A case study of what can go wrong when the Genealogical Proof Standard isn’t applied to family history research.

During the Gilded Age of America in the last decade of the 19th century, the daily news carried articles about robber barons like Andrew Carnegie, John D. Rockefeller, or Cornelius Vanderbilt to name only three, and their immense wealth; and, at the same time, genealogy was a growing popular hobby.¹ So, why not create a scam to defraud credulous individuals at the intersection of these two trends?

A group of like-minded individuals organized in Richmond, Indiana and again in Chicago, Illinois. They created the House Heirs Association (HHA)² for descendants of an alleged Andrew Valentine

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² The HHA was not an organized and licensed (or a legally registered) company in the State of Indiana; see the Indiana Secretary of State to Richardson, 20 April 2020.
House (AVH) of Maryland. This apparently fictional AVH possessed a compelling backstory—he was allegedly an immigrant from the Palatinate with a Huguenot wife, who escaped from France after the Edict of Nantes. In 1715, he supposedly inherited vast lands in Frederick and Washington County, Maryland “from a member of the English Royal Family.”

Wait—it gets more elaborate; the House family owned a mill on Antietam Creek, but lost it in a swindle involving a forge and departed in disgust for the Common-wealth of Kentucky, signing over their property by lease. Supposedly, the present value to members of the newly organized House association at the turn of the 20th century—a cool $300,000,000—just imagine!

So in Richmond, Indiana, several interested parties organized in July 1899 as the House Heirs Association; their officers were Charles Ellison of Noblesville, Indiana as the president and Mrs. L.

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3 Note the repeated confusion about his given first name—is it Andrew? Some newspapers, like the Butler County (Ohio) Democrat, 23 November 1899, say John Valentine House while many others say just a Valentine House.

4 Note, the Edict of Nantes was signed in April 1598! Details from “Mrs. L. R. Adams was Placed Under Arrest,” The Richmond Item, 17 April 1901, p. 1, col. 1-2.

5 In 17 August 1899, a Henry Clay Cameron [September 1827-1906, whose mother was born in Maryland] of Princeton, NJ [and served as Professor of Greek at Princeton] wrote that “he is the son of a descendant and that his father [John Cameron, 1796-1882, son of Daniel and Susan Clinton Cameron] when he was a boy went to the place and found the old estate then as described in metes and bounds precisely as his father had told him.” See “Case Dismissed Against Mrs. L. R. Adams, Charged with Improper Use of Mails in Connection with House Estate,” The Richmond Palladium and Sun-Telegram, 25 April 1901, p. 2, col. 4.

6 Or, maybe the family was supposed to make certain improvements, but failed to do so; see “After a $250,000,000 Estate,” Indianapolis Journal, 27 Jul 1899, p. 2, col. 2. and “Case Dismissed Against Mrs. L. R. Adams, Charged with Improper Use of Mails in Connection with House Estate,” The Richmond Palladium and Sun-Telegram, 25 April 1901, p. 2, col. 4. Or, maybe, it was a John House who owned 120,000 acres in Frederick Maryland, deeding his estate in 1752 to his children Andrew, George, William, John Valentine, and Susan; see “The House Heirs,” The Richmond (Indiana) Item, 16 November 1899, p. 5.

7 Oddly, he and his wife, Mary J., do not appear in the 1900 Census in Indiana, although he lived just northeast of Indianapolis. Mr. Ellison died on 7 May 1902 in Noblesville, according to The Hamilton County Democrat, 30 January 1903, p. 1, col. 5; his wife, Mary Jane, is buried next to him—see Find a Grave, database and images (https://www.findagrave.com : accessed 28 March 2020), memorial page for Charles H Ellison (6 May 1833–4 May 1902), Find a Grave Memorial no. 113458513, citing Riverside Cemetery, Noblesville, Hamilton County, Indiana, USA; Maintained by Tim Beckman (contributor 46974301).
R. (Jennie) Adams,8 the national secretary, and for Treasurer, a Jacob Lamott of Richmond, Indiana.9 Furthermore, they created eleven-member committee to “solicit funds from heirs with which to prosecute the litigation.”10 Apparently, the president was a true believer because he was quoted as saying “he remembers well hearing his mother and grandmother talk of the vast fortune awaiting them in the south.”11 Representatives from the HHA met with a Cincinnatian, Herman Marckworth,12 an attorney and collector.13 And in late 1899, sixty or seventy association members heard their Cincinnati-based attorney, Herman Marckworth assert “that he believed the claim of their heirs can be successfully established.”14

8 At her 1901 arrest, Mrs. Adams said “she has been interested in its affairs for eleven years [i.e. 1891].” see “Secretary of the House Heirs Association Will Be Tried,” Indianapolis News, 18 April 1901, p. 6, col. 1; Her Last Will and Testament is unlocated; there is no unclaimed property in her name or the HHA in Indiana. See the memorial page for Jennie Adams (1880 sic–1934), Find a Grave Memorial no. 126253759, citing Saint Mary Cemetery, Richmond, Wayne County, Indiana, USA; Maintained by DSON1492 (contributor 46855689). Her husband, Richard L. Adams, died in 1943; his last known residence was 222 North 9th Street.

