

## Introduction

The following proof argument was a product of Mary Kircher Roddy's work during her ProGen program. After ProGen, Mary revised and then submitted it to the *National Genealogical Society Quarterly* where it was accepted and published.

It is an interesting opportunity for you to see the article in the form that she submitted it as a ProGen assignment, and then to compare its published format as an NGSQ article.

To access the article, you may view it as a member of the National Genealogical Society. Or, you may access it through Mary's website directly [here](#). You may also enjoy perusing Mary's other publications as found on her website [www.mkrgenealogy.com](http://www.mkrgenealogy.com).

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# Who were the Parents of John C. Ahern aka John Lockren of Oakland and Sonoma County?

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Mary Kircher Roddy  
ProGen 31 Study Group – Proof Arguments

In order to prove a relationship, one first must prove identity, but when a man uses two different surnames, a conflict arises.

Identity problems can also arise when a person is informally adopted and changes his name to correspond to the “adopting parents” without undergoing a legal name change. When he maintains contact with his birth family, his recorded surname may differ between documents associated with his adopted family and those with his birth family.

An additional identity problem can occur when a person is enumerated in different households, using different names, on the same census. Such duplicate appearances demonstrate the familial dependence of surnames and highlight the need to corroborate the census with other documents.

Researchers must evaluate all pertinent sources looking for parallels in names, relationships, age, and other details in the records to establish that the two different names apply to the same person. Only then can a researcher name the parents.

## The Problem

No birth, baptism or official death record explicitly names John Ahern’s parents. Complicating the identification of his parents are frequent references to him with different surnames - Ahern and Lockren.<sup>1</sup>

John Ahern died due to injuries from a railroad accident near Hayward, California 18 June 1896.<sup>2</sup> Accounts of the accident and his death refer to him as both John Lockren and John Ahern, creating a problem of identity which must be solved before his parents can be named. A lawsuit filed in 1897 against the Southern Pacific Company gives a clue as to his identity.

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<sup>1</sup> Unless quoting original records, this paper will spell the surname as Lockren.

<sup>2</sup> “Killed by a Train,” *The San Francisco Chronicle*, 20 June 1896, p. 10, col. 6; digital images, Fold3.com (<http://www.fold3.com> : accessed 10 July 2017)

## Henry W. Ahern, Plaintiff vs Southern Pacific Company, Defendant

On 10 February 1897, Henry W. Ahern, identified as the “father and sole heir-at-law of John Ahern,” filed a “Complaint for damages for personal injuries” against Southern Pacific Company for negligence in the 19 June 1896 death of John Ahern.<sup>3</sup> In his deposition taken 10 October 1898, Henry provided information about John’s identity and family members.

When questioned by counsel for Southern Pacific Railroad, Henry Ahern indicated John Ahern was his brother, and that their father was James Ahern who was at the time of the deposition living in Sonoma City.<sup>4</sup> At his death John Ahern was survived by two brothers and three sisters, “... still living, - that is all but one brother that died long ago.”<sup>5</sup>

Regarding John’s residence Henry stated, “He has lived all his life with an Aunt of his and mine... All of his life since his mother died.”<sup>6</sup> John was two days old when his aunt took him. He never lived with his father, but would visit him “a couple of times a year, sometimes once a year... [for] about a week or so.”<sup>7</sup>

Henry was asked about “Mrs. Lockran, the Aunt.” He replied that John “lived in Oakland until he grew up; until he was ten years old in Sonoma, lived with her there; that is, she lived for a while on father’s ranch and each rented a ranch together.”<sup>8</sup>

When questioned about John’s surname, Henry said he went by “J. C. Lockran,” and that is the only name he was known by in Oakland and in business matters. “He always signed his name as Lockran; never any other way that I know of.”<sup>9</sup>

