

Who Was Elizabeth A. White, the Wife of Enoch White of East Nichols, New York?

Enoch White, of East Nichols, Tioga County, New York, was the son of Theodorus White (22 December 1789 – 15 November 1873) and his (first) wife Sarah Cole (8 March 1793 – 6 May 1850). Theodorus and Sarah were married in Duanesburgh, Schenectady County, New York, in June of 1808, and about seven years later migrated to Tioga County, and settled in the town of Nichols. Theodorus's parents, Joshua and Rhoda (Deuel) White, and other members of the White family, settled in Nichols around this same time. Enoch White was born in Tioga County, presumably in Nichols, in 1827. He died in East Nichols on 2 June 1881, at the age of 54, and was buried in the White Family Cemetery in Nichols – where his parents, grandparents, and other relatives were also buried.

East Nichols, a specific neighborhood within the town of Nichols, had its own post office in the nineteenth century. Elizabeth A. White, after the death of her husband Enoch, became the postmistress there. The *Directory of Tioga County, New York, 1887- '88*, published in 1887, includes this entry: “White, Elizabeth A. (East Nichols), widow [of] Enoch, postmistress, and farm 30 [acres].”

One of the daughters of Enoch and Elizabeth White was Minnie White, born 14 December 1868, who married Emron Osborne Carpenter. When she died on 31 January 1953, her obituary, on p. 5 of the 2 February 1953 issue of the *Binghamton Press and Sun Bulletin*, described her as “the daughter of Enoch and Elizabeth Phinn White.” Was this accurate? Was the unusual surname “Phinn” the maiden name of Enoch White's wife Elizabeth?

Enoch White had written a will on 18 October 1880, which named his wife Elizabeth A. White, and appointed her and his cousin Platt White as executors; and which also named his “youngest daughter” Minnie, and made special provision for her education. His other children were not specifically named in the will, but the will did state that after the death of Elizabeth his property was to be divided equally among all his heirs. The witnesses to this will were Eben Briggs and Louisa Briggs. We will have reason to discuss them again. In a separate document submitted to the Surrogate of the County of Tioga by Elizabeth A. White on 18 June 1881, soon after Enoch White's death and in regard to the probating of his will, she stated that

the following named persons are the widow [and] all the heirs at law and next of kin of the said deceased, and their respective places of residence are as follows, viz.: Elizabeth A. White widow of said deceased your petitioner, Sarah Wood daughter of said deceased, Charlotte Winans daughter of said deceased, Phena White daughter of said deceased, and Minnie White daughter of said deceased, severally residing in the Town of Nichols in the County of Tioga and State of New York...”

Enoch's wife Elizabeth appears with him and with other members of their family, as residents of the town of Nichols, on the 1855, 1865, and 1875 state censuses; and on the 1860, 1870, and 1880 federal censuses. The information provided in those census entries does indeed show that this couple had four daughters: Sarah (born 1853), Charlotte P. (born 1855), Tryphena (born 1863), and Minnie (born 1868). (“Phena” in the probate document, and “Tryphena” in the censuses, are the same person.) Also on the basis of these censuses, we know that Elizabeth, the

wife of Enoch White, had been born in 1829 or 1830 in Tioga County. The 1880 census furthermore states that each of her parents had been born in the State of New York.

“Elizabeth A. White” died on 7 June 1889, at the age of 60, and was buried in the Briggs Hollow Cemetery in Nichols. Her age at death calculates to a year of birth of 1828 or 1829. The text of her obituary, as it appeared in the *Tioga County Record* (Vol. XIX, No. 17), published in Owego, New York, on 20 June 1889, was as follows:

Died, in the town of Nichols, N.Y., Friday, June 7, 1889, Mrs. Elizabeth A. White, aged 60 years. The deceased leaves four daughters, Mrs. Ed. Winans, Miss Phema White of Owego, Mrs. A. Wood, of Nichols, and Mrs. E. Carpenter of North Rome Pa., also two sisters, Mrs. E. Briggs of Nichols and Mrs. D. T. Lucas of Owego. The funeral was held Sunday at the residence of her brother-in-law, Mr. Eben Briggs, Briggs Hollow.

