

# **Establishing Beyond a Reasonable Doubt that the Proposed Match of Stephen Sakellarios with 19<sup>th</sup>-Century Author Mathew Franklin Whittier is an Authentic Case of Reincarnation**

By Stephen Sakellarios, ©2022

## **Introduction.**

By May 4, 2005, when I first encountered my proposed past-life self, Mathew Franklin Whittier, on the Sarah Orne Jewett Text Project website, I had studied Eastern mysticism for roughly 32 years, and the Western research into reincarnation—including the work of Dr. Ian Stevenson and colleagues—for eight years. In the course of producing my documentary, “In Another Life: Reincarnation in America,” I had become aware of the most strongly-proved cases, and the most effective research methods—both scientific, and what I would call “forensic,” i.e., seeking the legal standard of “beyond a reasonable doubt.” This latter category included past-life therapists who had documented a particularly compelling case, like Rick Brown’s presentation in “The Reincarnation of James—the Submarine Man,” as well as people who had attempted to prove their own case, as in Capt. Robert Snow’s “Looking for James Carroll Beckwith.” I was neither averse to the use of hypnosis, if certain controls were applied, nor to psychic mediums, if vetted for authenticity. But the primary criterion I wished to adopt, was the gold standard set by Dr. Ian Stevenson. One must obtain, and then carefully date and document, past-life memories which the subject (myself, in this case) experienced before there was any normal way of knowing the historically confirmed information. Furthermore, those memories must be specific, idiosyncratic, and as plentiful as possible to overcome a normal explanation of “chance,” or mere guesswork.

This is not as simple as it might seem. It *is* relatively easy, if one has correctly identified a past life, to experience a past-life memory, either through an altered state like hypnosis, or through a chance encounter with some element of that lifetime, as for example a reincarnated person or a location. What’s difficult is to prove it by the above criteria, and especially to prove it to anyone else. Why should it be more difficult to prove a past-life memory to anyone *else*? Because then the issue of one’s own veracity arises. *You* know you aren’t fabricating your results—but now you must build into your evidence, proof to the *other* person that you aren’t fabricating them! Thus, for all the past-life impressions which arose during the course of my study, perhaps only 20 or 30 could be proven to at least some degree of plausibility, while only a handful lent themselves to proof beyond a reasonable doubt. And there is only one I consider air-tight, so long as the match, itself, remains in question—but as William James pointed out, the existence of one white crow proves that not all crows are black.

I must also clarify that the term “memories” does not necessarily mean only *cognitive* memories (even in Dr. Stevenson’s research method). Emotional memory, more subtle feelings, and simple recognition memory can also become grist for the research mill. For example, when children were brought into contact with their proposed past-life family, Dr. Stevenson was keen to observe whether their emotional reactions corresponded appropriately. In my case, if I recorded an emotion of deep affection for a man’s portrait, but I later found, in the deep (and normally inaccessible) historical record that he and Mathew were actually bitter enemies, then that proposed emotional past-life memory would be proved extremely implausible. So even

emotional memories are “falsifiable,” which is to say, they can be proved wrong. One must not make the mistake of assuming that because the raw data are emotions, the analysis of them is therefore *emotional*.

### **Mathew as represented in the official Whittier sources.**

I did not pursue my research in full earnest until four years after my initial discovery of Mathew Franklin Whittier. However, not long after first viewing Mathew’s etching, I accessed two historical sources concerning his life. The first was his only full-length biography, a 1941 student thesis entitled “The Life and Works of Matthew Franklin Whittier,” by Lloyd W. Griffin; and the second was “The Life and Letters of John Greenleaf Whittier” by official Whittier biographer Samuel Pickard, published in 1894. One past-life memory impression came unbidden while reading the introductory chapter of this book; and another, while casually perusing samples of Mathew’s work in the Appendix of the thesis. These could not have been influenced by any previously-seen historical material, inasmuch as they occurred during my first encounters. But by the time I took up the challenge to prove my own case, in 2009, my exposure to everything in those two sources, plus the information provided in other John Greenleaf Whittier biographies, was suspect for the error of false memory, or “cryptomnesia.” By this I mean that if I seemed to remember something, and I had already been exposed to that information in these sources, it would be difficult to prove that I wasn’t actually remembering it *from* these sources. I might or might not have been, but *proving* it would now become problematic.

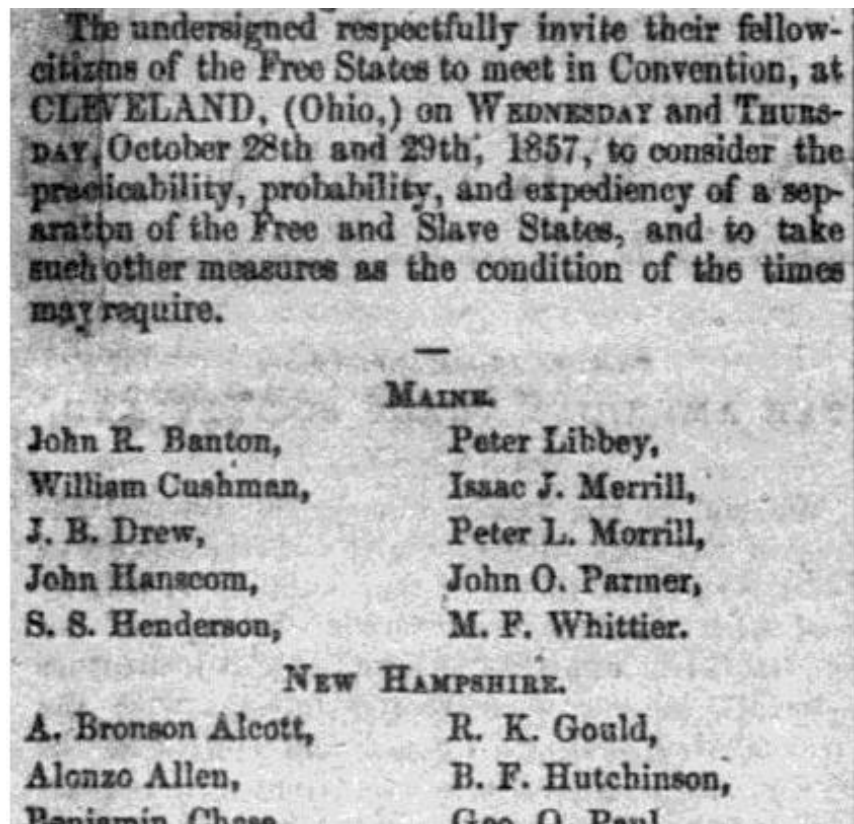
Fortunately—in a particular, ironic sense—much of this information about Mathew derived from the official Whittier legacy was erroneous. For example, Mathew was credited, in the sources initially available to me, with having written only one satirical series featuring “Ethan Spike” of “Hornby.” There were also vague references to his poetry, but none had seemingly been preserved, and the inference was that it was mediocre.. Over the course of 13 years of intensive research, I discovered that from 1825 (at age 12) until 1879, he had published over 2,700 works in practically all genres, including poetry—excellent poetry. His legacy also includes 15 novels published from 1833 to 1863. Mathew began publishing before John Greenleaf Whittier did; and Mathew was editing a New York newspaper, the “Constellation,” when John Greenleaf was editing the local “Essex Gazette.” It was Mathew who was aiding John Greenleaf’s career, by reprinting his local productions in New York City.

Similarly, Mathew is not portrayed as having any particular attachment to his first wife, Abby Poyen, and he is said to have remarried a year later because, like his brother, he was “attractive to women.” (One or two sources, citing an incorrect date, even infer that Mathew remarried while Abby lay dying!) Griffin, relying on Pickard, tells us this second marriage ended in 1857, at which time Mathew supposedly abandoned his family. Mathew is also said to have changed jobs, and residences, frequently. In short, his legacy, as I was later able to prove, had been maliciously truncated and distorted. Only the charges of alcohol abuse in his youth and in his later years are correct. When Mathew was a young man, drinking was considered normal. People even drank in church! But the Whittier historians neglect to mention that he was an enthusiastic advocate of Temperance during most of his adult life. He appears to have fallen off the wagon when he was stuck in a dead-end job and a loveless third marriage, in the late 1860’s. His literary legacy had been stolen by over a dozen different people, or buried in the obscurity that he

himself had idealistically created by publishing anonymously, and was irretrievably lost. Not only that, but his grief for Abby had not abated in 30 years, except that now he felt he had betrayed her by not waiting to join her in heaven. It simply became unbearable.

But all this biographical slander by the Whittier biographers created the ideal situation for reincarnation research, because not only had my investigation not been tainted by my previous exposure to these sources, it had actually *benefited* from them. If I seemingly remembered things about Mathew Franklin Whittier's life which ran substantially counter to what these biographers had written—and my memories were subsequently proved correct—then they became even more strongly validated. This happened with regard to several of these points.

Firstly, I felt from the beginning that Abby was indeed the love of Mathew's life, and this was proved many times over by my study of the deep historical record. I knew that they had eloped, although it took me years to prove it. I also knew that the second marriage had been arranged, and that Mathew must have been tricked into it, by being told that Abby had come through in a séance with instructions to marry this woman, named Jane Vaughan, whom his mother had picked out for him. I knew he found her profoundly incompatible and impossible to live with, and I learned that he continued to support the family from New York. (In fairness, I should mention that I had been told by the curator of the Haverhill Public Library, in 2005, that she had been a "battle ax.") I also extrapolated that he separated from her formally in 1849; and that where one sees frequent changes of address, these were intended to improve the living situation of his children. I learned that he was unable to continue supporting the family in 1857, because he was publicly exposed as the author of "Ethan Spike," a radical anti-slavery satire, and he was blacklisted from employment in Portland at this time. Another possible cause was that William Lloyd Garrison unwisely listed him, in "The Liberator," as an attendee to an upcoming anti-slavery and disunionist convention.



Similarly, as to the various jobs Mathew is reported to have held, his biographers simply remained unaware of his dual careers as a writer (and on one occasion, as an editor), and a merchant; or, his work as a traveling postal inspector. Whether Mathew withheld this information from his family, or whether Pickard simply omitted it, is unclear. In any case, all Griffin has done is to list some of Mathew's *odd jobs* taken for additional income, or to tide him over. He does include Mathew's brief ownership of a stove business; and he reports a rumor—which he questions—that Mathew was a trader in later years. And, he has Mathew's dead-end clerical job, which he performed for the last 20 years of his life, at the Boston Custom House (Pickard short-changes him by seven years). But he has missed a great deal.

I can prove almost all of this, to varying degrees of certainty, including that there is a record of Mathew's mother attending séances during the period in question. Actually, it is manifestly obvious from all the surrounding circumstances, that Mathew's second marriage was arranged. Jane Vaughan was masculine-looking and, by Mathew's admission in one of his humorous sketches, materialistic, being unappreciative of his spiritual or literary aspirations. She came from St. John, Canada (there was a branch of the Whittier family in Nova Scotia). Had Mathew wished to remarry, he could have found any number of more attractive, compatible girls in Portland.

The power and elegance of my research results can only be fully appreciated by immersing oneself in the entire study, which has been presented, as a thorough and transparent account of the research process, in two extraordinarily lengthy e-books: "Mathew Franklin Whittier in his own words," and "Mathew Franklin Whittier in his own world." They are as long as they are,

because over a period of 13 years I made new discoveries almost on a daily basis. In addition to Mathew's vast literary legacy and the clues embedded therein, my books also contain a great many past-life impressions, which are validated along a continuum of plausibility from just plausible, to proven beyond a reasonable doubt. Although there are indeed "smoking guns," it is the cumulative weight and interconnectedness of all this data which is most compelling.

However, there is also a need to simply establish that I met the criteria for an authentic case of reincarnation, by examining the most strongly-verified memories. This is a necessary, if not sufficient, condition for proving the match; but it be a necessary condition for inducing anyone to read these books in their entirety.

In a typical "Stevensonian" case, involving children with exceptional past-life recall, there may be as many as 30 or 40 objectively verified statements. I did not have this kind of recall, being more like the man who has found his wallet, and hence knows his identity, but who still suffers from profound amnesia. My memories—aside from those derived through hypnotic regression—tended to be triggered by a stimulus which was as nearly as possible identical to what Mathew, himself, would have experienced; and there had to be strong emotion attached to it. Thus, if I saw a portrait of someone he knew personally, but it was not of the age at which he knew that person, this was less likely to trigger a memory "flash-back" experience than if it was of the correct age. But at the same time, even if the portrait was of the appropriate age, if Mathew had not had a strong emotional relationship (positive or negative) with that person, a flashback was far less likely to occur than if there *had been* such a relationship.