9 “Immense Estate That Exists in Maryland Now Wanted by the Heirs,” The (Richmond) Evening Item, 27 July 1899, p. 1, col. 2. Typically, a treasurer’s responsibility is managing the association’s finances, selecting a bank, reconciling statements, and issuing checks; but Lamott died in 1901.


12 In the local newspaper reports, his name was incorrectly spelled as Harmon Markworth or Herman Marchworth.

13 See the Cincinnati City Directory, 1897, p. 1023, col. 2 identifies him as an attorney working at 3 Hubert Block and the 1901 edition, p. 2016, col. 2 says debt “collector.”

14 Fletcher became involved because Washington County’s Court Clerk George B. Oswald had received dozens of inquiry letters—see “House Heirs,” Butler County (Ohio) Democrat, 23 November 1899, p. 10, col. 4.
Then, on 12 May 1900, the National Convention of the House Heirs Association met in Chicago, Illinois under the leadership of its Chairman William A. Beville and B.S. House of LaBelle, Lewis County, Missouri, treasurer. From the outset, the HHA’s main task was to select another attorney since the organization’s previously collected funds failed to cover the retainer required by the reputable Lewis County, Missouri firm of Lewis C. Marchand and O.C. Clay, the HHA choose to support a young attorney Frank A. Hutson from Saint Paul, Minnesota recommended by J. Cannon, a HHA member from the same city. The overly optimistic young attorney was boldly “confident that a settlement can be reached in about 18 months time.” That time passed; their hopes unrealized.

The HHA asserted that 64,000 acres of land, rich in iron ore, in Maryland had been leased by the US government for a 99-year term terminating in 1884/1885. The National Secretary stated the federal government agreed to pay their heirs 14 cents per acres per annum, but failed to comply with the agreement.” Where is the legal document or agreement related to such a lease?

Into early 1901, more HHA meetings were held not only in Richmond and Chicago but also in Williamstown, Pendleton County, Kentucky in January and in Kokomo in April. By then, more

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16 Born in 1858, Mr. Beville resided in Chicago at 808 West Monroe (1900 City Directory, p. 252, col. 1), and worked locally as a purchasing agent for the Crane Company, having been a clerk for the Chicago & North Western Railway earlier.

17 House, Meeting Minutes.

18 Ibid.

19 Note that the “federal government” would have been the Congress of the Confederation, officially known as the United States in Congress Assembled, in 1785. Furthermore, there is considerable confusion about the amount and the exact location—one newspaper article asserts it was worth “in the neighborhood of $600,000,000” but another says $250,000,000; as for the location, one newspaper says “the record of the lease in Upper Marlborough, Prince George’s County, Maryland,” but another says “in one of the wealthiest sections of the city of Baltimore” while yet another says “near Harper’s Ferry.” One of the most specific says “including the battle ground of Antietam and the city of Fredericksburg.” One editor (of The Spokesman-Review) in Spokane, Washington said it was located in England.


21 “Dream or Reality: House Heirs Claiming an Estate Worth $600,000,000,” The Courier-Journal, 10 January 1901, p. 3.

22 After the 13 April 1901 Kokomo meeting, a W. J. Doran [perhaps the street car conductor living in Center, Marion County?] wrote a circular letter advising “Pay no money to anyone on any pretense
than three hundred descendants joined and generated interest among folks living in more than twenty states including Alabama, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Michigan Missouri, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Vermont, Virginia and as far away as Washington state. These members authorized Mrs. Adams as their National Secretary “to perform the work of collecting evidence and look after the records of the persons who believe themselves to be heirs.”

Of course, this situation came to the attention of the US government. Specifically, the US Post Office which sent their postal inspector W. T. Fletcher from Indianapolis to Richmond with US Deputy Marshall Lon Boyd served the arrest warrant at 221 North Sixth Street on the National Secretary for improper use of the United States mails in connection with the House estate. It seems that she was the only person connecting between the Richmond and Chicago groups.

whatever in connection with this case. Put no faith in reports about records. Send any real information you may have to me.”

23 “Mrs. L. R. Adams was Placed Under Arrest,” The (Richmond) Evening Item, 17 April 1901, p. 1, col. 1-2.

24 “That ‘House Estate’,” The Baltimore Sun, 19 April 1901, p. 6, col. 1. Any extant records of the Bureau of the Chief Inspector of the Post Office Department are available from NARA, especially their Postal Inspection Service’s “case files of investigations, 1877-1903” and “Statements of arrest for offenses against postal laws, with related registers and indexes” (28.8); see https://www.archives.gov/research/guide-fed-records/groups/028.html.

25 “Mrs. L. R. Adams was Placed Under Arrest,” The (Richmond) Evening Item, 17 Apr 1901, p. 1, col. 1-2.

