

Preface:

Writing comes naturally to me, but scholarship doesn't. I had to force myself to document and substantiate every historical reference. If it seems tedious to the general reader, all I can say is that it was necessary in order to show that this is a real reincarnation case. There have been enough fictional and semi-fictional works on the subject.

Having had difficulty in the past obtaining copyright permission for various elements of my documentary, "In Another Life: Reincarnation in America," I approached the matter this time with trepidation. As it happened, I was pleasantly surprised to find that almost all of the libraries, historical societies, auction houses and organizations I contacted for permission were very cooperative, despite my candidly telling them (on advice of my attorney) that not only was I exploring the life of Mathew Franklin Whittier, I was exploring the possibility that I might be his reincarnation. Thanks to them, I am able to present that kind of direct evidence which moves this case from the realm of speculation to the realm of proof. "Proof" admits of degrees. It does not have to be "absolute" in order to be "substantial." With the publication of this work, the case for my being the reincarnation of Mathew Franklin Whittier now becomes substantial.

Should unpublished diaries of any of the main figures in this drama ever surface, it may become considerably more substantial.

Having identified a real past-life match, but still having almost total amnesia as regards its specifics, what I did was to *react* to each new piece of historical information, and to *date and record* those reactions. Then I attempted to verify or disprove those reactions against the historical record. As you will see, there were some startling verifications. However, in the end, I feel it is not so much each individual piece of evidence that's so convincing, as the whole. No-one expects an adult to accurately remember everything about their childhood, nor even their college town. They may swear that the doughnut shop was on *North Main*, while it turns out to have been on *South Main*. And yet, it is not disputed that they *had* a childhood, or that they did, indeed, go to college in that town. How, then, could you expect someone to accurately remember everything about a life which occurred in a different century, and in a different body?

Expecting 100% accuracy is an unfair test. Mistakes are bound to creep in—but if I am merely imagining, I should be making *more* mistakes. Where I am sticking my neck out, reporting memories about rowing on a lake with young people at a clubhouse when I have no idea whether there were lakes in the area close enough for dating, or clubhouses for young people, and it turns out there was such a place; and when I do this not once, but many times—something beyond chance is operating. If I have carefully dated my memories and my research, so that I know which came first—and if the historical subject is too obscure for me to have run across the facts earlier, and forgotten them ("cryptomnesia")—that "something" is reincarnation.

On only a very few occasions, in this research, did I substantiate my paranormal data—past-life emotions, past-life memory, and psychic readings—to the degree that I consider them unequivocally proven. The paranormal data tends to be very personal, and such things are extremely difficult to find in historical records, especially with a paucity of correspondence and only one, obviously culled diary (that of Mathew's sister, Elisabeth). In most cases, I had to employ a scale running from impossible, through implausible, plausible, and finally to highly plausible. This word, "plausible," does not seem so impressive until you look closely at the

results. To have randomly imagined over 90 personal, idiosyncratic memories before I had any possible way of encountering the relevant historical information, and for so many of them to fall into the “highly plausible” end of this range, would be *extremely* unlikely. The odds of this happening, if my scholarship has been valid, are astronomical. And I was very careful with my scholarship.

Past-life memory is tricky. Since I was my own subject in this study, I honestly recorded all my subjective reactions to new historical data, whether it seemed to go against my claim to be Mathew’s reincarnation, or not. At times, for example, I immediately recognized a written work as Mathew’s, while at other times, I didn’t. On a few occasions, I actually rebelled against it, being offended and not wanting to believe Mathew could have written it. In such cases, it usually turned out that I was misinterpreting the piece. A poetic tribute to Abby initially looked trite to me, because I didn’t realize it was written to her in heaven; a humorous account of a character rejecting a woman seemed unduly harsh, because I didn’t understand the full context (it being the second half of a sketch); another sketch’s mocking tone regarding sensitivity to the issue of slaughtering farm animals offended me, until I understood it was a reflection of Mathew’s own ambivalence, having been raised on a farm; and that it may originally have been a dialogue between himself and someone else. At times, I simply forgot that I have progressed since that lifetime. I dismissed a particularly vindictive letter, for example, because I wouldn’t write such a thing, today. In all of these instances, I left in at least a summary of my initial reactions, so that the reader can see the entire process, rather than making myself look better by reporting only the more favorable final conclusion.