Although I have not emphasized them in my research, I did, indeed, have a few childhood memories which I later learned were relevant to my past-life as Mathew. Most, like longing for a soul-mate from an early age, or feeling that I had somehow lost a precious partner in death (even in grade school), are too generic to stand as evidence. One, however, is more specific. For as long as I can remember, I felt a nostalgic pull to the "rocky coast of Maine," before I really had much of an idea what that was. It so happens that I mentioned this, in my personal journal, on Nov. 19, 1986. At that time I was 32 years old, and this is roughly 19 years before I discovered Mathew Franklin Whittier:

Saw two interesting things on TV. The first was a biographical sketch of Andrew Wyath's [sic] father, H.C. Wyath [sic]. Many parallels I can identify with...a sensitive man with an inborn nostalgia for a more enlightened personal past (as, a memory of the astral, or even the longing for the "other world" which Rumi speaks about in the Masnavi...)—his greatness as an illustrator and artist, and his great love for his family. He even loved the coast of Maine and felt drawn to watch the waves rush against the rocky shoreline, as I feel a great pull to do. Perhaps I do have some karma there, and perhaps I will go there someday. In fact I may take a trip there if I have the time and resources at the earliest possible.

There were also the verifications which came through two psychic readings, which have been discussed in a separate paper, "Veridical Readings by Two Psychic Mediums, Concerning a Single Proposed Case of Reincarnation." Each of these psychics made multiple "hits" with very few errors. The first affirmed that I had, in fact, been Mathew Franklin Whittier (i.e., without

knowing Mathew's identity at the time of making the statement). This has a certain weight, as evidence, in itself, but it will not be brought to bear in this paper. The second actually got the name "Mathew," pairing it with the name of a small town which at this time neither he, nor I, knew that Mathew and Abby had briefly lived in.

I must also mention that where I indicate that I have identified an anonymous literary source as Mathew's "by style," this conclusion is not as arbitrary as it may seem. I vetted these works with extreme caution, applying both my intuition and experience, but also specific criteria too numerous to explain, here.

Finally, there is one additional caveat. My study became highly controversial when I found clear, extensive evidence that Mathew Franklin Whittier and his wife, Abby Poyen Whittier, were both literary prodigies who remained assiduously anonymous, but whose work, when plagiarized, made a number of authors famous, or increased the fame of already renowned literary figures. The evidence, in these cases of literary attribution (where some of the plagiarists were famous, and others obscure), is as rigorously compiled and as compelling as that for the reincarnation case, itself, but it introduces a seemingly insurmountable credulity factor. None, when encountering this aspect of my study, can resist the automatic assumption that I have manufactured these results out of thin air, in an attempt to feed my own ego. No amount of objective evidence will satisfy the incredulous, whose "boggle threshold" has thus been exceeded, because he or she has stopped taking my work seriously at that point.

However, evidence is evidence. I report *all* my results, and I report *everything* I learned about these historical figures. If Mathew struggled with alcohol abuse early in life, and then again in his later years, I report that. If he wasn't careful enough in his use of satire, I report that. If he unfairly suspected Abby, thereby damaging their relationship, or if despite his efforts to exercise Christian charity he had a vengeful streak, I report that. But if he was a deep philosopher and life-long student of literature, an exceptionally creative and talented writer, a devoted esoteric Christian, and a man of integrity and high ideals who advanced several social reforms selflessly from behind the scenes, I report that. And if he was the original co-author or author of several works which made certain beloved authors famous, I also report *that*.

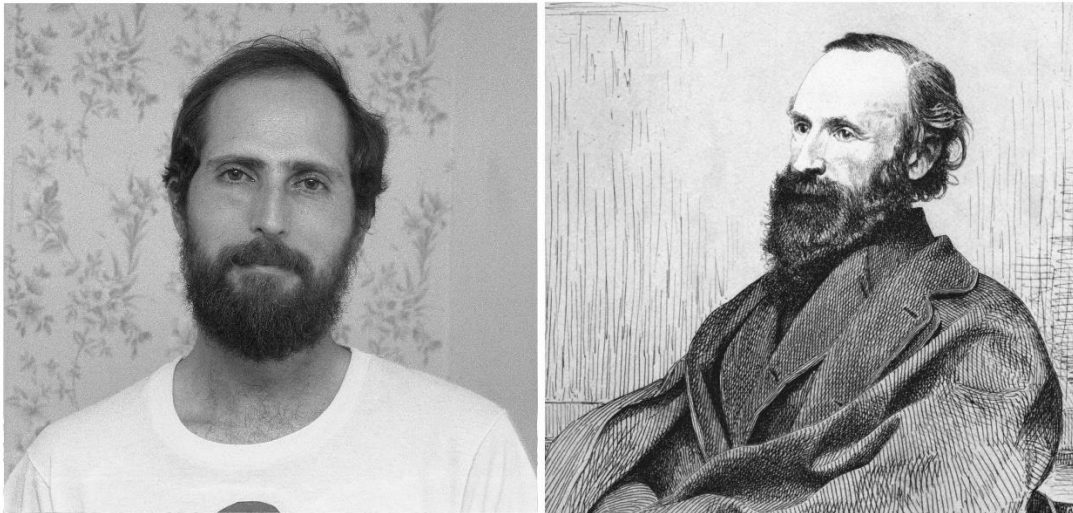
In one instance, the verification of such a claim comprises one of the most strongly-validated past-life memories of the entire study. Should I withhold it, here, to prevent the reader from "switching off"? Or should I include it for the sake of honesty, transparency and rigor? If I reveal it, I am all but guaranteeing that this paper will be intelligible only to posterity and a very few progressive thinkers of the 21<sup>st</sup>-century. I am also guaranteeing that this paper is *extremely* unlikely to be accepted for publication by any scholarly journal. I can prove these cases—but if I provide the additional 50 pages required to substantiate even one of them, 98% of my readers will simply stop reading. If they stop reading, they will not see the bulk of the evidence; and if they don't see the bulk of the evidence, they will, in effect, not have read the paper even though they will tell me that they have.

If I must err, I will err on the side of truth. The reader may simply take whatever seems implausible, and set it aside on the "I-don't-know" shelf, which would be the rational approach.

With this introduction and its caveats, we will now explore several of my most strongly-verified past-life memories. I will attempt to provide as much detail as possible, concerning *when* the memory occurred, the *circumstances* under which it occurred, and *how it was validated* through a study of the deep historical record.

### **Discovering Mathew.**

I had my first experience when I encountered an etching of Mathew Franklin Whittier in the Sarah Orne Jewett Text Project website, in mid-2005. The only information given was Mathew's name, that he was an author (i.e. of some kind), his birth and death dates, and that he was the brother of John Greenleaf Whittier. His facial features were substantially similar to my own; but what I remember is being especially drawn to his eyes. I felt a deep sense of familiarity—that I was looking at myself. To the extent that this was later proved correct, it becomes a strongly-verified recognition memory in its own right. Meanwhile, the marked similarity in appearance is not enough, by itself, to prove the match—but it must be given its own due weight. It should be enough to put the reader on notice that we may have a genuine case, here.



### **Describing Mathew before I discovered him.**

I say this was my first experience, and in a sense it was, but in the fall of 2003, two years before discovering Mathew, I participated in a text interview concerning the release of my documentary for a website called “Spiritual Atlanta.” I was e-mailed the questions, and answered in turn by e-mail. One of them read:

***Can you recall any of your past lives? If so, how have they been influential in your work?***

I responded, in part:

I have, through intuition, glimpses, and educated guesswork, identified a few lives I feel pretty sure of, and a number of others I have hints of. I’ve been a writer, connected, I

think, with the Romantic poets, for example. Not any of the famous ones as near as I can tell, but I think I knew some of them personally and ascribed to their overall philosophy (for better or worse).

I was unclear, at this time, as to what, precisely, constituted the Romantic period. But with that caveat, once again, if the case itself is verified as authentic, this becomes a strongly-validated statement, i.e., it's something I had no possible way of knowing at the time. Crucial, here, is the fact that I say I was not one of the famous poets, but that I "knew them personally." First of all, this narrows down the field considerably, because only a limited number of people were in the immediate social orbit of these famous writers. Each of them had just so many members of their extended family, and just so many close friends and associates. So we are *not* dealing with the entire population of the United States, by a long shot—this was a relatively small group of people. Secondly, my answer specifically matches Mathew Franklin Whittier, whose position in that society of famous writers and "Fireside Poets" of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century was as the "brother of the Poet." In fact, that is precisely how he is typically referred to, when he comes up in the historical record, as we see from the following account by Henry Clay Barnabee's "Reminiscences":

Among the scores of "distinguished sons" whom the Old Home Weeks used to round up in Portsmouth were included: Daniel Webster, Jeremiah Mason, Ichabod Bartlett, John Mitchell Sewell, Thomas Bailey Aldrich, John G. Whittier, and a brother of the latter, who, under the *nom de plume* of "Ethan Spike," used to write comic Yankeeisms for the Portland (Maine) *Transcript*: James T. Fields, of Boston, celebrity in connection with the Corner Bookstore, the *Atlantic Monthly* magazine, and the publishing business generally; Harriet McEwen Kimball, poetess: Benjamin P. Shillaber, creator of the inimitable *Mrs. Partington*: and the Rev. Thomas Starr King, whose father before him had preached in Portsmouth's venerable Unitarian Church.

I should perhaps mention, for skeptics, that when I first encountered the etching of Mathew Franklin Whittier, I was *not* looking for a historical figure matching my 2003 interview. In fact, I had long forgotten that interview, although I had felt what I reported in it for many years—going back to grade school, actually. Instead, I was looking for a past life as a woman of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century in California, who had had some success writing serials, as a psychic had told me several years earlier. I felt some sense of recognition for the name, "Sarah Orne Jewett," which is what led me to that website. I did *not* go through a list of possible matches for the Romantic poet memory, before settling on Mathew Franklin Whittier.

### **Remembering Mathew's involvement in the authorship of a famous literary classic.**

In my online blog (at that time, called an "Update") of May 31, 2006—roughly a year after I had discovered Mathew Franklin Whittier—I suddenly had the inspiration to create a dated public marker:

Here's something that might be useful as evidence. I have a strong feeling that I had some impact or influence on Charles Dickens's writing of "A Christmas Carol," as Mathew Whittier. But I have seen absolutely no evidence in that regard. I know that his brother, John Greenleaf Whittier, attended a reading in America by Dickens, and that is



the closest I can put them. So if it ever comes out that Whittier corresponded with Dickens while Dickens was in the process of writing that work, there will be a public record of my having had that intuition.

At this time, I had never studied the origin of that novel. Nonetheless, to the extent I was able to verify, beyond a reasonable doubt, that Mathew and Abby Whittier were the original authors of that work, this, too, becomes a strongly validated past-life memory impression. Whether or not I *was* able to confirm it, may be judged by the in-depth treatment given in my two e-books, or by two papers I have written on this subject—a full-length treatise presenting all the evidence, and an abridged version prepared for submission to scholarly journals. They are entitled, respectively, “Evidence That ‘A Christmas Carol’ Was Originally Written by Mathew Franklin Whittier and Abby Poyen Whittier, Rather Than by Charles Dickens”; and “Mathew Franklin Whittier and Abby Poyen Whittier’s Proposed Original Authorship of ‘A Christmas Carol.’”

Our remaining validations do not so much rely on *other* validations, though this issue was difficult to avoid entirely, with an author whose life and work were so deeply hidden in the historical record. Inevitably, for example, when a writer has published almost all of his work under a vast number of pseudonyms, confirming his authorship of *one* series requires appealing to *another* series, also published anonymously, and so-on. It thus becomes a vast tapestry, which is why I say that in order to fully appreciate the power of this study, one must immerse oneself in its totality. One must, in short, become so familiar with Mathew and his work, that one is in a position to perceive *patterns*.

I also concluded that Mathew had been the real author of the poems, “The Raven” and “Annabel Lee,” which are universally attributed to Edgar Allan Poe. Under hypnosis, I seemingly remembered a meeting with Poe, as Mathew, albeit with no specific memory of having shared any work with him—although, in a first meeting between authors this might have been standard protocol. Later, I was able to prove, beyond a reasonable doubt, that Poe had falsely claimed “The Raven” via a kind of 19<sup>th</sup>-century “identity theft.” (He never published “Annabel Lee” during his lifetime.) I mention this for the sake of transparency—we will not delve into the particulars, here, which have also been explored in separate papers. But once again, *if* I was able to prove this literary attribution, then my memory under hypnosis becomes substantially more likely, if not inevitable.

I should make it clear at this point that emotionally, my personal investment is in reestablishing Mathew Whittier and Abby Poyen’s legacy. I feel just as deeply outraged at the historically obscure persons who plagiarized this couple’s work, as I do the famous ones. My motives are not what people automatically assume they must be. I am not seeking vicarious fame through past-life achievements. I am attempting to wrest my past-life legacy from the grip of as many as 13 literary imposters—a few of whom achieved fame partly through Mathew and Abby’s work, precisely because that work was so exceptional. But in many cases the work mistakenly attributed to the obscure authors is just as remarkable as that attributed to the famous ones—and my personal interest is in reclaiming *all* of it. Therefore, any theory concerning my motivation is just that—a theory. And theories, if one is to be rational about them, must be investigated and verified. If they are uncritically *adopted*, no matter how well-justified it may seem, what we have is a prejudiced assumption masquerading as a rational conclusion.

