



# PIONEER RECORD

Newsletter for the Midland Genealogical Society

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April 2008

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## Leery about the Erie

*By Gloria Kundinger*

It was called "Clinton's Folly." President Thomas Jefferson thought it was a great idea but a century ahead of its time. Considered a feat of engineering and construction, the Erie Canal conquered impossible terrain enabling passengers and freight to be transported from the Atlantic Ocean to the Great Lakes and beyond.

Although others had mentioned the idea of a canal since 1724, Jesse Hawley, a miller from a New York village, was credited with the idea of a canal to connect the Hudson River to Lake Erie. In 1807, he went bankrupt and landed in debtor's prison because of the terribly high cost of shipping wheat. Fifteen articles were written by him on the need for a canal and why it would be a wise endeavor.

New Yorkers who read the articles believed in the feasibility of his idea. A group from New York State was sent to Washington in 1809 to persuade President Jefferson and congress to fund this project. However, the idea was considered "madness" and dismissed as too futuristic for its time.

Governor Dewitt Clinton of New York, who was newly elected, took on the challenge of this mammoth project and was able to persuade voters to send it to the state legislature for approval. The proposed canal was to have cost six million dollars. This was four times the population of the state!

Started on July 4, 1817, the canal stretched 363 miles from the Hudson River in Albany to Lake Erie in Buffalo. It was built entirely with hand labor and the strength of animals because steam-powered machines were in limited use at this time. The route went through untouched forests of huge trees, mosquito infested swamps, and the

rugged terrain of the Appalachian Mountains.

Contracted private citizens of the state of New York and immigrant laborers newly arrived from Europe built the canal. They dug the channel four feet deep and forty feet wide. Eighty-three locks were constructed of hand hewn stone. They were fifteen feet wide and ninety feet long. The locks enabled the canal boats to be raised or lowered 600 feet through the length of the canal. With a total cost of \$7,143,000.00, the canal opened eight years later on October 26, 1825. However finished sections of the canal were in use as soon as they were completed.

On a boat named the "Seneca Chief," Governor Clinton and a party of officials traveled from Lake Erie to the Atlantic where he dumped two barrels of water from Lake Erie into the ocean. This ceremony was called the "Marriage of the Waters" and signaled the opening of the entire canal.

Freight and packet boats were the two types of vessels that traveled by the thousands on the canal. Freight boats were pulled by two horses or mules that walked along a tow path on the banks of the canal. The boats were about sixty-one feet long, seven feet wide, and could carry seventy tons of freight. There were usually two smaller cabins, one at each end of the boat. The stern cabin sheltered the crew or the family of a man who owned his own boat. Horses or mules were housed in the bow cabin after their turn was

### Midland Genealogical Society Programs for 2007 - 2008

*Meetings are scheduled on the third Wednesday of the month unless otherwise noted..*

*Programs for the meetings are as follows.*

#### **April 16, 2008 meeting 7:00 Library Auditorium**

Jay Bradow, from station WNEM-TV5 will speak on "The Captains Chair".

#### **May 21, 2008 meeting 6:00 Carriage House**

Due to the death of Earl Ebach, our planned speaker for the month, we have decided to have a pot luck at the carriage house. This will be at 6 pm. Please bring a dish to pass, your place settings, and a beverage unless you want coffee. Spouses are invited to attend also.

## The Presidents Letter

We have had a tremendous Board serving the membership, all for the second year. Jo Brines, as Program Chair, has provided us with very good programs throughout the year. Betty Bellous has maintained our membership status with mailings, e-mails, phone calls and personal contacts. Ron Snyder has served for many years as our Treasurer. Jayne Shrier, our faithful Secretary, has provided us with excellent records of both Board and General Meetings. Faye Ebach and Beverly Keicher, our MGC Delegates, have represented us well at the by-monthly Michigan Genealogical Council meetings in Lansing. Kathy Bohl, Historian, has maintained our historical records and scrapbook. At each General Meeting, Dona McArdle and Nancy Humphrey, have provided the attending members with refreshments.

Our "Pioneer Record" newsletter, published 4 times each year, has been edited and published by Walt Bennett, Jr. This is probably one of the most time consuming and difficult jobs in the Society – Walt has done a superb job. Each newsletter has included a very interesting article researched and written by Gloria Kunding. Fran Longsdorf has assisted by mailing the PR to the membership.

Another function of the MGS is providing our web page. Randy Keicher has reorganized, updated and maintained our

website which can be found at [www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~mimgs/](http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~mimgs/). This site contains a lot of information about our society.

The programs throughout the year have been both interesting and challenging. Two programs remain: April 16 in the Library Auditorium, local TV personality Jay Brandow will talk about his book "The Captain's Chair". This program is co-sponsored with the Grace A. Dow Memorial Library. On May 21 the Society will have its annual meeting at the Carriage House. Earl Ebach will present a program regarding a historical "1792 Saginaw Letter".