What did *not* seem to happen very often, is my reacting to a written work which was not, actually, Mathew’s, initially feeling and believing that it *was*. In most cases, when I strongly felt a piece was his, no matter how unlikely it seemed at the outset, deeper research showed that my sense of recognition was arguably correct. Thus, because of prejudice or mistaken assumptions, I could, on occasion, be fooled into disavowing Mathew’s actual work; but rarely was I fooled into claiming work for Mathew that wasn’t actually his. In one or two exceptions which come to mind, the work was probably an amalgam; and in another, a travelogue by “Down East” for the Boston “Weekly Museum,” the author may have been a like-minded person, but there remains some question about whether Mathew might have written portions of it. Similarly, I thought a writer for the “Carpet-Bag” signing as “C. Bagg, Jr.” might have been Mathew, based on the quality of one of his poems. However, the editor, B.P. Shillaber, reveals it as his own in the July 3, 1852 edition. On the other hand, it also appears that Mathew at times collaborated with Shillaber, so that it is sometimes hard to pick apart their respective contributions. The poem I felt I recognized as Mathew’s work, “The Bar-Keeper’s Dream,” appears under this signature and is reminiscent of his other poems; and in content, it is very much like one of his short stories. Its short, stark, punchy lines are suspiciously unlike Shillaber’s usual rhymes, which while quite competent, are typically characterized by longer (though occasionally shorter), flowery, sentimental lines. (I don’t mean to imply that Shillaber’s work is trite—some of his poems, as where he writes of having lost a cherished young son, are deeply moving.) I decided to stop short of a charge of plagiarism in this instance, because of the generally sloppy attitude toward attributions in the “Carpet-Bag.” Since Mathew appears to have been a silent partner in that venture, it’s possible that the pseudonym was originally conceived as an umbrella for all of the editorial staff, and then specifically claimed by Shillaber later on.

Some authors, like two signing “Old Gray” and “A. Knutt,” respectively, used pseudonyms similar to some of Mathew’s, and wrote in a plausibly similar way, causing me to tentatively assign their works to him until I came across pieces which clearly were not his; while others, like “John Fisher” and “Peter Snooks” were such obvious imitators that they only gave me brief pause until I proved their plagiarism.

One can get some idea of the intrigue I encountered, and the detective work required to get to the bottom of it, by the following example. A very clever poem entitled “The Cat Serenade” about an amorous tom-cat courting the author’s tabby, with explanatory comments in italics before each stanza, I traced back to 1832, though I couldn’t identify the author. It definitely struck me as Mathew’s style and humor, and conceivably it *could* have been his early work, but the touch of cruelty at the end was a red flag (the author threatens, “I’ll spoil your beauty, dear! Take that!” and throws a poker). Ultimately, I was able to find a version under the title “The Tom-Cat’s Serenade” signed by “Elah,” one among several highly competent, though decidedly worldly, pieces of poetry and prose bearing that pseudonym in an 1835 edition of Harvard’s student publication, “Harvardiana.” One of “Elah’s” poems tries to convince his main squeeze that when he goes after other girls, he is really thinking of her, and then through sophistry, compares his views with Persian religion, ending thusly:

The Parsee child will turn to pray,
When shuts the day-god’s burning eye,
Where shines that sun’s reflected ray,—
A Parsee, love, am I.
The knee may bend at many a shrine,
The incense burns on only thine.

Not only is this not Mathew, but it would have been abhorrent to him. The same theme appears in a second poem, where “Elah” seems to fancy himself a quasi-religious king of old with a harem:

I would I were a Turk bashaw,
And followed Mahomet the glorious;
Or held the fine old Jewish law,
With Solomon, the sage uxorious;—
I’d fill my halls with beauty bright,
And queenly Julia make Sultana,—
But who should be my “Heart’s Delight,”
My “Harem’s Joy,” but lovely Anna!

This brings up a crucial point as regards ferreting out authorship and detecting plagiarism. People are internally consistent, whatever outward mask they may adopt, and the tiger does not change his stripes. A Don Juan with a worldly philosophy of life does not suddenly become a sincere lover, nor a sincere mystic. Here, no-one who truly respects romantic love (no less exalts it) would ever put “Heart’s Delight” in quotations. So this is someone who mocks love while pretending to sing it; and several of the other productions by “Elah” are similar in this regard. But one of these poems stands out like a gemstone among glass beads, as a genuine expression of monogamous love:

To Adela.

Lady, by the stars that glisten,
In yon conscious arch above,
By the viewless forms that listen
To my plighted vow of love,
By this heart which fondly flingeth
All its incense on thy shrine,
Speak the word that rapture bringeth,
Whisper, dearest, thou art mine.

