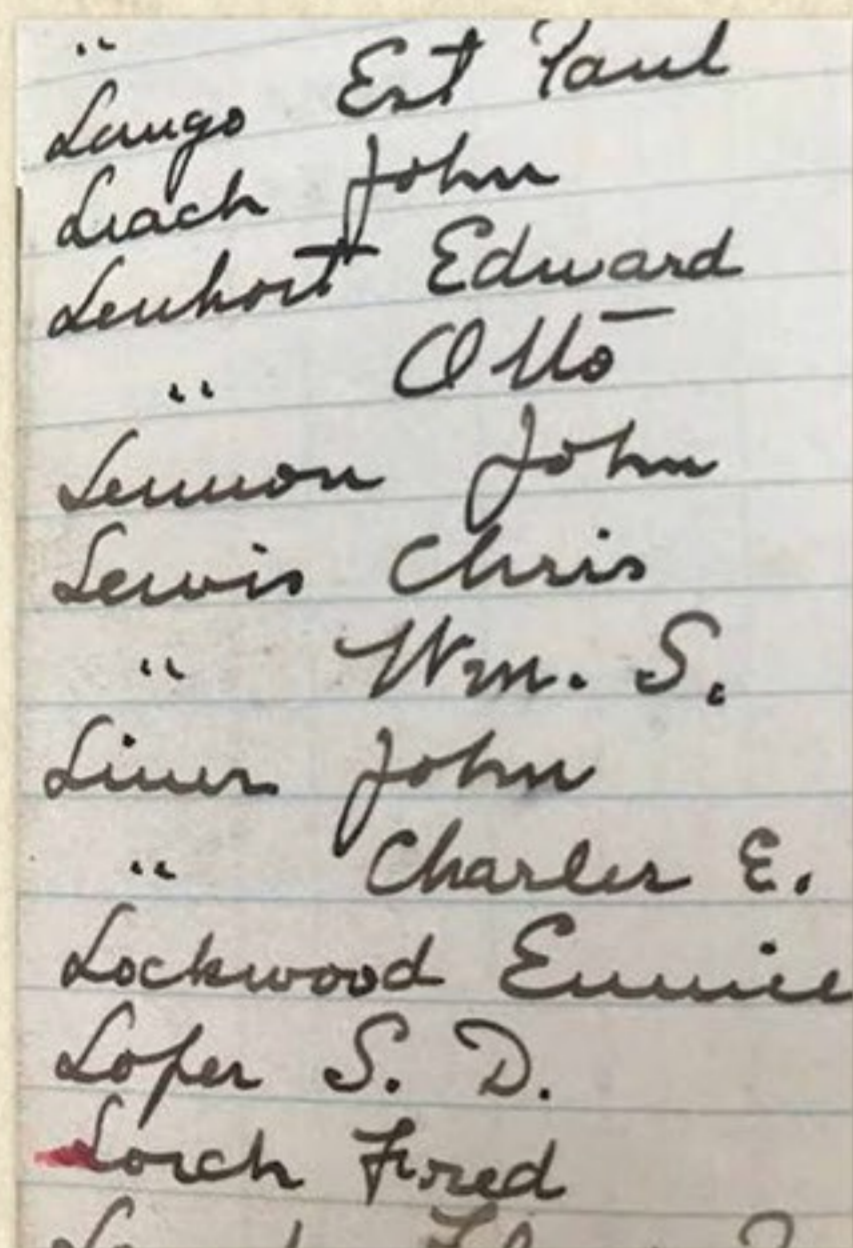


RESEARCH CREATES MORE QUESTIONS

Sometimes research brings more questions than answers and shows that primary sources are not as clear as one might wish. Such was the case with the 1918 petition from Sharon residents to Senator McLean.

The petition and signatures are clearly all written by the same person. The text was fairly easy to transcribe, as were most of the signatures, except for the last signature in the center column: "Mrs. John ...".



Tax record for John Liner, 1918
Sharon Historical Society and Museum, Archives Collection



Gravestone of John and Mary Liner (1849-1926, 1854-1938)
Courtesy of Marel Rogers & Myra Pleacia

WHAT COULD THAT LAST NAME BE?

Going letter by letter, there are two theories: the first theory argues that the name begins with a "C" and reads as Mrs. John Conie or some similar name, but definitely beginning with a "C". This will be referred to as "Theory C". The second theory argues that the first letter is an "L" and that the surname is Liner.

So, the search began.

We could find no evidence of a Conie family, but the 1920 Census shows the following married men whose name begins with a "C": John Carley, who did sign the petition, John Caesar, and John Clayton. The hunt for information about Liner was much more fruitful:

Observe the tax records for 1918 and the gravestone in the cemetery...

Theory C argues that the dot over the name is way off for a second letter "i" and points out that that second letter doesn't look like an "i". Theory C also examined the last two letters and claims that they do not resemble an "er". They also read the first letter as a "C", although slightly less curvy than the one which begins the Carley signature.

The Liner theory compares the first letter of the signature with the "L" in McLean and the "L" in Landon. The Liner camp also looked through the petition and found several floating dots over words that have an "i" in them. And in response to Theory C's distrust of the final two letters, the Liner camp points to the last two letters in the word "consider" above the signature "Robinson".

Despite their differences, both camps observed that the scribe of this petition was running out of ink as they composed the final lines where the contested signature lies. Perhaps this was also a contributing factor in the illegibility of the signature.

**GENTLE READERS, WHAT DO YOU THINK?
PLEASE VOTE FOR EITHER NAME,
OR EVEN BETTER, YOUR OWN INTERPRETATION.**