his family as the "Cowfers". The name stuck because David's descendents consistently used the Cowfer name at least by the early 1900's. It should be mentioned, however, that neither David nor Julia ever signed anything in his military records, which spanned from 1862-1917, with the name of Cowfer. It was always Cowher.



Examples of David's handwriting located in his pension file.

In the first example notice the "f" in the words "of", "fathers" and "from"; notice the "h" in the words "the", "fathers" and "here". In this context it is easy to see that David's "f's" and "h's" were clearly distinct, but when placed by themselves as in the example of his signature, anyone not familiar with David's handwriting would easily misinterpret the "h" in Cowher as an "f".

A rather in-depth search of census records through 1930 to see if James's other sons and grandsons used the name "Cowfer" revealed negative results with one exception. In 1910, David's brother William and his 3 sons were enumerated with the spelling of "Cowpher". By the time of the WWI draft registration, the sons had reverted to the "Cowher" spelling. William was not found on the 1920 or later censuses. The only Cowfers found on this census were descendants of David, not James. Thus, however strange it may be, it seems that David's handwriting was the catalyst for the change.

By 1910, David Cowfer, as shown on the census, was working as an operator in a coal mine, in spite of his disabilities.³⁷ The following year, this family experienced a loss with the passing of George, David and Julia's oldest son. George died in Johnson City, Illinois from typhoid fever.³⁸ After his death, his family returned to the Clearfield County area.

³⁶ Jack L. Cowher, *The Cowhers of Centre County, Pennsylvania* (Tyrone, Pennsylvania: Jack L. Cowher [25A West 10th Street, 16686], 2006), pgs 17-18.

³⁷ 1910 U.S. census, Clearfield, Pennsylvania, population schedule, Woodward Township, Houtzdale, enumeration district (ED) 56, sheet 12B, dwelling 135, family 135, Household of David Cowfer; digital images, Ancestry.com (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed n.d.); citing National Archives and Records Administration microfilm T624, roll 1330. Cit. Date: 18 Apr 1910.

³⁸ Charles L. Eater Jr., MD and Mabel B. Eater, *Descendants of David Timothy Cowher and Julia Ann Stonebraker*, Typewritten (Lewistown, Pennsylvania: Self published, Bet 1978 and 1992), pgs. 42 & 43, George W. Cowher.

At the end of October 1912, while still living in Houtzdale, David celebrated his 70th birthday. According the Bureau of Pension regulations, this was the age that entitled a pensioned soldier to receive an increase and they sent a request asking him to provide proof of his birthdate. David in turn responded with a certified, transcribed copy of information recorded in a family Bible. The Bureau accepted this and his pension increased to \$19 per month.

Sometime between 1 May 1913 and early 1915, David and Julia moved back to Osceola Mills to be closer to their remaining sons while he enjoyed his retirement. Mid winter of 1914-1915, David slipped on some ice and fractured his hip. He never recovered from this injury and died as a result of it on 24 March 1915.³⁹

He was buried on the 29th of March at Umbria Cemetery in Osceola Mills. David T. Cowher received a Soldiers Marker.⁴⁰

Julia Ann Stonebraker

Not much is known directly about David's wife, Julia Ann (Stonebraker). Like is so often the case the lives of women are inferred based upon the actions of fathers and husbands. She was most likely born in or near Gardner [Station] because that is where her parents, Valentine and Susan, were living in 1850. Her death certificate shows Centre County as her place of birth and a form filled out by Julia in her Widow's Pension Application stated she was born at Bald Eagle [Valley], Centre County.

Throughout the course of her life she was known as Julia, Julia A., Julia Ann and Annie with the last names of Cowher and Cowfer. It is not known exactly when she met her future husband. They could have known each other as children or they could have met when David took his "extended leave" from the Army during the Civil War. Either way, once they married, Julia dutifully and faithfully followed her husband wherever he went. She, like her husband, spent her entire life within a few handfuls of miles of her place of birth.

Julia must have been a very strong, loving, hard working, kind-hearted woman. She gave birth to 13 children, kept them fed and clothed, took care of her husband who had health problems later in life, and also helped raise nieces, nephews, grandchildren and great grandchildren. The 1870 Worth Township census mentioned earlier showed a niece and nephew in her home and the 1910 census for Woodward Township in Clearfield County enumerated a granddaughter in their household. One of Julia Ann's namesakes, my grandmother, was also taken care of by her as an infant.

