

Finding "Mr. King"

by Susan Richards

My Mother liked nothing more than to tell me her family stories. They ranged in topic from her life in WW2 London to her father Joseph's reasons for his lack of fortune. After she died, my interest in family history grew into a passion. I have pieced together a rambling family tree that, on one of its ancient limbs, dates back almost to the time of the Magna Carta. A story my Mother told about her grandfather, John Charles Bond Andrews, and an "uncle," "Mr. King," was always somewhat of an enigma.

Bond Andrews was a composer who died at a pivotal point in his career. He left his wife, Ellen, with a family of five children in a financially insecure situation. He also left a large amount of unfinished and unpublished work. Ellen parted with all her husband's original manuscripts to his fellow musicians at the Savage Club in London and eventually received royalties for some of the music. Mr. King apparently persuaded her to invest the money in the production of a calculator, but as the story goes, she never did realize on her investment. My Mother did not know which side of the family Mr. King was from, but for some unknown reason, we always assumed that he must be related to Ellen. For years the story remained the topic of speculation. Was Mr. King actually Otis King, inventor of the famous calculator, or was Otis King a relative of our Mr. King?

When recently looking for my ancestors in the 1881 UK census, I found Bond Andrews, unmarried, living in Kensington, London and listed as the son of the head of the household. Mary King was the head of the household and a five-year old boy named Hass King born in London, Middlesex was also identified as a son of the head of the household. A surprising find—no one in the family had ever mentioned Hass or that Bond Andrews' mother, Mary, had remarried. I also looked in the 1881 census for Otis King—without success.

Pursuing tangible proof of this newfound member of the family, Hass King, I requested a search and birth certificate from the UK General Registry Office for the son of Mary (nee Meacock, formerly Andrews) King based on a birth year range between 1875–1877. No Hass King. I resigned to wait for the 1901 UK census to go online. However, I was again disappointed when I did not find a Hass King in the UK in 1901.

I looked again in the 1901 UK census, only this time for Otis King. There he was, lodging with a William Davies and his family at 18 High Road, Fulham, London, Middlesex. At age 25, Otis was the same age as young Hass would have been. He was unmarried, and his occupation was listed as "Electrical Engineer". Bond Andrews's brother and son, Joseph, were also electrical engineers. I was quite convinced at this point that Hass was a pet name for Otis. Going back to the relationship of Mr. King in the family story, this meant that Otis King would be Joseph's uncle! I immediately sent for a birth certificate for Otis King, mother Mary (nee Meacock, formerly Andrews) King. Proof positive! I was quite excited by my discovery.

CERTIFIED COPY OF AN ENTRY OF BIRTH



GIVEN AT THE GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE

Application Number PAS 827630

REGISTRATION DISTRICT **Fulham**1876 BIRTH in the Sub-district of **St Paul Hammersmith** in the **County of Middlesex**

| Columns- | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|----------|---------------------|--------------|-----|----------------------------|--|----------------------|---|-----------------|------------------------|---------------------------------|
| No. | When and where born | Name, if any | Sex | Name and surname of father | Name, surname and maiden surname of mother | Occupation of father | Signature, description and residence of informant | When registered | Signature of registrar | Name entered after registration |

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|----|---|-------------------------|-----|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|----------|---|------------------------|-------------------|----------|
| 76 | Eleventh February 1876 Thorncroft Villas | Otis Carter Formby King | Boy | Charles de Wolfe King | Mary Fensha King formerly Meacock | Musician | W. J. King Father Thorncroft Villas near Grange Gardens Hammersmith | Twentysixth March 1876 | William D. Knight | Requibar |
|----|---|-------------------------|-----|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|----------|---|------------------------|-------------------|----------|

CERTIFIED to be a true copy of an entry in the certified copy of a Register of Births in the District above mentioned.

Given at the GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE, under the Seal of the said Office, the 30th day of September 2002