Eben Briggs of the Briggs Hollow neighborhood of the town of Nichols, at whose home Elizabeth’s funeral was held, is also buried in the Briggs Hollow Cemetery. According to the stone that marks the graves of Eben and his two wives, “Eben Briggs” was born on 29 June 1830 and died on 2 May 1907. His first wife “Charlotte P.” was born on 25 December 1830 and died on 24 August 1853. His second wife “Louisa P.” was born on 3 October 1834 and died on 30 October 1902. Charlotte and Louisa were sisters – daughters of Oliver Jones Plum and his wife Elizabeth (Van Duzer) Plum, of Nichols.

A short notice that appeared in *The Waverly Free Press*, published in Waverly, Tioga County, New York, on 21 March 1877, reported that “O. J. Plum, father of William H. Plum of this place, is lying dangerously ill at the residence of his son-in-law Eben Briggs, of Nichols.” Oliver Jones Plum had actually died the day before this notice was published. Another interesting detail is that in the 1880 census, another William Plum, said to be 73 years old, was living in the household of Eben Briggs and his wife Louisa in Nichols. His relationship to the head of the household was given as “uncle.” This was an older William H. Plum, a brother of Oliver Jones Plum, after whom Oliver’s son William H. Plum of Waverly had presumably been named.

Oliver’s parents (and the older William’s parents) were John Plum and his wife Tryphena Hunt. The “Family Record” section of John and Tryphena’s family Bible has entries for the births of their ten children. One of these entries shows that “Oliver J. Plum was born April the 27[th] 1800 in New Baltimore.” New Baltimore is in Greene County, New York. Another of these entries shows that “William H. Plum was born September the 18[th] 1806 in Northampton.” Northampton is in Fulton County, New York. (As an aside, yet another of these entries shows that “Sally Plum was born October the 4[th] 1790 in New Baltimore.” Sally was the great-great-grandmother of Ernest Miller Hemingway, the famous literary figure.)

As we “connect the dots,” then, we know that Eben Briggs was a son-in-law of Oliver Jones Plum and a nephew(-in-law) of Oliver’s known brother William H. Plum, which would make Eben’s wife Louisa a daughter of Oliver and a niece of William. We also know that Eben Briggs’ wife Louisa was a sister of Elizabeth A. White. From these data we can infer that Elizabeth A. White was also a daughter of Oliver Jones Plum, and also a niece of William H. Plum. The statement in the 1953 newspaper obituary of Elizabeth’s daughter Minnie (White) Carpenter, that Elizabeth’s maiden name was Phinn, rather than Plum, can be attributed to sloppy handwriting. When the typesetter read someone’s handwritten statement that Minnie’s mother was *Elizabeth Plum*, he thought that what it said was *Elizabeth Phinn*. There are other

mistakes in this obituary as well. The decedent's place of birth is given as Owego, whereas she had actually been born in Nichols; and the surname of the decedent's sons (William P. and Clayton) is given as White, whereas their name was actually Carpenter. This suggests that the information for this obituary had not been gathered and organized very carefully.

Oliver Jones Plum and his wife Elizabeth Van Duzer did indeed have a daughter Elizabeth, who was a member of the Oliver J. Plum household in Nichols in the 1850 census. The Plum household entry (which was recorded by the census-taker on 15 August 1850) includes eight persons – all born in New York, and all bearing the surname Plum: “Oliver J.,” age 50; “Elizabeth,” age 50; “Elizabeth,” age 19; “Charlottee,” age 18; “Louiza,” age 16; “Edwin,” age 13; “Triphina,” age 11; and “William H.,” age 9.

