

Finding Hiram Chandler's Parents and Grandparents

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This has been a great challenge because like with so many other ancestors between Hiram, my 2nd great grandfather, and myself there are birth certificates, death certificates with names of parents and birthdays, cemetery records, church records, city directories, military records, and more. Prior to 1850, and especially prior to 1800, research becomes very difficult because records in most cases are non-existent. But every once in a while, a great record appears and that seems to erase all of the frustrations encountered with failed searches.

While I still do not have a paper trail (ex. birth certificate, church record, etc.) that connects Hiram Chandler to whom I believe are his parents, I have what I consider overwhelming evidence that Hiram's parents are Vincent (Vince) and Sarah McLean Chandler.

Here are the facts for finding Hiram's parents and some conjecture:

- Hiram was born in New York City in 1809, according to the 1855 state census, and more specifically April 17th, calculating his birth day from information on his death certificate.
- Hiram lived his life entirely in New York City and maybe a couple of years in New Jersey where his son Edwin F. was born in 1845. He worked as a rope maker, a lamp lighter, a court clerk, and a policeman, all according to Federal census records, city directories, voter records, newspaper articles, and more. He died from an accident while on police duty on April 21, 1881 in New York City.
- Hiram is buried in Cypress Hills Cemetery, New York City, in plot 198, of which he is listed as the owner. Many of his immediate family members are also buried there even though only Hiram's name is on the tombstone. In all probability Hiram's police department paid for his tombstone. Interestingly enough, the only Chandlers buried in all of Cypress Hills are in plots on either side of Hiram's, namely in plots 197 and 199, with no tombstones on them. To me it is no mere coincidence that in all of this very large cemetery the three Chandler plots are side by side. They must be related.
- Research on a few Chandlers in plot 197 is still inconclusive.
- Plot 199 is owned by a Jonas Chandler and, according to his death certificate, he was born in New Jersey, his father and mother were born in New Jersey, and his age at death was 76 years 10 months and 22 days. He lived in New York City for 70 years; therefore, his first 6 to 7 years were in New Jersey. In plot 199 there are many of Jonas' immediate family members, including a Sarah Chandler, age 80 at death, who died in 1850. Sarah is most probably Jonas' mother. All of this information leads to the Old Dutch Church record found in Saddle River, Bergen County, New Jersey, listing Jonas' birth as 9 June 1792 and his parents' names as Fince Chanler and Sarah

MacCleen. The name of Fince is further clarified by many Bergen County records as Vincent Chandler.

- My conclusion is that Hiram and Jonas are brothers, and there's more evidence.
- According to military records (Records of Officers and Men of New Jersey in the wars 1791 - 1815) Vincent Chandler was born in Milford, New Jersey, in about 1770.
- Hiram's son Edwin F Chandler was born in New Jersey in 1845 per his death certificate so there is a New Jersey connection with Hiram.
- Vincent, who was born in New Jersey per military records, appears living in Montgomery, New York, in the 1790 Federal census which is where his wife, Sarah McLean, is from. Her family history can be traced there in Montgomery, NY.
- Vincent and Sarah must have married in Montgomery, NY, because the February 1791 birth of their first son, John, is recorded in the register for the Brick Reformed Church in 1791.
- Later in 1791 Vincent and family must have moved to Saddle River, New Jersey, where their second son, Jonas, was born on 9 June 1792, according to records of the Dutch Reformed Church in Bergen, New Jersey.
- According to Jonas Chandler's death certificate he lived in New York City for 70 years, making the date of the family move to New York City around 1798 – thus the family lived in Saddle River for about 6 to 7 years.
- We next find Vincent and family living in New York City, ward 6, in the 1800 Federal census and in the 1800 New York City tax rolls. In the 1800 Federal census there are two boys listed under the age of 10. They would be John (born 1791) and Jonas (born 1792).
- In the 1810 Federal census we find Vincent and family still living in New York City with two more boys under the age of 10. One of them would be Hiram (born 1809); the other is unknown at this time.
- On May 20, 1814, we have military records citing Vincent enlisting in the US Marines in New York City with many muster records up to 1815. Unfortunately, the Marines did not keep good records after this time. We don't know when Vincent was discharged, but it was a five year enlistment.
- In the August 7, 1820, Federal census we find Vince Chandler living in Dryden, Tompkins, New York, just after his five year enlistment is up. Interestingly, ancestry.com has a copy of a letter written by Sarah McLean Chandler to her sister, Margaret, in 1836. The owner of that letter today lives in Dryden, Tompkins County, New York.
- I assume Vincent died and was buried in Tompkins, New York, in 1820. We have a New York City directory listing Sarah Chandler as a widow in 1820.
- In 1815 and 1820 we have a John Chandler, Hiram's assumed oldest brother, working as a rope maker recorded in the New York City directories. Again in 1829-30 we find John Chandler working as a lamp lighter. Hiram obviously wanted to follow in his oldest brother's footsteps. (See next point.)

