

UNKNOWN FRIENDS OF H. P.
LOVECRAFT: No.1, CHESTER
ALWYN MOWRY

by Randy Everts

*annotated and slightly revised
by David Haden, with additional pictures*



Chester Alywn Mowry, seen here with his mother and aunt.

I have spoken with many who knew Howard Phillips Lovecraft (1890-1937) and I found these persons telling me about his humor, his kindness, his erudition, and his sociability. The rounded picture of Lovecraft which emerged during these enquiries was not quite that of the reclusive hermit, a portrayal once promoted by the invert August Derleth — and perhaps more in Derleth’s own image than in reality. Here are some examples of the more outgoing Lovecraft. When Lovecraft attended his first National Amateur Press Association convention in Boston in 1921 he appeared as “one sent from Providence”. The pun was apt, in that Lovecraft was found to be well able to speak extemporaneously in front of the large assembled crowd, and was judged to be as good a public speaker as the historian of the organization Truman J. Spencer. An outing at this convention went to Boston’s Revere Beach, where Lovecraft had his palm read by a palmist, answered a psychological questionnaire, and rode all of the rides in a manner that astounded some of his contemporaries.¹ He appears to have most loved large rollercoasters. E. Hoffmann Price (1898-1988) once told me that Lovecraft also loved to ride in his car, nicknamed ‘Juggernaut’,² and that Lovecraft went aloft in an airplane on a \$5 ride from Coney Island.

The belief that Lovecraft was a recluse is perhaps partly explained by the fact that he kept his friendship circles somewhat apart from each other. Many of his friends and acquaintances were not aware of the existence of other people in other circles. He tended to have his writer friends in one group, his Amateur Press Association friends in another, and his childhood friends in a further group. In this latter group were his Providence amateur astronomy friends, and some of his

¹ See David Haden’s Tentaclii blog post titled: “Lovecraft on a rollercoaster” (10th Sept 2013), for a detailed account of this event at Boston’s equivalent to Coney Island, with pictures and quotes from surviving published letters.

² A Ford car. Lovecraft took a four day road trip in it in June/July 1928.

old Providence Detective Agency³ friends. These latter two groups are rarely mentioned or investigated today. But one of his long-time friends in local amateur astronomy was notable for the faint light that he shines on Lovecraft, and he forms the subject of this essay. This man was Chester Alwyn Mowry (23rd Mar 1898 — 12th Jan 1945), scion of the rather interesting Mowry family of Rhode Island,⁴ and descendant of Roger Williams the founder of Rhode Island. That latter fact would have especially endeared Mowry to Lovecraft.

Lovecraft's friend:

I once spoke about Lovecraft with Lewis Judson Boss (1898-1982). As a young man Boss was a member of the various astronomy groups in Rhode Island during the 1920s and 30s. He never recalled meeting Lovecraft at these group events,⁵ but he told me that his friend Chester A. Mowry often spoke of walking at night with Lovecraft on his nocturnal rambles to various parts of Providence. He also told me that Mowry mentioned to him that Lovecraft had showed him the churches in northern Providence, and claimed that he used these for the composite portrayal of the “deserted church of Federal Hill”, the church that was taken over by the sinister Church of Starry Wisdom. Since it appears that the tale featuring Starry Wisdom, “The Haunter of the Dark”, was written in early November of 1935, one can presume

³ This was one of the names for a band of boys in the North Side district of Providence in Lovecraft's later boyhood, of which Lovecraft was a member and seemingly a key member of. There was later an attempt to revive the group as young adults in a new clubhouse, but it quickly came to nothing.

⁴ Chris Perridas, an expert of Lovecraft's early years, once wrote on his Lovecraft blog that “Lovecraft had a slight bit of Mowry blood” in his family tree. But members of the Mowry family are ubiquitous on Rhode Island in the historical record, and this does not imply that Chester Mowry was any relation.