David and Julia's first grandchild was born in 1884, a full 10 years before Julia would give birth to her last child, Amos. They would have 6 grandchildren before Amos was born. In fact, Julia and one of her daughters, Rachel, were pregnant at the same time. This author finds it absolutely amazing that one could have so many grandchildren older than your own.

After David passed away, Julia returned David's last "pensun" check to the Bureau of Pensions.⁴¹ She received it after David's death and apparently felt that it was the honest and correct thing to do. She did, however, promptly apply for a Widow's pension on 5 April 1915 which was approved the following 31st of August. She would receive \$12 a month. Late in 1916, when she was about to turn 70, Julia filled out a form for the Bureau stating she was born on 31 Jan 1847. As a result, Julia's monthly pension increased to \$20.

³⁹ Pennsylvania Death Certificate 32803 (1915), David T. Cowfer. "David Cowfer", Obituary, *The Progress (Clearfield, Pennsylvania)*, 25 Mar 1915, p. 4, col. 4; digital images, *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed n.d.).

⁴⁰ "Pennsylvania Veterans Burial Cards, 1777-1999," database, *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed n.d.), David T. Cowher; Headstone: Soldiers Marker, Information given by Abednego Crain (on) April 5, 1915; citing Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission; Harrisburg, Penn; *Pennsylvania Veterans Burial Cards, 1929-1990*; Archive Collection Number: Series 1-3; Folder No.: 102.

⁴¹ David T. Cowher, Letter written b Julia Ann returning pension check (4 April 1915); Julia A. (Stonebraker) Cowher, widow's pension no. WC795,626, Civil War, RG 15, NA-Washington.

1918 proved to be a rough year for her. On 10 June 1918, 100 acres of land in Taylor Township in David's name, was forfeited for taxes due. These taxes equaled \$6.66. One has to wonder if she was even aware that her husband still owned this land when he died. It was sold to the highest bidder, Wilson G. Frantz for \$9.78.⁴² What is not known was whether or not these 100 acres were part of the 400 acres originally owned by David's father. Those 400 acres were mostly in Worth Township but partly in Taylor. The forfeited acres were located in Taylor. Later, in December of that same year, Julia's youngest daughter, Bertha May, passed away at the age of 30 from complications due to the flu. Was she one of the casualties of the 1918 flu epidemic?

By 1920, Rachel and her husband and children were living with Julia, now identified as Julia A. Cowfer, in Osceola Mills at 410 Coal Street. Again, she was in a position to help raise more grandchildren. Living not far from her were sons Irvin, William J. [James], Wall and their families.

Buried in Umbria Cemetery next to her husband, Julia Ann (Stonebraker) Cowher/Cowfer passed away on 22 September 1928 at the age of 81 years. After she died, David's military marker was replaced with a joint stone for David and Julia.

Julia's date of birth, June 30, 1848, set in stone on their grave marker is incorrect. A close analysis of census records combined with her statement of when she was born in her Declaration of Widow's Pension confirm that her actual date of birth was 31 January 1847. This error was most likely due to poor penmanship on the cutter's orders where "Jan" was misread as "Jun". It is also quite common for dates to be off by one digit on the death dates or years but in this case both were off by one. The 30 should have been a 31 and 1848 should have been 1847.



All of these are easily made errors, however on paper and when combined remove a full year and a half from Julia's life.

David and Julia's Children

David and Julia had the following thirteen children:

1. **Mary Ellen Cowfer** was born on 11 Dec 1866⁴³ in probably Worth Township, Centre, Pennsylvania,⁴⁴ died on 21 Feb 1937 in West Decatur, Clearfield, Pennsylvania at age 70, and was buried on 25 Feb 1937 in Umbria Cemetery, Osceola Mills, Clearfield, Pennsylvania.⁴⁵ She married **William Henry Mease** on 8 October 1896 in Clearfield County.⁴⁶
2. **Martha Ann Cowfer** was born on 27 Apr 1868⁴⁷ in Port Matilda, Centre, Pennsylvania, died on 7 Feb 1953 in Amesville, Clearfield, Pennsylvania at age 84, and was buried on 11 Feb 1953 in

⁴² Centre, Pennsylvania, Deeds, D00125: 0687, James Cowher by Treasurer, David Cowher by Treasurer to Wilson G. Frantz, 10 Jun 1918, recorded 30 August 1921

⁴³ David T. Cowher, Department of the Interior, Bureau of Pensions, (Request for information regarding marriage and children, 22 Mar 1899); Julia A. (Stonebraker) Cowher, widow's pension no. WC795,626, Civil War, RG 15, NA-Washington. See Mary E. Cowher.