26 A working-class rental property which they were moving out of that very day in the middle of the month, according to newspaper accounts of her arrest. According to the 1897 Richmond City Directory on page 50, the Adams had been living in another rental property at 222 North Seventh, but moved onto North 6th by 1901 (City Directory, p. 34). Correlation is not causation, but assuming an average of five dollars per member from 400 members, that’s $2500—using Morgan Friedman’s CPI “Inflation Calculator,” that’s approximately $77,740 in today’s dollars. Enough to pay for a much nicer and shadier residence at 218 North 12th (1905 City Directory, p. 42) and by 1910 they owned a house on North A Street.

27 Note that she consistently appears in newspaper articles as Mrs. L. R. Adams, but in reality she is married to Mr. Richard L. (which would be R. L.) Adams (1859-1943); see Find a Grave, database and images (https://www.findagrave.com : accessed 04 April 2020), memorial page for Richard Adams (1859–1943), Find a Grave Memorial no. 126253784, citing Saint Mary Cemetery, Richmond, Wayne County, Indiana, USA ; Maintained by DSON1492 (contributor 46855689). It may be that she could travel so widely because her husband worked as a road supervisor for the Pennsylvania Railroad & Saint Louis Railway; see “Mrs. Jennie Adams,” (Richmond, Indiana) Palladium-Item, 3 February 1934, p. 10.
Hence, Mrs. Adams appeared before US Commissioner Jesse S. Reeves and the US Attorney Jesse J. M. LaFollette appeared in town. Interestingly, her fraud case was initially dismissed due to a technicality—lack or want of prosecution on 25 April 1901, which resulted in her release when she was represented by Robert White, attorney, who would understand the implications of the overly broad uses of the “Post Office Act of June 8, 1872”—chapter 335, § 302, 17 Stat. 323 (1872)—commonly known as The Federal Mail Fraud Act.

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28 For more information about Dr. Reeves, see https://snaccooperative.org/ark:/99166/w6k93b0g (accessed 29 March 2020).

29 Mrs. Jennie R. McConoughey Adams (1860-1934) was represented by Robert White, attorney, who would understand the implications of the overly broad uses of the “Post Office Act of June 8, 1872”—chapter 335, § 302, 17 Stat. 323 (1872)—commonly known as The Federal Mail Fraud Act.
posted a $200 personal bond.\textsuperscript{30} The HHA members\textsuperscript{31} were jubilant and she continued with her work.\textsuperscript{32} However, a federal grand jury was called in Indianapolis and witnesses from Richmond subpoenaed.\textsuperscript{33} That outcome of the United States Court, whether an indictment resulted, is unknown because such deliberations are confidential and generally not released to the public;\textsuperscript{34} but, later in 1904 the HHA’s President and a Chicago attorney, probably Carl L. Barnes who was an association member,\textsuperscript{35} still took a road trip in August “and went there [Maryland].”\textsuperscript{36}

\textsuperscript{30} Note that a $200 personal bond means that she would have personally paid cash worth in today’s money more than $6200; where would such a sum come from? See \textit{The (Richmond) Evening Item}, 17 April 1901, p. 1, col. 1-2 and “That Three Hundred Million Case,” \textit{The Indianapolis News}, 24 April 1901, p. 3, col. 5. Wishing to save the government money due to the added expense of calling witnesses twice, District Attorney [Albert W.] Wishard abandoned this initial approach.

\textsuperscript{31} Their attitude seems to have been that “hey, I have a House ancestor who lived in Maryland; maybe I should send my information to Mrs. Adams along with a donation/contribution and see what happens.”

\textsuperscript{32} In fact, none of these events seem to have a delirious effect their social standing because “Mr. and Mrs. Adams entertained the [Wayne County Boys & Girls] Key-stone club at their home on Fifth Avenue…” according to \textit{The Terre Haute Sunday Tribune}, 14 December 1902, p. 6, col. 1.


\textsuperscript{34} Indictments are public, but often sealed until after the person’s arrest to prevent that person’s fleeing from the charge. It is clear that the federal grand jury did meet in Indianapolis on 13-16 May 1901, but it appears to have been investigating counterfeiting cases; see \textit{The Indianapolis Journal}, 14 May 1901, p. 9, col. 3. Note that technically, in Indiana, such cases do not have to go directly to a grand jury and the US Court of Appeals has ruled that even “federal judges to not have the authority to unseal federal grand jury records, except for a limited set of circumstances governing grand jury rules of secrecy,” according Neil Vigdor in \textit{The New York Times}, 1 April 2020, p. A23, col. 1. In any event, the outcome would be either: 1) a guilty plea (with subsequent jail or prison time with or without a fine) or 2) a plea of not guilty, resulting in a trial finding either not guilty or guilty.

