



LINNELL FAMILY NEWSLETTER

Rachel Linnell Wynn, Founder and Historian Emeritus

www.linnellfamily.com

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LETTERS FROM THE CHAIRMEN

Hi My Dear Cousins.

I am writing to tell you I have resigned my role as chairman of our precious LFA, a position I have enjoyed for now some 25 years. I know that those who are steadily working on the steering committee will fill my position and the Eagle Wing will make many journeys to find our next of kin, be they in the good ol' US of A or elsewhere. Best wishes to you all. I hope to see you at the next reunion.

Jerry

P.S. I miss you, Rachel.

Dear Cousins,

It is with heavy heart that we acknowledge Jerry's resignation as the LFA Steering Committee Chairman. All who know him recognize what a loss this is for our organization. Jerry has been the Chairman since 1997, we would not be where we are today without his decades of stewardship and commitment. Under Jerry's leadership we have held numerous reunions across the USA creating new friendships and connections, established a college scholarship fund which has awarded \$13K to our family members, supported a program to locate and repair lost Linnell family graves and headstones initiated by Bob Linnell, started transitioning many LFA activities to electronic media to reduce the cost of operations, grew our membership rolls, documented our growing genealogy, and started researching ancestral lines back in Jolly Olde England. Please join us in thanking Jerry Linnell, LFA Chairman Emeritus, for all he has done and wishing him our best for the future.

For the past 5 years I've had the privilege of working closely with Jerry as the LFA Steering Committee Vice Chairman. With Jerry stepping down, I will serve as your Acting Chairman until a new Chairman is selected by membership at our next national reunion, slated for Cape Cod in 2022. Information on the 2022 reunion will be provided in the coming months, we hope everyone is able to attend.

The LFA's future is bright. Our recent membership drive was an outstanding success (look for details in our next newsletter) and we have the funds for scholarships, grave stones, and operations. We have a group of dedicated, talented people able to take the organization forward with a larger social media presence. New astounding findings have been made in recent years that vastly expand our family history, look for them in the coming months. We look forward to extending our membership to Linnells around the world and seeing each of you at the 2022 reunion.

*Doug Roberts
LFA Acting Chairman
(118, 241, 116, 231, 31)*

A Sin of Passion - The Murder of Avis Linnell

Mark Gribben—The Malefactor's Register



The Rev. Clarence Virgil Thompson Richeson was sorely tempted by the sins of the flesh and paid the ultimate earthly price for his weakness.

In 1911, the 35-year-old Richeson was betrothed to a wealthy heiress and daughter of a Boston Brahmin when he had the misfortune of impregnating one of his conquests, an 18-year-old choir singer named Avis Linnell. As a result of the difficult position he found himself in, like so many others, Richeson chose murder as the solution to his problems.

For years Richeson, quite the rake, had managed to avoid paying any serious costs for his many affairs of the heart and other human failings. There were some consequences, it is true, but the minister always seemed to land on his feet somewhere.

Born in Rose Hill, Virginia, Richeson eventually found himself at the William Jewell College outside Kansas City, Missouri.

There he became engaged to the daughter of a professor. Up until the announcement appeared in the Boston newspapers of Richeson's engagement to Violet Edmands, the Missouri woman considered herself Richeson's fiancée. She wasn't alone.

Expelled from Jewell College for cheating on exams shortly after he was ordained as a Baptist minister, Richeson worked as a streetcar conductor and served as a fill-in minister around Kansas City. Eventually he found a position at the Budd Park Baptist Church. While serving there he became involved with a widow who was not a member of his congregation. One Sunday she reportedly showed up while he was preaching, prompting him to faint while at the pulpit. At another church three young ladies stood up at a service and each asked the minister if he planned to follow through on a promise to marry her. Richeson's fiery sermon that day had been about how mothers had a responsibility to keep close tabs on their daughters to avoid sin.

After the service he fled town, never to return... In 1906 Richeson appeared at Newton Theological Seminary near Boston, receiving his degree in 1909. While at Newton, he was held in contempt by many of his classmates and instructors.

"The politeness of a polished Southerner and the natural conceit of a handsome man are the main characteristics of the Rev. Mister Richeson," said the Rev. Nathan Wood, a classmate. "He went out of his way to be courteous and I often thought that those who did not know him would likely believe him to be insincere."

Richeson was called to a congregation in Hyannis, Mass., where he met and romanced Avis Linnell whom he baptized and induced to join the choir. Shortly after they met, Avis began wearing a diamond ring and was telling her friends that she was engaged to the minister.