⁴⁴ 1870 U.S. census, Centre, Pennsylvania, population schedule, Worth Township, p. 13 (penned) 827A (stamped), dwelling 99, family 95, David, Julia, Mary E. and Martha A. Cowher.

⁴⁵ "Mrs. Mary E. Mease", obituary, *The Progress (Clearfield, Pennsylvania)*, 9 Mar 1937, p. 8, col. 4; digital images, *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed n.d.).

⁴⁶ Optical Storage Solutions, Inc., "LANDEX," database, *Landex.com* (<http://www.landex.com/webstore> : accessed 23 Mar 2012), Mary E. Cowfer and William H. Mease; Marriage License, Clearfield County, Instrument #106079, Book 0020, Page 6187.

⁴⁷ David T. Cowher, Department of the Interior, Bureau of Pensions, (Request for information regarding marriage and children, 22 Mar 1899); Julia A. (Stonebraker) Cowher, widow's pension no. WC795,626, Civil War, RG 15, NA-Washington. See Martha A. Cowher.

- IEOF Cemetery, Brisbin, Clearfield, Pennsylvania.⁴⁸ She married **John H. Wilkinson** on 4 March 1883 in Sandy Ridge, Centre, Pennsylvania.⁴⁹
3. **Nancy Jane (Cowher) Cowfer** was born on 25 Aug 1870⁵⁰ in Graysville, Huntingdon County, Pennsylvania, died on 2 May 1943 in Osceola Mills at age 72, and was buried on 5 May 1943 in Umbria Cemetery.⁵¹ She married **Perry Harris** on 21 May 1908 in Clearfield County.⁵²
 4. **George Washington Cowfer** was born on 11 Jul 1872⁵³ in Graysville⁵⁴ died on 23 Oct 1911 in Johnson City, Illinois⁵⁵ at age 39, and was buried in Umbria Cemetery.⁵⁶ He married **Mary Frances Garman** on 25 December 1897 in Clearfield County.⁵⁷
 5. **Rachel Matilda Cowfer** was born on 23 Aug 1874 in Centre County, Pennsylvania, died on 24 Dec 1953 in Philipsburg, Centre County, Pennsylvania⁵⁸ at age 79, and was buried in Umbria Cemetery.⁵⁹ She married **John Woods** on 14 June 1891 in Sandy Ridge.⁶⁰
 6. **Daniel Irvin Cowfer** was born on 9 Nov 1876⁶¹ in Bald Eagle Furnace, Blair, Pennsylvania, died on 20 Apr 1960 in Philipsburg at age 83, and was buried on 23 Apr 1960 in Umbria Cemetery⁶². He married first **Sarah E. Woods** about 1901, second **Clara Long** on 25 May 1932 in Clearfield County and third, **Bertha Marie Long** after 1956.⁶³
 7. **Edward Valentine "Wall" Cowfer** was born on 9 Sep 1879⁶⁴ in Powelton, Centre, Pennsylvania, died on 4 Feb 1958 in probably Osceola Mills at age 78, and was buried in Umbria Cemetery.⁶⁵ He married **Zola Marie Park** on 17 July 1900 in Clearfield County.⁶⁶
 8. **James William Cowfer** was born on 4 Mar 1882⁶⁷ in Powelton, died on 15 Apr 1969 in Philipsburg State Hospital, Pennsylvania at age 87, and was buried on 18 Apr 1969 in Umbria Cemetery.⁶⁸ He married **Effie M. Helsel** on 28 June 1902 in Clearfield County.⁶⁹

⁴⁸ "Martha A. Wilkinson," obituary, *The Progress (Clearfield, Pennsylvania)*, 9 Feb 1953, p. 3, col. 3; digital images, Ancestry.com (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed n.d.).

⁴⁹ Dr. Charles Eater Jr. and Mabel Eater, Charles W. Morgan, *The Stonebrakers in America* (Shippensburg, Pennsylvania: Self-published, 1992), 200, Martha Ann Cowfer.

⁵⁰ David T. Cowher, Department of the Interior, Bureau of Pensions, (Request for information regarding marriage and children, 22 Mar 1899); Julia A. (Stonebraker) Cowher, widow's pension no. WC795,626, Civil War, RG 15, NA-Washington. See Nancy J. Cowher.