\textsuperscript{35} Contemporary newspapers described Carl L[ewis]. Barnes’ business card — “M. D. LL.B. and Medico Legal Expert” practicing at 241 Wabash Avenue in Chicago; in fact, he was a “Professor of Anatomy and Sanitary Science” as well as President of his recently incorporated Chicago College of Embalming with his relative, Thornton B. Barnes, according to funeral trade advertisements at that time; see, for example, “The House Heirs,” \textit{The Richmond (Indiana) Items}, 2 Jul 1899, p. 1, col. 1; and, he was quite peripatetic because in late May of that year he was staying at the Gleason’s European Hotel in Little Rock, Arkansas, according to \textit{The Arkansas Gazette}, 24 May 1899, p. 5, col. 3. If you really want to know more about his operation, read “Her Fad an Odd One: Miss Mabel Parrish Likes To be Around Dead Bodies,” \textit{The (Chicago) Inter Ocean}, 1 August 1897, p. 13 and “Texas Girl Missing: Miss Mabel Parrish Mysteriously Disappears from a Chicago Hotel,” \textit{The (Chicago) Inter Ocean}, 5 August 1897, p. 2

What is clear is that their attorney, Herman Marckworth died in 1906,\textsuperscript{37} while Mrs. J. A. House was still working on HHA matters in 26 September 1906. Apparently, folks seem to be losing some interest. Genealogical queries about Andrew Valentine House continued until the end of this decade.\textsuperscript{38} In 1916, the United States Treasury Department was compelled by West Virginia’s Congressional Representative Matthew M. Neely (D) to look into the matter by his persistent House, Snyder, and Carney family constituents around Wheeling, West Virginia.\textsuperscript{39} And, as later as 1926, a Mrs. A. E. House wrote to Mr. Lester A. Granger about HHA matters.\textsuperscript{40}

Despite assurances that the land transferred to the Antietam National Cemetery Company was clear,\textsuperscript{41} many members ignored the warnings of the Maryland District Attorney who told them their effort was a waste of time and money.\textsuperscript{42}

Some say that believers are still out there,\textsuperscript{43} awaiting their day in court!

\textbf{POPULAR CONCLUSIONS}

\textsuperscript{37} Apparently, he didn’t live long enough to collect his $2,500,000 in legal fees, still believing in the claim of the heirs. See \textit{Find a Grave}, database and images (https://www.findagrave.com: accessed 28 March 2020), memorial page for Hermann Marckworth (19 May 1834–26 Jun 1906), Find a Grave Memorial no. \textbf{113375559}, citing Walnut Hills Cemetery, Cincinnati, Hamilton County, Ohio, USA; Maintained by Todd Whitesides (contributor \textbf{47553735}).


\textsuperscript{40} Iowan Leonard “Len” Granger now of Dixon, Solano County, California transcribed much of the HHA material and posted it on WebRoots in 2002; see https://www.ancestry.co.uk/boards/surnames.house/1300.1.1.1.1.1.1.1.1.1.1.1.1.1.1.1.1.2.1/mb.ashx.

\textsuperscript{41} “Probably Mythical Claims of House Heirs for County Land; The Title to Antietam is Good,” \textit{The (Hagerstown, Maryland) Mail}, 4 August 1899), p. 3, col. 5.

\textsuperscript{42} \textit{The (Muncie) Star Press}, 18 April 1901, p. 3, col. 305. Even the author of the \textit{History of Frederick County, Maryland} (Frederick, MD: L. R. Titsworth and Company, 1910), Thomas J. C. Williams mentions the “considerable money [which] has been spent in futile investigation of this estate”—see “House Family,” vol. 2, p. 1182, col. 1-2.

\textsuperscript{43} Actually, there is a “House Heirs Association Website” at http://freepages.rootsweb.com/~househeirsassocfiles/genealogy/index.html (accessed 31 March 2020), but there is nothing beyond the top level page.
Is there a persistent pattern of deception? The HHA National Secretary’s actions seem suspicious. The only common denominator among the various House groups meeting in different cities is Jennie R. Adams—who had no direct House ancestors because she is the daughter of Irish immigrants. There is a popular saying “it takes money to make money.”

So, don’t be gullible. Beware of fraudulent scams and swindles. You can identify them for the urban legends that they are by looking closely at the details, especially look for confusing or inconsistent details. And, whatever you do, don’t engage in wishful thinking.

Inconsistencies and “Muddled Facts”—where is the land really located (Maryland is the only consistent place mentioned—but in any event, there will be land records—why hasn’t the HHA produced those? Is just anybody with the surname House invited, but nothing on the specific family and its connections? Then, too, English royalty is often involved. Furthermore, there are certain facts which are ignored such as the 1598 Edict of Nantes and the couple’s supposed marriage taking place a century later. Note, too, the common practice of using the 99-year lease as the ploy. Then, consider the vast sum of $300,000,000—to be divided among 300 members, paying out $2,000,000 each—poor mathematical division? Or, is it really $600,000,000? Just too many confusing and inconsistent “facts.” So, don’t be gullible and question everything, genealogically speaking.

Finally, what are the genealogical credentials of those involved? The Chicago member was self-described as a medico-legal expert who “has made a study of the family and has spent considerable time in investigating the claim.” Of course, nobody seems to have constructed a House family tree which would meet the Genealogical Proof Standard (GPS).

**GENEALOGICAL IMPLICATIONS**

Search for newspaper articles. Check city directories. Find the county land records or local tax lists. Try to locate the will, estate probate/administration, or any pension records. Look at federal and state census records. Locate the church baptismal and county marriage records. Discover the naturalization record. Obtain the death records or certificates. Read the county histories. Talk with other researchers. In short, conduct a reasonably exhaustive search for any and all primary evidence to confirm or reject one’s findings in order to satisfy the GPS.