## **A memory of Congress Square in Portland, Maine.**

In a hypnotic regression session conducted on Oct. 28, 2008, the following exchange took place between myself and the hypnotist. I should explain that I was only able to achieve a light state of trance, not being what is called a “good subject”; but that occasionally I would dip down further, or what seemed to be memories would “bubble up” to consciousness. Here, “T.” stands for “therapist,” and “S.” for myself:

T: So now take a deep breath, just something you’ve worked, that’s going on in [?] .

S: Alright, there’s a public event. I’m watching some kind of public event, in a crowd.

T: So, as you stand there, what kind of situation is this?

S: I don’t know if it’s political? (sigh) I can’t quite read it. (chuckles) I don’t know what’s...it’s not threatening but there’s a sense that it’s important. There’s a sense that there’s big changes afoot, and that it’s being announced—it’s being announced.

Something like that. Like a public announcement. You know, there’s no television, there’s no radio, so when something big hits, you know, somebody will get up and make an announcement. So there’s an announcement.

T: So everyone’s gathered around...

S: And, it’s important, and I don’t know how important it’s going to be, that it’s important.

T: So as you take a deep breath, we’re going to move forward in time, just a little bit. And you’re going to find, notice your emotional reaction to the announcement.

S: (pause)

T: What’s the first impression?

S: I think it might be the Emancipation Proclamation, I’m not sure. Because...

T: How are you feeling?

S: Well, I’m feeling that it’s not going to affect anything right in my immediate vicinity, but it means big, big changes elsewhere.

T: Um-hmm. How do you feel about it?

S: I, I think I’m cynical. I think I’m not sure I believe it, or, “Wait and see.” Yeah, wait and see. Yeah.

This hypnotist didn’t pursue details as much as one might wish for the purposes of research, but I was experiencing far more than I was relating verbally. Specifically, I was in an open area, which—already knowing that Mathew had lived in Portland, Maine for many years—I took to be one of the two town squares in that city. There were a great many men in black coats and top hats milling about, as it seemed, with few if any women or children present. At the far end of this area, was a man standing on a makeshift stage—probably a farm wagon—giving an impromptu speech through a megaphone (i.e., a speaking cone). But very few seemed to be paying attention to him, and he was difficult to hear from my vantage point. I didn’t remember any snow on the ground, but it was moist. And, the thoughts and feelings accompanying this vision were as you see in the excerpt, above.

Note that this memory was included in the first version of “Mathew Franklin Whittier in his own words,” published in 2012, while I didn’t discover the strongest supporting evidence until much

later. In that version, I speculated, as I did in the regression session itself, that it might have had to do with the Emancipation Proclamation. Later I realized that the dates didn't line up, because Mathew had actually moved from Portland to Boston by 1863.

Sometime after this regression session, in the course of my research on Portland, I came across a historical photograph of Congress Square, and recognized the buildings in the background. From this, I concluded that the remembered event had taken place in this location. (I subsequently verified that two of the buildings in that photograph were indeed in existence at the time.) Then, in 2018, I discovered one line in a historical text which referred to a "city-wide meeting" in Portland, and the date was given, "Jan. 26, 1861." I am no student of the Civil War—in fact, all my life I have felt only disgust for it (which would be correct for Mathew's own attitude, inasmuch as he was anti-war and advocated "moral suasion" to abolish slavery). Far from studying it, I have avoided the topic whenever possible.

It was a simple matter to look up this historical event from the date. This was the "Great Union Meeting," in which all the city's voters (men only, in that era) were called to the City Hall to discuss the impending secession of the South from the Union. The City Hall held 2,500 persons. In a population of 26,341 (1860), there would have been more than enough voters to overwhelm this building, and to spill out into the two town squares—where it was traditional to give "stump speeches." That men did, in fact, overflow the Hall, is described in the newspaper accounts. Furthermore, while most of the city newspapers praised public solidarity in wishing to placate the South, the liberal "Transcript," which Mathew wrote for, suggested that the meeting had been stacked in favor of the conservatives. The liberals and radicals would have made their own speeches in the town squares—but as a great many others who could not find seats would have been there as well, not all present would have paid much attention. Mathew was a radical abolitionist and a "disunionist," as we have seen, aligned with William Lloyd Garrison. His attitude toward the conservatives' reassurances that the South could be induced to stay by making various concessions, would have been cynicism, as in "Wait and see." (Being a disunionist, Mathew *wanted* the South to leave.)

In short, my past-life vision was accurate on several counts—far beyond chance. Perhaps just as importantly, it does not seem to have been mistaken on *any* counts (unless there was snow on the ground—Portland may have had heavy rain recently, though there was deep snow in other New England states, based on the few historical references I could find). There was essentially no chance that I could have read about this event beforehand. "Ethan Spike" had talked about other "Great Union Meetings," but I thought that was an exaggeration and had no idea it referred to an actual 19<sup>th</sup>-century practice. Nor had I studied the history of the Civil War—even to the extent of watching documentaries about it—and I was unaware that city-wide meetings were held to address the crisis. Finally, I discovered that Mathew, himself, published one of his "Ethan Spike" satires regarding this event, sarcastically reported that his fictional, conservative rural town of "Hornby" had decided not to secede from the Union after all, if the proposed concessions were made to the South. For the record, my digital database indicates that I transcribed the following "Spike" letter on May 4, 2014, well before researching the 1861 date in 2018. However, this was still several years after I experienced the memory under hypnosis, and once again, I simply never connected the two until I learned of the historical Great Union Meeting in Portland. Published in the Feb. 2, 1861 edition of the Portland "Transcript," is the following note:

## **Postscript from Hornby!**

After our outside was printed off we received the following postscript to Ethan Spike's letter, which we insert here, as it is of too much importance to be altogether omitted.

P.S. Post Scripiter.—Since the foregoin a telegraphic despatch from Portland has bin received, wich alters the feed.

Sich of the Convention as was in workin order was got together under a post-mortem writ, and the following Preamble an Resolution added to the Constitution:

Wheras, Notwithstandin, information havin bin received that the Aristocracy of Portland has held a regular constituted meetin and resolved to do us justice: And whereas this being the beginning of the eend—therefore

Resolved, That ef the Wide-Awakes, Garrisonian Abolitionists, Sumner Blues, Douglass Phalanx, Society for the diffusion of Useless Knowledge and the Clear Grits of that rebellious city shall fraternize and confirm the action of the aforesaid aeristockracy, then the Constitution adopted by this Convention is nullified and as tetotally kerflumexed as though it had never bin—otherwise to remain in full effect an vartoo. E. SPIKE, Sec'y Pro tem.

## **A door and a closet.**

My detailed vision of what turned out to be the Great Union Meeting in Portland, Maine on Jan. 26, 1861 stands as one of the most-strongly verified past-life memories of the study, and it is the one I earlier characterized as “air-tight.” That one came through hypnotic regression, but another which is arguably of similar strength did not. I can only provide a cursory summary of the background, but all the details are provided in the aforementioned e-books. The scenario given here has been extrapolated from a great many clues.

Mathew Franklin Whittier and his true love, Abby Poyen, were forced to elope on August 2, 1836, because her father, a marquis, was so class-conscious that he would never permit her to marry a Quaker farm boy, no matter whether he was financially successful, or not. For years Mathew had attempted to succeed in the mercantile business, failing at least in part because of his honesty and naiveté, as well as his unwise choice of business partners. Finally, he must have proposed to Abby without asking her father for her hand in marriage, and she accepted. The couple fled from their native East Haverhill, Mass., to nearby Dover, New Hampshire, where Mathew immediately established a dry goods store. After a little over two months, Abby apparently saw fit to return home to make peace with her father, at which time he promptly had her arrested. Presumably, the charge was that she had stolen her own jewelry. This was possible because in the 1830's, a woman's property belonged either to her father, or to her husband. Since the marriage was being contested, the jewelry ostensibly belonged to her father. Thus, technically, when she took it with her as a nest egg, she was stealing *his* property! Abby was

permitted to move freely within East Haverhill, but was prevented from having any contact with Mathew.

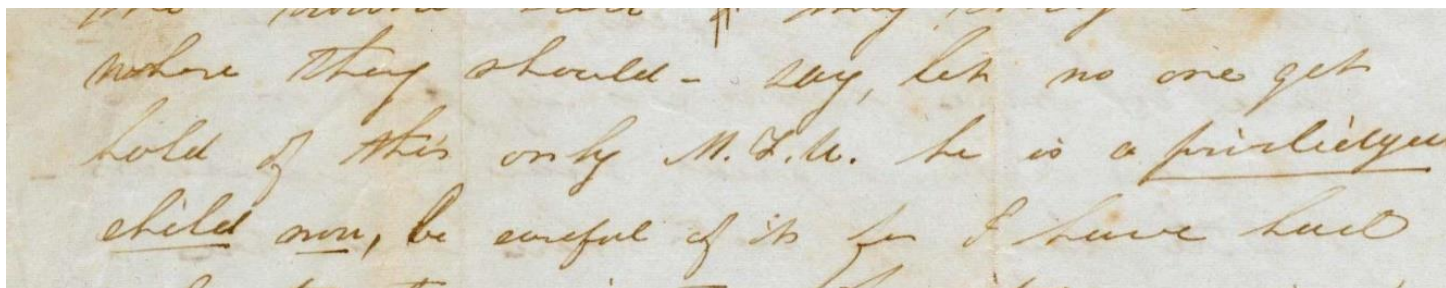
An as-yet unsubstantiated past-life memory has consistently suggested that her father had long been threatening to send her to a finishing school in Paris, and was getting serious about it at this time. I mentioned this by e-mail to a friend on April 17, 2011:

There's a whole lot of clues in that direction, and I think I'm starting to remember some things, too—so I'm building a whole hypothesis around it. The hypothesis goes that her father refused to accept the match, because he was descended from French aristocracy (fact), and Matthew was a “commoner” to him, a poor farm boy. When Abby persisted, her father was, I feel, threatening to send her away to finishing school...

Much later I realized, by studying all the evidence, that a sympathetic local judge may have ordered Abby constrained to the East Haverhill area specifically so as to *prevent* her from being sent away!

Abby decided that the only way to avoid this fate—which would have meant a years-long separation from Mathew, as well as facing the harsh conditions of such schools (which were not kind to independent-minded young women like herself) was to get pregnant. This they accomplished, probably with the help of her sisters, by arranging to rendezvous, on one or more occasions, at an empty house—either her own family home, a building on their property, or the house across the street. We know that the objective was accomplished roughly a month after Abby's arrest, inasmuch as she did, in fact, give birth to their son, Joseph Poyen Whittier, on Aug. 20, 1837. Note that they named him after her father, Joseph Poyen—undoubtedly, in an unsuccessful attempt to placate Mr. Poyen.

Now, the way Mathew was notified of Abby's wish for a rendezvous, was through a letter she wrote to his sister, Elisabeth, on a pretext. That letter is the only one of Abby's which survives, today. She asks Elisabeth to share her letter with Mathew, with the excuse that he will be able to decipher her poor handwriting. She says he is permitted to read it, because he is a “privileged child now.” But past-life memory suggested, to me, a little private joke between them. He had often teased her that she was a “privileged child.” But then, when they became sexually intimate, he exclaimed to her how privileged he felt to be with her in that way, whereupon she quipped that *he* was now a “privileged child”! So this was code, and it meant, “I want to have sex,” which of course, under the circumstances, meant, “I need to get pregnant, now.”



In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, judging by so many of Mathew's works, puns and double entendres are

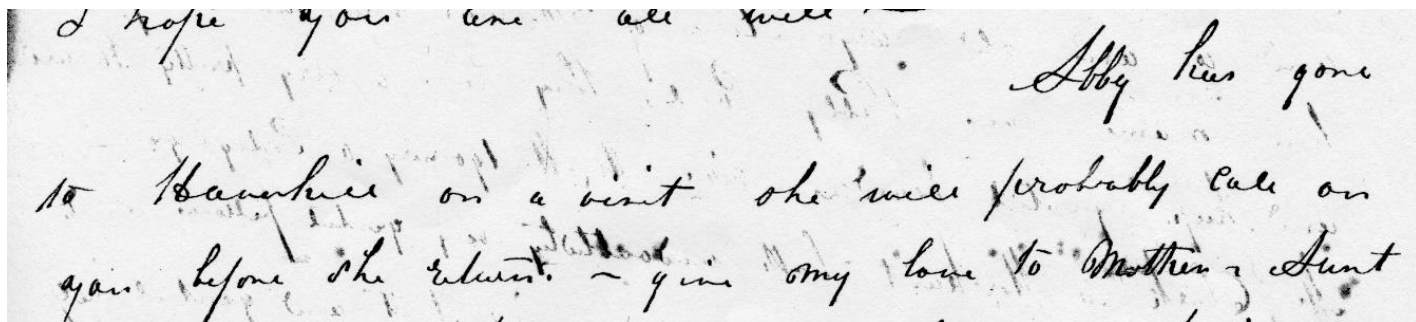
typically set in italics. Inasmuch as an underline, in cursive, is tantamount to italics, the fact that this phrase is underlined in her letter may be intended as a clue, to Mathew, that her meaning is more than it seems. (This has just occurred to me in the course of editing this paper.)