The younger Elizabeth's stated age of 19 in that census calculates to a birth in 1830 or 1831. This is only one year off from the age of Elizabeth the wife of Enoch White, as given in later census records. In the 1850 census, Charlotte (“Charlottee”) Plum is said to be 18 years old, whereas we know from Charlotte's gravestone inscription that she was actually 19 at the time (having been born on 25 December 1830). And Louisa (“Louiza”) Plum is said to be 16, whereas we know from her gravestone inscription that she was actually 15 at the time (having been born on 3 October 1834). In this census, ages were misstated by a year or so in either direction. In view of the fact that the daughter Elizabeth's next youngest sibling Charlotte was born in December of 1830, I believe that this younger Elizabeth (Oliver and Elizabeth Plum's daughter) was born sometime in 1829 – which would be in accord with Elizabeth A. White's stated age at death, and with her stated age in various censuses.

Oliver and Elizabeth Plum's daughter Tryphena (“Triphina”) was later the wife of Daniel T. Lucas. “Mrs. D. T. Lucas” was identified as a surviving sister of Elizabeth A. White in Elizabeth's 1889 obituary. When “Tryphena, wife of Daniel T. Lucas,” died in Owego, Tioga County, on 1 November 1901, her published obituary included among her survivors “one sister, Mrs. Eben Briggs of Briggs Hollow, and two brothers, Edwin Plum of Oregon, Ill., and W. H. Plum of Waverly.” “W. H. Plum” is William H. Plum, who in 1873 was living in Waverly, when he was named in the newspaper notice that reported the illness of his father O. J. Plum.

When Elizabeth A. (Plum) White died in 1889, her obituary did not include her still-living brothers Edwin and William H. among her survivors, even though her two living sisters were listed (together with her four children). I do not know the reason for this omission.

Returning now to the 1850 census, Enoch White was listed in this census as a single man living with his widowed father Theodorus White in Nichols – his mother Sarah having died in May of that year. So, he and his wife Elizabeth were not yet married at the time the census was taken. This is what we would expect, if Enoch did in fact later marry Elizabeth Plum, who was likewise still single in 1850.

Elizabeth Plum's parents, “Oliver J. Plum” and “Elizabeth Van Duzer,” both said to be from Albany, had been married at the Third Presbyterian Church in Albany, Albany County, New York, on 28 June 1821. “Oliver Jones Plum” had previously been baptized (as an adult) in that church on 21 February 1819. We also see in the baptismal records of the Third Presbyterian Church that Oliver and Elizabeth's son Philip Lucas Plum was born on 17 November 1822, and was baptized on 19 January 1823; that their son John Oliver Plum was born on 8 September

1824, and was baptized on 28 January 1825; and that their son William Henry Plum was born on 2 January 1826, and was baptized on 9 July 1826.

The Oliver Plum family moved from Albany to New York City sometime in 1826 or 1827. We know this because “Plumb, Oliver,” occupation cabinetmaker, appears in Albany city directories from 1822 through 1826 (residing at 8 Fox Street in 1822, and on Patroon Street from 1823 to 1826); and then “Plum, Oliver J.,” occupation cabinetmaker, appears as a resident of 62 Greene Street in New York City in the 1827 edition of *Longworth’s American Almanac, New York Register, and City Directory*. The Plums did not stay in New York City for long, however, because by 1829 they were living in Nichols. (Oliver’s occupation in Nichols, as indicated in various census records between 1850 and 1870, was also cabinetmaker.) The son John O. Plum died on 28 April 1835 at the stated age of ten years, seven months, and 20 days, and is buried in the East Nichols Cemetery (also known as the Riverside Cemetery or the Dunham Cemetery) in East Nichols. Also buried there is “Charles H., son of Oliver J. & Elizabeth Plum,” who was born after the move to Nichols, and who died on 3 May 1841 at the stated age of eight.