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45 The Richmond (Indiana) Item, 28 July 1899, p. 1, col.1.
Acknowledgements

I am especially thankful for the fascinating three-part April and May 2013 blog entries, “Nuts from the Family Tree: A Genealogy Blog About the Kelly and Williams Families,” of Diane Weintraub (daughter of Virginia Williams Kelly), which drew my attention to the House Heirs Association in the first place. And, this time, I appreciate Dr. Kenneth Crews, J. D. of counsel for Gipson, Hoffman & Pancione for his legal insight into grand jury proceedings. Finally, Craig Morgan of the Morgan Group, “a private consulting firm providing investigative expertise and training in the areas of health care fraud, white-collar and financial fraud,” read the manuscript, made critical comments, and provided valuable insight into the indictment process.

About the Author

Dr. John V. Richardson Jr. is Professor Emeritus of Information Studies at UCLA and believes that he is a descendant of William House (about 1740-before 13 August 1816; SAR A#05734) of Allegany County, Maryland. He expects a check for $2,000,000 in the mail shortly.
Appendix 1. Was There a Real Andrew Valentine House of Maryland?

Probably not; possibly so. Although there seems to be an Andrew Valentine House who was born in Germany on 8 August 1700 and is allegedly buried in the Saint Peters Lutheran Church Cemetery in Chewsville, Washington County, Maryland, if you wish to believe the FAG site without a photograph of the tombstone. An Andrew House took the Fidelity Oath (number 73) on 2 March 1778 in Washington County, MD. If he lived to be 100 years old, then he is living on Sandy Creek, in Allegany County, Maryland for the 1800 Census; or, perhaps that’s his son. The Maryland Office of the Register of Wills does not show an estate record for an Andrew or Valentine House.

There are heirs, of course; the best documented one is as follows:

- In a 1950 retrospective newspaper article about the HHA, J. William Hunt presents the direct paternal line of an 80-year old Mr. George L. House of 927 Frederick Street in Flintstone, Allegany County, MD who believed himself to be the 2nd great grandson of the original Andrew Valentine House (AVH). AVH had a son named James, whose son was James Allen House (buried in the family cemetery near Breakneck Road while his widow, Rebecca Elizabeth Browning, is buried in the Rose Hill Cemetery), the father of the 80-year old George L. House.

- In addition, this same article also goes on to indicate that Mr. House has the 7 June 1833 will of his great grandmother Ann House, widow of William House, which was witnessed by Joseph Robinette and Valentine House (not the original AVH)—note the discrepancy.

- Of course, his genealogical tree doesn’t check out…in fact, George L. House (1870-1952) is the son of James Allen House (about 1837-Bef 1870), the son of Darius House (about 1806 in Maryland). It doesn’t confirm the alleged connection.

46 See Find a Grave, database and images (https://www.findagrave.com; accessed 29 March 2020), memorial page for Andrew House (8 Aug 1700–9 Aug 1797), Find a Grave Memorial no. 14278757, citing Saint Peters Lutheran Church Cemetery, Chewsville, Washington County, Maryland, USA; Maintained by Bill Cromer (contributor 46832178).


49 J. William Hunt, “Across the Desk: Billion Dollar Fortune Prospects Eyed by Allegany County Descendants of Andrew Valentine House Who Leased 64,000 aces to Government in 1785,” The Cumberland (Maryland) Sunday Times, 17 Dec 1950, p. 4, col. 3-5. This Allen House estate seems to have been probated before 8/2/1850 with Moses G. Robinett serving as administrator after the death of Enoch House, the first administrator, and a payout made to Dorcas Robinett, widow, according to Liber C, page 272.
Appendix 2. Prominently Mentioned House Heirs

HHA’s Inner Circle at Chicago, Illinois (1900)—

- Mrs. L. (sic) R. (Jennie R. McConoughey) Adams of Richmond, Indiana, National secretary, who died in 1934, leaving no direct descendants.
- William A. Beville of Chicago, chairman (C&NW Railways clerk and then a purchasing agent for Crane Company; he died in 1928)
- J[ames or ohn?]. Cannon50 and attorney Frank A. Hutson of Saint Paul, Minnesota (born in March 1872 and who had just married May in 1900)
- B. S. House of LaBelle, Lewis County, Missouri, treasurer
- H. Elmer House of Manhattan, Riley County, Kansas, meeting secretary (worked as a portrait artist)
- Francis Lewis “Frank” Marchand & O. C. Clay of Lewis County, Missouri (See “The County Bar” in Walter Williams’s History of Northeast Missouri, 1913, vol. 1, p. 389)

