

Nashville Scholars
of the
Three Pipe Problem Investiture

February 20, 2016

John Clayton appears but once in the Canon, but his role as the cab driver for a disguised Stapleton in the Hound of the Baskervilles cements his place in Sherlockian lore. His cab, number 2704 was out of Shipley's yard near the Waterloo Station.

John Clayton lived in the Borough at 3 Turpey Street and earned two pounds, two shillings for his service to Stapleton as the hansom cab rushed through Victorian London as they followed Sir Henry Baskerville. Later, Claytom earned a half pound for sharing the details of this trip with the Master.

Legends exist that Clayton was actually the grandfather of Tarzan aka John Clayton which does not make sense unless the elder Clayton found diamonds and became Lord Greystoke, yet the coincidence exists. Another tale purports Clayton to be an American immigrant, the son of a Peoria Wagonmaster named William Clayton. Of course, this legend comes from the "Hansom of John Clayton" a Peoria, Illinois scion society.

Our Peorian friend Brad Keefauver tells us:

"Like the deerstalker cap and the curved pipe, the hansom is a trademark of the Sherlock Holmes legend. Unlike those other two, however, it actually appears in his recorded cases. From the initial promise of *A Study in Scarlet* ("and we started off together in a hansom") to the reassuring reappearance of "The Adventure of the Empty House" ("I found myself seated beside him in a hansom"), and even up to the last case his chronicler would tell us, "The Adventure of the Creeping Man" ("a smart hansom swept us past a row of ancient colleges") the hansom has always been there. Like the irregulars, like Toby and Pompey, it has a tradition of faithful service to the master of detectives. Such service has made the hansom cab oblivious to progress, as it has earned a place in that realm where time holds no meaning, where, as Vincent Starret has written, 'It is always eighteen ninety-five'."

None the less, John Clayton served a pivotal role in the canon.

For Nashville, our John Clayton serves an equally important and distinguished role. As the personal chauffeur and valet for our "Red Headed League", we depend upon him for not only bringing our youngest member to our gatherings, but for bringing to us his own scholarly approach to the Canon and our discussion.

Today, we ask Duncan Kimbro to enter our society as John Clayton.