- In 1835 we have Hiram Chandler in New York City working as a rope maker and in 1850 working as a lamp lighter according to New York City directories. Most assuredly, a lamp lighter would be part of the early police station duties.
- Hiram never really knew his father Vincent very well because Hiram was only 6 years old when Vincent, joined the marines. Apparently after Vincent was discharged from his five year enlistment in 1819, he and Sarah divorced or separated because we find Sarah still living in New York City and sometimes using her maiden name, McLean, once again while Vincent went to Dryden, Tompkins County, New York.

Now, who were Vincent's parents and Hiram's grandparents?

- We know Vincent was born in Milford, New Jersey, in about 1770 according to military records and most probably lived in Saddle River, Bergen County, New Jersey, with his family sometime between 1770 to 1775 and from 1775 to 1788 per Bergen county records.
- We have American genealogical records that say Robert Chandler was born in New York in 1750, old enough to be Vincent's father. Saddle River, New Jersey, records show that Robert Chandler lived there from 1775 to 1788 and probably earlier, but Vincent wouldn't be recorded as he would have been too young and living with his family.
- Who was Robert's wife? We don't know at this time but according to family tradition we have Indian blood. So maybe it's possible that Robert's wife was one of the Indian maidens living in the Saddle River area. According to history books the Algonquin Indians lived there and were a peaceful farming Indian nation.
- So in 1788-9 the family moves to New York. We find Vincent, age 18-19, in Montgomery, New York, and Robert goes to Pawling, Dutchess County, New York.
- In the 1790 Federal census Vincent is living in Montgomery, New York, with his sweetheart Sarah McLean (McCleen, Mac Cleen). In 1791 after the birth of their first son, John, Vincent and family moved back to Saddle River where their second son, Jonas, was born in 1792. Records show he lived there from 1791 to 1798. In 1798 Vincent and family moved to New York City. So he was living in Saddle River about 7 years after he returned. Why did he move there? Well, my guess is to take over the family farm because Robert wasn't coming back. In all probability Robert's wife had died and he wanted to leave. We found New York records for Robert getting married again in Catskill, New York, in 1803.
- No other Chandler's are found living in Saddle River, Bergen County, New Jersey, during this time frame; only Robert and Vincent. Two other Chandlers were found living in Pompton, Bergen County: William and Andrew. Perhaps they are uncles or cousins to Vincent.
- In the 1790 Federal census, we find Robert Chandler living in Pawling, Dutchess County, New York.

- It's my contention that Vincent moved back to Saddle River, New Jersey, to work the farm that his father, Robert Chandler, started. When Vincent got tired of farming he moved to New York City in 1798 (according to his death certificate). Whatever kind of work Vincent pursued in New York City it probably didn't work out to well for him, so in 1814 he enlisted in the Marines at age 44 for 5 years.
- In 1803 Robert moved over to Catskill, Greene County, New York, and married Caty Smith according to the Dutch Reformed Church record. After that Robert is found in the 1810 and the 1820 Federal census living in Cairo, Greene County, New York. He most probably died in about 1825 at the age of 75. Remember, too, that after Vincent was discharged from the Marines in 1819 he is found living in Dryden, New York, in the 1820 census not too far from where Robert lived.

Who were Robert Chandler's parents?

Remember that in about 1789 Robert is no longer found in Saddle River, Bergen County, New Jersey. We find him living in New York in Pawling, Dutchess County. Robert was born in 1750 in New York according to records. Also living in Dutchess County is a Soloman Chandler living in Rhinebeck Town, not too far from where Robert settled down in Pawling. According to records Soloman was born in 1732 possibly in the Boston, Massachusetts, area. He is old enough to be Robert's father. Soloman is found in the 1790 Dutchess County census and in the 1790 census living in Rhineback Town, Dutchess County, New York. In the 1800 and the 1810 Federal census he is living in Catskill, Greene, New York.. So in 1803 and maybe a couple of years either side of 1803, both Robert and Soloman lived in Catskill, New York. In 1810 Soloman would have been 78 years old so he probably didn't live much longer. Back in those days families were much more closely knit than they are today, meaning they lived close together for the purposes of helping each other in times of cold winters, famine, sickness, help on the farm, etc. Therefore my best guess at this time is that Soloman is the father of Robert Chandler, the grandfather of Vincent Chandler and the great grandfather of Hiram Chandler. Also, it is very possible that another Vincent Chandler, born in New York in 1750, is a twin of Robert Chandler who was also born in New York in 1750. If that is true then my third great grandfather, Vincent Chandler, had an uncle Vincent Chandler. Back in those days families often repeated ancestor names from one generation to the next. So far, other than making this conjecture, there is not enough evidence that Soloman is Robert's father. In fact, other recorded evidence about Soloman indicates that he didn't have a son named Robert but it is still possible that they are related somehow, therefore, he will not be recorded in the family tree unless we find an actual link to a relationship.