I extrapolated the above scenario laboriously over several years, again, from a great many pieces of evidence. But sometime prior to April 30, 2011, before I had put all this together clearly in my mind, I experienced the following memory. Abby was leading me up a flight of stairs. From the bottom, I could see, half-way up and on the right, a little door seemingly cut into the wall. I thought we were going all the way up to the second floor, but when we came to this door, she suddenly opened it and literally pulled me inside. (The feeling of surprise was a prominent emotional feature of the memory.) Behind the door was a small room, or a large closet, like a linen closet. Seated on top of a white dresser, we passionately and quickly made love.

My earliest documentation of this memory is an incomplete reference to it in my personal journal entry of Oct. 3, 2010:

I don't know if the past-life memories of love-making are historically accurate or not. They seem to repeat—early in our marriage she wouldn't disrobe, and I thought it was piety or modesty, but it was just shyness and fear I wouldn't like her. At some point we made love in a boat, or on an island. There is a scene in a large linen closet, presumably in her parents' house! Are these real memories? I don't know but they keep coming up and they don't seem to change much. Could we have become so frustrated wanting each other that she finally pulled me into a linen closet?

I had seen the historical letter from Abby to Elisabeth by this time, but as can be seen in the above excerpt, I had not yet extrapolated the entire context; nor had I yet discovered a letter written by Mathew to Elisabeth, mentioning Abby's visit to her family, dated Sept. 13, 1836.



I hope you are all well. Abby has gone to Haverhill on a visit she will probably call on you before she returns. Give my love to Mother & Aunt

Again, in my journal entry of April 22, 2011, I write:

I seem to have a memory of being in Abby's home, alone with her. She pulls me into a linen closet of some kind—one just big enough for us to fit inside and close the door. Perhaps everyone is gone but she still wants to take that extra precaution. At any rate, we have sex facing each other seated in cramped quarters with linen all around, and she briefly allows me to penetrate her, perhaps for the first time. This would make sense if we were (at least in our eyes) married, but weren't allowed to see each other and I had "sneaked in." Perhaps she had sent word to me when everyone else would be away on a

trip.

On April 30, 2011, my researcher sent me a link to the online listing for the house next-door to what is called the “Countess House” in Abby’s hometown of Rocks Village (in East Haverhill, Mass.) which included photographs of the interior. It was on this same date, as I responded to this e-mail, that I first specifically mentioned to her that my memories had included, from the beginning, the feature of the door being “embedded in the wall.” Unfortunately, I can’t substantiate that this feature was part of the original memory, because either I neglected to fully document it at the time or have lost that documentation. However, it’s obvious from the context in this e-mail that it preceded the April 30 date—the first time I ever saw confirming evidence. What I remember of the flashback, which is still clear in my mind, is that the door was of smaller than normal size, and flush with the wall. It was something I had assumed we would bypass on our way up the stairs. The feeling of surprise that she suddenly opened it and pulled me into it, remains strongly attached to the memory. It’s what one would experience upon being pulled into a closet, i.e., not simply a last-minute decision to walk into a room. On April 30, I had written:

See up the stairs, there’s a door leading off to the left? Is that a regular feature of these houses? What’s in there, do you know? If it’s a big linen closet, I want to know (I think we had special memories of one). If it’s a big closet, maybe the purpose of it was to be mid-way between upstairs and downstairs, so if you needed linen up or down, it would be easiest to get to.

I have **\*never\*** read that or seen that before—I am speaking strictly from past-life memory (or imagination) here. But if these houses used to have a linen closet half-way up the stairs embedded in the wall, that you could go into and shut the door, then I think I remember Abby pulling me into one once when nobody was home. Boy, was I pleasantly surprised :-)...

I first saw the following corroborating evidence, in the form of a photograph, on Nov. 2, 2012. It was included in an online historical article with accompanying slide show about the Countess House, which is located across the street from where, as I discovered the following year, Abby’s family home had once been. The photograph in question was taken from the bottom of the stairs, and it showed a little door cut into the wall on the right-hand side. Note this may or may not have been the original door—it looks like a sheet of plywood or metal, which could have been fashioned more recently. Later photographs show that it was replaced by a more traditional, albeit diminutive, door.



Visually, with allowance for a 186-year-old memory, one might construe it as being “half-way up,” though of course this is unlikely to be literal, inasmuch as such a room would jut out vertically between the first and second floors. This, incidentally, is actually a point *in favor* of the authenticity of the memory. Had I been either imagining or attempting a hoax, I would not have reported a feature which, given just a little reflection, is physically improbable.

In the photograph, we see that the little door is at the top of the stairs, but there is a landing with three small steps ascending to it on the right, and three additional steps ascending to the second floor, on the left. Behind that door, in modern times, is a bathroom, but it was not so in 1836. We know this because the house immediately next-door *contained the same eccentric architectural feature*. Except, in that case, the door was on the left, rather than on the right. There, however, the room had not been remodeled. Its dimensions were 9’x9’—very likely, a walk-in linen closet, as is also suggested by the positioning of another small, interior door in the corner. (The two doors positioned side-by-side in the corner would have minimized the space taken away from shelving.) The central location of this room would, presumably, have facilitated servants taking linen either upstairs, or downstairs as needed. And note that my recorded memory does specifically mention a linen closet.

To clarify, I encountered the listing for this second house twice—the first time, it was brought to my attention by my researcher in 2011, and then I came across it again three years later, at which time the real estate agent was kind enough to take the photographs we see below. This, even

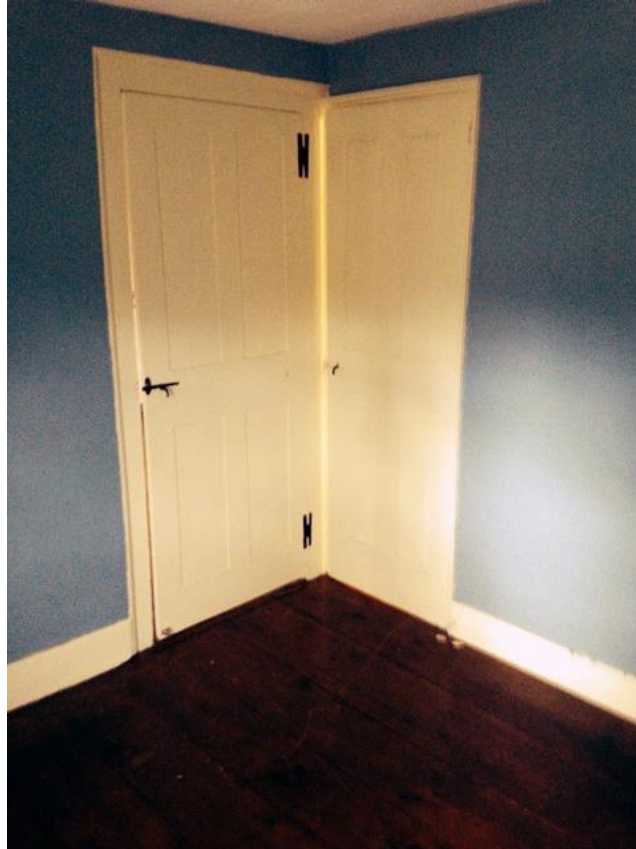


though I was entirely candid with him about my reincarnation research.

When my researcher—who lived in a neighboring town—first sent me the link for the listing, I responded on April 11, 2011:

See up the stairs, there's a door leading off to the left? Is that a regular feature of these houses? What's in there, do you know? If it's a big linen closet, I want to know (I think we had special memories of one). If it's a big closet, maybe the purpose of it was to be mid-way between upstairs and downstairs, so if you needed linen up or down, it would be easiest to get to.





The real estate agent thought that this house had originally been across the street on the Poyen property, moved to its present location in 1860. He opined that it may have been a barn, but in any case it is clearly a structure from at least the 1800's, if not earlier. If it was converted from a barn, this would have to have been done no later than the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, because it has the wide floorboards typically associated with that era (when large trees were abundant).

I was not able to ascertain whether such a feature existed in either the more recently-constructed portion of the Poyen home—the exterior of which looked very much like the “Countess House”—or the older portion, which had originally been an 18<sup>th</sup>-century tavern. The current owner of the first portion told my researcher that its interior, including the stairs, had been extensively remodeled, and I was never able to access the floor plan of the second. However, the real estate agent indicated he thought this particular feature was “relatively rare” in the area—and I couldn't find an exact match for it, in real estate listings, in any of the other period houses in that region of Massachusetts. There were a few that were similar, but only one that was really closely comparable. Actually, as one can see in the images above, it is quite awkward, inasmuch as the small steps leading to the door present a trip hazard. I would guess it was conceived specifically by the builder of those houses, and was unique to them. Below is the closest comparison I could find, from a listing in Newburyport, and as you can see this design seems to avoid the hazard. This door *does* appear to be “half-way up the stairs,” but in my vision the stairs were straight, as one sees in the Countess House, rather than taking a 90-degree turn.



If what we see in the Countess House and its next-door neighbor was indeed an idiosyncratic architectural feature, and if my memory is considered a close enough match, then this stands as a strongly-verified past-life memory, inasmuch as there was no normal way I could have had this information before the memory occurred. Whether the actual event could have taken place in the Countess House, or in one of the structures owned by the Poyen family, cannot now be determined. Nonetheless, in my opinion, the validation for this memory takes it far beyond chance.

I will mention here, as an aside, that while I advocate precise documentation of past-life memory impressions, I was not as careful in my own documentation as I now wish I had been. I relied primarily on e-mails between myself and my skeptical researcher, and unfortunately, she unilaterally deleted all of her e-mails at the close of our collaboration, despite my having asked her to save them for me. Of course, I retained most of it embedded within the e-mails I had sent her. I also have my personal journal, and then the computer files bear digital date stamps, so it has been possible for me to extrapolate most of the relevant dates by triangulating these sources. In my opinion, these combined methods rescue my study from admittedly sloppy record-keeping, and are adequate for the task. If anyone else attempts similar research, however, I would recommend that each and every past-life memory experience be fully documented as soon afterwards as possible, and then entered into an ongoing database designed for that purpose.

### **A slave market remembered under hypnosis.**

One of my past-life memories is both fully documented, and solidly confirmed from the historical record. The only weakness it may suffer from, is whether or not it is too generic, and

hence predictable. The following exchange took place in my first hypnotic regression session of Oct. 28, 2008. At this time, I was not yet delving deeply into the record, and had primarily been exposed to the various Whittier biographies. I knew that John Greenleaf Whittier had been an abolitionist, and I had seen brief references indicating that Mathew supported this cause, as well, in mid-life. Whether or not I could have generated the following scenario in imagination, with its concomitant emotions, will be left to the reader's judgment. I also did not know, at this point, that Mathew had a strong vengeful streak in his personality; nor that he had courted Abby when she was in her mid-teens; nor that he often referred to her as a "queen" (inasmuch as she was of aristocratic lineage, and looked the part). Finally, at this time I had no evidence that he had ever worked as an undercover agent, in New Orleans, contacting sympathizers and/or operatives of the Underground Railroad there. All of this I later extrapolated from Mathew's literary works beyond a reasonable doubt. The following is transcribed from a tape recording of the session:

T: So why don't you take a deep breath, and move in time to the next important thing that happens.

S: I think I see slaves being sold. And it infuriates me, it incenses me. I've heard about it, but I've never seen it. And I vow I'm going to do something about it, at that point.

T: Did you go to an earlier time, or a later?

S: I don't know. I don't think this earlier cause was that, it was something else. But now I *really* know what I'm going to be doing. I don't know what the earlier one was.

T: So take another deep breath, and you're going to go to another time, when you do something that you consider significant.

S: (pause) Here again, we're getting a cross-over. I *think* I wrote something. I think it was maybe political. I would write things and get them channeled out through other people. Because I didn't want to get found out. You know, I mean, I wouldn't publish under my own name.

T: So...

S: (definitely) I was a ghostwriter, basically.

T: So I want you to go to some point in time when you're interacting about ghost writing.

S: (sigh) What came to me is that I didn't have direct contact with the person. It came through somebody, through somebody and got to me, and then it went out to somebody, and out to somebody, and got to them, so there was no traceable connection between me and this person. Whoever it was.

T: Now you're going to go to your contact for your writing. You're going to go to a point in time...