We can presume that the son William Henry Plum, born in Albany in 1826, died sometime prior to the birth of his younger brother William H. Plum. When this second William H. Plum died on 2 June 1907, at his home in South Waverly, Bradford County, Pennsylvania, the obituary for him that was published the following day in *The Binghamton Press* stated that “Mr. Plum was born in Nichols 66 years ago last January.” The only survivor listed was his brother Edwin, of Oregon, Illinois. According to the death certificate for “William H. Plum” of South Waverly, he had been born on 16 January 1841 in Nichols, and was the son of “Oliver J. Plum,” born in Albany, and “Elizabeth Van Duzer,” likewise born in Albany. The informant was “Phena White” of Waverly. She was the daughter of Elizabeth (Plum) White and, as we have concluded, would have been the niece of the decedent. Edwin Plum’s gravestone in the Lighthouse Cemetery in Daysville, Ogle County, Illinois, indicates that he lived from 1836 to 1919.

According to the 1855 state census, Oliver Plum’s mother Tryphena (Hunt) Plum was then living with him and his family in Nichols. Her husband John Plum (Oliver’s father) had died on 10 November 1850, in Windham, Bradford County, Pennsylvania, where he and his wife Tryphena had been living for many years. Nichols and Windham are adjacent towns. Nichols is on the northern edge, and Windham is on the southern edge, of the New York - Pennsylvania state line. Oliver’s mother Tryphena died on 19 December 1858. She and her husband John are buried in the East Nichols Cemetery.

We also note that in the 1855 census, Elizabeth, the daughter of Oliver and Elizabeth Plum, was no longer living with her parents. “Enoch White” was still living with his father “Theodorus White” in Nichols, identified as Theodorus’s 27-year-old child. But now also living in this household were four new females: a new wife of Theodorus, “Martha White,” age 50; a new child of Theodorus, “Elizabeth White,” age 25; and two new grandchildren of Theodorus, “Sarah White,” age 1, and “Sharlotte B. White,” age ½. It is quite evident that the “child” Elizabeth was actually Theodorus’s daughter-in-law, Enoch’s wife; and that the grandchildren were Elizabeth and Enoch’s offspring. I also believe that “Sharlotte B.” was a mishearing on the part of the census-taker of “Charlotte P.,” since this daughter is referred to as “Charlotte P.” in the 1860 census.

The fact that Enoch and Elizabeth White had daughters named Charlotte and Tryphena is onomastic evidence of a connection between the Whites and the Plums. We recall that Elizabeth Plum – the presumed wife of Enoch White – had sisters Charlotte (Plum) Briggs and Tryphena

(Plum) Lucas, in addition to a grandmother named Tryphena. Enoch and Elizabeth White's oldest daughter Sarah was apparently named after Enoch's mother Sarah (Cole) White, which makes it likely that Enoch and Elizabeth would have named later children after relatives as well. Another bit of onomastic evidence of this connection is that Enoch and Elizabeth White's daughter Minnie, with her husband Emron Osborne Carpenter, had a son named William Plum Carpenter (June 25, 1905 – October 6, 1972). Emron's middle name "Osborne" had been derived from the maiden name of his mother, Alvana (Osborne) Carpenter. William's middle name was apparently derived from the maiden name of his grandmother Elizabeth (Plum) White. "William Plum" would also have been the name of one of his mother's uncles.

We have already noted that Oliver J. Plum was born in New Baltimore, Greene County, New York. The 1855 and 1865 censuses state that both Oliver and his wife Elizabeth had been born in Greene County. We would note that these data regarding their places of birth match the statement in the 1880 census that the parents of Enoch White's wife Elizabeth were both born in New York State. William H. Plum's 1907 death certificate states that his parents Oliver and Elizabeth had each been born in Albany. This information was provided by a niece of William, who seems to have known that her grandparents were both living in Albany at the time of their marriage, and who probably assumed that they had also been born there.

Oliver J. Plum died on 20 March 1877, aged 77 years. His wife Elizabeth had died on 26 February 1873, aged 72 years. They are buried together in the East Nichols Cemetery.