⁵ Lovecraft was an avid astronomer in his youth, but damaged his eyes, and so far as we know he quit observational work sometime in the early 1910s. It seems he only began attending meetings of local astronomers again around the Autumn of 1936 (see the concluding quote of this essay for details).

that Lovecraft knew Mowry by October of 1935, and had very possibly known him for a very long time before that.⁶

His parentage and family:

Mowry's great-niece kindly sent me some information about her relative who died before she was born, and I am indebted to her for much of the following. Chester Alwyn Mowry was a direct descendant of Roger Williams, through Roger Mowry (a Quaker of course, but who did not hesitate to run a Public House, which may have contributed to his domestic downfall). Mowry's parents, Albert Randall Mowry (1872-1940) and Philena (*nee* Angell) Mowry (1864-1946) lived in Smithfield, Rhode Island where their oldest child, Harold Conrad Mowry was born in 1891. Smithfield was the birth place of the next two children: Angell Tourtellot Mowry (1892-1938), Maude Estelle Mowry (who died six days after she was born in 1894). Albert and Philena were divorced when the children were all young, most likely due to his alcoholism, and Albert remained in Smithfield, Rhode Island. The family of Harold C. Mowry reported that Harold had taken the pledge never to touch alcohol, and likely Chester A. Mowry was also a teetotaler, as is common in the children of alcoholics. If so, then this was a facet of his personality that would have endeared Chester Mowry to Howard Lovecraft, who likewise abhorred alcohol.

Philena took the children to live with her parents in North Scituate, and it was there that Chester was born on 23rd March 1898. She was listed there in the 1900 Census with only Chester, at her father Nehemiah Angell's house with four children born and only three

⁶ Lovecraft often slipped his friends into stories, and so a mention of a Mowry in "The Shadow over Innsmouth" (1931) might perhaps hint that Lovecraft knew a Mowry in late 1931. Old Zadock says...

"I guess I done a bit by tellin' Selectman Mowry what I see from the cupalo."

living. Ten years later she appeared in the 1910 Census as a farmer, with her widowed 79-year-old mother Phoebe Angell and two male children, Angell Mowry and Chester Mowry. My informant's family history says that Philena raised the boys mostly at her parents' home where she taught school, sold Larkin Products⁷ and worked at various other jobs to keep their heads above water. In the 1915 Census she was listed at her own house with all three sons, and living on her own income on the Danielson Pike road. By 1915 her mother Phoebe was also living with her. This home was about eight miles from where Lovecraft lived. By then Lovecraft was about age 25, and Chester Mowry age 17.

His North Scituate home:

The family history relates that the house in North Scituate where the boys were raised:

“...was a bit strange. There had evidently been a family rift at some point along the line, so the house was divided in two, but there was only one common front door. My grandmother's half (Philena's) had no electricity or running water and she insisted that she didn't want any of those new-fangled things, but the other side of the house was completely modern. I have always felt that my grandmother's side [of the house] had much more character. Also, on my grandmother's half there was an outbuilding, always referred to as 'the shop,' which was a grand place to while away the time. There was a second story, called the shop chamber, where there was a bed, millions of books and magazines,⁸ and all sorts of collections like butterflies,

⁷ Branded household items and soaps, probably sold as a 'weekly order delivery box', in the days before chain grocery stores were common in rural parts.

⁸ Mowry was evidently an avid reader, perhaps even of the Munsey proto-pulps. Could he have contacted Lovecraft that way? We may never know.

rocks,⁹ etc., amassed by my uncle Chester, and by my father [Chester's brother Harold], too. The first floor of the shop consisted of a woodshed and another room which seemed to be a workshop of some kind. There were 60 acres of land on my grandmother's half, no longer farm land but many highbush blueberries. About a half mile back of the house is a family burying ground [where] my grandmother and Chester are buried, along with assorted family members... Angell, the oldest son, was epileptic, and spent his final days in a mental institution, because in those days there was nowhere else for an epileptic. It was pretty sad for him. My grandmother took me to visit him once."

His workplace and sudden death:

Chester Alwyn Mowry attended four years of high school in Scituate, Rhode Island, and was also a school teacher (1918) prior to America entering the First World War. He was listed on the *World War I Draft Registration* and noted as: "tall, blue eyes, light brown hair."



Chester A. Mowry seen in 1919, at a meeting of the American Association of Variable Star Observers.

⁹ Lovecraft also had a minerals collection at the end of his life, and probably earlier since he owned a quarry and sometimes went on prospecting expeditions with Morton.