S: (chuckling)

T: ...where you're interacting with your contact.

S: (laughing) I think my contact was a very implausible, bumbling, like a drunk, not really a drunk, but kind of a foolish sort of guy. I mean that's the way he looked, anyway. It was, there was something humorous about him.

T: Um-hmm.

S: That's what I'm thinking. He probably was dumb like a fox, you know, but it was something very implaus...you would *never* suspect this guy of doing anything that required any brains at all, basically! Yeah.

T: And so he takes an article for you. Do you know where he takes it?

S: No, no idea, and I'm not supposed to know, I don't know where he takes it. It protects us not to know.

T: Um-hmm.

S: We don't know. I'm given topics. I'm given topics and I write on those topics, and I write well, and it's then taken, and whatever they do with it, they do with it.

T: And how do you get paid for that?

S: I don't know that I do. (slowly) I don't think I do. (long pause)

T: [?]

S: I can't describe what I felt when I saw that slave market. But it, I can't think of the right word. Hatred. I felt such hatred for those people that were doing that. I don't know precisely what scene it was, whether somebody was being separated from their loved one, or their families, or...I, I saw the fear in those people, and I saw what they were doing. It, I was filled with such...I can't, I don't have a word for it. But whatever it was, that was enough, that one experience was enough! You know.

T: [?]

S: I'm sorry?

T: So the reward for you is what?

S: I think it was not *really*, really, it was hatred for those slave-owners. It was to ruin them, to disable them, to bring them down. As much as it was to help the slaves. It was the hatred I felt for those people. And I was going to destroy them with anything I had. Which was my mind, and my ability to write.

Much later, I determined that Mathew had spent two summers working as a reporter for the New Orleans "Daily Delta," covering the police arraignment hearings in the "Safety Office." For the first series in 1846, he signed with his middle initial, "F.," whereas in 1847, his contributions were anonymous. In 1847, toward the end of his employment, there may be a second reporter imitating his style, so it is not precisely clear when he left. In the summer of 1848, there is only one piece I feel confident assigning to Mathew's pen in the "Delta," but it is a crucial one. Pulling out all the stops with his "coded" style, it superficially appears to be a highly lyrical, tongue-in-cheek report of a fishing expedition made by a group of friends, entitled "Chronicles of the Piscatorian Brotherhood." In actuality, this is a report of a meeting with Southern operatives of the Underground Railroad, and these are "fishers of men." Here, the "Free and Easy," which is presented as though it were the philosophical pursuit of truth, is actually liberation from slavery:

This Order has been created, by the *fraternization* of the Military, with the Civil and Religious Mingoos of Baton Rouge, and has for its object, (as these veritable chronicles will abundantly set forth in the sequel,) the discovery of the secret of the genuine "Free and Easy," —a secret which has occupied the attention of all the Virtuousos, Antiquarians, and Savans, since the ancients first began to write "Anno Mundi," down to the present time, A.D. 1848.

This is not the only time Mathew used the press to report his contacts to his superiors—presumably including William Lloyd Garrison.

This piece appears in the June 1, 1848 edition of the "Delta." On June 29 and July 4,

respectively, in the anti-slavery Boston “Chronotype,” to which Mathew frequently contributed, appears a scathing report of a slave auction in New Orleans, which dovetails precisely with what I had described in my 2008 regression session. In the first installment, a beautiful black girl of about the age Abby was when Mathew began courting her is put up on the auction block—in the second, a married couple is separated. I will provide excerpts from each, as evidence:

We noticed one hardened old sinner in particular. He had fixed his eye upon a young girl of some fifteen or sixteen summers. She was of a beautiful rounded form and had the head and face of a Venus. She would have been a queen in her own sunny clime—but here she must choke down her agony and tamely submit to insult. “Open your mouth, you slut,” sternly muttered the purchaser, and he suited the action to the words and thrust apart the lips and teeth of the girl. “Sound teeth, eh? Can eat your full allowance of grub, I’ll be bound!” Then followed certain rubs and pinches upon her arms, shoulders, breast and neck, such as a judicious horse-jockey bestows upon the animal for which he is in treaty. We hoped for the sake of common decency, if from no other motive, that his examination would end here, but we were disappointed. He was not the man to purchase a commodity without first fully understanding its value. “Let’s see your ankles, your knees—up higher, you silly wench.” This was too much for the poor girl. A faint blushing tinge crept under her dark skin—and the tears started to her eyes. And this hardened villain had a daughter of his own about the same age! What would have been his rage at the suggestion of the same process to his own daughter? Where is the difference? If any, the delicacy of character would probably preponderate in favor of this poor enslaved girl. But she is placed upon the platform, so far above the floor as to be conspicuous to all the house. The auctioneer possessed an indifference sufficiently brazen to have knocked down St. Paul himself to the highest bidder.

“Who bids—what’s offered—fine wench—rather delicate in appearance—little ticklish—shy at this age—came of a good stock—no doubt will be a good breeder—come—come bid away—Five hundred—five fifty—six—six fifty—eight hundred—well done, sir, you have discovered her value—eight—eight—eight—eight hundred—once, eight-hundred twice—eight hundred dollars—and gone. Well, Mr. Holdfast, you have got a rare bargain there—hope I shall have the selling of the progeny—don’t let there be too many yellow ones, though—they always hurts my feelings to sell.” The misery of the poor black girl was now at the highest. She had fallen into the hands of the brutal speculator, and her fate could be imagined from the treatment already received from him. She continued in the position in which her natural gracefulness had at first thrown her—and such an eloquent expression of despair, depicted in her every form and feature, we never saw or imagined before. In the marked catalogue before us we find that Jane was sold to a Mr. Holdfast for eight hundred dollars. Mr. Holdfast takes his property and places it in a corner, evidently to add more to it in the course of the sale. A further account of this scene in our next.

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The two next victims are a noble middle aged man and his wife, who called herself twenty-two. They were not to be sold together—for they would not bring so much

money as if sold separate, and moreover it seems the design of every one who has any thing to do with slaves to discourage and deaden all the domestic loves to which human nature is addicted. The young wife was first questioned in this manner, that she might perchance recommend herself:—

“How old are you?”

“Twenty-two.”

“How long have you been married?”

“Three years.”

“How many children have you?”

“None.”

And as she made the last reply in a saddened tone, the tears started from her eyes, and she turned beseechingly to her husband for protection. Upon this the questioner, too, turns ferociously towards him—

“You villain you—have you lived three years with this wench without having any children?”

Now the true man was seen, although bound in fetters and trampled in the dust. With form erect and folded arms, and with a dignity that might have lent lustre to Othello himself he calmly replies—

“We have had one, but God took him.”

The fact that the woman had been the mother of but one child, and that dead, was the reason for the low price of two hundred dollars for which she was knocked down. She was purchased by a Red River planter to be turned out into the fields to hoe and pick cotton. The husband was afterward sold for seven hundred and fifty dollars, to be sent into the swamps of Tennessee as a wood chopper. The two were separated never more to meet in this world. It is expected that husbands and wives thus separated will form new connections, rear up new families, and perchance be again sold and divided asunder. Thus are the holiest of the institutions of Heaven rendered void by the management of men: and thus are poor ignorant slaves made to commit the sins that are denounced by all moral and civil law and by the direct commands of God.

Inadvertently or intentionally, Mathew signs this piece with the personal reference which immediately follows:

The last spectacle was as much as we could bear. We thought of our own deep domestic loves—then three thousand miles away.

In mid-1848, Mathew had not yet formally separated from his second wife, Jane Vaughan. But she would often take the children to her hometown of St. John, Canada. New Orleans is 3,000 miles from St. John.

Although it is not documented in my notes, as I proceeded with my research I increasingly felt that Mathew had interviewed slaves. This impression was finally confirmed when I discovered this report. In the introduction, he writes:

We had oftentimes even made pretence of purchase for the opportunity of asking questions and getting at the thought that we knew to be teeming madly under the

immovable muscle of the ebon visage.

And again in the conclusion:

In closing this sketch allow us to say that we have seen slavery in every form. We have conversed with slaves, slave owners, slave speculators—and those who would have nothing to do with slaves. We have looked at it politically, morally and religiously—and may hereafter give our views from each point of observation. We can only say now that it is difficult to comprehend the enormity of the evil—and that in the work of the emancipation is required much care and consideration. If possible the philanthropists of both North and South—of the whole country and the whole civilized world should work harmoniously together, that the time may be hastened when slavery shall be no more.

Note that he specifically mentions “philanthropists of both North and South.” This would be a veiled reference to the members of the “Piscatorian Brotherhood”—the fishers of men—with whom he had recently met in a supposed fishing expedition outside New Orleans.

The third and final installment of this series, which was entitled “Facts and Imaginings,” being signed with an impenetrable, one-off signature, “Grapho Mania,” concerns not slavery, but the dedication of Forest Hills Cemetery in Boston. If I am not mistaken, this is one of many instances in which Mathew has secretly dedicated his efforts to Abby’s memory. I have determined, by emotionally powerful past-life recognition, that one of her favorite songs was “I Would Not Live Alway”; but that after her death Mathew found it unbearable, and if he encountered it being performed somewhere, he would have to leave the room. The closing of this final piece (and hence, the entire series) reads:

Such were the themes upon which the gifted orator eloquently discoursed. The large audience gathered there upon Consecration Hill, hung upon his words and were enchained by them to the place, and never was more truthfully or feelingly sung, than at the close of these ceremonies the beautiful hymn,—

“I would not live alway, I ask not to stay,  
Where storm after storm rises dark o’er the way;  
I would not live alway, no, welcome the tomb.  
Since Jesus hath lain there, I dread not its gloom.”

I found a great deal of evidence for Mathew’s work as an undercover operative for the abolitionist cause (which he seems to have adopted under Abby’s influence about the time he married, and not because of his brother’s involvement). However, this one memory I experienced in the regression session was my only indication, until I uncovered it in the historical record.

### **Recognizing a friend.**

On Aug. 30, 2010, my researcher e-mailed me the following information, concerning Mathew’s co-workers in his later years:



George Bradburn was a Unitarian minister. He was settled in Nantucket, he served in the Massachusetts Legislature, he was an editor at Lynn, he found asylum in the Custom House, he died in Melrose in 1880. A Memoir of him has been published by his wife. The early portrait of him, after a crayon by Mrs. Richard Hildreth, would serve admirably as a portrait of the late Henry F. Durant.

This is one of those leads that I find as I scour my records, but which I seem to have largely ignored at the time. My reaction was only to say that I didn't think I had been him, which misunderstanding my researcher cleared up by telling me that wasn't what she was inferring. And then it appears to have slipped through the cracks, and was not investigated at the time. Still, we must acknowledge that I had seen the name and a brief description, without having yet viewed Bradburn's portrait.

On Jan. 15, 2012, I wrote another researcher, who was assisting me by this time, the following:

As I said, I might be sending you occasional e-mails confirming that I recognized someone from history. This is a no-brainer, because he knew the people that Matthew and his brother both associated with in the Abolitionist movement.

Matthew also submitted letters to the newspaper, the Boston Chronotype, in 1846, that this man edited sometime in the late 1840's/early 1850's (which is how I found his photograph). Searching on the newspaper name, under Google Images, I saw his picture and knew that I recognized him strongly. Then, reading the article, I see that he was a major Abolitionist figure who knew the people Matthew and John Greenleaf would have known.

In any case, I feel that Matthew knew this man well, not just casually, and admired him a great deal.

<http://www.thesunchronicle.com/articles/2011/03/01/attleboro/8933133.txt>

(I've saved the entire web page.)

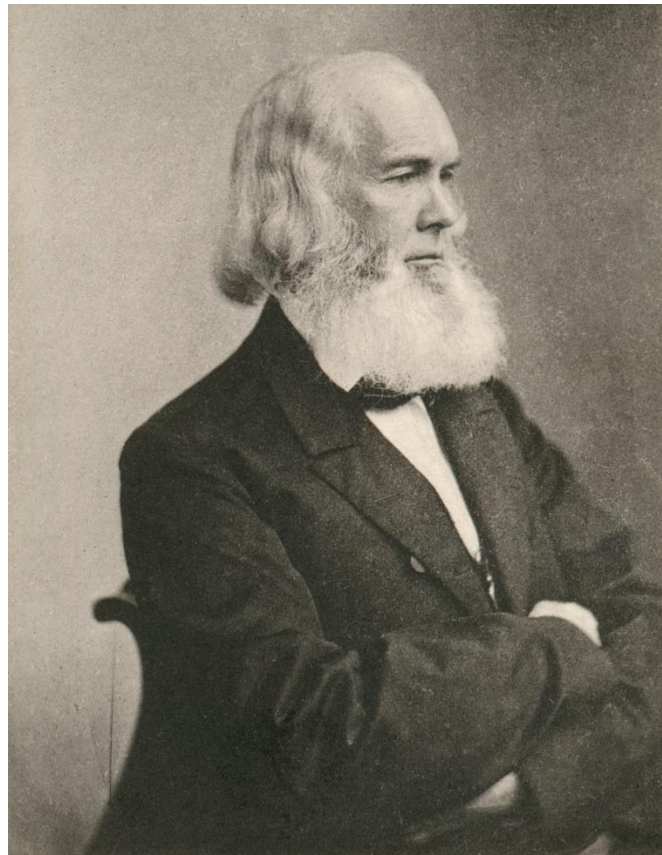
This is George Bradburn, for the record. I'm sending you this and also keeping a copy for myself. If letters between Matthew and George turn up, it won't prove much, but I want to record that I recognize this man strongly. Looking at the photograph, it's as though he's alive, to me, and could turn and face me and start talking at any moment. I know his personality very well, though personally in this life I've never heard of him. Tremendously strong sense of recognition. I also feel that he was involved with me in mentoring Booker T. Washington (which would have been in our later years, when Washington was a young man. I've already recorded my feelings about having mentored Washington. But I feel, now, as I look at this portrait, that Bradburn was in on this, also.