Oh delay not;—bitter sorrow
For thy coyness have I borne;
Let me not, another morrow,
Feel within the festering thorn!
Ah! That gentle smile thou wearest
Speaks of pity for my pain;
Bless thee! bless thee! sweetest, dearest!
Let me see that smile again.

Lady, do those witching glances,
And that bosom's gentle swell,
And the soft blush that entrances,
Sign a joy words cannot tell?
Speak they not the first of blisses,
First on earth, and first above?
Seal the holy bond with kisses,—
Holy—for the bond is love.

The power of a woman's love to transform a man notwithstanding, "Elah" is disqualified, by my intuition, as the author of this poem, both by its expression of monogamy, and by respectful mystical references to a conscious universe and unseen spirits (i.e., rather than tossing off casual references to ancient religions). This, despite the fact that the "incense" analogy is used by both poets (perhaps the one is imitating the other). Keep in mind that the poet has mischaracterized Parsee mysticism—the mystic does not pray to the fire as a symbol of the sun, he prays to the fire as a symbol of God. And it is sheer con-artistry to assert that he flirts with other women because they remind him of his true love, being reminiscent of the Crosby, Stills and Nash anthem of the 1960's sexual revolution, "If you can't be with the one you love, love the one you're with."

Furthermore, if I read the poem correctly, this would be the author's first relationship, which "Elah" clearly can't claim ("First on earth, and first above?"). Now we would have to turn to three other criteria: past-life recognition memory, style analysis, and the historical record. The first criterion yields a strong "hit" on the intuitive Geiger counter, that this is my poem. The second, comparing with Mathew's known work, tells me that the poem is indeed written in his distinctive meter and style; and the third suggests that it was either written for an older girl whom Mathew loved unrequitedly before he met his first wife, Abby Poyen, or more likely, it was for Abby, herself. If it *was* for Abby, we will see that this could place it in either 1833 or

1835/6. The plagiarizer might have only bothered to change the name slightly, from “Abby” to the far-less common “Adela”; or, as we will see, the name “Adela” might have had a personal meaning for them.

The evidence in this example, so far, suggests that Mathew, as a young man, shared his poetry with an unscrupulous friend who went to Harvard; and this would fit precisely with Mathew’s social patterns at the time. Perhaps this person added the cruel touch to the ending of “The Tom-Cat’s Serenade,” which I intuitively balk at. However, all this was still too tenuous to claim it for Mathew. (The likely identity of “Elah,” and how it was discovered at the 11th hour, will be discussed in the body of this work.) Where I ran into authorship disputes like this, in almost all cases I was finally able to run it down, though sometimes this took a great deal of detective work. Rather than simply report my conclusions, I have taken the reader on the investigative journey with me—which, admittedly, has greatly increased the length of the book. I did so for two reasons: firstly, for the skeptical reader who will dismiss my reincarnation case out-of-hand if I don’t prove these attributions; and secondly, because I think the quest holds its own fascination.

While attempting to establish the authorship of a given piece, I made use of the power of the internet by searching its title and interior lines. In this way, I was able to discover earlier, and still-earlier publications of a given piece, sometimes under one name, sometimes another—a capability beyond even the most widely-read scholar of the 19th century. This occasionally rendered Mathew’s authorship impossible; more often, however, as my past-life intuition kept insisting it was my own work, pursuing the matter further led me to a theft, just as the example above appears to have done. I do realize that the skeptical reader will accuse me of bias in claiming plagiarism rather than simply admitting a poem belonged to someone else. It is left to posterity to decide how objective I was. I can only say that I tried very hard not to let my wishes color my conclusions.

At times, this detective work seemed to become bogged down in a sea of confusion. Some of these thieves and false friends were very clever, and it took a great deal of work to wrest Mathew’s authorship from them. This was the case with the pseudonym “Quails” in the Boston “Weekly Museum,” where the editor appears to have been in collusion with the thief, and where all of them were initially friends. In the Boston “Carpet-Bag,” editor B.P. Shillaber’s light hand on the tiller, and the universal use of clever pseudonyms in that paper, caused the attributions to be so sloppy that my feeling of ownership for individual pieces was extremely difficult to confirm. Shillaber actually seems to have been *encouraging* imitation, and I was able to catch at least four of the authors—one of whom subsequently became famous—blatantly imitating Mathew’s work.