It is unclear why Henry Ahern, rather than James Ahern, was the plaintiff in the suit and named in the complaint as the father of John Ahern. The complaint, filed more than seven months after the incident, also contained an error as to the date of the accident, which occurred on the 18<sup>th</sup>, not the 19<sup>th</sup>, of June 1896.<sup>10</sup> On 10 May 1900 Southern Pacific Company filed a notice to dismiss for on two counts, including “want of legal capacity in plaintiff to bring or maintain said action... [because] plaintiff bore the relationship of brother, and not of father, to John Ahern.”<sup>11</sup> By this date, both Henry and James Ahern were dead.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Superior Court of the State of California in and for the County of Alameda, doc. 13585, 12 February 1897, Ahern v. Southern Pacific Company, 1897, Old Civil Reel 339, Oakland, California.

<sup>4</sup> Ahern v. Southern Pacific Company, Deposition of Henry W. Ahern, 10 Oct 1898, p. 3.

<sup>5</sup> Ahern v. Southern Pacific Company, Deposition of Henry W. Ahern, 10 Oct 1898, p. 4.

<sup>6</sup> Ahern v. Southern Pacific Company, Deposition of Henry W. Ahern, 10 Oct 1898, p. 6-7.

<sup>7</sup> Ahern v. Southern Pacific Company, Deposition of Henry W. Ahern, 10 Oct 1898, p. 7.

<sup>8</sup> Ahern v. Southern Pacific Company, Deposition of Henry W. Ahern, 10 Oct 1898, p. 7-8.

<sup>9</sup> Ahern v. Southern Pacific Company, Deposition of Henry W. Ahern, 10 Oct 1898, p. 8.

<sup>10</sup> “John Lochren’s Horrible Fate,” *Oakland Times*, 19 June 1896, p. 1, col. 6.

<sup>11</sup> Ahern v. Southern Pacific Company, Notice, 23 April 1900.

<sup>12</sup> “Death of Henry Ahern,” *Petaluma Daily Courier*, 15 February 1900, page 3; “Died. Ahern,” *The Petaluma Daily Argus*, 14 January 1899, p. 1, col. 3

## Newspaper Accounts Naming Family Members

John's death was reported in newspapers in at least three different locations – San Francisco, the major city in the area; Oakland, the city where John lived; and Petaluma and Sonoma, the two towns in Sonoma County where the Ahern family lived.

These newspapers also mentioned various family members in obituaries or other accounts of his death, sometimes by name, and sometimes by relationship. A chronological listing of newspaper articles appears in Table 1 showing the location, the surname used, and John's family members.

Newspaper	Date	Article Title	Name	Parents	Mentions of Family Members
<b>Oakland Times</b>	19 Jun 1896	"JOHN LOCHREN'S HORRIBLE FATE" <sup>a</sup>	John M. Lochran / Mr. Lochren		"Mr. Lockren lived at 1503 Fifth street with his mother whom he supported"
<b>Oakland Enquirer</b>	19 Jun 1896	"DIED – LOCKREN" <sup>b</sup> (Death notice)	John C. Lockren	Ann Lockren and James Ahern	Brother of: Charles and Mary Lockren, Henry, James and Sarah Ahern, Mrs. Belle Green and Mary Bradley
<b>Oakland Times</b>	20 Jun 1896	"Death Was Accidental" <sup>c</sup>	John Ahern, popularly known as John M. Lockren		
<b>Oakland Enquirer</b>	20 Jun 1896	"Accidental Death" <sup>d</sup>	John Lockren		"It developed at the inquest that the correct name of the young man was John Ahren, [sic] he having taken the name of his stepfather.
<b>Sonoma Index-Tribune</b>	20 Jun 1896	"DEATH ON THE RAIL" <sup>e</sup>	Johnny Ahern	Jas. Ahern	"Mrs L. H. Green (nee Belle Ahern) of this place is a sister"
<b>San Francisco Chronicle</b>	20 Jun 1896	"Killed by a Train" <sup>f</sup>	John Ahern, "known for years as John Lockren"		"When a child, his widowed mother remarried, and he took the name of his stepfather."
<b>Petaluma Courier</b>	24 Jun 1896	"DIED – AHERN" <sup>g</sup> (death notice)	John C. Ahern	J Ahern	Died "near Oakland... Brother of James Ahern"
<b>Petaluma Courier</b>	24 Jun 1896	"Accidental Death" <sup>h</sup>	John C. Ahern	J Ahern	"He lived with his aunt and other relatives at Oakland"