My impression, looking now at the photograph, is highly intelligent, very compassionate. Would have been a hippie in this era. Had a twinkle in his eye. Had blue

or grey eyes. Had an infectious laugh. Was a true friend, i.e., if he was behind you he had your back and you could trust him 100%. Totally loyal.

For the record...

Best,  
Stephen



In short, while researching the Boston “Chronotype” online—a newspaper I knew Mathew had written for—in the search results I glimpsed a thumbnail of Bradburn, and upon clicking on it, I found that the image was accompanied by a brief mention that he had edited for that publication in the “late 1840’s,” which is to say, near the end of the paper’s run. I had forgotten the brief description sent to me in 2010 by my previous researcher, nor was I consciously aware that he had worked at the same place where Mathew had worked for many years, the Boston Custom House. Nonetheless, I felt an overwhelming sense of positive recognition, that he was an extremely close friend. With an upwelling of deep affection, came the thought that he was “like a warm hearth on a cold day.” We might skeptically posit that I somehow created this experience out of sheer imagination, based on having read a description a year and a half earlier which I had paid scant attention to—but I think that’s a very weak supposition. Against this explanation, I was pleasantly surprised to discover the memorial, but disappointed when, half-way through, I read that he was good friends with Mathew’s brother, John Greenleaf Whittier. I was afraid the memory was now disproven, inasmuch as this would not match my powerful sense of

affectionate recognition. Which is to say, one doesn't feel so strongly for a brother's friend. It was only when I reached the end, and learned (seemingly for the first time) that he had worked for many years in the Boston House, that I felt elated that the memory had been all but substantiated. Had an unconscious memory of having read that Bradburn had worked at the Custom House been driving all these feelings, I would not have experienced disappointment before finding the reference about it at the end.

In any case, I was, in fact, able to look up the memorial written by Bradburn's wife, Frances, and the information that he worked for the last 14 years of his life in the Naval Dept. of the Boston Custom House. This would mean that he and Mathew were co-workers in a small group of men for almost a decade and a half. They had a great many things in common—both had been active in the abolitionist movement, both had worked for the Boston "Chronotype" and were friends with its editor, Elizur Wright, both were deeply religious (i.e., spiritual), both had a sarcastic sense of humor, and both were spiritualists. Furthermore, I later learned that before Bradburn began editing for the "Chronotype," a writer signing as "M.," whom I take by style and signature to be Mathew, had praised him in a letter to the editor, in the Sept. 24, 1846 edition. If this is indeed Mathew's letter, his praise may have been instrumental in Bradburn's having obtained the editorial position in the first place. Here, he writes from Mathew's hometown of Haverhill, Mass.:

Did you ever, Mr. Editor, hear George Bradburn? He was present at the convention, and made a short speech. He is an orator *sui-generis*. His gestures, intonations and emphasis are all his own. A strong man, he uses almost exclusively the strong old Saxon dialect. As Novalis said of Luther's, "his words are half battles." He has no superfluous language; all his sentences are full of condensed thought. His powers of wit and sarcasm make him a dangerous opponent, as more than one ex-member of the Massachusetts Legislature can testify to from his own sorrowful experience.

This is one of the prettiest of our New England villages. Stretching along the southern slope of the north bank of the Merrimack for nearly a mile, it presents a fine view from the Bradford shore and from the steamboat coming up the river from Newburyport. It owes its prosperity mainly to the shoe-trade. This business, I believe is rather dull, as the market is overstocked.

Yours, M.

As mentioned in my introductory comments, one of the very first past-life impressions I recorded occurred before I had studied Mathew's life in much depth, at all. It happened while I was reading the opening chapter of "The Life and Letters of John Greenleaf Whittier" at the library in Marietta, Georgia. I had obtained this book through interlibrary loan, a few months after first encountering Mathew's image on the Sarah Orne Jewett Text Project website. I wrote in my online "Update" of June 6, 2005 of first discovering Mathew's portrait; in the entry for Oct. 18, 2005, I describe having that day read the Griffin biography. If memory serves, I had requested both sources, the biography and Pickard's "Life and Letters," and read them both during the same visit. As I read in the latter source about the young Whittier boys' relationship with the family team of two oxen, such that they were practically perceived as pets, I had a strong

emotional reaction. I felt anger and betrayal, that the oxen had been sold for slaughter, when Mathew was an adult and was unable to prevent it.

After 13 years of research, I feel reasonably certain that the anecdotes concerning these oxen originally came, not from John Greenleaf Whittier, but from Mathew, himself. This is entirely plausible inasmuch as the official Whittier biographer, Samuel Pickard, was married to Mathew's daughter Elizabeth. Thus, it would have been *Mathew*, in particular, who had an emotional attachment to them as pets. The boys are described as sitting on the oxen's heads; there is an anecdote in which one of the oxen peers with curiosity through the window; and there is a story that one of them saved the boys' lives, by jumping over the boys while running down a hill and being unable to stop. At the time I experienced this emotional past-life memory, I had no historical information indicating that Mathew was in any way different from most other men of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century, who typically viewed sensitivity toward animal suffering as effeminate weakness. However, I subsequently discovered several of his journalistic works which protest the cruel treatment of carriage horses in New York City, or the wholesale slaughter of dogs in New York and their poisoning, in New Orleans, for the prevention of rabies. I also learned that Mathew became a vegetarian, at least for a time, in 1857. Most on-point is a report, in one of his travelogues, in which he describes having purchased a horse and sleigh for a trip to Canada (probably, to visit his children where their mother had taken them, in St. John). Upon his return, he expresses his deep affection for the animal, indicating that he was careful to sell him to a friend who would only use him for a "fancy team," ensuring that he would be well-treated.

Thus the matter stood for some time, until, on Nov. 19, 2016, I discovered in the Dec. 4, 1830 "Essex Gazette" an announcement of a general auction for the Whittier farm. The oxen were included, along with "3 Cows, 1 three year old steer, 1 pair of yearling steers, 1 yearling heifer, 20 sheep, beds and bedding, 1 sleigh, lot of old Iron, old casks and several other articles." The auction was scheduled for Tuesday, Dec. 14, 1830, or roughly six months after Mathew's father's death. Mathew, however, would have been in New York City at the time, where he was pursuing a mercantile career and acting as the de facto editor of the New York "Constellation" under editor-in-chief Asa Greene. Mathew's contributions to the "Constellation" during this period appear in all of the weekly editions of Dec. 4, Dec. 11, and Dec. 18. Probably this means he remained in New York during the entire period. However, none tie him specifically to the area on these dates, so it is still conceivable that he had travelled to Haverhill, leaving articles on-file. But even if he had, he might not have been able to persuade his brother—who would have had the official authority where the farm was concerned—to change his mind.

Of course, a general auction means that the oxen could have been purchased by anybody, for any purpose. As they would have been getting old by 1830, that purpose might very likely be for slaughter. An ox's lifespan is 15-20 years. The accounts given in "The Life and Letters of John Greenleaf Whittier," concerning the brothers' childhood, would have been from, say, 1817, when the boys were ten and five, respectively. Even at that time the oxen would already have been adults; so by 1830, when they were sold, they would have been elderly. This, of course, assumes it was the same pair of oxen, and that they hadn't been replaced—though with money being tight, it's unlikely they had been.

	Hampstead, Nov. 29, 1830.	49	
sec-	AUCTION.		cov
ling	WILL be sold at public auction, on Tuesday		who
the	the 14th inst. at 1 o'clock P. M. at the		rem
the	late dwelling house of John Whittier, 1 yoke of		A
bod	Oxen, 3 Cows, 1 three year old steer, 1 pair of		will
ries	yearling steers, 1 yearling heifer, 20 sheep, beds		was
uld	and bedding, 1 sleigh, lot of old Iron, old casks		five
tant	and several other articles. Conditions at the		A
	place of sale. JACOB CALDWELL, Auc'r.		Ulc
for	Haverhill, Dec. 3d, 1830.		the
ro-	49		two
...	STOCK, &c. FOR SALE.		who
	WILL be sold in Bradford at public auction on		afte

Thus, my memory was brought to a distinct level of plausibility, though without a confirming reference in correspondence or a diary, it cannot be absolutely confirmed. However, all it would take would be a brief mention, as for example, "Do you remember how upset Mathew was about his family's oxen being sold for slaughter?"

#### Romantic recognition for a portrait.

There were a great many memories which, in my investigations, similarly rose to a certain level of plausibility. For example, upon first viewing an image of the young woman whom historians believe John Greenleaf Whittier had a half-hearted romantic interest in, Evelina Bray, I experienced a distinct feeling of romantic and sexual attraction beyond what I might normally expect from any randomly-viewed pretty face. I subsequently learned that there was, indeed, an unnamed girl whom Mathew had a strong, protracted crush on, in his early teens, who appears to have strung him along for some years. This could plausibly have been the historical Evelina, who was two years older than Mathew. Evelina, one of John Greenleaf's schoolmates at Haverhill Academy in 1827, was the most attractive girl in the area, and yet she married relatively late in life (the implication being she avoided commitment). The girl in Mathew's personal history is referred to, as a character in one of Abby's short stories, as "the coquette of Frank's old idolatry." She also shows up repeatedly in his own writing in early 1829. But although I strongly suspect this was indeed Evelina Bray, I have found nothing in the historical record which directly ties her to Mathew. It is plausible inasmuch as Mathew probably reached his full height of 6'2" early, being handsome and socially popular, but since he was two years younger, Evelina still might not have taken him seriously at that age. Furthermore, a great deal of the ambiguity around John Greenleaf's supposed relationship with her might be cleared up, if it so happens his one visit to see her in Marblehead, Mass. was not for the purpose of courting her, but of ascertaining her intentions towards his younger brother. This would certainly explain why he failed to recognize her, some years later, when they happened to attend the same church service.

There—unless a reference surfaces someday in correspondence or a diary—we must leave the matter. If that evidence should ever appear, however, my emotional reaction to the portrait will stand as very strong evidence, precisely because there seems to be nothing currently available in

the Whittier legacy to suggest that Mathew ever had a crush on her.



### **A sleigh ride with Abby.**

In the first edition of my first book, “Mathew Franklin Whittier in his own words,” published in May of 2012, I recorded the following memory:

Abby is young—we are not courting yet. The first thing I see is a great sleigh, black in color with gold trim scrollwork around the edges. It has high sides, unlike most sleighs which are open. There is snow on the ground, we are in a forest, and it is twilight, getting dark. We ride in the sleigh, three to a seat. I am in the middle and Abby is to my right. We have a blanket over us. This sleigh has two great horses. The driver is driving fast through the forest, weaving through the trees, and Abby is scared (or pretends to be), and it is cold. She is snuggling up against me. The top of her head is just under or beside my chin, and I can smell her hair, and it is a wonderful, rich smell. I am intoxicated with her nearness, but I don’t know whether she is snuggling because she likes me and this is the only situation in which she could show it, or because she’s simply scared and cold. At some point she takes my hand—still, I don’t definitely get the message. I’m just not sure but it is the most wonderful evening of my life.

Normally, a young man would never hope to be this close to a good girl, and Abby is of a very good family. I don’t see her the rest of that winter, but I am constantly thinking about how to arrange to see her in the spring.

It would seem, by the description, that Abby was enamored of Mathew and was trying to tell him, but that while he was responding viscerally, he didn’t know quite what to make of it—and she was too young for him to openly reciprocate.

At the time I recorded this memory, it was a puzzle to me. What I knew of Mathew and Abby's relationship was that they married in 1836, when he was 24 and she was 20. Everything before then was conjecture, although I did have a past-life impression of some of this same romantic tension existing between them—especially from Abby's side—when she was tutoring him. Specifically, I seemed to remember her teaching him a deaf alphabet which involved touching points on the hand, and then later discovered there was actually such a method. However, I also distinctly recall feeling that there was no logical place to put this sleighing memory. In fact, in my first book, I tried to extrapolate a scenario which would have them coincidentally in the same anti-slavery group, harvesting molasses so as to boycott cane sugar. I could think of no other reason why they would be together in a sleigh when she was so young.