In the Portland (Maine) “Transcript,” where Mathew didn’t face this situation, I immediately recognized those pieces written by him, and subsequent research bore out my initial impressions. The single asterisk—perhaps, a secret tribute to Abby, as many of his literary conventions were—is almost certainly his, as are the unsigned Mercantile Library Association lyceum reviews. In other papers, the “Quails” travelogues and “The Old ‘Un” have been proven (in my opinion) to be Mathew’s work, as have various series including “Jedediah Simpkins,” “Sally Sage,” and the “prize-winning tale” parodies (Joseph Torrey’s imitations notwithstanding). With each of these pseudonyms and series, my investigation began by encountering, and intuitively recognizing, a single example. This is significant when it comes to those pieces—especially the

famous ones—which I strongly felt were Mathew’s, but where the authorship cannot be so well established from the historical record, like the sketch that Samuel Clemens read for Mathew’s brother’s 70th birthday, and the unsigned parody of “The Raven” entitled “The Vulture.” Mistakenly claiming work which turned out *not* to be Mathew’s, is what a skeptic would expect from me, if I am trying to enhance my sense of self-worth by identifying with a historical figure. But the research, as it unfolded, simply does not support this view.

As regards scholarship and the accuracy of historical records, historical research has been “on-the-job training” for me. Many times I have made errors of interpretation that would make a trained scholar blush—but I have dutifully corrected them, making a note of the change where it would be relevant for the proof process. On the other hand, it quickly became apparent, as I delved into the scanty and scattered records for Mathew Franklin Whittier, that recorded history is often wrong. Thanks to the internet, which none of my scholarly predecessors had, and also, perhaps, to an intuitive sense of who Mathew was as a person, and hence what was accurate about his character vs. what couldn’t possibly be so, I have disproved quite a number of historical assertions about his life.

An object lesson in the need to take the historical record with a hefty grain of salt, is a case of mistaken identity which, because of John Greenleaf Whittier’s fame, was replicated in several newspapers. In the Indianapolis “News” of Sept. 7, 1885—more than two years after Mathew’s death—is found the following news item:

Clark Whittier, brother of the poet, has founded a town and colony in Swain county, North Carolina, “on the principles of God’s word, including all morality and especially prohibition in its strongest form.”

This is doubly absurd when one considers that Mathew lampooned prohibition.

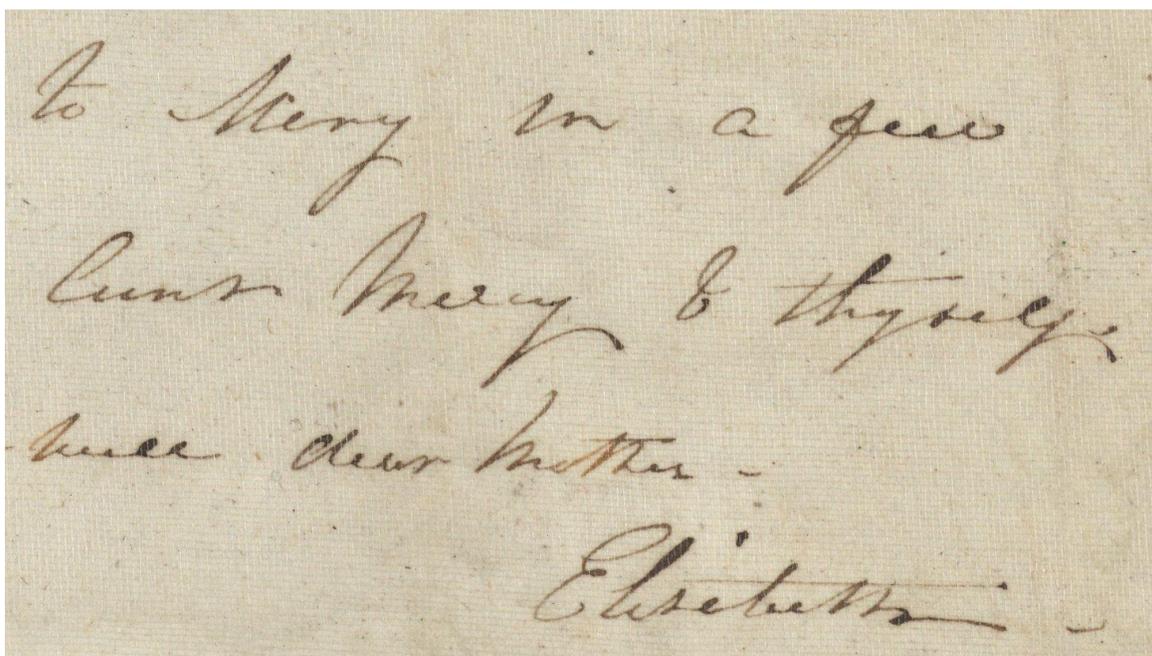
On the other hand, a columnist for the Lawrence “Daily Journal” of Oct. 11, 1879, when Mathew was still quite alive, has the opposite problem:

Another rare wit and humorist on the same side was “Ethan Spike.” He was a brother of the poet Whittier, lived in Portland, Maine, and probably died before the beginning of the war.

