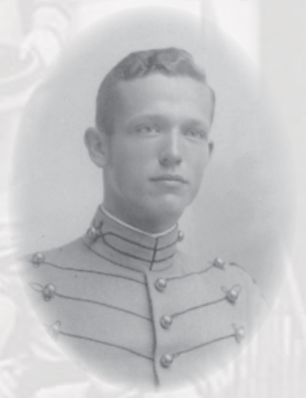
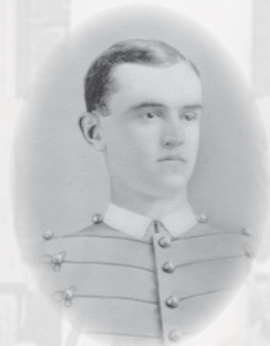


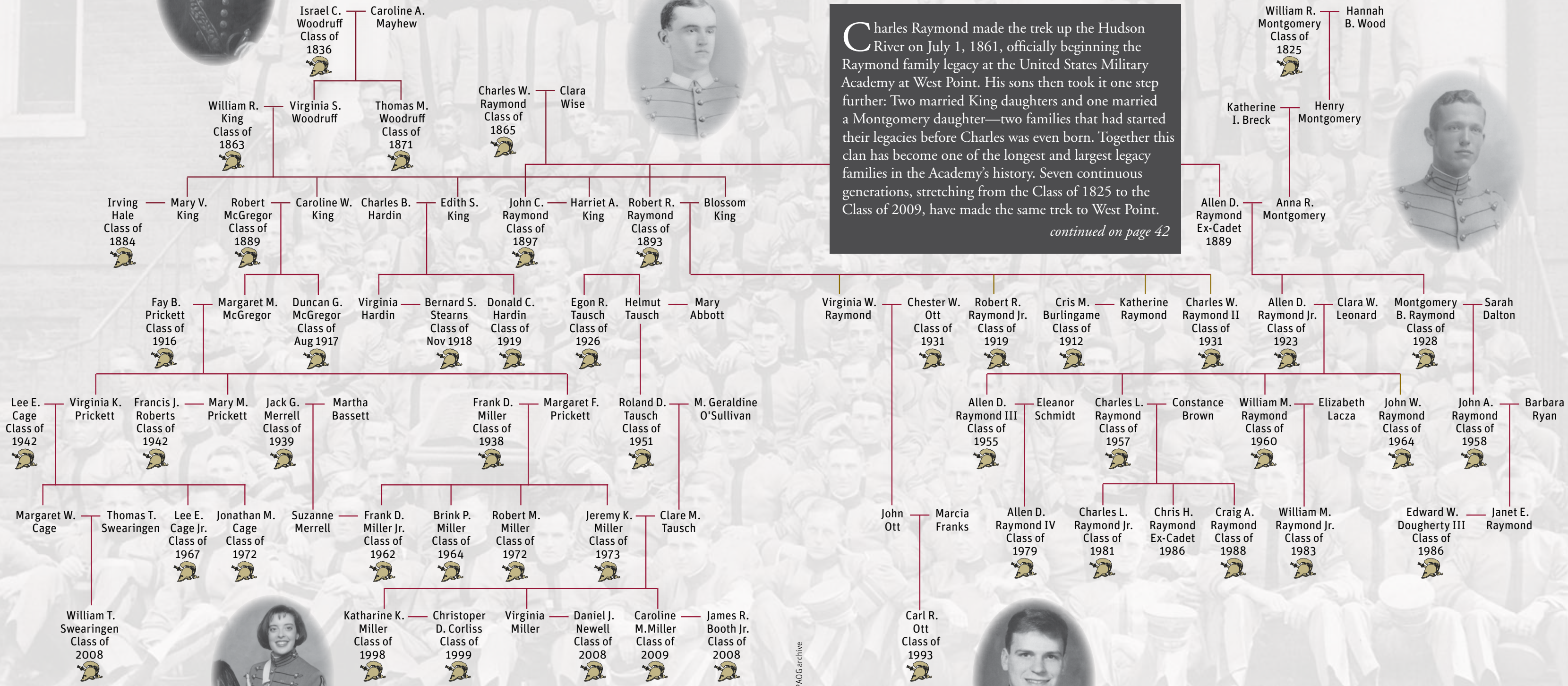
West Point's Legacy Families

By Marissa Carl, WPAOG staff



Charles Raymond made the trek up the Hudson River on July 1, 1861, officially beginning the Raymond family legacy at the United States Military Academy at West Point. His sons then took it one step further: Two married King daughters and one married a Montgomery daughter—two families that had started their legacies before Charles was even born. Together this clan has become one of the longest and largest legacy families in the Academy's history. Seven continuous generations, stretching from the Class of 1825 to the Class of 2009, have made the same trek to West Point.

continued on page 42



Photos: Submitted, WPAOG archive

Charles went on to graduate number one in his class and his descendants continue to leave their mark on the Academy. Craig Raymond '88, the most recent graduate with direct ties to Charles, was an Army lineman who helped the Black Knights beat Navy 17-3 his first year, even playing with a broken thumb throughout the second half of the game. He says the lessons he learned from the Academy translated to the football field, and continue to drive his service-oriented life—Craig spends his nights and weekends coaching the offensive line of his local high school football team.