Gradually, over the course of several years, a clearer picture emerged. I would require the space of an entire paper to demonstrate it by examples, but I can give an overview.

While Mathew was still struggling with his unrequited attachment to another girl (possibly Evelina Bray), Abby, at age 12, or even as young as age eight (when Mathew was 12 and had run away from home), began tutoring him—first in French, her native language, and then in other subjects such as the history of ancient Greece, and particularly its philosophers. This mentoring relationship was initiated because Mathew desperately longed for an education, but was unable to attend college; while Abby, being tutored privately, and being a brilliant student, was in a position to pass her education on to him. At some point, probably at around age 14, she fell in love with her handsome, older student. She expressed her feelings in poetry, and at some point Mathew became aware of them, but he half-humored her because of her age. Slowly, he began to reciprocate her feelings, as one can see in his humorous series featuring “Enoch Timbertoes,” written for the New-York “Constellation” in 1831. It became understood, in some sense, that they were a nascent couple, and that he was waiting for her to grow up; but the only way he could assure her of his fidelity, without arousing her parents' suspicions, was by affirming his bachelor status, and by downplaying her competition. He would communicate to her through his newspaper stories, and through letters to her older brother, Francis, who was represented in the “Timbertoes” series as “Tim.” Abby became “your Sally,” i.e., Tim's younger sister, Sally. In the April 16, 1831 edition, “Enoch” even writes to Sally, directly. You can imagine how this letter warmed Abby's heart:

NEW YORK, APRIL, 12th 1831.

Dear Sally—Your Tim, in his last letter, said as how you wanted me to write something about the women folks in New-York. My acquaintance aint been nothin to speak of among em, but I've had a leetle experience that way as you shall hear. Your old maid aunt Louis, who is dead and gone used to say, looks is nothin behaviour is all, and I guess as to looks the York gals aint got much to boast on. They are most on em pale and sickly lookin criters, which comes of their keepin bad hours and tigh' lacin. They keep it

In the fall of 1831, Mathew danced with Abby for the first time at a party held at her family home. By February of 1832, Mathew published his first love poem to her in the "Constellation," entitled "To Miss Molly Blueberry." This was followed by another poem called "My Love and I," in the Aug. 18, 1832 edition. Here, when Abby has recently turned 16, they are permitted to walk under the stars unchaperoned. They tell stories to each other, and Mathew's stories express his love for her, and probably his hopes for their future. She understands, and tearfully leans her head on his chest—but apparently he has promised her parents that they will remain chaste, and it is a terrible struggle for him! Or so he broadly hints with his poem's humorous ending. I also discovered another poem entitled "Abbie in the Swing" originally written, as I believe, many years later by Mathew as a retrospective. It appears to have been plagiarized at least twice in succession, and bent to less noble purposes, but as originally written it would suggest that when Abby was in her early teens, she would flirt with him. Being captivated, he nonetheless had to control his feelings, just as we see in the poem "My Love and I." In any case, one can triangulate a number of different sources, and see that my memory of the sleighride is precisely on-target for the budding romance that was developing between these two. The sleighride would probably have occurred in the winter of 1830, when she was 14 years old. The poetry she wrote at this time clearly indicates she had fallen in love with him; but officially she was his tutor and his friend, and in any case she was too young for him to think of pursuing a romance with her.

Obviously, in 2001 when I recorded this memory, there was no historical validation. Yet, it was quite vivid, even incorporating a sensory memory of the smell of her hair. Only later did it occur to me that people in the 19<sup>th</sup> century didn't wash their hair as often as people of the 21<sup>st</sup> century do, in the winter. Another mystery in the memory was cleared up by my subsequent research—if Mathew lived in New York, and was *visiting*, this would explain why he didn't see her the rest of the winter. It wasn't because he didn't know her very well yet, as I assumed at the time—it was simply because he was only in the area for a few days.

**Recognizing Mathew's literary work.**



Another instance of recognition memory could also be brought to a high level of validity, if supporting evidence emerged from the historical record. While perusing antiquarian newspapers for sale on Ebay.com, I felt powerfully drawn to a little Boston publication called “The Sheet Anchor,” which was issued for the religious edification of sailors. This was the Feb. 21, 1846 edition, and on the front page was a story entitled “The Contrast.” I felt certain, as I read it, that it was one of Mathew’s productions.



However, when I did due diligence online, I discovered that it was actually a chapter from a book entitled “Never Too Late,” published the preceding year and credited to a prolific New York writer of juvenile religious novels, Charles Burdette. Feeling unsatisfied, I bowed to the inevitable—as it seemed—and forgot about it for over a year. Then, knowing that Mathew had been ghost writing for someone else in Boston during this same period, I had the thought to go through this book carefully, looking for any indications of Mathew’s style. (We have also seen that the issue of ghost writing had come up in my 2008 regression.) The evidence was overwhelming—this, in my opinion, was Mathew Franklin Whittier’s own work, which meant he would have ghost written it for Burdette. Further research revealed that Burdette had “written” too many books, in too many different styles—in short, he seemed to be more of a publisher than an author. It also appeared that Mathew was the author of one more in this series, entitled “Lilla Hart: A Tale of New York,” published in 1846. Yet a third title was confusing—the *concept* was typical of several stories Mathew had written (i.e., the personification of an inanimate object, which tells the story from its own perspective), but the prose, itself, wasn’t a match. I concluded that Mathew may have sent Burdette a proposal, but had subsequently stopped working for him, so that Burdette simply hired another writer to develop Mathew’s theme.

Being deeply familiar with Mathew’s literary style, I am absolutely convinced the first two books are his work—but it would be difficult to prove to anyone else. I would need correspondence, or a contract, or a receipt, or mention of it in a journal entry. If my study ever becomes more widely-known, such evidence might surface. If it does, my persistent feeling of being the author of that story, and of feeling almost magnetically drawn to it despite the seeming historical contraindications, would be a strong “hit.”

## **Abby's memorial service.**

Yet another instance of a memory which *could* stand as extremely strong evidence, concerns Abby's memorial service. It came to me in the course of writing an e-mail to my first researcher in stream-of-consciousness, after being asked if I remembered anything of Abby's funeral (and replying, at first, that I did not). I seem to have lost the actual e-mail—all I have been able to find are partial references to it, made soon afterwards. However, the relevant portion is that I remembered sitting on a single-cushion, horse-hair padded sofa at the reception, typical for the period. In front of me was a low table, and on that table was a bronze figurine of a dancer pirouetting. It was about eight inches tall, and was encased in a bell jar which had no handle at the top, and which rested on a wooden base with a rich, dark finish. I remembered staring at that figurine with all my might in order to control my emotions, because the friends I had brought with me hadn't known Abby well, and were boisterously socializing. I had the tremendous urge to bolt from the room, but I restrained myself because it would have been an insult to Abby's mother, who (as I later extrapolated) had arranged the service a month or more after the official funeral in mid-April, specifically for my benefit.

Much later, I found evidence indicating that Abby had, in fact, danced outdoors in nature. She may even have done so privately, for Mathew, on their walks and study sessions. This suggests yet another reason why Mathew might have chosen that figurine to focus on.

In an e-mail exchange between myself and my researcher, dated Feb. 22, 2010—less than a month before my first psychic reading (which means I could not have been influenced by it)—we see the following:

Hi [Name],

Indeed, could have easily seen it many other times. It occurs to me that it is probably a relatively easy bronze to cast (compared to some of the other figures I saw on Google), because the feet and hands could be actually joined together in the material, giving it more stability.

I keep trying to emphasize that what I "see" is so much like imagining something in one's mind's eye—it's like a very, very, very fast snapshot that you don't get a very good look at. And yet, it stays the same each time you go back and remember it—it doesn't change.

Then, the temptation is to try to fill in the gaps, and this, I think, is where imagination comes in. Meaning, I saw a bronze girl figure about 8 inches high in the bell jar, upright, I think a dancer, I *\*think\** arms raised, I *\*think\** on tiptoe. Pretty sure about the head being turned. Pretty sure about sofas—green or light-colored fabric, dark wood "trim" on the arms and legs and such.

In short, I can go back right now and still "see" the same partially-formed picture I saw then. It's as clear (or unclear) now as it was the first time.

Steve

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Steve,

The pose you are describing was a pernette(?) and was very popular when I was growing up (had brief ballet lessons with my sister but hated it) This was a beginners classic pose for small porcelain figures set in music boxes, turning as the music played. So your subconscious may have been saturated with that image as you were growing up....but maybe not as well. So we will continue looking. I don't mind learning about sculptors and styles during that period. All art is interesting to me and I especially like sculptures of the figure. Very amazing what they can make out of rock or a piece of wet sod.

[Name]

My researcher, who lived in that region of Massachusetts, helped me identify the house where this reception would probably have taken place as the "Peaslee Garrison House," not far from the cemetery which contains Abby's grave. Its floor plan, as gleaned from written descriptions, matches my memory (i.e., a large room to the right as one enters the front door, which had held gatherings in the past). This memory thus stands as "plausible" with the information presently at hand. *However*, should evidence ever emerge confirming that such a figurine was, in fact, present in that house at the time, in 1841, we would have the most powerfully confirmed past-life memory of the entire study. All I know as of this writing, is that the current owner told my second researcher that no such figurine existed in the house at that time. Even this, frankly, might not be honest, if my researcher had mentioned reincarnation and the owner was too frightened. She could have been concerned that I was crazy, and might attempt to break in and steal it (people have conceived such absurd notions, before).

### **Mathew's use of "literary code."**

The final memory I will present in this paper occurred upon perusing samples of Mathew's "Ethan Spike" series in the Appendix of the Griffin thesis, upon returning home from the library with my Xerox copies. I was casually glancing through them, when I had the strong thought and feeling, "Mathew used to secretly insert coded, deeply personal references into these humorous pieces." Or so I remember it, in hindsight. I had encountered no indication of this practice prior to this memory flash, which occurred on Oct. 18, 2005. The closest I came to mentioning Mathew's use of "autobiographical code," in my "Update" entry for that date, was the following comment. (Where I refer to "Whittier," I mean Mathew.)

Whittier is known (where he is known at all) as a satirist. But look closely at the mental gymnastics that actually produces the humor. Whittier is taking on an assumed stance of, or as in the above example, reporting on, a naive person, a clown if you will, who then gets duped or encounters misfortunes. Some portion of it, I feel intuitively, is more

than a little autobiographical, drawing on and exaggerating some aspects of his own character.

What I had actually experienced, however, as I have long remembered it, was far more specific. At least, here, we have the phrase, “more than a little autobiographical.” Again, in my personal journal of December 17, 2005, I wrote:

Ethan Spike was more autobiographical than anybody knew, at least parts of him.

What I learned, over many years of discovering and archiving more than 2,700 of Mathew’s published works, is that he did indeed embed a kind of literary “code” into many of them, employing methods which include the following:

- 1) Juxtaposing his various pieces, written under different pseudonyms, adjacent to each other on the page, so that one would reveal a deeper meaning in the other. (This was possible because he was personal friends with the editors he submitted his work to.)
- 2) Causing to have placed directly above one of his pieces (or sometimes below), a poem by someone else, which reveals his secret intentions.
- 3) Assigning a meaningful date to a piece, as for example, Abby’s birthday when it had a specific reference to her; or, deliberately mis-writing the date for a future century, like 1950 instead of 1850, to indicate that the subject of the piece (i.e., himself or Abby) was ahead of their time.
- 4) Quoting a few lines of poetry, where the secret message can be discovered by looking up the source, and scanning the lines which immediately follow.
- 5) Quoting a few lines of poetry, which has portions omitted with ellipses, where the meaning can be discovered by looking up the omitted portion.
- 6) Providing a cartoonish portrayal of a character, which was actually autobiographical for himself, as for example that he had known he was a genius since childhood, or how he was beaten by his father, fought back, and ran away from home.
- 7) Seemingly casual references which actually revealed a detail of his personal history, as for example that he had been to Cuba, or that he had been on his own since age 14.

The above list is by no means complete, but the point here is that this goes far beyond what we might normally expect from the typical author who draws upon his or her personal experience to write fiction. I discovered that Mathew engaged in this practice dozens of times—and this is *precisely* what I recall thinking when I first glanced at those samples of “Ethan Spike” in October of 2005, before I had read any of his works. Admittedly, memory has played tricks on me before, and in the absence of documentation, there is the possibility that I unconsciously embellished this memory beyond “autobiography.” At least we have proof that I inferred it was to an exceptional degree. However, I seem to distinctly remember thinking the word “code” in

this context. I should point out that at the time I first glanced over the “Ethan Spike” samples, I was unaware of any of Mathew’s other works. Thus, I wasn’t excluding them—I simply wasn’t aware of them yet.