Such mistakes are not restricted to newspaper reporting. Even the extensive entry for Mathew in the “Encyclopedia of American Humorists,” (1988, edited by Steven H. Gale), while remarkably accurate overall, contains five historical errors in the biographical sketch, such as his first wife’s birth year and the year of Mathew’s third marriage. There is also the erroneous interpretation in the literary analysis that he was a “nihilist,” and that “Unlike his brother, John Greenleaf, he did not explore holiness and spiritual truth...” Further, there is no mention of his many humorous and serious works written under pseudonyms other than his famous one, “Ethan Spike,” which reveal him as a deeply spiritual person who was active in the Spiritualist movement, and certainly no nihilist. (The point is not to disparage the excellent scholarship of the entry’s author, Daniel G. Royot, but rather to point out the inaccuracy and incompleteness of the readily-available sources, which took me over seven years of intensive research to correct.)

One error in scholarship bears mentioning here, as I will be using a convention that is contrary to most of the Whittier literature. The first name of Mathew’s younger sister, Elisabeth, is usually

spelled with a “z,” “Elizabeth,” as it appears on her tombstone in Union Cemetery, Amesbury, Mass. This last is not necessarily authoritative, as someone not of the family could have made the burial arrangements, or even more likely, the present-day headstones, which look suspiciously uniform and intact, may be replacements. Meanwhile, as I obtained copies of original correspondence, both to and from her, I found that she spelled her name with an “s,” “Elisabeth.” Below we see details from three original handwritten letters, including Elisabeth’s own signature on an 1839 letter to her mother, an 1859 letter from Elisabeth to her sister Mary, and an 1839 letter from Mathew, indicating that she spelled her name “Elisabeth.” Note how Elisabeth wrote the name “Lizzy,” and the letter “s” in the following word “sends,” for comparison, making it less likely that what appears to be an “s” in her signature is really a “z,” “Zorro” style. At first glance it appears from the signature, below, that she spelled it “Elisebeth,” but we see from her spelling of “Mary” that she must have sometimes written her “a’s” like “e’s.” Meanwhile, her own brother Mathew (third example) spells her name “Elisabeth,” settling that question (he, also, uses the drop-tail “z” in the name “Ebenezer” in the body of that same letter). I will, accordingly, use “Elisabeth” in this work except when quoting or citing other sources.



To Mary in a few
lines Mary & thyself
will dear Mother -
Elisebeth

coming over &
to have her come
Lizzie sends her
Love - Anna send
I hope this will
that - I can hear a

25
Check
Elizabeth H. Whittier
& Care of John G. Whittier
Single Sheet?
Philadelphia, Pa.

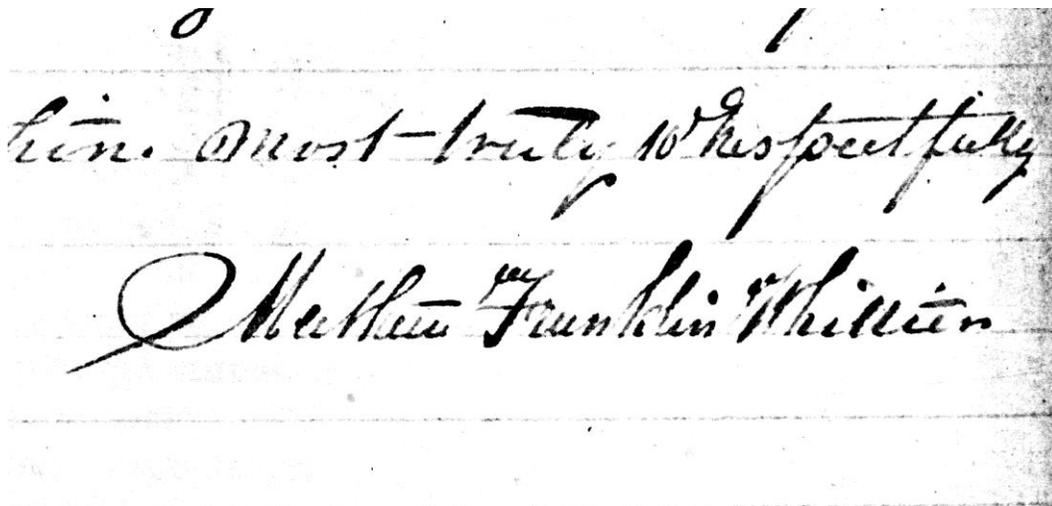
More importantly, there are indications that Mathew may have spelled *his* name with one “t,” “Mathew,” despite the fact that it, too, is frequently misspelled. The first instance occurs in the official listing of his marriage to Abby Poyen on Aug. 4, 1836. Another occurs in the only personal correspondence I have found wherein Mathew signed his own first name, a July 20, 1837 letter introducing himself to Thomas Chandler. Almost always, he signed with his initials, “M.F. Whittier,” even in letters to family. His printed birth record gives his name as “Matthew”;