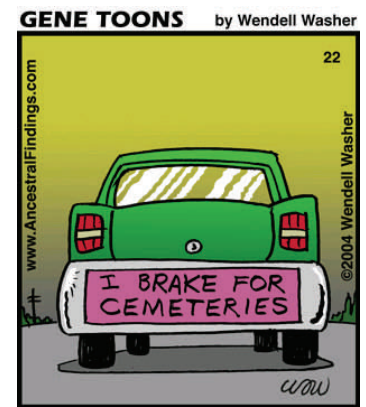
Ruth Ann Casadonte chairs the "Midland County Marriage Records -1857-1929" Project. She, along with a committee of approximately 10 members, have been copying data from existing county records and inputting the information onto a computer spreadsheet which will eventually become a new MGS publication.

The week of April 21 approximately 12 members will be traveling to Allen County Public Library in Fort Wayne for several days of research. As a group, we will be staying at a Bed and Breakfast Inn within walking distance to the Library.

The 2009 MGC Seminar Committee continues their task of program planning - attracting both nationally as well as locally known speakers, approaching potential vendors, as well as planning and arranging the logistics for such a state-wide event.

The Nominating Committee is presenting a slate of officers which includes several new members for board positions. This includes Laressa Northrup for Program Chair, Linda Fisher for Membership Chair, and Fran Longsdorf for Secretary. With such a cadre of enthusiastic board members, we look forward to another challenging as well as a productive year.

*Earl Ebach, MGS President,*



Genealogists on the road.

### *From The Editor...*

And so ends another year of the Pioneer Record. Keep those submissions coming so that I can use them in the Fall. I am looking for some members with some writing talent that can write interesting articles for the P.R.

After the death of my mother in February, I decided to take a genealogy research trip that I had wanted to do with my mother. I took this trip in late March and returned with information that I have been wanting

for some time now. With the price of gasoline, I almost had decided against the trip, but I feel much better about it now that I have returned. I also concluded that the gas will not get any cheaper but will continue to rise.

If you have had an interesting genealogical journey, let us hear about it. What did you do to resolve unanswered questions?

*Walt Bennett*  
Editor

### **MEMBERSHIP DUES 2008-2009**

**The collection of MGS membership dues for 2008-2009 will conclude at the September 17th MGS meeting. The MGS treasurer and Membership chairs will begin collecting dues beginning in May 2008, although there has been no specific request. If your dues are not paid by the end of September, you will not receive further issues of the Pioneer Record. Dues may also be paid by mail to: Membership Chair, Midland Genealogical Society, Grace A. Dow Memorial Library, 1710 W. St. Andrews Dr., Midland, MI 48640. Dues for an individual are \$14.00; for a family they are \$17.50.**

## Program

Our meeting on Wednesday, April 16, 2008 promises to be very interesting and informative. It will be jointly sponsored by MGS and the Library and held in the auditorium at 7:00 pm. Refreshments will follow in the lounge downstairs. It is open to the community and I'm hoping we will have a good attendance. Invite friends to come with you.

Our speaker will be Jay Brandow—from WNEM TV5 discussing his book "The Captains Chair". I have read the book and it is interesting for history buffs, genealogists, and anyone who has Great Lakes ships men in the family. In the process of restoring a 120 year old Victorian house in Bay City's East side, Mr. Brandow becomes interested in its early history and of the families who might have owned the house for many years. What begins as a simple desire for a few pieces of information about the house develops eventually into a wonderfully warm friendship with a very elderly Johnston daughter who last lived in the house in 1931.

Mr. Brandow's book, and the resulting speech, are an excellent example of how different facets of local history and details of the private lives of families can enrich and enhance the basic genealogical facts. The book is in the library, can be checked out, and also will be available for purchase at the meeting.

Jo Brines

## Membership Report

Sept Oct Nov Jan Feb  
39 38 33 24 21

No, this isn't the lottery history. This is the record showing the decrease in monthly meeting attendance ! What's happening ?

Besides the flight of winter snow-birds, what's going on ? What is preventing you from attending ?

If there is something we can do to spark attendance, please tell us.

We would like to welcome new members  
Brad Gougeon , Alfred Glispin from  
Washington State and Lawrence Hurley  
from Florida.

The May meeting will be at the Heritage  
Park location with the election of officers.

See you there.

Betty Bellous, membership

## Is That Obituary Misleading?

from Michael John Neill

Many genealogists use obituaries as a part of their research. They can easily be a clue to additional records or sources, but must be used with care. It is important to remember that the information contained in an obituary can be incorrect, misleading, or incomplete. The confusion is compounded when an obituary contains all three errors.

The deceased might have been married three times, but only the last spouse is listed in the obituary. Children of the deceased may be named, but they may not have the same set of both parents and none may be the child of the spouse listed in the obituary. Lists of children may even be incomplete, especially if there has been a family squabble or an estrangement.