<sup>a</sup> "John Lochren's Horrible Fate," *Oakland Times*, 19 June 1896, p. 1, col. 6.  
<sup>b</sup> "Died – Lockren," *Oakland Enquirer*, 19 June 1896, p. \_\_, col. 5  
<sup>c</sup> "Death Was Accidental," *Oakland Times*, 20 June 1896, p. 1, col. 5-6.  
<sup>d</sup> "Accidental Death," *Oakland Enquirer*, 20 June 1896, p. \_\_, col. 6  
<sup>e</sup> "Death on the Rail," (Sonoma) *Index-Tribune*, 20 June 1896, p. 3, col. 2.  
<sup>f</sup> "Killed by a Train," *The San Francisco Chronicle*, 20 June 1896  
<sup>g</sup> "Died – Ahern," *Petaluma Courier*, 24 June 1896, p. 2, col. 5  
<sup>h</sup> "Accidental Death," *Petaluma Courier*, 24 June 1896, p. 3, col. 5

The death notice from the Oakland *Enquirer* identified Ann Lockren as John's mother. The 20 July 1896 Oakland *Enquirer* article reporting on the coroner's inquest indicated that his name was "Ahren" [Ahern], and an article from the *San Francisco Chronicle* the day after the inquest called him Ahern and noted that he was "known for years as John Lockren." Articles from the Petaluma and Sonoma newspapers identified him as John Ahern and his father as James or J. Ahern.

In Oakland, where he lived with the Lockren family and was known as John Lockren, the articles, for the most part, referred to him by that name. Similarly, in Sonoma County where the Ahern family lived, the articles called him John Ahern.

The death notice from the Oakland *Enquirer* provided the most comprehensive list of John's relatives, identifying him as the son of Ann Lockren and James Ahern and the brother of Charles and Mary Lockren, Henry, James, and Sarah Ahern, Mrs. Belle Green, and Mary Bradley.

## **Census and vital records for Ahern and Lockren families**

Duplicate enumerations of John on the 1880 census use different surnames based on the household in which he appears. John "Lochlin" was enumerated 9 June 1880 in the household of Ann "Lochlin" in Oakland, Alameda, California.<sup>13</sup> John Ahern was enumerated 1 June 1880 in the household of James Ahern in Vallejo Township, Sonoma, California.<sup>14</sup>

Census and vital records for the Ahern and Lockren families are shown in Tables 2 and 3.

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<sup>13</sup> "United States Census, 1880," database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:M6G2-NLS> : 14 July 2016), Ann Lochlin, Oakland, Alameda, California, United States; citing enumeration district ED 6, sheet 103A, NARA microfilm publication T9 (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.), roll 0061; FHL microfilm 1,254,061.

<sup>14</sup> "United States Census, 1880," database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:M6PL-WQT> : 14 July 2016), dwell. 13, fam. 14, James Ahern, Vallejo, Sonoma, California, United States; citing enumeration district ED 121, sheet 23D, NARA microfilm publication T9 (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.), roll 0084; FHL microfilm 1,254,084.