but the 1870 census spells it “Mathew,” and I found at least two obituaries, including the one below printed in the “Daily Yellowstone Journal,” which have “Mathew.” Whether those particular copy editors simply made an error, or they were the only ones who bothered to check with family for the correct spelling, we will never know. Apparently local historian Rebecca I. Davis took the trouble to get it right, when she wrote, in “Gleanings from Merrimac Valley”:

But we must not omit John and Mathew, dressed in Friend’s garb, with the rest, all, excepting the “guest and schoolmaster,” eager listeners we may well imagine.

Mathew’s tombstone, which one would think would be the last word on the subject, spells “Matthew” with two “t’s.” But here again, we don’t know who made the burial arrangements, nor whether the original could have been replaced.

Some of the institutions holding Mathew’s papers use one spelling, some, the other. To be honest, this was an 11th hour revision in this book; for a long time I was quite comfortable with the double “t” spelling, an embarrassment for which I have no explanation. My intuitive feeling is that Mathew simply acquiesced when people spelled it wrong, accepting either spelling. I will use “Mathew” in this book based on the strength of the one signature (though in my e-mail correspondence and other material in the Appendix, I will leave the double-t spelling as I had written it, then). Most other authors used the double “t,” including the Portland “Transcript,” Samuel Pickard, John Pickard and Mathew’s student biographer, Lloyd W. Griffin. Given that Mathew almost never signed with his first name, they naturally assumed the more common spelling, and I have quoted them accordingly.



0 1

Yours most truly & respectfully

Mathew Franklin Whittier

DEATH OF A CELEBRATED AUTHOR.
BOSTON, Jan. 9.—Mathew Franklin Whittier, the only brother of John G. Whittier, the poet, is dead. He was the author of the famous “Ethan Spike Letters.”

From the "Daily Yellowstone Journal," Jan. 10, 1883

These issues about the names give us a foretaste of more serious controversies we will encounter in the historical record regarding Mathew, his family and his work, which, when all the evidence is considered, do not always admit of the most obvious explanation. (Case in point, an alternative explanation surfaced in the course of this study, that people of the 19th century may have felt free to change the spelling of their first names according to current fashion.)

Traditional scholarship aside, the questions I'd like you to ask yourself as you read this book are: "Who else but Mathew Franklin Whittier, reincarnated, would have known what to look for? Who would have understood John Greenleaf Whittier's personality in such depth, when, seemingly, legions of fans and scholars have missed it? Who else would have known that Mathew never fell out of love with his first wife, despite his stoic show of bravado, and that his unrelenting grief for her profoundly, albeit secretly, influenced everything in his life until his own death 42 years later? Who else would have caught the hidden depth of Mathew's writing, including his embedded code phrases and obscure autobiographical references, when no-one else has taken his work seriously? Who else, in short, could have written this book?"

A final word to those who have the habit of reading only a portion of a book. I have no objection—but every word in this book is there to prove the case, including the material in the Appendix, which demonstrates that I had a similar writing style to Mathew's, and comparable abilities, before I ever heard of him. Chapters 13 and 14, in particular, are crucial because this is where I added new historical finds after completing the bulk of the work, and, most importantly, after having recorded the paranormal data. A representative sampling of my original e-mails with my first researcher is included, to show how I worked and to demonstrate that my memories were recorded before the historical confirmations took place; and the relevant portions of my hypnotic regression sessions are also presented verbatim for reference.