HHA’s Inner Circle in Richmond, Indiana (1899)—

- Mrs. L. R. (Jennie R. McConoughey) Adams of Richmond, Indiana, who died in 1934 leaving no direct descendants; her husband, Richard L. Adams died in 1943.
- Carl Lewis Barnes of Chicago
- Charles and Mary J. Ellison of Noblesville, Indiana (presumably)
- Austin Goddin (possibly Gidden?)
- George F. Hoover (farmer, born January 1861)
- John Ingerman (possibly, John Matthew Ingerman, 1859-1929 of Wayne County, Indiana)
- D. H. Johnson (D.W. Johnson is a painter in 1901)
- Julia Jones
- Joshua Lamott (died 5 July 1901 in Washington Township, Wayne County, Indiana)
- Mrs. Alice Miller (widow of Henry)
- W. D. Richards (W. J. Richards is a blacksmith in 1901)
- John [B.] Smeltzer (odd jobs in 1910 Census)
- Elizabeth Turner (possibly 1871-1940; married to William C. Turner of Richmond, Indiana)

Other HHA Members Mentioned:

- Henry Clay Cameron of Princeton, New Jersey (1827-1906)
- Carney Family of Wheeling, Ohio County, West Virginia (possibly George Edward and/or Thomas)

50 WebRoots says that there is a Charles E. Cannon of Wichita, Kansas.
Mrs. J. M. D. of Maryland
Mrs. Jessie Gilmore of Hamilton, Butler County, Ohio (425 S. 2nd Street)
House family of Wheeling, West Virginia (possibly Wesley Taylor and/or Mary J.)
Amanda House of South 7th Street, Hamilton, Butler County, Ohio (possibly widowed wife of Isaac)
Arthur [E.] House of Hamilton, Butler County, Ohio (saloon and machinist)
Elva House of Hamilton, Butler County, Ohio (telegraphy operator, possibly with Edna E.)
Mrs. W. B. House of Hamilton, Butler County, Ohio
Mrs. W. H. House of Hamilton, Butler County, Ohio
Mrs. William House of Hamilton, Butler County, Ohio (possibly steamfitter)
Mr. William A. House, VP/General Manager of United Railways & Electric Company
Mrs. Elmer Newell of Hamilton, Butler County, Ohio (possibly Cora, husband works as a painter)
E. C. McWhorter of Kentucky
Mr. D. B. D. Smelter of Frederick County, MD, whose mother was a House (probably a farmer in Middletown)
Snyder Family of Wheeling, West Virginia
Mrs. Julius [J.] Tasso of Hamilton, Butler County, Ohio (possibly Aria, husband works as plasterer)

Appendix 3. SELECTED NEWSPAPER COVERAGE IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER,
July 1899-December 1950

Who, despite being a House descendant, “knows nothing of the matter, whatever, and is not giving it any concern,” according to “Probably Mythical,” The (Hagerstown, Maryland) Mail, 4 August 1899, p. 3, col. 5.
Figure 3. Immense Estate
After a $250,000,000 Estate.
Special to the Indianapolis Journal.

RICHMOND, Ind., July 26.—A large number of claimants to the Andrew Valentine House estate, comprising a large tract of land near Harper’s Ferry, in Maryland, now valued at $250,000,000 or more, held a meeting here this afternoon. Under the laws of Maryland House is said to have forfeited his estate for a period of ninety-nine years because he failed to make certain improvements on the streams of the State. The ninety-nine years expires soon and the heirs are claiming that the property reverts to them. Considerable valuable evidence has been collected and steps were taken at this meeting toward bringing legal action to recover the property. An organization was formed with Charles Ellison, of Noblesville, president; Mrs. L. R. Adams, of this city, secretary. Harmon Markworth, of Cincinnati, is the attorney.

Figure 4. After a $250,000,000 Estate
Three Hundred Millions Involved.

Richmond, Ind., July 27.—A number of claimants to the Andrew Valentine House estate met yesterday afternoon at Richmond and organized, with Charles Ellison, of Noblesville, president, and Mrs. L. R. Adams, of Richmond, secretary. According to the story on which the claimants are basing their hopes, Andrew Valentine House died near Harper’s Ferry, in Maryland, a century ago. Under a law of the State, he forfeited his lands for ninety-nine years because he failed to make certain improvements along the streams, as ordered by the State. The decree of forfeiture has now run its course. They report $300,000,000 involved.

Figure 5. Three Hundred Millions Involved.
HOUSE HEIRS MEET.

Richmond, Ind., July 27.—A meeting of the heirs of Valentine House, formerly of Maryland, but who died many years ago in Kentucky, has been held here to take legal steps for the recovery of a large estate in Maryland and Virginia, including the battle ground of Antietam and the city of Fredericksburg. It is claimed the ancestor leased this estate for ninety-nine years and the lease expired in 1875. The heirs organized by choosing Charles Ellison, of Noblesville, Ind., president; Mrs. L. R. Adams, of Richmond, secretary; Herman Marchworth, of Cincinnati, attorney.

Figure 6. House Heirs Meet
Figure 8. Antietam Battle Field; Western Heirs
House Heirs Are Sanguine.
Special to the Indianapolis Journal.
RICHMOND, Ind., July 28.—The heirs of Andrew Valentine House, who have been holding a meeting here, adjourned this morning. They give out that the prospect of securing the large Maryland estate, which they claim, is bright. Carl L. Barnes, a Chicago attorney, who is one of the heirs, went from here to Cincinnati to confer with Harmon Markworth, the chief attorney for the heirs, and from there will go to Maryland. The estate comprises 64,000 acres.
A Big Claim.