The Post Office at Pawtucket, Rhode Island, where Mowry worked.

The family history also names the livelihood and relates the sudden death of Chester Mowry:

“Chester, the youngest, worked in the Post Office in Pawtucket, R.I.,¹⁰ and he looked after my grandmother, coming back to North Scituate¹¹ a couple [of] times a week.

¹⁰ Pawtucket is at the head of Seekonk River, three miles north-east of Providence. The urban sections and centre do not appear to be a place that Lovecraft was inclined to visit for walking. He calls the view of Pawtucket urban centre from the train on the approach to Providence a “dingy interlude” (*Collected Essays 4: Travel*). Hence he seems unlikely to have ‘just dropped in’ on Mowry at his workplace in the Post Office, despite his predilection for sending postcards etc. But one does wonder if a Mowry route might have been how he sometimes managed to get some of his more *outré* mailing covers accepted into the U.S. postal system? Lovecraft did of course know the Lincoln Woods, located north of Providence and two miles west of Pawtucket...

“...the Quinsnicket or Lincoln Woods region which I have haunted all my life.” (Letter from Lovecraft to Clark Ashton Smith, 1933. *Selected Letters* V. p.285).

¹¹ Mowry’s North Scituate post-1915 home was on the Danielson Pike, which would put his home just a few miles from the north end of the Scituate Reservoir, a place which some have claimed as the inspiration for Lovecraft’s “The Colour out of Space”. Clearing of the immense reservoir began in 1915, construction in 1921, with water filling in 1925/26. Mowry would likely have had to cross the north end of the cleared Reservoir space in the early 1920s, in

He [Chester] never married. I don't know whether he was just disinterested in women or whether he was just never in a financial position to support a wife. He died of a heart attack shortly after I was married."

Chester Alwyn Mowry was actually clocking in to work on 12th January 1945 at the Pawtucket Post Office when he suffered this heart attack. He "dropped dead" right there, as a friend of his told me. He was listed as a deceased member of the 34th meeting of the American Association of Variable Star Observers in October of 1945, where a short eulogy was spoken for him. He had died at the exact same age as his deceased friend Howard Phillips Lovecraft.

His scientific work:

Mowry was a regular member of the American Association of Variable Star Observers from about 1917.¹² In 1925 he is documented as being closely associated with the Seagrave Observatory in North Scituate, Rhode Island. From there he co-authored with his friend Lewis Judson Boss a 1925 article published in *Popular Astronomy*, entitled "The Seagrave Observatory Eclipse Expedition". The lengthy article carefully documented the expedition that he and Boss took after being

order to travel from North Scituate to Pawtucket and back. One wonders if he related to Lovecraft some of his feelings about the reservoir area clearance?

¹² He appears to have taken a serious interest in astronomy around 1917, when he would have been aged about 19 and was first listed in the *Monthly Reports* and *Annual Reports* of the American Association of Variable Star Observers. Nevertheless, Mowry may have been interested in astronomy for many years before 1917, and a 'youthful aspiring astronomers together, circa 1914/15' notion seems a plausible explanation of how he and Lovecraft could have known each other at an early date. But 1917 seems a touch late to have brought Mowry into contact with Lovecraft due to astronomy, unless perhaps he had noted Lovecraft's 1915 series of astronomy articles in a local newspaper and struck up a correspondence. The other plausible possibility is that a correspondence was struck up when the boy Mowry noticed the teenage Lovecraft's letters in one of the Munsey proto-pulp magazines.

invited to New Haven, Connecticut to observe the 24th January 1925 solar eclipse and to take various measurements using photography.¹³

THE SEAGRAVE OBSERVATORY ECLIPSE EXPEDITION.