Table 2. Ahern family census and vital records

Name	Parents on Baptismal Record	Parents on Marriage record (church)	Parents on Death Certificate	1870 Census <sup>a</sup>	1880 Census <sup>b</sup>
James Ahern - head	John Ahern, Mary Toumy <sup>c</sup>	<i>not found</i> <sup>d</sup>	not given <sup>e</sup>	James, 45	James, 47
(Mary) Jane Ahern nee Graham - wife	<i>not found</i>	<i>not found</i> <sup>d</sup>	not given, cause of death "Childbirth" <sup>g</sup>	Mary J, 30	[deceased]
Mary Agnes Ahern b. 1859 - daughter	James & Jane Ahern <sup>h</sup>	Jacobo Ahern et Jane Graham <sup>i</sup>	James Ahern, Jane Graham <sup>j</sup>	Mary, 12	Mary A., 20, daughter
John Ahern b. 1861 - son	James & Jane Ahern <sup>k</sup>	not married	not given <sup>l</sup>	[deceased]	[deceased]
Henry Michael Ahern b. 1862 - son	James & Jane Ahern <sup>m</sup>	<i>not found</i>	<i>not found</i> <sup>n</sup>	Henry, 10	Michiel, 18, son
James Bernard Ahern b. ca 1867 - son		Jacobo Ahern et Jane Ahern <sup>o</sup>	James B. Ahern, Jane Graham <sup>p</sup>	James, 3	James B., 13, son
Sarah Anne Ahern b. 1869 - daughter	Jacobo Ahern et Joanna Grimes <sup>q</sup>	not married		Anna, 1	Sarah A., 11, daughter
Jane Isabel Ahern b. 1871 - daughter	Jacobo Ahern et Joanna Grimes <sup>r</sup>		James Ahern, ----- Graham <sup>s</sup>		Jane I., 8, daughter
John Cornelius Ahern b. 1873 - son	<b>Req 7/10/17 from StVdP in Petaluma w/more info</b>	not married	Certification of No Record - Alameda County <sup>t</sup>		John C., 6, son

<sup>a</sup> 1870 U.S. census, Sonoma County, California, population schedule, Vallejo Township, p. 13, dwelling 77, family 75, James and Mary J. Ahern; digital image, Ancestry.com (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 7 July 2017); citing NARA microfilm publication M593, roll 91, Family History Library Film: 545590.

<sup>b</sup> "United States Census, 1880," database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:M6PL-WQT> : 14 July 2016), James Ahern, Vallejo, Sonoma, California, United States; dwelling 13, family 14; citing enumeration district ED 121, sheet 23D, NARA microfilm publication T9 (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.), roll 0084; FHL microfilm 1,254,084.

<sup>c</sup> National Library of Ireland, "Catholic Parish Registers at the NLI", digital images, National Library of Ireland (<http://registers.nli.ie/registers/vtls000632516#page/60/mode/1up>: accessed 7 July 2017), Aghabullogue Parish (County Cork), Diocese of Cloyne and Ross, "Bapt 04 Jan 1820– 22 June 1856," 30 October 1830, James, son of John Ahern and Mary Toumy; digitized from NLI microfilm 05007/03.

<sup>d</sup> FamilySearch.org (<https://familysearch.org/search>). Separate searches covered variants of James and Jane's surnames as well as searches by first name (James and Jane or Mary from 1851 to 1860 in Somerset and Middlesex Counties. Request made to St. Peter's Catholic Church, New Brunswick, New Jersey to search for a marriage record for James Ahern and Jane Graham about 1857 and baptism records for their children Mary Agnes and Michael Henry. St. Peter's responded by sending baptismal information on Mary, John, and Michael H. but did not send marriage information for James and Jane.

<sup>e</sup> State of California, Sonoma County Death Record (1899), James Ahern, Certified Copy of Vital Records, issued 1 March 2004, privately held by author

<sup>f</sup> FamilySearch.org (<https://familysearch.org/search>). Separate searches covered variants of James and Jane's surnames as well as searches by first name (James and Jane or Mary from 1851 to 1860 in Somerset and Middlesex Counties. Request made to St. Peter's Catholic Church, New Brunswick, New Jersey to search for a marriage record for James Ahern and Jane Graham about 1857 and baptism records for their children Mary Agnes and Michael Henry. St. Peter's responded by sending baptismal information on Mary, John, and Michael H. but did not send marriage information for James and Jane.

