

# The Story of The Thomas Cousins

## And how we came to be

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Summer 2020

## Our Generations

These are the results of my DNA test through Family Tree DNA. The "promotion" on this included a year of research sponsored by the Mormon's of Utah. Being female, it is traced through my Mother, Helen.

1. Anna Frances Reistle ( substitute your name here)
2. Helen Marie Thomas ( herr Mother) ( substitute Helen, Fred or Jim here)
3. Alphonso Lyons Thomas, Jr. ( Helen's Father)( follow this chart as yours)
4. Elizabeth Smallwood Downer Thomas ( Alphonso's Mother)
5. Mary Smallwood Rulon Downer (Elizabeth's Mother)
6. John Mahomat Rulon (Mary's Father)
7. John Rulon, Sr. (John M's Father)
8. Henry Rulon (John, Sr.'s Father)
9. David Cooper Rulon ( Henry's Father) Pierre Ruel Rulon ( David's Father)
10. Margrietje Paulding Rulon (David's Mother)  
b. 1680 LaTremblade, France b.1681 Monmouth, NJ  
d. July 18,1741 Ulster, NY d. 1714 Monmouth, NJ  
her parents are Henry Allen and Hannah Corlies Allen
11. Exercise Allen Rulon ( Pierre and Margrietje's daughter in law)  
b. October 18, 1705 d. March 29, 1779

now it jumps to:

13. Henriette Auger Corliez (1530-1627)
14. . Pierre Corliez (Henriette's Father) 1497-1551)
15. Louise Bascom Corliez ( Pierre's Mother) 1469-1520)
16. Giulaiume Bascom,Jr. (1443-1511) and Adelaide Chabane de Bascom (Louise's parents)
17. Amedei Daniel... Lord of Des Vres Cambria Nord Nord-Pas-de Calais France  
Amedei was Father to .
18. PHILLIPO DANIEL Thrice Noble and Magnificent and Powerful Prince  
b. 1453 d. 1488
19. He married Agnetta Daniel and they were parents to Andre Daniel Noble of St. Omar

This is the end of the research I have for us, but..... NO DOUBT..... We have "royal French Blood" in us!!

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REV. ARTHUR DOWNER (No. 2458).

Rev. Arthur Downer

He has the distinction of having founded a new branch of the Downer family in this country, and of having a town named in his honor. His father was John Downer born in Ireland about 1780. His grandfather was Charles Downer, born about 1755, somewhere in Ireland, and came to Drumbess in the Parish of Killeshandra, years before the rebellion of 1798. The ancestors to this branch of Downers were intense Loyalists and escaped from England in Cromwell's time and found refuge in Ireland.

John Downer was a rigid churchman and also a member of the Primitive Wesleyan Church. He had the stern spirit of those early days and trained his children accordingly. He personally gave them the rudiments of a secular education ( the nearest school being 2 miles away)and was careful to instill into their minds religious truths. There is, in this family a tradition that some of its member went to America at an early time, but where is not known.

Influenced by letters received from friends of his Mother, in Philadelphia, Arthur Downer embarked from Ireland in the packet ship J.P.Whitney on May 19, 1849. He landed in Philadelphia on July 7. He first found employment in a wholesale store on Second Street ,but it was not to his liking. In the spring of 1850 he crossed the Delaware into NJ and hired out to a Gloucester County farmer at \$9.50 per month. Afterwards, in 1858, he began farming on his own account and ran into debt for fifty acres of wild, unimproved forest land. It was, he said “ a moral and physical desolation” ,but he lived there 10 years, clearing the lands and cultivating the soil. In 1870 a railroad was surveyed through the section and the line laid out, going directly through the town of Downer.

In 1873 the Jay Cooke Financial crisis nearly ruined him, but providentially a

valuable bed of silicate sand was just then found on his farm, which has ever since continued to be a source of unfailing revenue. From it is taken over two thousand tons a month on which Mr. Downer's personal royalty is ten cents a ton, giving him a net income of more than \$ 200 monthly from this source alone. The sand is washed by machinery and shipped in car lots to various points, where it is used in the manufacture of glass and steel. The future of Downer, NJ seems to be assured and its founder is proud of the fact that it has no saloon. The village itself, with its Downer name, is a monument to the man back of it, but no account of him would be complete without reference to the religious side of his life. One of his first acts in coming to Gloucester County was to connect himself to the Harrisonville ME Church, and since that time has been active in Christian work. He soon organized a Sunday School in his house and gathered in his neighbor's children for religious instruction. In 1868 he bought an adjoining block of 48 acres of land on which he selected a site for a beautiful church. This however was not built until 1886. Mr. Downer never sought church preferment, but it has come to him unsolicited. In 1866

was licensed to exhort" and five years later he received a "preacher's license", In 1889 he was ordained a Deacon, and in 1895 ordained an Elder, by Bishop Merritt. The church and district school at Downer owe their existence to him. He not only donated the land on which they stand, but it was chiefly by his aid that the buildings were erected. He preaches at neighboring places as he may be needed, and is grateful for the opportunity. Now in his declining years he possesses the respect of his neighbors and recognizes the leadings of an over ruling Providence. He can look back with satisfaction on a well-spent life and rejoice that he has been able to accomplish so much for the good of the community where God has placed him.