By **LEWIS J. BOSS** and **CHESTER A. MOWRY.**

A decision to send a party into the shadow path of the solar eclipse of January 24, 1925, was made early in September, 1924. In selecting a site consideration was given to (1) accessibility to the Observatory, and (2) the probability of clear weather in that locality. New Haven, Conn., was favored from the first, as it fulfilled the conditions stated above and moreover was nearly in the exact center of the eclipse track. At the October meeting of the A. A. V. S. O. at Harvard College, Prof. Ernest W. Brown, of Yale University Observatory, very kindly invited us to locate on their grounds at New Haven. This most generous offer was accepted and preparations were at once started. In view of the short time of totality it was decided to make all observations photographically and to use a photo-electric type of photometer in an attempt to measure the coronal light

A camera utilizing a lens of 1½ inches aperture and of 14-inch focus was provided for taking direct photographs of the corona, on plates sensitized to different portions of the spectrum with pinacyanol, kryptocyanin, erythrosine, etc. This instrument gave pictures somewhat smaller than could be desired but of excellent definition. The entire photographic program was arranged and carried out by Mr. Mowry and originally called for twelve exposures to be made during totality. This number was cut down to ten on eclipse day, due to the intense cold slowing down the manipulation of plate holders. An attempt to photograph the shadow bands was also made, but this did not meet with success. The exposures made during totality were as follows:

No. of Plate	Exposure Interval	Sensitizer	Make of plate	Remarks
1	1 Sec.		Lumiere Sigma	Backed
2	2 "	Erythrosine	" "	"
3	3 "	Orthochrome T	W & W panchromatic	"
4	4 "	Pinacyanol	Hammer D. C. ortho	"
5	5 "		W & W panchromatic	"
6	6 "		" "	"
7	5 "		Lumiere Sigma	"
8	5 "		Hammer D. C. ortho	"
9	3 "	Dicyanin	(Plate holder trouble.	Spoiled)
10	4 "	Kryptocyanin	Hammer D. C. ortho	Backed

Evidently he was a skilled photographer. His great-niece recalled seeing a photograph of crashing waves on rocks that "terrified" her.

¹³ From the end part of the 1925 Boss-Mowry paper...

"The beauty and impressiveness of a solar eclipse is rarely exaggerated. We were seeing our first one and the majesty of the spectacle will never be forgotten. The effect of the ashy light, the dropping of the sudden darkness, the beautiful prismatic colors in the clouds just under the sun a few minutes before totality, all combine to make an experience never to be erased from memory."

Since it appears from the paper that Mowry was highly skilled in camera work using photo-electric equipment, one wonders if he also played some part in Boss's pioneering developments of photoelectric photometry using selenium?



Lewis Judson Boss (1898-1982),¹⁴ Mowry's friend and co-author of the 1925 scientific paper. He lived in North Scituate, near Mowry.

The Seagrave Observatory is still open today on Peep Toad Road in North Scituate, Rhode Island, and has served as the headquarters of "The Skyscrapers, Inc." since circa 1936. It has recently been fully and extensively restored to working order by the volunteers there.

¹⁴ Boss was the pioneer of photoelectric photometry using selenium, which he developed to study variable stars, and he published this as "The Use of Selenium Cells in Astronomy" in 1920. He contributed many scientific papers to journals during his life. Note that he is not to be confused with Prof. Lewis Boss of Albany, NY, a notable and prolific astronomer who died in 1912.



The Seagrave Observatory in 1925, showing the observation team for the eclipse of 24th Jan 1925. This was the same major eclipse that Lovecraft viewed shivering atop an aqueduct as darkness engulfed New York City, and which Mowry and Boss were observing at New Haven, Connecticut.



The Seagrave 8-inch Clark refractor, in like-new condition after 134 years.

Jim Hendrickson

The fully restored and working telescope in 2014, at the Seagrave Observatory, North Scituate. Picture: Jim Hendrickson.

On 5th May 1932 the Seagrave group and other local astronomy groups were merged at Brown University's Ladd Observatory — a place once familiar to the young Lovecraft — taking the new name “The Skyscrapers Amateur Astronomical Society of Rhode Island”.¹⁵ This new group began holding main meetings at the Brown campus or at Ladd Observatory itself.¹⁶ Lovecraft did not join them there at this time, and it is uncertain if Mowry joined them there — since it was only in late 1936 that Chester A. Mowry was listed as a member.¹⁷ Mowry's membership date is important because it was at about this time that Lovecraft was once again becoming interested in observational astronomy. For instance, Lovecraft had evidently visited his old Ladd observatory at Brown, in some capacity, in the high summer of 1936 — since he wrote to his young friend Barlow that:

“Last night I had an interesting view of Peltier's comet¹⁸ through the 12” telescope of Ladd Observatory (of Brown U) a

¹⁵ Much of the group's history has now been carefully documented. See “Celebrating 75 Years of Stargazing”, the official online group history, and Maribelle Cormak, *A Quarter Century of Skyscraping* (1957).