Individuals listed as children may actually be step-children of the deceased. The step-parent/step-child bond may have been a very strong one and the step-parent may have been a parent to the child in all the important ways, but the obituary may not make the distinction which the genealogist typically wants to make.

And there can easily be unintentional errors due to inaccurate knowledge on the part of the obituary informant.

An obituary may be an important part of your genealogical research, but the information it contains should be used with care and as a pointer to other records. Many times the obituary's purpose is to notify newspaper readers of the death and funeral of the deceased. Those details are usually correct; other details should be used with caution.



## B O O K S F O R S A L E

The following books, published by the Midland Genealogical Society, are available for sale at any meeting, at the Midland Genealogy Room, Grace A. Dow Public Library or by mail. Price of each book is \$20.00 plus \$3.00 for postage and handling.

Midland County Obituary Index (#1) – 1872-1927. The book consists of 16,000 abstractions covering 55 years from the Midland Times (1872 -1875), The Midland Sun (1892 -1924) and the Midland Republican (1881-1927). The soft bound 238 page book is 8 ½ by 11 inches.

Midland County Obituary Index (#2) – 1928-1950. The book consists of about 8,000 abstractions covering 22 years from the Midland Republican (1928 - 1937) and the Midland Daily News (1937 - 1950). The soft bound 238 page book is 8 ½ by 11 inches. Note: Both Obituary Books (#1 & #2) are available as a package of \$35.00.

Midland County Obituary Index (#3)-1951-1982 This book consists of 30,900 entries including about 4000 maiden names covering 22 years extracted from Midland Daily News. The 387 page, 8½ by 11, soft bound book consists of two volumes A through L and M through Z. The set costs \$40 plus \$5 postage and handling.

Midland Pioneers, edited by Ora Flaningham. This book is a compilation of the most interesting genealogical, historical and humorous reprints from newspapers published in the Pioneer Record. The book is 6 by 9 inches, soft bound, 259 pages. (Out of print, but orders being compiled at Genealogy desk.)

To ORDER A BOOK write: Midland Genealogical Society BOOK: Grace A. Dow Memorial Library, 1710 W. St. Andrews Dr., Midland, MI 48640.

done.

Packet boats were used to ferry passengers. They were lighter and pulled by three horses. They contained cabins the length of the ship except for a galley and a bar. Earlier ones from 1836 had seats the length of the ship that converted into cots for sleeping. Berths were several shelves built above the seats and had sack-type mattresses. Ladies slept in the bow which was divided from the men in the stern by a curtain. For meals, a table was set the length of the boat and the curtain removed. Meals were of good quality food with some luxuries included. The trip took about four days and cost \$3.50 in 1836 which is about \$69.00 today.

To pay for the construction, New York State charged a toll for freight shipped via the canal. This was started in 1820 and \$28,000.00 was collected that year. Four years later, it made \$300,000.00 in tolls before it had been totally completed and fully opened. The canal was such a successful enterprise that it more than paid for itself in ten year's time! In 1835, it was widened.

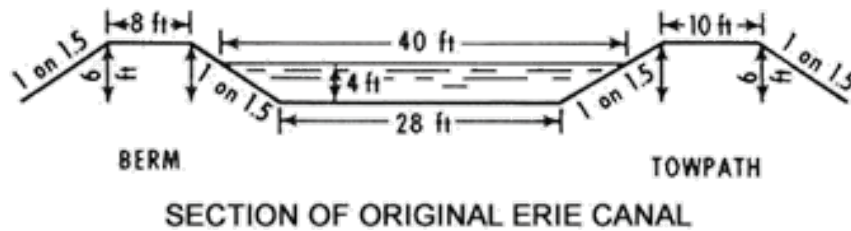
Agricultural goods were shipped east and manufactured goods went west on the canal. The cost of shipping wheat raised in the Genesee Valley of



New York was \$100.00 a ton and took twenty days by wagon to reach Albany. After the canal was built, a ton of wheat could be shipped in ten days the distance to New York City for a mere \$5.00 in transportation costs. By 1845, one million tons of freight had been shipped via the canal.

The canal caused the interior of the state of New York to grow and develop. Along the canal route, cities and towns were founded or grew larger. Industries developed in those towns and grew as well. The canal also caused tremendous growth in population and manufacturing in New York City. It became the major seaport of the United States—outgrowing Philadelphia and Boston.

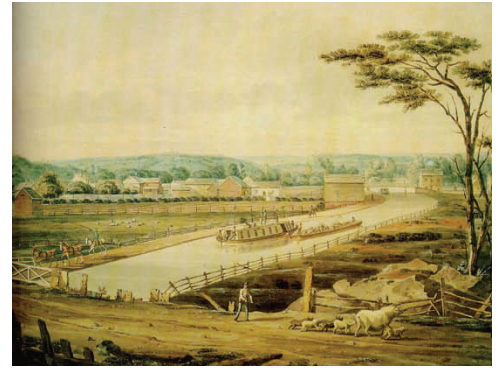
Since the Erie Canal proved to be successful and effective as a means of trans-



porting people and freight, it sparked a wave of canal building over the whole country. Side branches were added to the Erie Canal by the state of New York. These and the canal were enlarged in 1862 and dredged to a depth of seven feet.