To those of you who read copyrights, and who notice that mine are in no particular order, I apologize. Once or twice I started trying to put them in the order of their appearance, but certain of them had to be grouped by origin, and ordering them all alphabetically seemed a Herculean, and fruitless, task. All three of you, therefore, may resort to the digital search function to find your particular copyright.

While we are apologizing, I am well aware that the sheer length of Chapter 14, which is now the size of a small book in its own right, may raise some eyebrows. The explanation is simple—as I encountered new evidence, the bulk of it turned out to be relevant to the material already present in this chapter, rather than Chapter 13. Some significant portion of the length is due to illustrations. This being solely a digital work, I had none of the constraints that authors encounter with print works; and having a video production background, I was inclined to "show" as well as "tell." A great deal of the length is also due to the necessity to reclaim, as much as possible, Mathew's stolen work, and to prove that the pieces he wrote under a plethora of pseudonyms are really his. In the absence of a diary, with very few personal accounts by those who knew him, and only a few pieces of correspondence, Mathew's published work comprises the greatest portion of my historical evidence. Thankfully, he incorporated a great deal of tacit autobiography in it. If I had simply *asserted* his authorship of these various works, even though many of them are claimed by historians for other writers, I could have cut the book by perhaps a third. But I am writing to a skeptical audience; and I know they will take any excuse to dismiss my work as

either fantasy, or bad scholarship.

If this book comes to the public notice, there will undoubtedly be scholars who go back into the historical record and attempt to disprove my conclusions. For this reason, as well as on principle, I test my own theories as vigorously as I expect others to test them. When it comes to my claims for Mathew's authorship of various works, I must prove everything I can, and it is no simple matter to wrest a body of work from a plagiarist 150 years after the fact. It isn't impossible—it just takes some intrepid detective work, and a bit of “ink.”

I completed what I thought was the final draft of this work, and published it, in mid-2012. For several years thereafter, I continued to find new evidence, revising it almost continually, and adding most of the new material into the final wrap-up chapters, 13 and 14. As a result, however, some of my speculations as found in the original chapters (and in many cases, within the final two chapters, as well) were now found to be incorrect. Rather than simply re-editing them—which would have destroyed their evidential value, given that past-life impressions and speculations are often intertwined—I decided to make these corrections by foreshadowing the new discoveries in parentheses. You will thus see addendums such as “(Later, I would learn that...)” No doubt this method is annoying; but I opted to do it this way, rather than to go back and completely re-write the material according to my latest understanding of Mathew's history, for the sake of transparency. I did not, in short, want to look more prescient than I really am. What I *didn't* understand correctly is as important for an objective evaluation of this case as what I *did* understand.

The primary source on Mathew's life was a student thesis written by Lloyd W. Griffin in 1941, which in turn relied heavily on sparse, inaccurate and even misleading references by Mathew's nemesis, his son-in-law Samuel Pickard. Not having the internet, as I had for my own research, Griffin made a few significant blunders which I took for fact, including that Mathew left his second family in 1858, and married a third wife in 1864 (or simply lived with her); that he created only one character, “Ethan Spike” and its derivatives, and very little other than humorous letters in dialect; and that he was a worldly, irresponsible person. What Griffin missed was as significant as his assertions: that Mathew's entire life was shaped by his brief first marriage to his soul-mate, Abby Poyen, whom he continued to grieve, and to contact in the spirit world; that he wrote under dozens of pseudonyms in several genres, for a lifetime total of over 600 published pieces; that he was active behind the scenes for a number of progressive causes; and that he was a deep and widely-read philosopher, conversant with metaphysics and the Greek classics.

In particular, uncritically accepting Griffin's historical report about Mathew's second marriage threw off all my speculations on this subject, until I finally pieced together the correct view from Mathew's published works. That means wherever I had intuitions about that marriage, I interpreted them *within the historical framework that had been provided by Griffin*. This occurred even under a light hypnotic trance during my two past-life regressions. What remained reliable were my occasional flashes of distinct memory, and my feelings. All-along, for example, I felt that Mathew's second marriage was arranged—and this turned out to be correct, despite the fact that all Griffin could offer as the reason why Mathew would marry a homely girl from St. John—apparently, sight-unseen, and only a year after his first wife's death—is that the Whittier brothers were “attractive to women.” I also felt that, finding they had absolutely no compatability, Mathew *should* have ended this relationship much earlier, but I *assumed*, based on

Griffin's thesis/biography, that he had waited until 1858 (mid-1857, once I found evidence for the final dissolution of the family at this time). As I continued to rely on this scenario as historical fact, it became deeply embedded in the narrative. However, I later learned that he appears to have ended the marriage in 1849, at the seven year mark, though he may have attempted reconciliations on one or more occasions. I also strongly felt that he did not "abandon his family" as Griffin suggests—and in fact, it appears he continued supporting them after the initial split, until after the final breakup in 1857 he was financially unable to do so. Even that situation was not as Griffin had interpreted, based on Pickard's prejudiced view, because the reason Mathew could no-longer support his family is that his behind-the-scenes work for progressive and radical causes had been recently outed, and he was probably being blacklisted.