BXBZ 652897

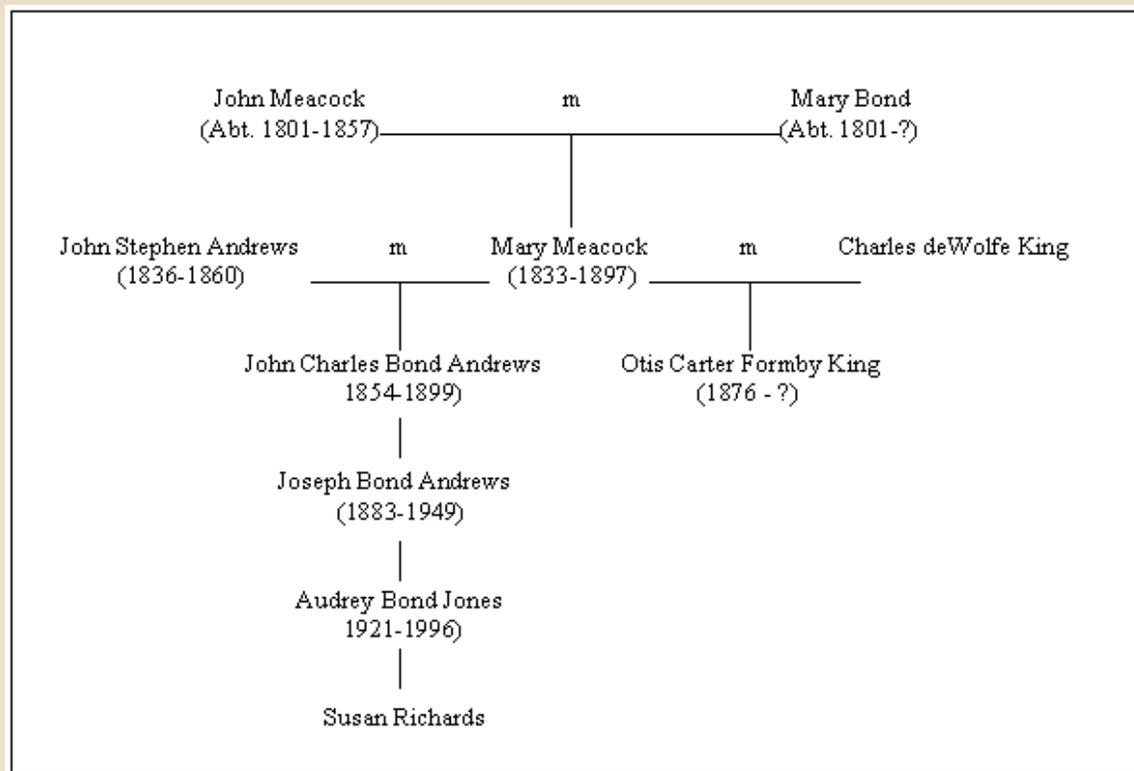
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Otis King's birth: 2002 certificate from 1876 record.

Otis Carter Formby King was born on February 11, 1876 at 1, Thorncroft Villas, Hammersmith, London, Middlesex, England. His father was Charles deWolfe King, a musician. His mother, Mary, was born in 1833 in Birkenhead, Cheshire, one of eight children born to brewer John and Mary (nee Bond) Meacock. John Meacock and Mary Bond were married at St. Michael's Parish Church, Toxteth Park in Liverpool, Lancashire in 1830. John Meacock was born in Ledsham, Cheshire. The only known family of Mary Bond is that of her brother, a landscape painter named Richard Sebastian Bond, who lived with his family in Wales at the time of the 1881 census. Mary King's first husband was John Stephen Andrews, a master chemist. That is as far back as I have managed to trace Otis's family on his mother's side. His father, Charles deWolfe King, may have died before the 1881 census was taken or he may have been away from home on the night of the census. The census would have provided his age (or the age he would have liked to be) and birthplace.



Otis Carter Formby King, half-great-granduncle of Susan Richards

Mr. King's calculator is a success story. Otis King calculators were patented in the UK and the USA and manufactured for over 50 years. However, the story of our Mr. King is unfinished. Who was Ada Matilda Pladdy King with whom Otis lived in Coventry, England during the early production days of his calculator? If Ada was his wife, did they have any children, and are any of them or their descendants living? How long did Otis live? Where was his father born?

I have requested a search for the marriage license of Mary (nee Meacock) Andrews and Charles deWolfe King. Hopefully, they were married in England sometime between 1873-1875. From the marriage license, I will learn where they lived at the time of their marriage and Charles' father's name and occupation. Although the ages of mature couples were often stated as "of full age," it is possible that I may also learn Charles' age. As for any children of Otis, the Mormon Church's family history centres contain, on microfilm, the UK National Registry of births, marriages and deaths in the UK since 1837. However, spending my days in a church basement is beyond the limits of my passion, and so I hope that one day the records will be on the web, and then I will search for Otis's children -- my half-first-cousins-twice-removed!

Susan Richards is an avid family historian, born in England and now residing in Ontario, Canada.

November 10, 2002.