<sup>g</sup> State of California, Sonoma County, Death Record (1873), Jane Aheran, Certified Copy of Vital Records, issued 1 March 2004, privately held by Roddy

<sup>h</sup> St. Peter the Apostle (New Brunswick, New Jersey). Certified transcript of baptismal record of Mary, child of James and Jane Ahern, baptized 10 July, 1859. Privately held by author.

<sup>i</sup> St. Vincent de Paul Church (Petaluma, Sonoma, California). Marriage register, unknown volume number, page 66, marriage of Patrickum Bradley et Mariam Ahern, 23 November 1881, entry 219, photocopy privately held by author.

<sup>j</sup> California State Department of Public Health, Standard Certificate of Death, County of Marin, City of Tiburon, Local Registered No. 29 (1937), Mary A. Bradley; Certified Copy of Vital Records, issued 17 May 2012.

<sup>k</sup> St. Peter the Apostle (New Brunswick, New Jersey). Certified transcript of baptismal record of John, child of James and Jane Ahern, baptized 7 April, 1861. Privately held by author

<sup>l</sup> "New Jersey, Deaths, 1670-1988," database, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:FZGG-YY2> : 8 April 2016), John Ahern, 28 Apr 1861; citing Millstone, Middlesex, New Jersey, United States, Division of Archives and Record Management, New Jersey Department of State, Trenton.; FHL microfilm 584,572.

<sup>m</sup> St. Peter the Apostle (New Brunswick, New Jersey). Certified transcript of baptismal record of Michael H. Ahern, child of James and Jane Ahern, baptized 1 June, 1862. Privately held by Mary Kircher Roddy, Seattle, Washington

<sup>n</sup> "Deaths – Ahern," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 16 February 1900, p 10, col. 4. Because of the 1906 San Francisco earthquake and fire, no death certificates are available for San Francisco for this time period.

<sup>o</sup> St. Vincent de Paul Church (Petaluma, Sonoma, California). Marriage register for 1894, unknown volume number, page 105, marriage of Jacobum B. Ahern et Sarah E. Davidson, 18 January 1893, entry 375, photocopy privately held by author.

<sup>p</sup> California State Department of Public Health, Certificate of Death, County of Marin, District No. 2101, (1945), James Bernard Ahern; Certified Copy of Vital Records, issued 17 May 2012, signed and sealed by Bruce E Abbott, Deputy.

<sup>q</sup> St. Vincent de Paul Church (Petaluma, Sonoma, California). Baptismal register, unknown volume number, unknown page number, baptism of Sarah A. Ahern, 22 May 1869, photocopy privately held by author. Jacobo and Joanna are the Latin versions of the names "James" and "Jane."

<sup>r</sup> St. Vincent de Paul Church (Petaluma, Sonoma, California). Baptismal register, unknown volume number for 1871, page 128, baptism of J. I. Ahern, 20 October 1871, photocopy privately held by author. Note: in baptismal register, original entry says "J. I. Ahern." In a different hand in a different pen, someone has written "John."

<sup>s</sup> California State Department of Public Health, Standard Certificate of Death, County of Sonoma, City of Sonoma, Local Registered No. 43 (1931), Certificate No. 31-062796, Jane I. Green; Certified Copy of Vital Records, issued 3 April 2012..

<sup>t</sup> "Certification of No Record", State of California, County of Alameda, Office of Recorder, search for death record for John Ahern between 1 June 1894 and 30 June 1898, issued 27 January 2005, privately held by author.