¹⁶ Mowry may also have made the Skyscrapers' home movies, since he had done so for the American Association of Variable Star Observers since 1928...

“Mr. Boss amused us with cleverly-titled movies taken by him or by Mr. Mowry at meetings since 1928” (*Variable Comments: Published in the Interests of the American Association of Variable Star Observers*)

¹⁷ This sudden appearance of Mowry in their formal membership is perhaps explained by the society needing to be rapidly incorporated in late November 1936 and renamed as “The Skyscrapers, Inc.” This sudden incorporation was to enable their major but unexpected purchase of Frank Seagrave's Seagrave Observatory at North Scituate (a site near Mowry's home and which he had been associated with since 1925, and probably since circa 1915). So it seems plausible to suggest that Mowry needed to be listed as a formal member in order to vote for the incorporation of “The Skyscrapers, Inc.” in late November 1936.

¹⁸ Lovecraft must have been getting a long-distance preview of the comet. “Promising one of the heavens' most brilliant spectacles in recent years” (*Harvard Crimson*) it was the most visible to the naked eye at 3rd/4th August 1936. One wonders if observing it showed him that his eyesight was not as ruined by early astronomy, and early night-reading, as he had once assumed it was (on his eyesight see David Haden, *Lovecraft in Historical Context* III, pp. 24-26).

mile north of here. I used to haunt this observatory 30 years ago—the director and his two assistants (all dead now—save one asst. now at Wesleyan U. in Middletown, Conn.) being infinitely tolerant of a pompous juvenile ass with grandiose astronomical ambitions! The present object showed a small disc with hazy, fan-like tail. I could have seen it through my own small telescope were the northern sky less cut off from the neighbourhood of 66 [College Street, then Lovecraft’s home]. The first comet I ever observed was Borelli’s—in Aug. 1903. I saw Halley’s in 1910—but missed the bright one earlier in that year by being flat in bed with a hellish case of measles!” (H.P. Lovecraft. Letter to Robert H. Barlow, 23rd July 1936.)¹⁹

So perhaps it was Mowry — in late 1936 a new member of “The Skyscrapers” and thus presumably able to invite a guest — who pushed Lovecraft in the direction of this group in 1936. Someone obviously did. Here is Lovecraft describing his visit there:

“On October 9th [1936] I attended a meeting of the local organization of amateur astronomers— “The Skyscrapers”²⁰ which function more or less under the auspices of Brown University—and was astonished at its degree of development. Some of the members are really serious scientific observers, and the society has recently purchased²¹ a well known private observatory (that of the late F.E. Seagrave—whom Charles A.

¹⁹ Barlow was then about to set off to visit Providence. By early August he was sitting in a Providence churchyard with Lovecraft, writing poems to Poe.

²⁰ The group had not yet formally incorporated, an event which was unexpected and still over a month away at the point Lovecraft visited them.

²¹ Lovecraft was probably writing this after the fact, in late November or later. The property and observatory had been offered, but at October \$1,000 still needed to be raised for the actual purchase.

A. Parker once knew²²—with an 8” refracting telescope) in the western part of the state. It [“The Skyscrapers”] has separate meteor, variable star, planet, etc. sections, which hold meetings of their own²³ and report as units, and enjoys the use of the college observatory. At the recent meeting there was address on early Rhode Island astronomy, and the reflecting telescope of Joseph Brown—used to observe the transit of Venus here on June 3, 1769 and owned by the college since 1780—was exhibited. Oddly enough this meeting proved a prelude to another wholly unrelated revival of my old astronomical interests. Down in DeLand, my friend Charles B. Johnston²⁴ has become connected with Stetson University and its astronomical society, and has asked me for a series of elementary articles on the heavens for the local paper. I had an old series—published twenty two years ago [1915] —which seemed about the right sort; but when I got them out, their obsolescence completely bowled me over. The progress of science in the last twenty or thirty years had left me utterly behind, and I saw that I had to do a helluva lot of brushing up

²² This seems to imply that Lovecraft never himself met Seagrave, thus ruling out an early connection with Mowry via a youthful involvement with the Seagrave telescope group, or via a trip there by the Ladd group at Brown.

