Llanhilleth native son Stanley Thayer emigrated from Wales to the United States in the early 1920s.

Here follows an overview of how he and his only child, Stanley Gwynfryn Thayer, fared in the New World.

Stanley Thayer, was born in Llanhilleth June 16, 1894, at 14 Woodside Terrace to coal miner John Thayer and Mary Thayer (formerly Holford). John signed the birth certificate with an "x" which the registrar noted was his mark, indicating that John did not know how to read or write. John was one of nine children of William Thayer and Ann Thayer (formerly Harris). One of John's brothers was local legend Thomas "Speedy" Thayer. John and Mary Thayer had at least 10 children in addition to Stanley: Will, Vic, John (known as "Jack"), Alf, Martha, Edith, Irene (known as "Rene"), Percy, Harry, and Harold. Edith married Eddie Morgan and was the mother of Norman Morgan, to date the only Llanhilleth rugby player to play for Wales in international competition. Norman recalls that John and Mary Thayer may have had another child who died in infancy. There are four infants from Llanhilleth named Thayer buried at St. Illtyd's, one or more of whom could have been another of Stanley's siblings or first cousins: Thomas, 6 months, 04/02/1897; Arthur, 11 months, 05/09/1899; Lily, 10 days, 07/11/1908; and Violet, 3 months, 06/12/1909. John and Mary Thayer are buried at Christchurch, Aberbeeg, along with many other family members.

Stanley attended Cliff College and married Gwenllian Thomas, a teacher from Llantrisant. Years later, their son described his parents' early married life as follows:

"My parents were immigrants from Wales, although I believe they considered themselves more serving missionaries than searchers of the Promised Land. My father was a Methodist minister whose first charge or church was in a small German village called Sunfield. Appointments in the Methodist Episcopal Church were made for only one year. As a result, changes in churches occurred quite frequently. My father's next appointment came two years later to a charge called Sears and Barryton, where I first crashed the world [on August 16, 1923] with a crying spree which my father claimed lasted for an entire year. My birth actually took place in Blodgett Hospital in East Grand Rapids, Michigan [USA]. I spent only a few weeks in Sears, and we moved to the parsonage in Barryton some twelve miles away. At the end of two years, my father was appointed to the church in Gladwin [also in Michigan]. Gladwin was a step up. We had an inside bathroom and electricity. The year was 1924. With a 1922 Model T coupe things were up to date. Suddenly word was received from Wales that my grandmother Thomas, my mother's mother, had terminal cancer. My parents borrowed $12.00 and at 18 months old I made my first transatlantic crossing. My next visit to Great Britain would be at age 48 inn 1972."

The account continues: "My father's next church was in Sparta, a small town some 15 miles north of Grand Rapids. We were to live here for the next six years. In January 1926, the church burned killing the janitor. A new church was built and dedicated in 1927. In 1932, we moved to a small village near Lansing (the Michigan state capitol), called Okemos. Our home was just three miles from East Lansing, where Michigan State College was located."

Through the 1930s, '40s and '50s, Stanley was assigned to churches in various Michigan towns: Fremont, South Haven, Three Rivers, and then to his last church, Valley Avenue Methodist Church in Grand Rapids, a major Michigan city. Gwenllian died in Grand Rapids in 1959, and Stanley retired in 1960. He soon set out for Wales and reunited with the sweetheart of his youth, Dorothy (nicknamed "Doll"). He wrote from their bungalow in Newport in April of 1962, "I am glad I have been spared to enjoy a few years in the land of my birth." Of Doll, he wrote, "She is kind to me and looks after me well. She is a good sport and full of fun." He reported that he was regularly asked to preach at Congregational and Presbyterian, as well as Methodist churches, in the vicinity. In July of 1962, he wrote that the following Sunday evening he was scheduled to preach at the Llanhilleth Methodist Church: "The Thayer’s will be out in full force in the evening and it will be a joy to preach in the Church of my boyhood days where I began." Over the next several years, he divided his time between Wales and the United States. He and Doll eventually settled in Newbridge, which is where they were living when his son visited Wales in 1972, and where he died.

In 1941, at age 17, Stanley Gwynfryn Thayer graduated from South Haven High School, where he played cornet in school bands and orchestras, was President of the Student Council, Editor-in-Chief of the yearbook, and class Salutatorian. That fall, he entered the prestigious University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, Michigan, as a freshman and was proud to have been selected as a member of the famous Michigan Marching Band. He joined a campus fraternity, Phi Sigma Kappa, but war soon interrupted his collegiate career. On March 16, 1943, he became a private in the United States Army and spent the next two years assigned to Medical Units and shuttled around the country from Michigan to Florida, Colorado, North Dakota, Alabama, and Mississippi. In February 1945, he was sent to Officer Candidate School in Pennsylvania and graduated as a 2nd lieutenant May 30, 1945, by which time the war in Europe had ended. He was then sent to Tacoma Washington for arms training and then to Joplin, Missouri, to train troops who were to be assigned to medical units. He stayed there until the war in the Pacific ended after the atomic bombs were dropped on Japan, continued to train troops through the winter, and then was assigned to Fort Sam Houston, Texas. Finally, he was sent to Fort Custer, Michigan, for release from active duty as a reserve officer. Stanley Gwynfryn Thayer had always been called "Gwyn" until he joined the Army, but thereafter was "Stanley" except to his parents and friends who had known him before then.

In 1946, Stanley married Marie Kopp. Daughter Gwen Marie (nicknamed "Muggins"), was born on December 26 that same year, and daughter Helen Mary (nicknamed "Bobbi") was born December 30 of the following year. In 1950, Stanley was called back to active duty during the Korean conflict and was assigned to a hospital in Tokyo. While he was there, Marie brought Muggins and Bobbi, ages 4 and 3, for an extended visit in Llanhilleth at number 20 Pleasant View. Upon his return from Japan, Stanley resumed his studies at the University of Michigan and completed his Bachelor of Arts degree in 1948 and his law degree in 1950. He set up a law practice in Ann Arbor and became active in local Republican Party politics. He served as an acting Municipal Court judge in both Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti from 1957-58 and was chairman of the Washtenaw County Republican Committee from 1958-60. Daughter Elizabeth Victoria (nicknamed “Vicki”) was born in 1958.

Stanley was elected to the Michigan State Senate in 1960 and quickly rose to power. He served as majority leader from 1963-64 before giving up his seat for an unsuccessful Congressional bid in 1964. He subsequently served on the State of Michigan Employment Security Commission and, in 1967, Governor George Romney appointed him chairman of the powerful Liquor Control Commission, which oversaw the state's liquor monopoly, maintaining a statewide liquor inventory and issuing liquor licenses, and generated more than $100 million in annual state profits. The Ann Arbor News reported that "some criticized the liquor commission for being more concerned about making a profit to fill state coffers than the social ills caused by drinking. But Thayer said he made sure that a percentage of liquor sales went to fight alcoholism. 'Prohibition didn't work in the 1920s and it won't work today,' he told a reporter when he left the commission in 1979. ‘It's like saying we should take all the cars off the road because so many people get killed in them.’"

In 1979, Stanley joined a Detroit law firm that later moved to Southfield, Michigan. He continued to reside in Ann Arbor, retired in 1997, and died there in 2000. The Ann Arbor News reported on his death that he had advanced "an agenda of tax reform, civil rights and progressive legislation during his four years in the Senate" and "prided himself on running a clean operation" at the Liquor Control Commission.