

## **Thomas Eagar SR 1792 Ireland – 1840 New York**

By: Cody R. Johnson [\*], (Great-Great-Great-Great Grandson of Thomas Eagar SR.)

[\*] Pieced together from census, passenger manifest, and other various records]

Thomas Eagar (commonly misspelled as Thomas Eager in many official documents and records) was born January 1, 1791 in Tralee, Kerry County, Ireland to Francis and Elizabeth Rice Eagar. He was the fifth of nine children. Not much is known of his early life in Ireland. He lived in Ireland during a very turbulent time. The “Irish Rebellion” of 1798 and the 1801 unification with Great Britain to become the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland took place while he lived in Ireland. It is not known if the turbulence in his homeland caused him to come to America or if other events shaped his choice.

Thomas Eagar immigrated to the United States of America aboard the ship *Rising States*, arriving in Philadelphia, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania on either June 17<sup>th</sup> or June 18<sup>th</sup> 1812 from Newry, Ireland. In the official passenger manifest he is listed as “Thomas Eager” and aged 21. Based on this information and the year Thomas would have been born on January 1, 1791 and not January 1, 1792 like many other records state. After arriving in America, a governor wrote him a recommend which helped him get work. He found himself north of New York City where he became a stone mason and found employment helping to construct a prison at Auburn, Cayuga, New York.

Thomas Eagar most likely resided in Auburn, Cayuga, New York where he met and married Mary Ann Leonard (1798-1821) in about 1818. Mary was a sister to a blind man. They had one child together, Thomas Eagar (1821-1821). Mary died during the childbirth and the baby Thomas died thereafter.

In 1822, Thomas, a widower, married Lucy Buell (1803-1888), daughter of Joseph and Hannah Rider Buell. They had eight children together. The first, John Eagar was born in Auburn, Cayuga, New York on July 13, 1823. Their second child, Elizabeth Eagar was also born in Auburn on October 15, 1824. Between 1824 and 1826 Thomas moved his family to the village of Sing-Sing (which was later named Ossining), Westchester, New York, which is on the east bank of the Hudson River about 34 miles above New York City. There was a federal prison being built at Sing-Sing at that time and Thomas once again found employment as a stone mason helping to construct the prison in the town of Sing-Sing, New York.

Thomas and Lucy Eagar’s third child, Lucy Eagar, was born in Sing-Sing, New York in November 1826, and their fourth child, Mary Eagar, was born July 29, 1827 in Sing-Sing. The Sing-Sing prison was completed in 1828 and Thomas found employment by running a hotel. Their fifth child, Thomas Eagar, was born March 1, 1830 in Sing-Sing. Their sixth child, Arabella Eagar, was born July 1, 1831 in Sing-Sing. Finally, their seventh and eighth child (twins), William and Walter Eagar, were born July 1, 1835 in Sing-Sing. Walter died that same year.

In 1836, when John Eagar was 13, Thomas Eagar moved his family from Sing-Sing, New York to Albany, New York and bought a hotel. In those days hotels had bars. Thirteen year old John Eagar tended the bar where he saw much evil and suffering from

those who drank there. As a result he never touched liquor and taught his sons about the evil and suffering that came as a result. Soon after arriving in Albany Thomas fell ill and his responsibilities rested on his son John in order to provide for the family. John had to quit school to meet these responsibilities. Sometime between 1836 and 1840 Lucy Buell Eagar joined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Thomas never recovered and died of tuberculosis after a long illness on June 9, 1840 (and not June 8, 1841 as wrongly indicated in many records) in Mount Pleasant, Westchester, New York. He was 49 years old. John was nearly 18 years old. Further evidence that Thomas died in 1840 comes from a probate record found in the Hudson River Chronicle dated January 19, 1841. In this record is an executrix notice stating that Lucy Eagar is the executrix of the Estate of Thomas Eagar. Thomas would have had to have died before this date and all other records indicate that he died on June 9<sup>th</sup>. As a result his death date would have to be June 9, 1840; aged 49. The records in St. Paul's church in Sing-Sing also gave his age as 49 when he died, with burial in the Sing-Sing cemetery, which is not the same as the Sing-Sing prison cemetery. His family would later go on to sail to California with The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.