According to her age as given on her gravestone and in census records, the year of birth for Oliver Plum's wife Elizabeth Van Duzer calculates to 1800 or 1801. She was probably the daughter of the "John Van Douser" who with his family was living in Loonenburg (now Athens), Greene County, at the time of the 1800 census. Elizabeth was therefore probably born in Loonenburg. "Van Duzer" and "Van Douser" are variations on the historic Dutch family name Van Deursen or Van Duesen. The American progenitor of this family was Abraham Pietersen Van Deursen, originally from Haarlem in the Netherlands, who settled in New Amsterdam, in New Netherland, before 1636. I have not yet been able to figure out how Elizabeth, and her probable father John, fit into this larger family.

There are no Tioga County probate records for Oliver Jones Plum or for his wife Elizabeth (Van Duzer) Plum, to confirm the identify of their daughter (and heir) Elizabeth as the Elizabeth who married Enoch White. There is no known birth record for this daughter Elizabeth. Since Oliver and Elizabeth Plum are known to have had their older children baptized in the Presbyterian Church in Albany, we can assume that Elizabeth and her other siblings were likewise baptized soon after birth – even though there are no known baptismal records for the children who were born to this family after its move from Albany. The family remained religiously active after that move, however. According to *A History of Nichols, N.Y.*, by Burtis A. Everett (1974), Oliver J. Plum was elected to be an elder of the First Presbyterian Church in Nichols in 1833, and the following year he was elected to be a deacon of that church (p. 23). But this congregation had been organized in 1832, about three years after the birth and presumed baptism of Oliver's daughter Elizabeth. Her baptism must therefore have taken place under the aegis of a different congregation, likely in a neighboring town. Perhaps a record of that baptism will turn up someday.

And, there is no civil record of the 1889 death of Elizabeth A. White – the widow of Enoch White – in the Nichols town clerk's register. This last fact is particularly disappointing, since those civil records usually give the names of the parents of the decedent. The State of New

York had begun requiring town and city clerks to record the deaths of their residents in 1880, so Elizabeth's death in Nichols in 1889 should have been recorded. But in response to a query on my part to the Nichols Town Clerk's office regarding such a record of death, I received this communication in an email on 28 February 2019 from Deputy Town Clerk Tiffany Middendorf: "I looked at our records and there is not an Elizabeth White that died in that time frame in our records." In a follow-up message on 1 March 2019, she added: "There isn't a lot recorded in the first few years. The earliest our records even start is 1887."

Elizabeth A. White's identity as a daughter of Oliver Jones Plum and his wife Elizabeth Van Duzer can nevertheless be pieced together and established on the basis of the documentary evidence, herein cited, that proves that our Elizabeth A. White was a sister of Louisa (Plum) Briggs; that proves that this Louisa (Plum) Briggs was a daughter of Oliver Jones Plum (and a niece of Oliver's brother, William H. Plum); that proves that this Louisa (Plum) Briggs was also a sister of Tryphena (Plum) Lucas; and that proves that Elizabeth A. White was likewise a sister of this Tryphena (Plum) Lucas. A sister of Oliver's daughter is herself also Oliver's daughter. Our Elizabeth was a sister of Oliver's daughter (Louisa). Our Elizabeth was therefore Oliver's daughter, too.

Oliver and Elizabeth Plum's daughter Elizabeth A. (Plum) White was not buried with her husband Enoch in the White Family Cemetery. Her burial instead in the Briggs Hollow Cemetery can be better understood in light of the identification of Eben Briggs' first wife Charlotte, who was already buried there, as Elizabeth's sister; and in light of the identification of Eben's second and then-current wife Louisa – who was destined also to be buried there – likewise as Elizabeth's sister.