The Erie Canal also opened up the Midwest to greater settlement and development. It was the main route to the Midwest before railroads existed there. Many immigrants traveled from the port of New York to Buffalo by canal then by steamship through the Great Lakes to settle places in Ohio, Michigan, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Indiana, and Illinois.

Villages prospered and towns grew into larger cities along the Great Lakes and throughout the Midwest because of the canal. The new settlers helped clear the timber, and forests became farmland. Lumber and farm produce were transported east via the



Great Lakes and the canal.

By the 1850s, railroads had expanded and were a faster means of shipping goods out west. Even though the toll on the canal was eliminated in 1882, canal usage dropped dramatically while the railroads prospered during this time. After the railroads formed a monopoly and began charging ridiculous rates for shipments, transporters once again used the canal.

During this time, the canal had deteriorated and was in need of repairs. Reconstruction

began in 1900 to add more locks besides widening the canal. It also incorporated other New York canals as well as several lakes and five rivers. The canal was finished in 1918 and renamed the New York State Barge Canal. This 800 mile canal system was the principal means transporting grain from the Midwest for a long time. Eventually other means of transportation and the St. Lawrence Seaway rendered it obsolete. Today the canal is called, the New York State Canal System. Its main use now is for pleasure boating and tourist cruises.

Anyone who has ever driven along the New York Turnpike has probably come across abandoned sections of the canal. It is somehow hard to believe that these overgrown ditches were once part of a great waterway that helped settle the Midwest and made the transporting of produce and goods to market more economical. "Clinton's Ditch" made over 121 million in the sixty two years that tolls were charged. In the beginning, many people were

(Continued from page 4)

leery about the success of such a gigantic project but those who thought it could be done proved that it wasn't such folly after all.

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## COMING EVENTS

**"Footprints of Family History"** by the Federation of Genealogical Society's. Philadelphia, September 3-6, 2008.

The program will include topics such as Research in the Mid-Atlantic states, DNA and genealogy, The area's major ethnic groups such as the English, Irish, Swedish, and Germans. African-American research, How "material culture" can enrich family history, society management presentations and military records relating to a variety of conflicts. For further information, we have several copies of the flyer in the gene room or visit FGS at [www.fgs.org](http://www.fgs.org).

**The Polish Genealogical Society of Michigan is hosting a 30th Anniversary Celebration Dinner**, June 21, 2008, 1 p.m. - 5 p.m. at the American Polish Cultural Center, 2795 E. Maple Rd, Troy, MI 48183. This is open to the public but registration is required. Registration form can be found at [http://pgsm.org/index\\_002.htm](http://pgsm.org/index_002.htm).

## Publications of Interest

*Tree Talks* is the Central New York Genealogical Society's 64-page quarterly publication. Within *Tree Talks* are articles by noted genealogists, abstracts of records of genealogical significance and reviews of publications. An every name Index is published annually, containing surnames from the March, June and September issues.

The Central New York Genealogical Society began *Tree Talks* in 1961 to present abstracts of records from the post-Revolution era, to about 1860, of historical and genealogical interest from five central New York counties. By 1964, when New York State chartered the society as a nonprofit educational corporation, coverage had expanded to forty-six of the state's sixty-two counties. Presently, 49 upstate New York Counties are covered.

Material printed in *Tree Talks* is largely contributed by CNYGS members. Genealogical and historical records printed include those from Surrogate Courts and County Clerks' offices, plus abstracts of church, cemetery and newspaper vital records. Members have supplied many Bible records and day-books of doctors,

ministers and store-keepers. *Tree Talks* also contains book reviews of new genealogical publications.

An early census, or other significant record, with Index, has been published as one issue of *Tree Talks* since 1974. The record transcribed is chosen because: it is the earliest unpublished census of that county; the county was on a migratory route, or was a parent county; names can be supplied by member-researchers for the initials used in the original enumeration; and finally, because of the research interests of the volunteer subscribers.

Abstracts from a number of different counties have been printed each year in the March, June and September issues. To better facilitate the use of these abstracts, a decision was made in 1999 to extract from *Tree Talks* all the pages of each individual county, and then offer these pages as Special Collection County Packets. Through the years, as these abstracts were published, a few errors occurred in the sequencing of the page numbers. Be assured that all published pages have been included for a specific county.

Material included in each of these packets has been copyrighted and may not be reproduced without written permission from the Central New York Genealogical Society. You do not have to be a member of CNYGS to obtain any of these Packets.