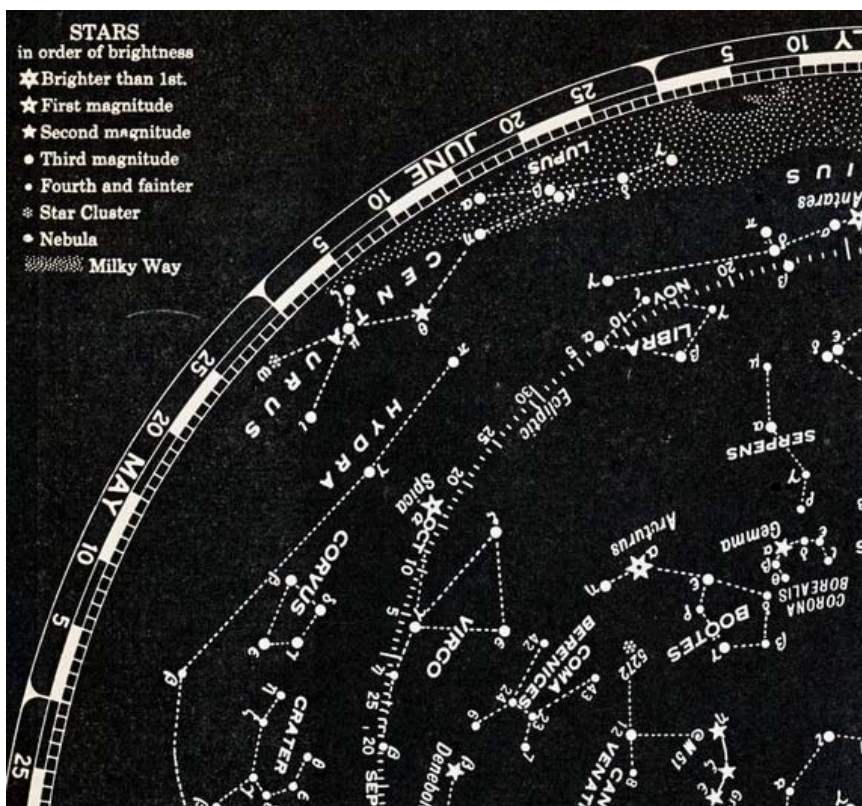
²³ In the mid 1930s Mowry was a member of their 18-member “Meteor, Variable Star and Comet group”. This sub-group met at the home of Mowry’s friend Lewis J. Boss in North Scituate, and also at the Seagrave which was ...

“the scene of many enjoyable picnics preceding the summer meetings. The suppers are flavored with spicy conversation as well as delicious food, of which there is always enough and to spare for anyone who comes at the last minute and has not had time to provide his own fare.” (*A Quarter Century of Skyscraping*, pp.17-18).

This may suggest a reason why Mowry might have preferred the Scituate meetings, rather than the more formal meetings held at Brown University.

²⁴ Here is another unknown friend. Lovecraft seems to have known him via Robert Barlow, Johnston having been working as a hired hand on the Barlow property in Florida when Lovecraft visited there. Presumably he was then a young lad, since he appears to have gone on to become a student at Stetson.

if I ever expected to bridge the last decades and give the ancient articles an intelligent revision [up] to date. Well, I decided to try, hence began an intermittent reading course with which I'm still busy. Our public library has some excellent new books on the subject —the textbook by J.C. Duncan and the layman's manuals by Bartky and Stokeley being the best short cuts for the non-mathematical amateur. Curious how one's early interests crop up again in one's sunset years." (H.P. Lovecraft, Unfinished letter to James Morton, March 1937).



Detail from a 1930s constellation star chart.