Table 3. Lockren family census and vital records

Name	Parents on Birth Record	Parents on Marriage record	Parents on DC	1870 Census	1880 Census <sup>a</sup>	1900 Census <sup>b</sup>
Michael Lockren - head		Charles and Mary Loughran <sup>c</sup>	Not named on church record			
Anna Graham Lockren - wife		Henry and Sarah Graham <sup>d</sup>	none given <sup>e</sup>	Anna Locklin, 39 <sup>f</sup>	Ann Locklin, 55	Annie Rockren, 63, children born/living: 2/2
Charles Augustus Lockren - son	Michael Loughran, Ann Loughran formerly Graham <sup>g</sup>	not married	Michael Lockren and Anna Graham <sup>h</sup>	Charles Lacking, 15, enumerated in household of James Hern <sup>i</sup>	Charles Locklin, 25, son	Charles, 42, son
Mary Josephine Lockren - daughter	Michael and Anna Loughran, formerly Grimes <sup>j</sup>	<i>I don't have this record</i>	<i>I don't have this record</i>	Mary Laughlin, 14 <sup>k</sup>	Mary Locklin, 20, daughter	Annie M, 40, daughter
John Lockren - son		Never married	Certification of No Record <sup>l</sup>		John Locklin, 6, son	[deceased]

<sup>a</sup> "United States Census, 1880," database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:M6G2-NLS> : 14 July 2016), Ann Locklin household.

<sup>b</sup> "United States Census, 1900," database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:M9PQ-DRY> : accessed 11 July 2017), Annie Rockren, Oakland city Ward 6, Alameda, California, United States; citing enumeration district (ED) 379, sheet 3B, family 74, NARA microfilm publication T623 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1972.); FHL microfilm 1,240,082.

<sup>c</sup> Brooms Our Blessed Lady and St. Joseph R.C. church, Marriage record Loughran-Graham, 20 January 1854, Durham County Council, County Record Office, Durham, England; digital image, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, "Catholic church records of Broom, 1828-1983," database, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-CSJ7-59B5-B?i=135&cat=720895> : accessed 27 July 2017), image 136.

<sup>d</sup> *ibid*

<sup>e</sup> Anna Lockren death certificate, #78621 (outside)/#149 (inside), May-June 1902 Death Certificates (bound book), Health Department of the City of Oakland, held at Oakland History Room, Oakland Public Library, 125 14th Street, Oakland, California, 94612

<sup>f</sup> "United States Census, 1870," database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:MNX3-B8W> : 17 October 2014), Ann Locklin in household of James Kennedy, California, United States; citing p. 25, family 184, NARA microfilm publication M593 (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.); FHL microfilm 545,590.

<sup>g</sup> Entry of Live Birth for Charles Loughran, 1855, Lanchester, Certificate Number 152, County of Durham.

<sup>h</sup> California State Board of Health, Standard Certificate of Death Duplicate, County of Alameda, City of Oakland, Local Registered No. 65 (1911), Charles Augustus Lockren; Certified Copy of Vital Records, issued 11 Aug 2005.

<sup>i</sup> 1870 U.S. census, Sonoma County, California, population schedule, Vallejo Township, p. 13, dwelling 77, family 75, James Ahern.

<sup>j</sup> Brooms Our Blessed Lady and St. Joseph R.C. church, Register of Baptisms 1856-1861, page 43, Baptism record Marianna Loughran, 22 February 1857, Durham County Council, County Record Office, Durham, England; digital image, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, "Catholic church records of Broom, 1828-1983," database, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q57-L96W-K39J?i=169&cat=720895> : accessed 27 July 2017), image 170.

<sup>k</sup> "United States Census, 1870," database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:MNXQ-FFL> : 17 October 2014), Mary Laughlin in household of Douglas Church, California, United States; citing p. 31, family 233, NARA microfilm publication M593 (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.); FHL microfilm 545,590.

<sup>l</sup> "Certification of No Record", State of California, County of Alameda, Office of Recorder, search for death record for John Lockren, Lockran, or Loughran between 18 June 1895 and 18 June 1899, issued 28 March 2012 privately held by author.