For further information or to place an order see:

<http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~nycnygs/index.htm>

## OLD TOMBSTONE CARVINGS:

The term "Relict" on a tombstone means that the woman was a widow at time of death, consort means that her husband survived her.

"Cenotaph" engraved on a tombstone indicates an empty grave, with the stone erected in honor or memory of a person buried elsewhere - often erected in honor of a person lost at sea. The words G.A.R. (with a flying flag) on a tombstone means Grand Army of the Republic. It was a political organization of Civil War Union Army Soldiers. They held annual encampments and had various decorations to wear.

## Genealogy Seminar at Sea

Oct 25—Nov 1, 2008

Aboard Royal Caribbean's newest ship "Liberty of the Seas". Sailing from the Port of Miami to San Juan, Puerto Rico to Philipsburg, St. Maarten to Labadee, Haiti (Royal Caribbean's private paradise) and back home to the Port of Miami. During 3 days of seminars, learn from nationally known genealogy speakers and authors:

John Philip Colletta...Stephen J. Danko...Michael J. Leclerc...Paul Milner George G. Morgan...Donna M. Moughty...Laura G. Prescott...Paula Stuart-Warren. For further information see: <http://www.genealogycruises.com/>

## Family History Genealogy Seminar May 10, 2008

Sponsored by the Lansing MI Family History Center Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, 431 E. Saginaw, East Lansing, MI 48823. Call 517-332-2932. There is no charge for the seminar. Registrations will continue to be accepted as long as space is available. Doors open at 8:30 am.

## Lancaster PA research

By Walter Bennett

A few weeks ago, I went on a trip to Lancaster Pennsylvania to research my Moore ancestors. Other than census records, I was unable to find much on the internet about them. To find out more about them, I needed to go visit where they lived.

The subjects of my research are my great-great-grandparents Albert and Mary Moore. All I knew about them was what information my mother was able to give me. My mom had letters that were written to my great-grandmother that contained an address in Lancaster City, Pennsylvania. The address was 417 E. Orange Street. From checking my mapping program, I determined that this was in the downtown area. My mom also had provided me with names of several of their children which was beneficial for locating them on the census. The other piece of information was that Mary Moore's maiden name was Meehan and she was a famine immigrant from Ireland who came to this country at a young age.

Prior to my trip, I gathered as much information as I could get on the family. The census records were helpful to determine where they lived and also help determine a date range for their deaths. I also had used a city directory which provided me with information on Albert stating his address and occupation. By using my mapping program, I was able to determine that there was a Catholic church about a block away from their residence.

Armed with this information as well as address's for the places I was going to research at, several pencils and a pad of paper, I headed East. From my research on the internet, my best place to start was going to be the Lancaster county historical society in Lancaster city. They have a library room which they charge you \$5/day for research. They are closed on Sunday and Monday, so I planned my trip accordingly. Also, they have later hours on Tuesday's and Thursday's.

I arrived at the historical society on Tuesday morning, and after a brief talk with one of the helpful librarians, about what was available, I began with looking through the transcriptions for the cemetery that was operated by the St. Anthony of Padua Catholic church that was closest to where they lived. Within minutes I found them listed, but the inscriptions on their stones contained their ages and not dates as one would expect. I also located two of their children and some grandchildren listed in the transcriptions.

I was pleased to know that the historical society also had microfilm records of most of the churches in Lancaster county. I grabbed the rolls for St. Anthony's and began looking for more information. I was able to find some baptismal records of interest. I found three

of their grandchildren's records in which Albert and Mary were named as sponsors in a couple of them. Also, I was able to find baptismal records for two of their daughter-in-laws who were converted to the Catholic faith as adults. Sponsors here were also listed as Albert and Mary Moore with both of these women being of German descent. St. Anthony's church was primarily a German church.

It was noted that Lancaster county was primarily German being known for the Pennsylvania Dutch. There did not appear to be many Irish in the area.

I looked through the marriages for the church on the film but did not find any related records. I then went to the civil registrations for marriages and found a couple of the son's weddings listed.

The film of the church records for St. Anthony's did not contain burial records and I could not find anything significant in the civil registrations either. I felt that I needed to know their death dates to find other important documents.

The next morning, I went to the cemetery that was down the road a few blocks from the church. There, I located the graves and took photographs of the stones. I was disappointed to find that Mary's stone was upside down and leaning backwards against the stone behind hers with a corner of the bottom broken off. I gently lifted the stone face up onto the base so that I could photograph the stone. I next went to the parish rectory to get the information that I was missing. They provided me with the death and burial dates of Albert and Mary as well as their cause of death, Albert dying from complications and Mary dying from brights disease, which is a disease of the kidneys.

I returned to the Historical society and began looking up obituaries in the Lancaster newspaper. After a few minutes of searching, I located the obits for both Albert and Mary. Mary's obituary having died in 1907, stated that she came from Londonderry, Ireland in 1854, was a resident of the city since 1881, listed a few of her children and two brothers John and James Meehan and a sister Sarah Gelsenlichter. One brother living in Bridesburg (near Philadelphia) and the other brother and sister living in Lancaster. This was information that I didn't have and provided me with basis for further research.