A postscript by David Haden, and a final item of evidence:

There is one final item of new evidence to note, in regard to Lovecraft's friendship with Chester Alwyn Mowry. I thank David E. Schultz for providing this item of evidence, and for swiftly responding to my query seeking any mention of Mowry in Lovecraft's letters. Schultz was able to pinpoint only a single mention of a Mowry. But, when this is placed alongside the evidence presented in the body of Randy Everts's essay, it seems a very valuable confirmation:

“Yeh—keep it up [meaning, the use of new American slang and twang], & you'll have even Mowry rolling his rrr ... 's in mid-western style yet!” (Letter from Lovecraft to James F. Morton of January 1928).

So clearly both Morton and Lovecraft knew a male called Mowry and had met him face-to-face, since Lovecraft seems to assume that Morton was familiar with Mowry's manner of speech. Lovecraft further implies that Mowry spoke in a very formal and non-American manner, presumably the New England British accent. This might be congruent with what Randy Everts has established about Chester Mowry's claimed Rhode Island ancestry: in that it would have been natural for an intelligent and well-read man of the Mowry line (descended from the illustrious Roger Williams) to seek to polish or newly cultivate an excellent and refined manner of speech, so as to rise above a difficult upbringing on a rural farm.

The letter's date of 1928 might further suggest that Lovecraft was indeed including his friend's name in a story, when he had Old Zadock say in “The Shadow over Innsmouth” (1931) that...

“I guess I done a bit by tellin' Selectman Mowry what I see from the cupalo.”

To recap only the clear facts, as they might relate to Lovecraft:

- Mowry was about eight years younger than Lovecraft.
- Mowry grew up and lived only eight miles from Lovecraft.
- Mowry had a strong interest in astronomy from 1917.
- Mowry had a huge collection of books and magazines.
- In a 1928 letter by Lovecraft he mentioned a male Mowry, known by sight and speech to both Lovecraft and Morton.
- The name Mowry was used in a story by Lovecraft in 1931.
- Mowry would very regularly commute through Providence.
- A trustworthy man of science and obvious integrity, Lewis Boss, recalled that his very good friend Mowry spoke circa 1935 of being friends with Lovecraft, and of going on local night walks with him.
- In 1936 Lovecraft recorded in a letter that he had attended a local astronomy group, of which Mowry was a member.

Based on these facts my working hypothesis would then be: that the young Mowry corresponded with the young Lovecraft, either about astronomy or the Munsey proto-pulps or both. But Lovecraft never visited Mowry's Seagrave Observatory for group observation meetings (he had by that time given up observational work in astronomy; Mowry's friend Boss did not recall Lovecraft's distinctive face; and in 1936 Lovecraft could not recall meeting Seagrave). This loose early friendship with Mowry was picked up again, at some point before 1928, after Lovecraft had returned to Providence from New York. In the warmer months of the mid 1930s Lovecraft occasionally invited Mowry to stop over in Providence on his way home from work at the Post Office, so they could take long evening walks together. Good manners probably prevented Mowry from revealing to Lovecraft the woefully antiquated nature of his scientific knowledge of astronomy. Nor did Mowry tell Lovecraft about the formal meeting of the local

post 1932 “The Skyscrapers” astronomy group at Brown University, since Mowry may have been hazy about them himself — as he preferred to attend the more informal branch of that same group at the Seagrave Observatory (which was near his home, offered good picnics, and in which his good friend Lewis Boss was a leading light). This meant that Mowry did not become a formal member of “The Skyscrapers”, until their sudden need for incorporation meant they needed all possible voting members signed up toward the end of 1936. At that point Mowry’s formal membership meant that he was able to invite his friend Lovecraft as a guest to a prestigious main group meeting of “The Skyscrapers” at Brown University. This meeting was of the sort that Mowry knew Lovecraft was likely to enjoy — on the local history of astronomy. Lovecraft attended, and enjoyed himself.

A final objection to this hypothesis might be that Mowry’s name does not appear in the transcribed address list from Lovecraft’s 1937 Diary (for that transcription, see *Lovecraft Annual* 2012 and 2013). I can only suggest that perhaps their communication to arrange meetings was done by the phone from Pawtucket, and that Lovecraft had long since ceased writing to Mowry?

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