Within a year of taking charge of the Hyannis congregation, Richeson was involved in a conflict with his deacons. The church elders considered him impetuous and disapproved of his coarse language. There was also a problem with a missing \$50 that had been left by a parishioner in the minister's study. Richeson claimed to have been robbed, but shortly after the theft, the deacons learned that he had sent a \$50 money order to a woman friend in Salt Lake City.

A man who would never drown because he was born to hang, Richeson soon ended up better off than he was in Hyannis.

He accepted a call to a Cambridge congregation, receiving a significant increase in his annual salary (from \$300 in Hyannis to \$2,100 in Cambridge). Before leaving Hyannis, he told friends that it was his intention to remain in Cambridge only a short time, to marry Avis, and to leave the country to serve as a missionary in China. All of this was a flat-out lie. For a man like Richeson, Cambridge, the haunt of Puritans like Increase Mather, was an ideal hunting ground for a man who wanted the best and worst in life.

The Immanuel Baptist Church in Cambridge was frequented by some of the city's wealthiest and most powerful families, including that of Moses G. Edmands, whose daughter, Violet, soon caught Richeson's eye. He began juggling his time between the two young ladies.

As his relationship with Violet became more serious, Richeson moved to distance himself from Avis. Using the excuse that the diamond in her ring was loose, he took the engagement ring from her "to be repaired." She never received it back.

In October 1911, an announcement appeared in the Boston papers that the Rev. Richeson and Miss Violet Edmands were engaged. When Avis learned of this she collapsed into tears, only to recover when Richeson assured her and her family that the item was gossip that had been printed by mistake.

The engagement was no mistake, however. Invitations had been mailed for a late October wedding.

Richeson's schemes collapsed shortly after the engagement was announced when Avis revealed that she was pregnant. The minister knew that there was no way he would be able to talk his way out of this dilemma and began to take steps to remedy the situation.

"How long ago he learned of the girl's condition can never be known, for the girl did not even take her mother into her confidence," said Chief Inspector Joseph Dugan, who headed the investigation into Avis's death. "But we do know that when the formal invitations to his marriage of Miss Edmands were sent out...Miss Linnell's condition was desperate."

On Friday, October 13, Richeson appeared at the drug store of William Hahn in Newton and made a strange request. Mentioning that he had a pregnant dog, Richeson reportedly told Hahn "I want a poison that will kill the puppies without killing the dog." Hahn assured him that no such poison existed, so Richeson asked for potassium cyanide to kill the dog.

The next day, Richeson met with Avis and gave her a vial of medicine that he said would cause an abortion. In fact, the vial contained enough poison to kill 10 people. Richeson banked on the plan that Avis's friends would assume that she committed suicide after learning her beloved minister had become engaged to another woman.

What his plan did not include was the likelihood of an autopsy which would not only reveal the presence of poison, it would show Avis was with child. More importantly, he did not count on was that Avis would tell her friends at the YWCA that she had had lunch with the minister and that he had given her some "headache medicine."

Around 11 p.m. October 14, Avis retired to the bathroom of the YWCA and swallowed the vial of potassium cyanide, probably expecting that it would cause a spontaneous abortion. Instead, she began gasping for air and was discovered nearly dead by her housemates. She died that night.

When the autopsy revealed that she was pregnant and that she had taken a large dose of cyanide, police for several hours believed that she had killed herself. She was subsequently buried in the gown she made for her wedding.

Within a day or so they became suspicious of Richeson because of his behavior. One of Avis's friends called him to let him know that Avis had died and he first denied even knowing her, then asked "why did you phone me? Tell her parents."

At the same time that the druggist Hahn was telling police that he sold cyanide to Richeson, the minister fled his lodgings and took refuge at the Edmands home. Both Moses Edmands and his daughter expressed their support for Richeson to police who desperately wanted to speak to the preacher.

After a day-long stand-off, Richeson finally agreed to accompany police downtown and he was arrested for Avis's murder. Although the Edmands family continued to support Richeson, paying for special meals to be sent to him in jail and for his attorney, it became clear that the October 31 wedding would have to be postponed.



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LFA SCHOLARSHIP NEWS

The Linnell Family Association Scholarship Fund Administration Committee (LFASFAC) would like to extend a huge thank you for our recent anonymous donation of \$1000 to support the continuing education of our young cousins!

The committee is currently in the process of reworking its guidelines for awarding Linnell Family Association scholarships.

In an effort to increase the awareness of the LFA scholarship and take into consideration the changes in our day-to-day lives and the conduct of LFA business, the LFASF is examining possible changes to the program which may include tying the award to the triannual LFA Convention and/or increasing the award amount.

Please check the LFA website and upcoming newsletters for the revised LFASF rules.