Albert's obituary having died in 1914, provided me with the facts that two of his sons were living in Waynesboro, another son was living in Delaware county, and he was living with one of his sons when he died. This explained why the sons didn't show up in the city directories in the later years, which is the next place I went looking. The Historical society had City directories for 1869 and forward for most years. I went through these, year by year, making notes of address and occupations for family members. I also

made notes on Meehans that were living near.

Next, I decided to look for wills. This was on microfilm with an index. I was unable to locate wills for either Mary or Albert. I later went to the Orphan's court and checked their archives. This is one place where you can still go into the basement and pull the original books yourself, take them to a counter and look through them. I checked the wills book there thinking that maybe I missed something from the microfilm copy but I was unsuccessful. I then pulled the index for intestates and did not find anything there either.

From this trip, I was hoping to find a record that contained the parents names of both Albert and Mary. I could not locate a civil death registration. I do know that they were living in Drumore township prior to moving into the city. Unfortunately, the only Catholic church in Drumore was not created until the late 1800's. The librarian told me that if they were Catholic, they would either have gone into Lancaster City for church or would have gone into Maryland to the south.

I also checked the family files hoping that someone had already requested or had done research on this family. There were several Moore's but I was unable to locate any related records.

On my last day, I went to Philadelphia to visit the grave of my grandfathers sister who died at the age of two from Infant Cholera. She was buried in St. Mary's cemetery, which I found behind St. Mary's church. Unfortunately, the church and grave yard were both locked up. I called a phone number that was located on the rectory office door which stated by appointment only. The person who answered the phone did not appear too friendly and told me to call back tomorrow at 10:00am. Someone would help me then. I tried to explain that I would not be there tomorrow, that I was only there for today, but then I was again told to call tomorrow. I usually expect a graveyard to be open to visitors except after dark. I was very disappointed in my visit to Philadelphia. This church is located just a few short blocks from the Liberty Bell, Independence Hall and Penn's Landing so I was able to do a little sight seeing.

My drive home also took me on a detour to Loretto, Pennsylvania where I was able to visit the gravesites of some distant ancestors. Here is buried my fourth great grandfather Nicholas Braddock who may be a brother to the famous General. This location and the Priest who started this parish is rich with history and deserves an article written about them.

## Burned Counties

by Michael John Neill

The courthouse burned. What do I do? Research in "burned counties" that have suffered a record loss may be possible, but it requires persistence and a willingness to turn over as many stones as possible. This week we take a look at some techniques that may be helpful.

### Get Beyond the Destruction

Determine exactly what records were destroyed. Was it the entire courthouse? Was it a certain office in the courthouse? Were some records housed offsite and not destroyed? Do not assume that all county records were burned just because someone told you so, or because you read it on a message board or website.

Were any records re-recorded after the incident? Deeds and other records of property ownership may have been recorded again after the fire. (Remember landowners generally kept the original deed; the courthouse has a copy.) For records that were created in the normal course of business after the destruction, keep an open mind. Pay particular attention to deeds and other documents where ownership of property might have been an issue, especially ownership before the fire. These documents may specifically mention former owners or imply who those owners were.

Settlements of estate or some court records may mention events and relationships as they were before the records' destruction. Search carefully for estate settlements of any family members who died without descendants—even if the death was fifty or more years after the records were destroyed. These records could be located a significant distance from the burned county. The records of the disbursements from their estate may mention heirs and or relationships dating back a hundred years.

### Get Beyond the Immediate Family

Researching the complete family becomes even more important during the time period of the fire as well. Some family members might have eventually lived in areas where records were not destroyed or might have left behind records with more detail. These documents may refer to individuals who lived in the "burned county." Since our search must necessarily broaden, it is imperative that a research log be kept so that records on a specific relative are not overlooked.

Search [the Family History Library Card Catalog](#) for information on records in the county. The Family History Library has an extensive collec-

tion of microfilm and while they do not film every piece of paper in the courthouse, there may be other materials. Look for printed or published materials in their collection and then go beyond that to original records wherever possible.

### Get Beyond Relatives

It is not just the extended family who should be researched. Pay special attention to neighbors, associates, fellow church members, and others with whom your ancestor might have been affiliated during his time in the county. Information on where they were from may help you locate where your ancestor was from as well.

### Get Beyond the County

Search state and federal level records as completely as possible. Are there any wars that involved family members? Are there pension records from those wars and have they been accessed? They might mention your relative or provide clues as to his or her existence.

### Get Help Beyond Yourself

Have local historical societies and genealogical societies been contacted for potential information in their collection? They may also be aware of "hidden" sources that were not destroyed, additional sources that have been located recently, or unique approaches for the area. A posting to the appropriate [county message board](#) or [a listserv](#) is an excellent idea.