I will proceed to give several examples of Mathew using code, with the first instance occurring in his “Ethan Spike” series. In the Sept. 26, 1857 edition of the Portland “Transcript,” Mathew describes a town picnic in his fictional town of “Hornby.” The young people are incorrigibly amorous, and the two adult chaperones have their hands full. But one couple, in particular, commits the unpardonable offense of walking away arm-in-arm! This is symbolic—it means nonconformity, or (as both of the psychic readings had emphasized), that Mathew and Abby were ahead of their time. Mathew’s ignorant character, “Ethan Spike,” comments:

Ef they’d ony hav sneaked raound an skulked off in the popperler way, nobody’d thought nothin of it, bekase that’s not oncommon in perlite circles—but to act so onconsarned, jest as though thar war no sich institootion as public opinion—why, ef the comick had struck Kyersarge maounting an knocked it into a cocked hat, twould a bin mere boys play compared to this stewpenderous innickerty!

Meanwhile, Mathew puts us on notice that he is reminiscing about an event in his courtship with Abby, when he says that Hornby has been a “statooary corporocity” for “better than sixteen years.” Abby’s death had occurred 16-1/2 years earlier, and Mathew’s emotional state had been “statue”-like ever since.

“Ethan Spike” continues:

Nobody seems to know what orter be done in this moast distressedest dispensatory, though everybody thinks something orter. The hull matter has already bin up for discussion afore three tea-squalls, but it is still onsettled.—Thar will moast likely have to be a taown meetin on it yet, though thar is some talk of Elder Fawsill’s goin to preach abaout it, from the 7th chapter an 42d varse of the fust book of Nickerdemus—

*“Them that sins in a corner —shall be winked at; but them that go agin public opinion cant go to Heaven at any price.”*

Now, there is obviously no such thing as the “7<sup>th</sup> chapter and 42<sup>nd</sup> verse of the first book of Nicodemus,” and his readers will simply take this as mere fanciful language. But Mathew’s prose was never meaningless. When it *sounded* meaningless, it was probably code. So if we take this as the 7<sup>th</sup> century and 42<sup>nd</sup> verse of *Nostradamus*, we find the following:

Two newly arrived have seized the poison,  
to pour it in the kitchen of the great Prince.  
By the scullion both are caught in the act,  
taken he who thought to trouble the elder with death.

Abby’s father was a marquis, and I have extrapolated from other data that Mathew and Abby, having had a strictly chaste courtship since she was 15, became sexually intimate at some point

after she reached the acceptable age of 16 on June 2, 1832—and that it appears they were discovered, separated and prohibited from having any contact with each other for an extended period of time. We see, for example, what I suspect is a veiled reference to this experience, written in sympathy while Mathew tours the London Tower, in an 1851 travelogue from Europe. Here he quotes a bit of graffiti:

*“My hart is yours tel dethe. Thomas Willyngar Goldsmith.”*

Poor Thomas had probably become so *enchained* with the *silvery* voice of his *bell-e* that he unwisely undertook to *ring* her too soon and became *linked* himself thereby.

In the above example from “Ethan Spike,” the meaning is clear—he and Abby were caught kissing in the kitchen, which brought down the wrath of the “great Prince,” Abby’s father the marquis. There is also the possibility that, as I seem to have remembered, they were discovered to have engaged in even more serious intimacies out on a picnic, but this cannot yet be proven. There is, however, some evidence that Mathew may have hinted at a similar experience on a long stage coach ride, which I *also* seem to have remembered, in one of his other literary sketches. There, a young man leaves his childhood sweetheart to pursue his career in India for many years. Upon his return, and on the way to visit her, he becomes irresistibly drawn to a young woman riding with him in the coach, only to find, on his arrival, that it was the same girl, grown up. What’s evidential about this story is what’s *implied*, i.e., heavy petting, which would correspond to my memory. The contrivance of mistaken identity is simply a convenient way to make the story all about Abby, while still having an interesting plot twist on which to hang the narrative.

Here, “Walter” was 16 when he had last seen Mary Fuller, who was 12 (exactly the same age spread as between Mathew and Abby). At that time, he had thought of her as his “little wife Mary.” Characters named “Mary” who represent Abby have appeared several times in both Mathew’s and Abby’s stories, while Mathew used the name “Walter” in a number of other stories, as well. This unsigned sketch, which I have identified as Mathew’s by style, appears in the May 16, 1857 edition of the Portland “Transcript”:

“Yes, it is getting colder; it is nearly dark,” and so it was. Walter had a boat cloak, and after a very little trouble he was permitted to wrap it around her lovely form, and somehow or other, his arm went with it: and in the confusion he was very close to her, and his arm was around her waist, outside the cloak, though; then he had to put his face down to her to hear what she said, and somehow those ringlets of soft, silky hair, were playing across his cheek—Human nature could not, and would not stand it any longer; and Walter, the modest Walter, drew his arm closer than ever, and pressed upon the warm rosy lips of his beautiful fellow traveller a glowing, burning, regular East India, Bombay kiss, and then blushed himself at the mischief he had done, and waited for the stage to upset, or something else to happen: but no, she had not made any resistance: on the contrary, he felt distinctly that she had returned the kiss the very first kiss, too, he had ever pressed upon a woman's lips since he gave a parting one to little Mary Fuller, and he would have sworn he heard her say something (about the very moment he had given her the first long kiss of youth and love,) that sounded like “dear, dear Walter.”

But at the close, just before revealing her identity, Mary mischievously exclaims:

I shall stop where you stop. I won't leave you. Here you have been kissing me this last half hour, and now you want to run away and leave me. I am determined to expose you to the old clergyman and his wife in the doorway yonder. More than that, your 'darling little wife,' that is to be, as you called her, shall know all about it.

The single, impulsive kiss described in the first passage is one thing—but combining it with the second passage, we see that Walter has been giving Mary “glowing, burning, regular East India, Bombay kisses” for *half an hour*, which, with healthy young people, typically leads to more than mere kissing. Thus, Mathew has found a way to anonymously record—in a 19<sup>th</sup>-century family newspaper, no less—even this most intimate of memories from his and Abby’s courtship. And if so, I seem to have remembered it. This past-life memory comes up in my private papers as early as 2012, whereas I discovered the story in 2020. To what extent it may be considered *generic*, I leave to the reader. Although I came to this conclusion later on, probably, picnics and long stage coach trips were indeed the means of choice for amorous young couples in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, if chaperones could be avoided.

Mathew appears to have begun communicating with Abby via veiled, personal references inserted into his journalistic productions, which she would decipher when she purchased his newspaper. This may actually be the origin of the method, because it does seem to first appear in his work for the New York “Constellation” in the early 1830’s. After Abby’s death, he used these techniques primarily for three purposes: to keep her memory alive by relating, in disguised form, intimate details about their courtship and marriage; to relay information concerning his clandestine anti-slavery activities; and to expose his plagiarists to posterity. To demonstrate *how* intimate, and *how much* disguised these memories about Abby might be, I give you an excerpt from what is, ostensibly, a slapstick parody of poor-quality popular literature. In order to insure Abby’s anonymity, Mathew has changed her height, nose shape, hair color, and both her eye color and size (she had large eyes). He has, however, retained her body shape, beauty, and age, but he has signed with an impenetrable one-off pseudonym, “Georgeius Lipsalve”:

Tall and slender is her form! Tall and slender like the pole that bears the fragrant hay!  
Like uncombed flax is her hair—falling in beautiful confusion on her freckled  
shoulders! Like lightning-bugs do her small, grey eyes flash beneath their thin, white  
arches! A beautiful pug is her nose! Her twin breasts that heave beneath her calico  
gown, are round—round and flat—like Bond’s biscuit! Like a pair of blacksmith  
bellows, do they heave! And beneath them beats her little gizzard! Ha! Her little  
gizzard! It beats and struggles and thumps like “somebody knocking at the door”!!!

To my practiced eye, and also to my intuition, Mathew is specifically referring to their early sexual intimacies. After all, he seems quite familiar with the shape of her breasts, and biscuits are not simply admired visually. This same story opens as follows:

A lovely maiden sitting on the steps of an old house! An old house that had withstood  
the storms and tempests of a century! And a *young* maiden of scarce twenty-five  
summers! An old house and a young maiden!!!

In 1849, when this was published, an unmarried girl of 25 was concerned about not ending up as an old maid. She certainly wasn't "young." But Abby's house—the older portion, which had once been Elliot's Tavern, back in the 1700's—was indeed a century old. What I believe has happened, here, is that the editor has prudently revised "of scarce fifteen summers" to "of scarce twenty-five summers." The passage is now safe for a general audience, but in the process it has been rendered nonsensical.

Mathew does something very similar with another parody, this one telling the story of their first dance at the fall party in 1831. He actually wrote two versions—this is the later one. The first appears to include an encounter with "Prudence," who I take to have been Evelina Bray, while the second, written after many years, omits her entirely. Here, the girl representing Abby is grooming herself before the party. This particular passage prompted a past-life flash of its own:

Look!

At the glass stands a young girl just blossoming into womanhood. How beautiful! Tall and graceful as a candle, twelve to the pound. Her eyes are as dark and brilliant as a black walnut rocking-chair, and shaded by lashes as long and sleek as a muskrat's tail. Her chin is directly under her nose. Her mouth is small and beautifully curved. Her lips are as red as two cherries, not looking as though they had ever been soiled by pork or buttered pancakes.

Her bosom heaves and swells like a summer's sea, while her long, jet-black hair, hardly confined by a string, falls beautifully about her long swan-like neck.

Her toilet is completed!

She looks in the glass!

She rares up on her toes! Like a beautiful angel, she rares up on her toes!

She wriggles and twists like an angleworm! Well she might. A crisis has come in her girlhood. The night's history may color her whole destiny.

Mathew has once more disguised Abby's identity by giving her "long, jet-black hair" (hers was auburn and curly), black eyes (hers were blue and/or hazel, depending on the lighting), and making her tall instead of petite. He *has*, however, preserved her age, as he had tried to do in the previous example. But when I read this for the first time, I thrilled to the sentence: "She rares up on her toes! Like a beautiful angel, she rares up on her toes!" The reason Abby would have raised herself up on her toes at the mirror, is precisely because she was petite. This memory was so intensely poignant for Mathew, that even though it didn't make sense in context, he had to include it. This was typical of his "encoded" parodies—most of the personal references would be heavily veiled, but here and there he would inject the literal truth.

We see from the foregoing examples that Mathew was indeed writing intimate, veiled autobiography which he intended his readers to take as light humor. Therefore, my simple past-



life insight, experienced before I had studied any of Mathew's published works, becomes a significant validation that I am, in fact, his reincarnation.

And if that is so, then what I wrote in the 2003 interview *also* stands as a strong validation:

I have, through intuition, glimpses, and educated guesswork, identified a few lives I feel pretty sure of, and a number of others I have hints of. I've been a writer, connected, I think, with the Romantic poets, for example. Not any of the famous ones as near as I can tell, but I think I knew some of them personally and ascribed to their overall philosophy (for better or worse).

Reports of past-life memories—including memories which have at least some elements of validation—are becoming increasingly common. Note I said the *reports* are becoming increasingly common, and that is because in 2022, when this paper is being written, it is increasingly acceptable to relate them publicly. There are, meanwhile, a number of researched cases of reincarnation which are more strongly validated than my own. However, this particular match has some unique features which recommend it to the next level of reincarnation research. We know, from the work of Dr. Stevenson, his colleagues and their successors, as well other researchers like Australian psychologist Dr. Peter Ramster, past-life therapists like Rick Brown, and independent investigators like Capt. Robert Snow, that reincarnation is an actual, proven phenomenon. But it is not entirely clear, as I write this today, exactly *what* reincarnates—what part of a person is retained in the process of reincarnation, and what is lost.

Because Mathew Franklin Whittier's literary legacy is so extensive, and because it contains a great deal of autobiographical material (including a number of intimate, personal travelogues), one can very clearly discern his values, attitudes, beliefs, sense of humor, world view, and the way his mind works. All of these things comprise what I like to call the "higher mind," and what I have observed—and *can objectively demonstrate*—is that my higher mind is absolutely identical to Mathew's. This means that while my physical visage and my personality, which are similar, may have replicated such that the "apple" didn't fall very far from the "tree," *my higher mind persisted intact from one incarnation to another*. And again, most crucially, this is not merely a matter of conjecture. One can compare my own personal writings, taken from a time before I had studied Mathew's written works, with his. This can be done for all the aforesaid parameters—values, attitudes, beliefs, sense of humor, world view, and the way my mind works.

*That* is a subject for another paper—a more advanced paper, addressed to readers who have accepted this proposed past-life match as validated and authentic. I will be able to leave behind the bugaboo of proving the case itself, for them. And *then*, there is the matter of Mathew's—and Abby's—literary legacy, which cannot be understood until this match is accepted as genuine, because of the controversies which arise in it. But first things first.