The conclusion we have reached concerning the identity of Enoch White's wife as Elizabeth A. Plum, allows us to set forth for her, and for all her descendants, a line of descent from Mayflower passenger Richard Warren. That line of descent, as it would come down to me through 15 generations, is as follows:

- (1) Richard Warren (1585-1628), m.1610 Elizabeth Walker (1583-1683); parents of
- (2) Anna Warren (b.1613), m.1633 Thomas Little (1608-1672); parents of
- (3) Abigail Little (b.1635), m. Josiah Keen (1637-1710); parents of
- (4) Josiah Keene (d.1732), m.1681 Lydia Baker (b.1660); parents of
- (5) Lydia Keene (b.1695), m.1713 George Partridge (1690-1769); parents of
- (6) Sarah Partridge (1716-1766), m.1736 Asa Hunt (1710-1752); parents of
- (7) Ziba Hunt (1746-1820), m.1763 Joanna Blunt (1748-1825); parents of
- (8) Tryphena Hunt (1766-1858), m.1783 John Plum (1765-1850); parents of
- (9) Oliver Jones Plum (1800-1877), m.1821 Elizabeth Van Duzer (1800-1873); parents of
- (10) Elizabeth A. Plum (1829-1889), m. Enoch White (1827-1881); parents of
- (11) Minnie White (1868-1953), m. Emron Osborne Carpenter (1868-1950); parents of
- (12) Clayton Enoch Carpenter (1888-1972), m.1907 Rose Lorena DeCator (1887-1971); parents of
- (13) Laura Lucille Carpenter (1920-1990), m.1937 Donald Milton Webber (1918-1976); parents of
- (14) David Milton Webber (1938-2008), m.1959 Joy Ann Balint (living); parents of
- (15) David Jay Webber (living).

David Jay Webber
24 March 2023



Gravestone for Elizabeth A. (Plum) White, wife of Enoch White, in the Briggs Hollow Cemetery



Gravestone for Oliver Jones Plum in the East Nichols Cemetery



Gravestone for Elizabeth (Van Duzer) Plum, wife of Oliver Jones Plum, in the East Nichols Cemetery

FAMILY RECORD.

MARRIAGES.

MARRIAGES.

John Plum and
Tryphena Hunt
were Married February
20 1783 -

State of New York
County of Seago

for Tryphena Plum & Nichols in said County
being duly sworn says that she is the identical person who has made
application for a pension as the widow of John Plum a revolutionary
soldier deceased which application is now pending - That the Original ~~Record~~
the marriage of this deponent with the said John Plum either of a public
or private nature was exists so far as this deponent can ascertain - That this
sheet of paper on which this affidavit is written was contained in the family Bible
and formed a part of the family record of the said John Plum and
is deponent for more than thirty five (35) years - That all the written
parts of this piece of paper was copied by ~~the said John Plum~~ and is a true
copy of an old original record contained in an account book which was at
the time of its being copied nearly worn out and has for many years been
lost or destroyed - That the said original record was made at the time of
occurrence of the events stated therein in the hand writing of the said John
Plum and further that the above copied statement to wit "John Plum
and Tryphena Hunt were married February 20. 1783" is in the hand writing
of the said John Plum and was made by him more than thirty five (35) years
ago and is a true copy of the original record - That facts stated above and on the
other side of this sheet are true and true copies from said original record

Subscribed and sworn to this
seventeenth day of November
1801 one thousand eight hundred
and fifty three before me
Peter H. Joslin Justice of the Peace

the words "by the ^{said} John Plum" crossed
before this affidavit was sworn to
by the said Tryphena Plum
Peter H. Joslin
Justice of the Peace

Tryphena Plum

Plum Family Bible Record (first page)

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FAMILY RECORD.

BIRTHS.

BIRTHS.

Camela Plum was born
December the 17 1786.
Stephen town

Butler G Plum was born
December the 5 1794
in New Baltimore

Hiram Plum was born
July the 29 1788
in Schooak

Oliver Plum was born
April the 27 1800
in New Baltimore

Sally Plum was born
October the 1 1799
in New Baltimore

Elijah Plum was born
July the 6 1804
in Northampton

Thirza Plum was born
January the 18 1793
in New Baltimore

William H Plum was
born September the 13
1806 in Northampton

Nathaniel Plum was
born March the 14 1795
in New Baltimore

Mahitable Plum was born
July the 14 1797
in New Baltimore