In both instances where John is enumerated on the 1880 census, he is identified as the son of the head of household, and by inference as the brother of the other children in those households.

The vital records shown in Table 2 indicate the parents of the Ahern children are James Ahern and Jane Graham. The vital records shown in Table 3 name Michael Lockren and Ann Graham as the parents of Charles and Mary Lockren.

## Two Names for One Man

Though the newspaper accounts refer to John using two surnames, Ahern and Lockren, the date and location of the accident are the same. Newspaper accounts are generally based on secondary information provided by persons who may not have known all the details of the family structure. Nothing in the newspaper articles provides any information regarding the informant(s) who provided family details.

The official date of the 1880 census was 1 June 1880. The duplicate census entries for John were recorded on different dates - 1 June 1880 in the Ahern household and 9 June 1880 in the Lockren household.<sup>15</sup> In each enumeration the surname is noted next to the head of household and the surname of the children of the head of household was recorded as a distinct horizontal dash, indicating the same surname as the parent.<sup>16</sup> John is listed as "son" in each enumeration and is recorded with the same name as the parent shown. Both Ann Lockren and James Ahern, considering John their son, may have indicated that his residence was with them. Alternately, he may have relocated from the Ahern home to the Lockren residence between 1 June and 9 June 1880.

Information in the deposition of Henry Ahern unites John's two different surnames into one. John Ahern is the son of James Ahern and brother of Henry Ahern. John lived in Oakland with his aunt, Mrs. Lockran, and he went by J.C. Lockran.<sup>17</sup> The information provided by Henry Ahern was sworn testimony before a notary in a legal action, and as such demonstrates a higher degree of reliability than information from census enumerations or newspaper articles.

In Oakland, the community where John lived with Ann Lockren as her son, he was known as John Lockren. In Sonoma county, where the Ahern family had lived since prior to 1870, the community knew John as the son of James Ahern and referred to him by that surname. Both names refer to the one person.

## Who were John's Parents?

No official birth, baptismal or death record names John's parents. He is identified as the son of Ann Lockren in the 1880 census and his obituary in the *Oakland Enquirer*<sup>18</sup> However he is not her son, but her nephew.<sup>19</sup>

Convincing evidence points to James Ahern and Jane Graham Ahern being John's parents:

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<sup>15</sup> "United States Census, 1880," James Ahern, Vallejo, Sonoma, California, United States; dwelling 13, family 14. "United States Census, 1880," Ann Lochlin, Oakland, Alameda, California, dwelling 288, family 297.

<sup>16</sup> "1880 Census Instructions to Enumerators," IPUMS USA (<https://usa.ipums.org/usa/voliii/inst1880.shtml> ; accessed 7 August 2017)

<sup>17</sup> Ahern v. Southern Pacific Company, Deposition of Henry W. Ahern, 10 Oct 1898, p. 7-8.

<sup>18</sup> "United States Census, 1880," Ann Lochlin, Oakland, Alameda, California, dwelling 288, family 297; "Died – Lockren," *Oakland Enquirer*, 19 June 1896, p. \_\_, col. 5;

<sup>19</sup> Ahern v. Southern Pacific Company, Deposition of Henry W. Ahern, 10 Oct 1898, p. 6-7.



- John's obituaries and census records identify his siblings within the Ahern family.<sup>20</sup>
- Baptismal, marriage and death records of John's Ahern siblings name their parents as James Ahern and Jane Graham:
  - Mary Agnes Ahern's baptism record names James and Jane Ahern.<sup>21</sup> Her marriage and death records name James (Jacobo) Ahern and Jane Graham.<sup>22</sup>
  - Henry Ahern's baptism record names James and Jane Ahern.<sup>23</sup>
  - James B. Ahern's marriage record names James and Jane Ahern and his death record names James Ahern and Jane Graham.<sup>24</sup>
  - Sarah Anne and Jane Isabel's baptism records name James Ahern and Jane Grimes.<sup>25</sup>
  - Jane Isabel Green's death certificate names James Ahern and "--- Graham."<sup>26</sup>
- Jane Ahern's maiden name, Graham, is the same as that of Ann Lockren, John's aunt.<sup>27</sup>
- John was born 1 September 1873.<sup>28</sup> Jane Ahern died from childbirth 9 October 1873.<sup>29</sup>
- Henry Ahern named James Ahern as John's father.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> "Died - Lockren," *Oakland Enquirer*, 19 June 1896; United States Census, 1880, "James Ahern, Vallejo, Sonoma, California, United States; dwelling 13, family 14.