LINNELLS IN THE MILITARY

Cousin Paul Linnell, Chair Membership/Vital Records, is working on his detailed biography, "Linnell's in the Military" which includes, but is not limited to, the following chapters covering events in which Linnell family members have participated:

- The American Indian Wars
- The Revolutionary War
- The War of 1812
- The Mexican War
- The Civil War
- The Spanish-American War
- World War I
- World War II
- The Korean War
- The Vietnam War
- Operation Desert Storm/Desert Shield (the First Gulf War)
- Operation Iraqi Freedom
- The Afghanistan War
- Unknown Wars and/or Conflicts (from 1540 through the Present)

Any Family Member who would like to contribute, please contact Paul at any of the addresses or phone numbers contained in this newsletter. He will furnish you with an Information Worksheet.

NEWSLETTER UPDATES: HARD COPIES DISCONTINUED

As stated in our May 2020 issue, hard copies of our LFA Family Newsletters have been discontinued. In response to our announcement, 19 family members have opted to continue receiving the newsletter in the mail. If you or a family member did not initially opt-in, but would still like a printed copy, please contact Paul Linnell, Chair Membership/Vital Records

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

As of September, paid LFA Membership for 2020 were as follows:

Annual Memberships:	4
Life Memberships:	173 (40 Deceased)
Total:	177

Our \$20 LFA Annual Membership renews yearly on January 1st! Life Memberships are available for \$125.00. Memberships make great gifts! To pay your Membership Dues, please go on-line to the LFA Website at www.linnellassociation.com and click on **Membership** for information on how to register and pay online or by snail mail.

We would like to say **Thank You and Welcome Aboard** to those Members who, in the summer of 2020, have either paid their **New** or **Renewal** Annual Members:

Wendy Lee (Swedberg) MacDonald (DRL 118, 241, 185, 822 - Pages 392 & 435) - Annual Renewal

Edna Mae (Beck) Williams (DRL 118, 241, 116, 933 - Pages 375 & 412) - Annual Renewal

Kathryn "Kate" (Dickman) Porter - New Annual Member

VITAL RECORDS UPDATE

All Members are reminded to furnish information about your Family Members, such as "Births"; "Deaths"; "Marriages"; "Divorces"; etc., to Paul E. Linnell, Jr., LFA Membership and Vital Records Chairman. This will help to keep our DRL Records up to date. The following are the latest known facts for updates on our DRL Records, which include:

BIRTHS

Aria June Jobe

Born on 11 May 2020 in Grants Pass, Josephine County, Oregon to Alicia Linnell and Michael Jobe.

DEATHS:

Michael Joseph Porcaro (DRL 117, 7-10-1, 42-11, 22 - Pages 143 and 152 of the DRL)

Passed away on 15 March 2015 in Valley Village, Los Angeles County, California. Michael was born on 29 May 1955 in Hartford, Hartford County, Connecticut to Eileen Frances Linnell (DRL 117, 7-10-1, 42-11, 2) and Joseph Porcaro. Michael and his Brothers, Jeffery Thomas Porcaro and Steven Maxwell Porcaro were the Founding Members of the Rock Group "Toto".

Miles Edwin Crawford Porcaro (DRL 117, 7-10-1, 42-11, 212 - Page 152 of the DRL)

passed away on 4 October 2017 in Orange County, Florida. Miles was born on 12 June 1986 in Los Angeles County, California to Jeffery Thomas Porcaro (117, 7-10-1, 42-11, 21) and Susan Norris.

Terri Lee Linnell (B: 15 March 1951 - D: 26 April 2019)

Passed away in Hermiston, Umatilla County, Oregon. Terri was born in Pendleton, Umatilla County, Oregon to Hubert and Mary (Clark) Seen.

DEATHS: (cont'd from page 5)

David George McConnell (DRL 118, 241, 186, 622 - Pages 393 and 435 of the DRL)

Passed away on 6 October 2019 in Louisa, Louisa County, Virginia. David was born on 10 May 1931 in Rockford, Winnebago County, Illinois to the late Marjorie M. Sewell (DRL 118, 241, 186, 62) and to the late Gabriel McConnell. David had been a Life Member of the LFA since 2000.

Mavis Beatrice (Kaufman) Palmquist (DRL 118, 241, 145, -10-31 - Pages 383, 425, and 426 of the DRL)

Passed away on 17 January 2020 in Saint Paul, Ramsey County, Minnesota. Mavis was born on 20 March 1928 in Tomah, Monroe County, Wisconsin to the late Nina Berneice Lee Heilig (DRL 118, 241, 145, -10-3) and the late Marvin Kaufman. Mavis had been a Life Member of the LFA since 2001.