⁵¹ "Mrs. Jane Harris," obituary, *The Progress (Clearfield, Pennsylvania)*, 8 May 1943, p. 5, col. 8; digital images, Ancestry.com (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 2 Oct 2011); Her obit states that she was born in Graysville, Centre Co., but just a month earlier her parents were living in Worth, Centre Co. Graysville is in Huntingdon County, and is about 10 miles south-southeast of Port Matilda.

⁵² Optical Storage Solutions, Inc., "LANDEX," database, Bula J [Nancy Jane] and Perry M. Harris; Marriage License, Clearfield County, Instrument #115077, Book 0022, Page 15173.

⁵³ David T. Cowher, Department of the Interior, Bureau of Pensions, (Request for information regarding marriage and children, 22 Mar 1899); Julia A. (Stonebraker) Cowher, widow's pension no. WC795,626, Civil War, RG 15, NA-Washington. See Geo W Cowher.

⁵⁴ George Cowher, "Migration of the Julia Ann (Stonebraker) Cowher/Cowfer, Martha Ann (Cowher) Wilkinson & Rosella (Wilkinson) Martin Families; Mother, Daughter & Granddaughter, 1848-1952" (MS, Henderson, Colorado, 2012), pgs. 2-3; authored and privately held by Julia M. Bagwell, [address for private use,] Henderson, Colorado, 2012.

⁵⁵ Eater, et al., *Descendants of David Timothy Cowher and Julia Ann Stonebraker*, pgs. 42 & 43.

⁵⁶ Umbria Cemetery (Clearfield, Pennsylvania; This cemetery is located at the end of Elizabeth Street in Osceola Mills, Pennsylvania), Personally read, 12 July 2009.

⁵⁷ Optical Storage Solutions, Inc., "LANDEX," database, George W. Cowher and Mary F. Garman; Marriage License, Clearfield County, Instrument #107298, Book 0015, Page 7391.

⁵⁸ "Mrs. Rachel Woods"" obituary, *The Progress (Clearfield, Pennsylvania)*, 26 Dec 1953, p. 2, col. 4.

⁵⁹ Umbria Cemetery, Rachel M. Woods marker, Personally read, 12 July 2009.

⁶⁰ "Mrs. Rachel Woods"" obituary.

⁶¹ David T. Cowher, Department of the Interior, Bureau of Pensions, (Request for information regarding marriage and children, 22 Mar 1899); Julia A. (Stonebraker) Cowher, widow's pension no. WC795,626, Civil War, RG 15, NA-Washington. See Danyel E. (*sic*). Cowher.

⁶² "D. Irvin Cowfer," obituary, *The Progress (Clearfield, Pennsylvania)*, 21 April 1960, p. 10, col. 2.

⁶³ *Ibid*.

⁶⁴ David T. Cowher, Department of the Interior, Bureau of Pensions, (Request for information regarding marriage and children, 22 Mar 1899); Julia A. (Stonebraker) Cowher, widow's pension no. WC795,626, Civil War, RG 15, NA-Washington. See Edward V. Cowher.

⁶⁵ "Edward (Wall) Cowfer", obituary, *The Progress (Clearfield, Pennsylvania)*, 5 Feb 1958, p. 6, col. 3.

⁶⁶ Optical Storage Solutions, Inc., "LANDEX," database, Edward W. Cowher and Zola M. Parks; Marriage License, Clearfield County, Instrument #109037, Book 0017, Page 9130.

⁶⁷ David T. Cowher, Department of the Interior, Bureau of Pensions, (Request for information regarding marriage and children, 22 Mar 1899); Julia A. (Stonebraker) Cowher, widow's pension no. WC795,626, Civil War, RG 15, NA-Washington. See James W. Cowher.

⁶⁸ "J. William Cowfer," obituary, *The Progress (Clearfield, Pennsylvania)*, 16 Apr 1969, p. 2, col. 8. James William was the last of his siblings to pass away. Umbria Cemetery, J. William Cowfer marker, Personally read, 12 July 2009.