In the main, my discoveries had verified my strong feelings about Mathew's life, against the assumptions made in Griffin's thesis. Now, however, I had a problem on my hands—what to do with the numerous instances where I had already incorporated Griffin's mistakes into my own interpretations and speculations?

Normally, an author would simply go back and re-write the earlier chapters for consistency. But I am attempting to prove reincarnation, and the nuances of my reported past-life impressions would be artificially masked if I went back and "cleaned up" my original working assumptions, where they later proved incorrect. Of course, I could simply have left all the incorrect errors intact, so that the reader picks up their correction as the narration progresses, without foreshadowing. But this is a long and complex book, and leaving the wrong impression on page 182, correcting it only on page 586, would create confusion; and I am well aware that it's a long book and not everyone will be inclined to finish it. I want people who are reading the initial chapters to know "that ain't all I got." And in particular, I don't want critics, who may only skim, lifting a quote from page 182 as though it was my final understanding of the matter. Therefore, I made the editorial decision to put these mistaken interpretations and speculations in past-tense, where they had been written in present tense; and then, in parentheses, to indicate what I discovered afterwards. The reader will thus see a statement which originally read as:

Since we know that Mathew's second marriage lasted 15 years...

Rewritten as:

I concluded that since, according to Griffin, Mathew's second marriage lasted 15 years... (Later, I would learn that...)

If this becomes tedious, think of it as a test, providing the opportunity to see what I did with Griffin's historical mistakes. It is somewhat parallel to Dr. Ian Stevenson's studies, when a child was brought for the first time to meet with his past-life family, and someone at the scene tried to trick the child by presenting a stranger as his or her family member. In my case, sometimes I said "No way!", while sometimes I accepted it uneasily, on his authority, as in "Oh, well, okay, if you say so..."

As it happens, for the most part I wasn't fooled. Furthermore, what I sensed about Mathew which ran contrary to Griffin's portrayal, and which I later confirmed by a deep study of the historical record, goes well beyond merely wishing to paint my subject in a better light.

At the 11th hour I also capitulated to the custom of inserting topic subheadings, which break up

the narration somewhat. I had resisted it because the content is so interrelated—almost holographic—in nature. It is all one complex tapestry, and any piece of new evidence relates to 20 different research issues at the same time. My concern was that if I told the reader what the next section is about, I might inadvertently exclude 19 other implied connections—some of which he or she may see more clearly than I do. For this reason, I strongly suggest reading this book not so much as a *consumer* of my detective work, but as a *detective* in your own right.

My addition of Mathew’s own work in Part II is self-explanatory. Mathew had intended to publish a compilation in his lifetime, and as his reincarnation, I have finally accomplished it for him. This is the first time a body of his work has ever been published, though occasional pieces have been reproduced in a few scattered publications. Out of over 600 pieces I have obtained from various sources, I am presenting 27, mostly written as his signature character, “Ethan Spike.” With a little practice, one can get accustomed to his intentional misspellings and phonetic representations of the rural Maine dialect, and once one does, the depth and richness of his humor is well worth the trouble. There are a great many excellent pieces which Mathew wrote under other pseudonyms, which I am certain are his work, but for which I cannot absolutely *prove* his authorship. These I have excerpted liberally in the text, itself.

Finally, the “Scorecard summary” enables the reader to see, at a glance, to what extent the paranormally-derived data squared with the historical record. The “Mathew Franklin Whittier timeline” is provided as a handy tool, given that I was not able to go in strict chronological order as regards Mathew’s personal history; and the “Research timeline” is likewise provided as a tool so that the reader can see at a glance how the paranormal data prefigures the historical confirmations.

This book is for those who are thirsting after knowledge about reincarnation; and for those who love a good detective story. It is not for those who read it grudgingly, but rather for those who plunge into it eagerly, since it requires both work and receptivity. But as with Mathew’s own writing, if you will only bring such an appetite to the table, the banquet is now spread before you.

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