Service to this country is the resounding family motto. William "Bill" Raymond Jr. '83, who taught in the Department of Social Sciences from 1993 to 1996, has a son in his third year of the ROTC program at Kansas State University—joining the ranks of dozens in his family who chose to serve in the military without going to West Point—and his family couldn't be more proud. "I'm honored he wants to follow in my footsteps and serve his country," Bill says.

It would take nearly an entire magazine to include everyone in this family who was commissioned outside of the United States Military Academy or enlisted (many of the indirect graduate lines—for instance, Clara Leonard's two brothers—don't even fit on the previous pages); however, that group includes many decorated soldiers, a handful of general officers, and a Medal of Honor recipient. "I'm just amazed at all of the things my ancestors have accomplished to help establish this nation," says Katharine (Miller) Corliss '98.

Corliss '98, now an Executive Officer in the Air National Guard, "and I wanted to do my part as well."

Corliss remembers when the first classes of women started graduating from the Academy in the early 1980s. "I remember thinking that was just so cool and that West Point was now a possibility for me," she says. Corliss went on to become the first female graduate in her very long family lineage. Eleven years later, her sister, Caroline (Miller) Booth '09, tossed her hat on graduation day. As for the next generation, Corliss's eldest, age 11, spends her summers at West Point with her grandparents. "It's in her head," Corliss says. "If that's where her path takes her, great." The family isn't pushing, but "certainly wants to set her up for success if West Point is what she wants."

"All of my ancestors would say 'I am who I am today because of West Point,' and that's something I wanted to be able to say myself."

—Katharine (Miller) Corliss '98

Six and seven generations are where certain families break from the pack. Three- and four-generation families crowd the pages of the West Point Association of Graduates' *Register of Graduates*. Even five generations are increasingly common as the years go on. Six and seven generations, however, require a genealogical succession that



This brooch was created for Clara Raymond and includes the A-pins of her husband, four sons, and five grandchildren. Bill Raymond '83 says it was a running family joke that "Grammy" wore the West Point A-pins every day, but never any memorabilia from her descendants who graduated from the Air Force or Naval academies. "They're kind of the black sheep of the family," he jokes.

starts within the first few decades of the Academy's founding. Rene DeRussy, as the 89th graduate of West Point, is the earliest graduate to start one of these elite legacy families. After he graduated in the Class of 1812 (and then served as Superintendent from 1833 to 1838), six generations of his direct descendants—most recently James Lincoln Jr. '90—tossed their hats on graduation day.

Three years after DeRussy graduated, Tyler Donnell's lengthy lineage started. Tyler '02 is the most recent graduate to descend from the 137th graduate, Francis Berier, Class of 1815. Seven of the past eight generations of Tyler's family have included a West Point graduate, and he is the fourth to come back to teach at the Academy. Since 1821, his ancestors have taught cadets mathematics, artillery tactics, and physics—the subject Tyler started teaching this fall and the course his father, Alton Donnell Jr. '67, taught from 1977 to 1980.

Alton says his family continues to attend the Academy not because of the pressure of the legacy but because of the strong ties his family has to the area (two generations of his family married Cozzens, a prominent local family). Alton himself chose to become a cadet because he was the first of four kids and thought it would be the practical choice over Michigan State or Cornell universities. "Then R-Day hits you right in the face," he jokes. As the generations continue, the local ties grow stronger and stronger. Tyler spent a lot of time at West Point with family friends and now his children will get to spend some of their childhood years growing up at West Point. (His son is only 11 but already very interested in his family's connection to the Academy.)

Tyler's great-great-grandfather, Alexander Ross Piper, Class of 1889, also spent many of his childhood years at West Point and, like his relatives, came back later in life to serve the Academy.



MAJ Tyler Donnell '02 is the most recent graduate in a long line of West Pointers (dating back to the Class of 1815). However, even his non-graduate relatives have strong West Point ties. His great-great-great-grandfather, William Brown Cozzens, was the first manager of the West Point Hotel and later owned Cozzens Hotel, which was located outside of what is now Thayer Gate until 1866. This illustration of a cadet hop at Cozzens Hotel, by Winslow Homer, was printed in the Sep. 3, 1859 issue of *Harper's Weekly*.

Photo: Marissa Carl/WPAOG staff

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From 1934 to 1936, he was President of the West Point Association of Graduates and is credited with convincing Congress to pass a law bestowing a Bachelor of Science degree on all living and future West Point graduates.

West Point is very often a family affair. The following cases are just three of thousands of interesting Academy family ties: George Hillard III restarted his family's legacy in 1964, following after his great-great-great-grandfather Charles Gratiot, Class of 1806, and great-great-great-grandfather Gabriel Rains, Class of 1827. Merlin Miller and classmate John Mainwaring each started a legacy when they tossed their hats on June 5, 1974. Miller's three daughters then graduated from the Academy around the same time as Mainwaring's three sons. Jacqueline Stilwell officially stretched her family legacy to the 100-year mark in May 2004, following her father (Class of 1960), who followed his father (Class of 1933), who followed his father (Class of 1904)—all named Joe Stilwell.

At the Class of 2012's Graduation Banquet in May, General Ray Odierno '76 commented on the 80 legacy families in attendance. The theme of Odierno's speech focused on certain generations of West Point leaders and how they have changed history; he then charged the Class of 2012 to shape the Army of the future, which is sure to be led by more and more West Point graduates who have generations of support and experience behind them. (Ninety members of the Class of 2013 have parents who graduated from the Academy.) ★

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