Eileen Farnsworth (Olson) Gutzman (DRL 11a, b15, 515, 81S - Page 226 of the Additions and Corrections Booklet), Second Wife of the late Gerald Dean Gutzman (DRL 11a, b15, 515, 81) passed away on 23 April 2020 in Carlsbad, San Diego County, California. Elaine was born 22 November 1922 in Edgerton, Rock County, Wisconsin to Olaf Olson and Rita.

William Luke Henwood (B: 5 June 1933 - D: 21 May 2020), Second Husband of Myrna Lee (Satter, Peterson) Henwood (DRL 11a, b15, 515, 632) passed away in Quincy, Plumas County, California.

Gary Wayne Nelson, Jr. (B: 19 February 1969 - D: 14 June 2020), Partner of Elaine Els Webb (born "Myrna Elaine Peterson" - DRL 11a, b15, 515, 632, 1), passed away in Newport, Pend Oreille County, Washington.

Joseph "Joe" Porcaro, Husband of Eileen Frances Linnell (DRL 117, 7-10-1, 42-11, 2)

Passed away on 6 July 2020 in Thousand Oaks, Ventura County, California. Joseph was born on 29 April 1930 in Hartford County, Connecticut.

Sandra Kaye (Childers, Soleim, Clark) Damon (DRL 11a, b15, 514, 822 - Pages 223 and 230 of the DRL)

Passed away on 10 July 2020 in Drain, Douglas County, Oregon. Sandra was born on 23 March 1946 to the late Elvema LaFern Linnell (DRL 11a, b15, 514, 82) and the late Lawrence Vernile "Vern" Childers.

Josi Lyn Brinson (B: 19 September 2003 - D: 15 July 2020), Daughter of Tamera JoAnne (Olin) Brinson (DRL 11a, b15, 515, 611, 2) and her Second Husband, Joel Grant Brinson, passed away in San Diego, CA.

REUNION UPDATES

The 2021 Cape Cod National Reunion has been postponed to 2022. Original plans for the steering committee to visit the Cape last summer to make plans for the reunion were postponed due to closures and travel restrictions associated with the virus. We are happy to report that arrangements have been made for the Committee's June 12, 2021 advance trip to Hyannis for reunion planning and preparation activities.

The 2020 West Coast Reunion, serving Linnells who reside in the States of Oregon; Washington; California; Idaho; Montana; and Nevada, but open to all LFA members, is tentatively rescheduled for July/August 2021. Paul Linnell is working with his sister, Dorothy Linnell Johnstone, to identify a location and finalize the date. Information will be sent out to LFA members via snail mail, email and LFA Facebook groups. Contact Paul Linnell, Chair of Memberships and Vital Records, for more details

The Murder of Avis Linnell

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Violet Edmands fled Cambridge for parts unknown while her family began returning the gifts that were being delivered.

Asserting his innocence, Richeson resigned his pastorate in November, shortly after he was indicted by a special grand jury. The indictment was handed down almost to the minute that his wedding to Violet was to begin. The matter was set for trial in January 1912.

On December 20, 1911, Richeson mutilated his genitals using a piece of tin he managed to secret in his cell. Although the injuries were not life-threatening, doctors were not able to save his penis and finished the job he had started. It was unclear whether Richeson intended to commit suicide or was simply punishing himself for his sins.

Two weeks before he was to stand trial, "under the lashings of remorse," as he called it, Richeson stood before the court and admitted that he deliberately intended to kill Avis.

There was but one penalty for his crime and Richeson was sentenced to die in the Massachusetts electric chair.

On May 21, 1912, 1,900 volts of electricity surged through Richeson's body as he sat in the chair. He amazed the witnesses to the execution by demonstrating the "real spirit of manhood when death looms," according to one account.

"It was surely a revelation of God's power which was granted, because Richeson died a far better man than he ever lived," said the prison Chaplain.

Violet Edmands never married after the scandal. She left the rarefied Boston lifestyle and devoted her life to social service and missionary work, spending time in Japan until the memories of the Avis Linnell murder faded from the public memory. She died in 1939.

STAYING IN TOUCH

Members are reminded to keep us appraised of your current Mailing Address and/or your E-Mail Address, so that we can keep our Membership Database up to date. Please furnish any changes to Paul E. Linnell, Jr., LFA Membership and Vital Records Chairman

THE LINNELL FAMILY ASSOCIATION

Steering Committee 2020

The purposes of the Association are to promote fellowship among Linnell Family members through reunions, the publication of the Linnell Family Newsletter, and the preservation of family records.

CHAIRMAN

Jerry Linnell—Westminster, MD
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GRAVE RESTORATION

Vacant at this time.

WEBSITE

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SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE

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Bonnie Featherstone—St. Paul, MN
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