Richmond, Ind., July 28.—A large number of the claimants to the Andrew Valentine House estate, comprising a large tract of land near Harper’s Ferry, in Maryland, now valued at $250,000, or more, held a meeting here yesterday afternoon. Under the laws of Maryland House is said to have forfeited his estate for a period of 99 years because he failed to make certain improvements on the streams of the state. The 99 years expire soon and the heirs are claiming that the property reverts to them.

Figure 10. A Big Claim
PROBABLY MYTHICAL

Title to Antietam is Good

Farmers of Sharpsburg District Feel Assured of Their Holdings.

A dispatch from Richmond, Ind., published in the papers gave an account of a meeting held there of the heirs of one Andrew Valentine House, said to be formerly of Maryland, but who died many years ago in Kentucky, to take legal steps for the recovery of a large estate in Maryland and Virginia. The portion of the estate in Maryland, it is alleged, includes the battlefield of Antietam.

Francis N. Darby of the Safe Deposit and Trust Company, Baltimore, formerly of Hagerstown, who practiced law in Washington county for upward of 28 years, said that he never heard of Andrew Valentine House, or the claim of his descendants to any property in the Sharpsburg district. The property, he stated, is all owned by substantial farmers, merchants and mill-owners, who feel sure of the validity of their title to the lands they occupy.

When the Maryland Legislature, in 1875, passed the act incorporating the Antietam National Cemetery Company, the title to the property acquired by the company was carefully examined and found satisfactory.

William A. House, vice-president and general manager of the United Railroads and Electric Company, who, it is stated, is a descendant of the alleged lessor of Antietam, knows nothing of the matter, whatever, and is not giving it any concern.

Figure 11. Probably Mythical
Figure 12. Heir to Millions
Figure 13. The House Heirs
Figure 14. House Heirs Met in Richmond Court
Figure 15. Dream or Reality?

The article discusses a meeting where a person claimed to have rented a house for $900,000. The question is whether this is a dream or reality. The details of the meeting and the claims made are presented in the text.
Figure 16. Claimants to Many Acres
Figure 17. Mrs. L. R. Adams...is National Secretary
Deputy United States Marshal Boyd yesterday went to Richmond, where he arrested Mrs. L. R. Adams, of that city, on the charge of violating the postal laws. It is claimed that Mrs. Adams has been taking an active interest in organizing an association of the supposed heirs of Andrew Houser, who was a wealthy Maryland planter in colonial days, and has been using the mails for this purpose. Mrs. Adams has been one of a number to write letters in regard to this matter. The heirs, it is said, have been led to believe that Andrew Houser, more than a hundred years ago, leased a tract of land for ninety-nine years and the leases have expired. It is said that the city of Baltimore occupies a part of the leased territory. Last Sunday a convention of the heirs was held at Kokomo.

After her arrest Mrs. Adams was arraigned before United States Commissioner Reeves and pleaded not guilty. Her hearing was set for April 25. Mrs. Adams was secretary of the association of heirs.
THAT "HOUSE ESTATE"

Action Taken By Postoffice Inspector Fletcher.

[SPECIAL DISPATCH TO THE BALTIMORE SUN.]

HAGERSTOWN, MD., APRIL 18.—Court Clerk George B. Oswald received a letter from Postoffice Inspector W. T. Fletcher, of Indianapolis, asking him for all communications received in the matter of the Andrew Valentine House estate, to be used in the case of the Government against Mrs. L. R. Adams, arrested yesterday at Richmond, Ind., charged with violating the postal laws. Proceedings against her on the charge of using the mails to defraud have been instituted. Mrs. Adams, he wrote, claims the House estate is of fabulous value, lying in Maryland and Virginia, and that the United States confiscated it a century ago and is now about to settle with the heirs. He states that no such claim has ever been made on the Government. Court Clerk Oswald received dozens of letters inquiring into the estate and about Mrs. Adams, who organized the alleged heirs into an association. All these letters were sent to the inspector and will be produced in evidence.

Figure 19. That "House Estate"
That Three Hundred Million Case.

Mrs. L. R. Adams, arrested at Richmond by Postoffice Inspector Fletcher on the charge of using the mails for the purpose of fraud, was to have a hearing before the United States commissioner at Richmond, to-morrow, but District Attorney Wishard has abandoned the plan. Mrs. Adams has been released on her personal bond and the Government officers will take up the case with the Federal grand jury when it meets next month. It is said at the district attorney's office that the preliminary hearing was abandoned in order that witnesses in the case would not have to be called together twice, before the commissioner and the grand jury. This plan will, it is said, save considerable money. Mrs. Adams has been secretary of the House Heirs' Association, which claims the ownership of a $300,000,000 Maryland estate, which the Government officers say, does not exist.
Figure 21. The Adams Case
Figure 22: The Adams Case; Federal Grand Jury
Secretary of the House Heirs Association will be Tried.