Have you searched any regional or nearby university archives? They may have unpublished manuscripts or other written material that may be helpful in your search. Try searching [WorldCat](#) for the county of interest to see what materials appear in the catalog. Bear in mind though that oftentimes a manuscript collection may be incompletely cataloged in WorldCat or not cataloged at all.

Are there any published county histories or scholarly studies of the county that may shed light on certain families, migration patterns, etc.? Search WorldCat and see if local libraries have such materials.

Also read genealogical journals that contain scholarly research articles. Sometimes these articles discuss families in burned records counties or provide background on methodology that is also effective in areas that have suffered a record loss.

Have all church records been exhausted? In burned record counties, church and other private records become increasingly important and should not be overlooked. Church records should be accessed even if your ancestor was a

## New Additions to the Gene Room

Genealogy—How to write and Publish Your Family Book

Barnett—The Barnett Source Vol. 1, 2, 3, The Barnett Data Base Vol. I

U.S. Mass—An Index to Plymouth Co., Mass, Warnings Out From Plymouth Court Records—1686—1859

U.S. The American Census Handbook Passenger and Immigration Lists Index Yoder Newsletter Issues 1 to 25.

Beaverton. A Century In The Making Morgan—The Official Guide to Ancestry.Com

Mayflower Families—Vol. 16 Part 3, Vol. 20—Part 2

Source—3rd Edition The Source Red—3rd Edition

Horning—Horning Family History

American Victorian Costume in Early Photographs

Mayflower Families Vol. 20

Divorce Proceeding Records of Monroe Co., Michigan

Bibliography of African American Family History at the Newberry Library

Family Portrait History of Gottschalk, Molling and Benjamin Families from Hanover Germany

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member of a denomination that typically did not keep excellent records. If contacting the local church is unproductive or impossible, contact the regional or national archive of the denomination.

If the time period is a little bit earlier, consider searching Revolutionary and War of 1812 pension records for others who settled in your ancestral area. Even if these records do not mention your ancestor specifically, they may provide general information on migration in and out of the area.

### In Conclusion

Do not assume that what you have been told was destroyed was actually destroyed. From Ancestry Weekly Journal, April 14, 2008.

## MICHIGAN GENEALOGICAL COUNCIL REPORT

Faye Ebach, Delegate

The MGC met on March 13 after a four month hiatus in a downtown Lansing church while roof repairs to the Library of Michigan continue. Plans were made to return to the LOM for the next scheduled Council meeting in May.

Randy Riley, LOM Special Collections Manager reported that the Abrams Foundation is increasing support for digitalizing Library genealogy records for the next three years. The Library is currently negotiating with Ancestry.com to digitize the 1887-1920 Michigan Death Records and place them on the LOM web site with free access to users. He also reported that the 'Michigan e Library', aka MEL, contains databases available from home computers via the [www.MEL.org](http://www.MEL.org) web site. Users must use either their Michigan driver's license number or library card for access.

Mark Harvey, State Archivist, reported that the Archives of Michigan has submitted a grant request for projects to create catalogue records of the 4000+ manuscripts currently stored at the Burton Collection, Detroit Public Library. When completed, these manuscripts will be available on MEL.org. He also reported that new records have been obtained which include Detroit Recorder's Court records, along with Washtenaw County Probate records. With the addition of multiple new records, the Archives have obtained an additional 37,000 cubic feet of storage space in a new facility and will make storage boxes readily accessible via a bar code system. The Archives are currently involved in a project to film and digitize 75,000 Michigan records of the Civil War so they will be available on the web.

The MGC has finalized arrangements for a new web address: [www.mimgc.org](http://www.mimgc.org). The site is now available and includes links to many additional sites of interest to genealogists.

## Nomination Chair Report

The following slate of officers are being presented for election by the membership at the annual meeting in May.

President - Earl Ebach

Program Chm. - Laressa Northrup

Secretary - Fran Longsdorf

Treasurer - Ron Snider

Historian - Kathy Bohl

Council Delegates: Faye Ebach &  
Beverly Keicher

If you have any questions, just e-mail me (Marionjoan32@aol.com) or call 631-3057. Thanks

Marion Berry, Nominating Com. Chm.

### The Sad State of Obituaries

As some of you know, my mother passed away last Sunday (3/16/2008). My father and us five girls sat down to write her obituary..our tribute to our loving mother.

We each had ideas in our heads about how her obituary should read.

Being a genealogist, I of course wanted to include all of the particulars in date and time, parents names, history etc. You know..one of those obituaries that, as a researcher, you DREAM of finding in your quest for information.

What started out as our tribute to our mother's life, quickly became a sad paring down to obscure information. No maiden name, no birthplace or date, no children's last names...nothing. ALL the result of our wish to avoid burglary of my father's house, and identity theft for any of us. (your mother's maiden name is so commonly used to validate access to an account)

A sign of our sad times. An obituary so bare-bones that it left us all feeling more empty than we had when we sat down to write it.