This information is taken from a book... "The Downers of America" A  
Genealogical Record

By David R Downer Newark, NJ  
1900

Information from the Township of Monroe  
Williamstown, NJ site

## Downer... History of Monroe Township

Arthur Downer and his wife Mary arrived in 1858.

An Indian Burial Ground was present as was an indication of cultivation of the fields. Crops were grown next to the public road ( presently Rt. 322) Peach trees were also raised and although they bore rather feebly on one occasion it is said the crop of peaches were so large they resembled cantaloupes. Apple trees were also found in the area. In 1864 residents of Downer voted for Abraham Lincoln and were driven to the poles by Arthur Downer himself.

The Downer house was a typical house of the time consisting of two rooms downstairs and three upstairs. They were used for many reasons in addition to living quarters. Some were used for storage, granary, etc. and the hams were stored in the fireplace.

By 1871 the population had grown sufficiently large to require the need of a school. As in other hamlets in the area, the school was initially built for children and later became the property of the church. The school became part of the Downer UM Church and was used as a Social Hall.

In 1875 the potato bug infested their crops and left them in seriously difficulty so they turned to other endeavors. John, the son, had discovered yellow sand in the area, but his father because Arthur paid little attention to this. Later, the burial of a colt in the sand proved to be eventful because it was tested and found to be good for the glass industry. Delivery of the sand was first made by horse drawn wagon and later by rail on the Williamstown and Delaware River Railroad. A siding was placed at the Fries Mill Road to take advantage of the cheap rail rates. The name formerly used by this area was Whitneyville and was shortened to Whitney. When the Post Office was built the name was changed to Downer.

As in all the surrounding areas, the Methodist Church played an important part. It began with the efforts of Mary and Arthur Downer, who after attending a Camp Meeting felt the need to have their neighbors experience "Sanctification", as they called it. Revivals started at "the corner house".

School was conducted in the Downer Homestead. Church services were attended in Williamstown. Realizing that with growth, a new permanent church was needed... one was built. The original burnt, but was quickly replaced.

## The Story of Alphonso and Elizabeth

It all started with Benjamin Smallwood (1775-1832) and Elizabeth Cooper (1778-1832) ..... Their son John Charles Smallwood ( 1797 1878) and his wife Mary Dunham (1803- 1874)( were married on April 17, 1833). Ten years later their daughter Mary Smallwood was born. (1832-1899). Mary met Samuel Goldsmith Thomas ( 1826-1870) and their son was Alphonso Lyons Thomas, Sr ( 1856-1920). Our Great Grandfather!

Meanwhile... it started again with Benjamin Smallwood and Elizabeth Cooper. Their daughter Sybillia Cooper Smallwood (1803-1883) married John Rulon, Jr. (1802-1877) on October 7, 1824. Their daughter Mary Smallwood Rulon ( 1834-1899) married Arthur Downer ( 1829 1917) on May 13, 1853. Their fourth child and only surviving daughter was Elizabeth Smallwood Downer ( 1861-1946) Our Great Grandmother!!

Alphonso, Sr. 's Mother and Elizabeth's Mother were cousins. Elizabeth was born and raised in Downer. Alphonso's Mother became a widow and with several young sons went to work, with her boys, in a mill in Delaware. MY story goes like this.....

Mary Downer wrote to her cousin Mary Thomas and insisted she move to Downer, NJ with her boys. Rather than working in the mill they could work on the Downer's farm, where the boys could attend the Downer school, and Church. Alphonso was the oldest... and as fate would have it... fell in love with the younger( 5 years) Elizabeth Downer. And so our story begins! Both Mary Downer and Mary Thomas died the same year (1899) and both are buried in the Downer Cemetery.

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And that's how the "Thomas Clan" began for us!

This is the family home of Alphonso Lyons Thomas, Sr. and Elizabeth Downer Thomas. It looks quite different now, as it was purchased by Fritz Hoffman after the GGparents moved to 89E. Barber Ave, Woodbury, NJ. Fritz moved it back from 322 and tore off the back shed and bricked the exterior. All six of the Thomas children were born and raised here. It is currently for sale, and is located on the corner of 322 and Fries Mill Rd. It is only one of two original houses in Downer to survive. The other one is next to the Downer UM Church and is used as a Sunday School.

The railroad played an important part in the development of the hamlet of Downer. Not only for shipping the sand to the glassworks and steel industry, but for produce and people transportation. The railroad is not there anymore, but the state of NJ has converted the original railroad bed to the "Rails to Trails" project. It runs from Williamstown to Elmer.