[Richmond, Ind., April 18.—Mrs. L. R. Adams, arrested by Government officers on the charge of promoting an association of heirs through the mails, in the hope of recovering an imaginary $300-000,000 estate in Maryland, pleaded not guilty before the United States commissioner, and has been released on bond. She was secretary of what is known as the House Heirs Association, and says she has been interested in its affairs for eleven years. The preliminary hearing will be held April 25.]

Figure 23. Released on Bond, 18 Apr 1901

[Richmond—Local members of the House Heirs Association have been subpoenaed to appear before the Federal grand jury at Indianapolis on the 14th inst., to give information concerning the manner in which the work of Mrs. L. R. Adams, the national secretary, has been conducted.]

Figure 24. Local Members of the HHA Subpoenaed, 1 May 1901
ARRESTED FOR MISUSE OF MAILS IN CHASING RAINBOW ESTATE

Indianapolis, Ind., April 17.—Deputy Marshal Boyd went to Richmond today with a warrant for the arrest of Mrs. L. R. Adams on the charge of violating the postal laws. Postmaster Inspector W. T. Fletcher and Assistant District Attorney Lafollette went with the deputy marshal to represent the government.

The charge is that Mrs. Adams has been using the mails in organizing an association the supposed heirs of Andrew Houser to recover an estate, when such an estate does not exist. Mrs. Adams is but one of many who has taken an active part in the effort to recover an estate which is supposed to be located in Maryland, and is valued at $200,000,000.

There are 109 or more of the supposed heirs and they live all over the United States. As the plans for recovering the estate progressed, conventions of the heirs were held. The last one was at Kokomo, last Sunday, when some of the heirs traveled several hundred miles to be present. They represented seven states. Their attorney, however, failed to appear.

Mrs. Adams has been one of the number to write letters and make contributions to the fund for the employment of lawyers to advance the case in the courts. The government officers think she has been sincere in her belief that such an estate exists and that it will be difficult to prove that she used the mails for the purpose of defrauding any one. The heirs became so active in working on their plans that the government began an investigation of the alleged estate through the federal authorities of Maryland and at the Kokomo meeting a letter from the district attorney of Maryland was read, which said that the heirs were wasting their time and money.

A telegram from Richmond says the arrest was made this afternoon.

Figure 25. Arrested
After a $250,000,000 Estate.
Special to the Indianapolis Journal.

RICHMOND, Ind., July 26.—A large number of claimants to the Andrew Valentine House estate, comprising a large tract of land near Harper’s Ferry, in Maryland, now valued at $250,000,000 or more, held a meeting here this afternoon. Under the laws of Maryland House is said to have forfeited his estate for a period of ninety-nine years because he failed to make certain improvements on the streams of the State. The ninety-nine years expires soon and the heirs are claiming that the property reverts to them. Considerable valuable evidence has been collected and steps were taken at this meeting toward bringing legal action to recover the property. An organization was formed with Charles Ellison, of Noblesville, president; Mrs. L. R. Adams, of this city, secretary. Harmon Markworth, of Cincinnati, is the attorney.
THE ADAMS CASE

Federal Grand Jury to Take Up the Investigation Next Week.

SUMMONING WITNESSES

Deputy U. S. Marshal Boyd Here Today for That Purpose It Is Said Although He Declined to Talk About the Case to Reporters.

The federal grand jury will meet next week in Indianapolis, and it is said that one of the first cases that will come up for investigation will be that of Mrs. R. L. Adams, of this city, whose arrest two weeks ago in connection with the House hotel matter excites considerable comment.

The disclosure of proceedings when the case was called for preliminary hearing did not end the incident; it is said, and the federal authorities are at the present time active in the preparations for the investigation that is to be carried on before the federal grand jury. This morning Deputy United States Marshal Boyd was in the city. While he politely declined to discuss the object of his mission, it is said on good authority that he was summoning a number of persons to appear before the federal grand jury and give testimony relative to the House hotel estate.

On the other side of the case Mrs. Adams is said to be at work as usual on the estate. She told the item on the day that the proceedings were disclosed against her that she had expected such an ending, for she had no time done anything that could be taken as a violation of the postal laws. All of the officials of the House hotel association are standing with her and intend, it is said, to contest it showing that there has been no illegitimate collection of money for the prosecuting of the claim against the estate. It is probable that the federal grand jury will receive all of the inside details of the project and will determine whether or not there has been any postal violations. Mrs. Adams' friends believe implicitly that whatever investigation is had she will be able to show that she has been acting in good faith at all times.
Maryland -- HERALDRY NOTES

Figure 26. House (Middle column)
WASHINGTON, Aug. 23.—An investigation is being made by the treasury department, at the instance of Congressman M. M. Neely of Fairmont, W. Va., into the conditions of a 99-year lease on lands near Cumberland, Md., made by Andrew Valentine House.

Members of the House, Snyder and Carney, families of Wheeling, W. Va., claim to be heirs of House and assert the lease has expired. The treasury department will ascertain what grounds they have for a claim to the property now.
Figure 28. Tremendous Fortune