9. **Sara E. Cowfer** was born 13 Mar 1884⁷⁰ in Powelton, died on 3 Oct 1954 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania while visiting a daughter at age 70, and was buried on 7 Oct 1954 in Umbria Cemetery.⁷¹ She married **Joseph Marriot** on 18 December 1911 in Clearfield County.⁷²
10. **Susan Alice Cowfer** was born on 10 Oct 1886⁷³ in Powelton, died on 12 Apr 1965 in Westmoreland Co., Pennsylvania at age 78, and was buried in Plum Creek Cemetery, Unity, Pennsylvania.⁷⁴ She married **John M. Banks** on 10 October 1907 in Clearfield County.⁷⁵
11. **Bertha May Cowfer** was born on 25 Oct 1888⁷⁶ in Powelton, died on 10 Dec 1918 in Clearfield County,⁷⁷ Pennsylvania at age 30, and was buried in Umbria Cemetery.⁷⁸ She married **David Samuel Whaling** on 22 June 1911 in Clearfield County.⁷⁹
12. **Allen "Aaron" David Cowfer** was born on 30 Apr 1891⁸⁰ in Powelton, died on 26 Jan 1961 in probably Dorseyville, Allegheny, Pennsylvania at age 69, and was buried in Lakewood Memorial Gardens, Dorseyville. He married **Ethel Ruth Couperthwaite** on 29 December 1911 in Osceola Mills.⁸¹
13. **Amos B. Cowfer** was born on 10 Aug 1894⁸² in Bald Eagle [possibly Osceola Mills or Powelton], died on 2 Oct 1964 in Philadelphia at age 70, and was buried on 4 Oct 1964 in Bald Eagle Cemetery, Snyder Township, Blair County, Pennsylvania.⁸³ He married **Ruth McCall**.⁸⁴

⁶⁹ Optical Storage Solutions, Inc., "LANDEX," database, James W. Cowher and Effie Helsell; Marriage License, Clearfield County, Instrument #110507, Book 0018, Page 10601.

⁷⁰ David T. Cowher, Department of the Interior, Bureau of Pensions, (Request for information regarding marriage and children, 22 Mar 1899); Julia A. (Stonebraker) Cowher, widow's pension no. WC795,626, Civil War, RG 15, NA-Washington. See Sarah S. (*sic*) Cowher.

⁷¹ "Mrs. Sarah E. Marriot", obituary, *The Progress* (Clearfield, Pennsylvania), 5 October 1954, p. 3, col. 4.

⁷² Optical Storage Solutions, Inc., "LANDEX," database, Sarah E. Cowfer and Joseph Mariott (*sic*); Marriage License, Clearfield County, Instrument #118478, Book 0024, Page 18915.

⁷³ David T. Cowher, Department of the Interior, Bureau of Pensions, (Request for information regarding marriage and children, 22 Mar 1899); Julia A. (Stonebraker) Cowher, widow's pension no. WC795,626, Civil War, RG 15, NA-Washington. See Susan A. Cowher.

⁷⁴ Dr. Charles Eater Jr.... *The Stonebrakers in America*, 242. See Susan Alice Cowfer.

⁷⁵ Optical Storage Solutions, Inc., "LANDEX," database, Sue Cowfer and John Banks; Marriage License, Clearfield County, Instrument #114646, Book 0021 Page 14741.

⁷⁶ David T. Cowher, Department of the Interior, Bureau of Pensions, (Request for information regarding marriage and children, 22 Mar 1899); Julia A. (Stonebraker) Cowher, widow's pension no. WC795,626, Civil War, RG 15, NA-Washington. See Birtha (*sic*) M. Cowher.

⁷⁷ Dr. Charles Eater Jr. et al, *The Stonebrakers in America*, 244. See Bertha May Cowfer.

⁷⁸ Umbria Cemetery, Bertha May Cowfer marker, personally read, 12 July 2009.

⁷⁹ Optical Storage Solutions, Inc., "LANDEX," database, Bertha M. Coffey and David Whaling; Marriage License, Clearfield County, Instrument #117320, Book 0024, Page 17424.

⁸⁰ David T. Cowher, Department of the Interior, Bureau of Pensions, (Request for information regarding marriage and children, 22 Mar 1899); Julia A. (Stonebraker) Cowher, widow's pension no. WC795,626, Civil War, RG 15, NA-Washington. See Aron (*sic*) D. Cowher.

⁸¹ Dr. Charles Eater Jr., et al, *The Stonebrakers in America*, 246, see Allen (*sic*) David Cowfer.

⁸² David T. Cowher, Department of the Interior, Bureau of Pensions, (Request for information regarding marriage and children, 22 Mar 1899); Julia A. (Stonebraker) Cowher, widow's pension no. WC795,626, Civil War, RG 15, NA-Washington. See Aimes (*sic*) B. Cowher Cowher.

⁸³ "Amos D. Cowfer," obituary, *The Progress* (Clearfield, Pennsylvania), 3 Oct 1964, p. 10, col. 8.

⁸⁴ Dr. Charles Eater Jr., et al, *The Stonebrakers in America* (Shippensburg, Pennsylvania: Self-published, 1992), 250. See Amos B. Cowfer.