<sup>21</sup> St. Peter the Apostle (New Brunswick, New Jersey). Certified transcript of baptismal record of Mary, child of James and Jane Ahern, baptized 10 July, 1859. Privately held by Mary Kircher Roddy, Seattle, Washington].

<sup>22</sup> St. Vincent de Paul Church (Petaluma, Sonoma, California). Marriage register, unknown volume number, page 66, marriage of Patrickum Bradley et Mariam Ahern, 23 November 1881, entry 219, photocopy privately held by author; California State Department of Public Health, Standard Certificate of Death, County of Marin, City of Tiburon, Local Registered No. 29 (1937), Mary A. Bradley; Certified Copy of Vital Records, issued 17 May 2012.

<sup>23</sup> St. Peter the Apostle (New Brunswick, New Jersey). Certified transcript of baptismal record of Michael H. Ahern, child of James and Jane Ahern, baptized 1 June, 1862. Privately held by author.

<sup>24</sup> St. Vincent de Paul Church (Petaluma, Sonoma, California). Marriage register for 1894, unknown volume number, page 105, marriage of Jacobum B. Ahern et Sarah E. Davidson, 18 January 1893, entry 375, photocopy privately held by author; California State Department of Public Health, Certificate of Death, County of Marin, District No. 2101, (1945), James Bernard Ahern; Certified Copy of Vital Records.

<sup>25</sup> St. Vincent de Paul Church (Petaluma, Sonoma, California). Baptismal register, unknown volume number, unknown page number, baptism of Sarah A. Ahern, 22 May 1869, photocopy privately held by author; St. Vincent de Paul Church (Petaluma, Sonoma, California). Baptismal register, unknown volume number for 1871, page 128, baptism of J. I. Ahern, 20 October 1871, photocopy privately held by author.

<sup>26</sup> California State Department of Public Health, Standard Certificate of Death, County of Sonoma, City of Sonoma, Local Registered No. 43 (1931), Certificate No. 31-062796, Jane I. Green; Certified Copy of Vital Records, issued 3 April 2012.

<sup>27</sup> Brooms Our Blessed Lady and St. Joseph R.C. church, Marriage record Loughran-Graham, 20 January 1854, Durham County Council, County Record Office, Durham, England; digital image, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, "Catholic church records of Broom, 1828-1983," database, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-CSJ7-59B5-B?i=135&cat=720895> : accessed 27 July 2017), image 136.

<sup>28</sup> "Died - Lockren," *Oakland Enquirer*, 19 June 1896

<sup>29</sup> State of California, Sonoma County, Death Record (1873), Jane Aheran, Certified Copy of Vital Records, issued 1 March 2004, privately held by Roddy

<sup>30</sup> Ahern v. Southern Pacific Company, Deposition of Henry W. Ahern, 10 Oct 1898, p. 3.

## **Conclusion**

Use of multiple names complicates the identification of a person. In addition, duplicate enumerations of someone on a census can lead researchers to conclude the existence of two people, not one. But by looking beyond easily available census records and newspaper articles to find court records or other documents, a researcher can find evidence to establish that different names apply to the same person.

Even if no vital records exist to name a person's parents, by establishing his relationship to a group of siblings and utilizing information from their records, a father and mother can be identified.