Today, I looked on-line at some of the current obituaries and found, to my surprise, that most of them were as stripped down as my mother's had been. I'm assuming it's for similar reasons.

Ah, for the days when we could list a mother's maiden name, birth date, place of birth, daughter's married names and current

residences without fear of having our financial identity stolen from us and used by some unscrupulous person to buy a car.or gain a credit card.or any of the millions of ways that one could use that personal data.

It made me sad. It seems, as I've researched and read old newspapers over the years, that each generation had some prevailing hardships. I guess this in one for our time.the inability to write a proper detailed account of someone's life and pay them a last tribute, lest our own lives get swept up in a lifetime of credit issues and theft.

In the end, we printed that pared down version, with a personal resolution to write that "dream" obituary for our own sake, print it out on the computer, and share it amongst ourselves. Technically, that worked. And we've each come to our own state of compromised happiness with that.

Here's hoping that the future again allows us to write a proper tribute to our loved one!

Julie North

[www.juliesgenealogy.com](http://www.juliesgenealogy.com)

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### WHERE IS THAT TOWN ?

Looking for a place name no longer in existence ? Or what counties a place name is located ? Check out this web site: [www.ePodunk.com](http://www.ePodunk.com). This database includes many places no longer populated communities. These may include rural crossroads, hamlets, ghost towns or settlements that have been absorbed by nearby cities or towns. Links to Canada , Ireland and UK .

Another great site is the Central New York Genealogical Society. They have published County Packets for 49 New York Counties. See the attached article which explains what time period is covered and which county packets are available.

Betty Bellous



## Looking Back in Midland County

Taken From *The Midland Sun* October 21, 1898  
p. 1

### George B. Howe

Union Silver Candidate for Register of  
Deeds

George B. Howe was born in Livingston County, this state, in 1864. His mother dying when he was a baby, he found a home here and there among strangers until the age of 14, when he began hustling for himself. Managed to pick up enough education to enable him to begin teaching school at the age of 20, which occupation he followed up to two years since—a period of about 12 years. He moved to Coleman about four years ago, where he taught school for about two years, since which time he has been engaged in the sale of agricultural implements and machinery. He held several minor township offices in the southern part of the state, and was at one time, a member of the board of county school examiners.

Those who know Mr. Howe have the highest regard for his uprightness and integrity, and his ability for the position to which he aspires is unquestioned. While there were numerous candidates for this office from the lower part of the county who were perhaps better known throughout the county than Mr. Howe, the convention saw the justice of the claim of Warren for recognition on the ticket and gladly gave it. It would not only be fitting recognition of this populous township, but also of the village of Coleman, for the voters of the county to give her candidate for the office of register of deeds the election. If the office is a good one, it should be passed around; if a poor one, no one man should be expected to bear the burden from year to year. In his dealings with the farmers of his vicinity in the sale of agricultural implements, Mr. Howe has established a reputation for fair dealing, and he would bring to the office to which he aspires the same consideration that has marked his business life. George B. Howe should be the next register of deeds for Midland County.

Taken from *The Midland Sun* June 16, 1899 p.  
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### Smith's Crossing

Leonard Starks was in town Sunday. Church services being held in the evening. James Hubbard's valuable dog was not stolen; it had strayed away.

New houses are being built by Samuel Cone, Delevan Ames, Wm. McCrary and James Major.

Saturday, June 10<sup>th</sup> was a sad and gloomy day for Smith's Crossing ball players, as they suffered a double defeat. "The hustlers" engaged a team from Freeland and lost, the score being twelve to seventeen. They play return game next Saturday at Freeland.

The Junior team went to Laporte and there faced the team from that place, supported by the crack pitcher of the West, Wm. Elliot. Hankins went in the box for the Crossing, pitching a fine game and making many of his opponents fan the air. But an error in the eighth inning, allowing the Laportes three scores, lost the game for the Crossing, the final score being eight to nine. The boys will try again on the Fourth of July

Miss Delia See finished an eminently successful year of school at this place Saturday, June 3<sup>rd</sup>. In the afternoon, a large number of patrons of the school gathered to hear the closing exercises, which were a credit to both the teacher and the pupils. At the close of the program, Miss Clara Higgins, in a few well chosen words, presented the teacher with some beautiful china dishes as a token of regard from her pupils. Although Miss See has been with us but a short time she has proven herself an excellent teacher, and it is hoped that we may be so fortunate as to secure her services for the coming year.

### North Wheeler

Minnie Sheffield has purchased a new wheel.

Monroe Brunson lost a valuable cow last week.

Mrs. John Welch visited Saginaw friends the first of the week.

Messrs. Butler and McParlin have Owen Ryan's barn nearly completed.

The people in district No. 3 begin to think that Sima Murphy will do a good job in the school house, as he has hired a first class mechanic from Midland.

### Averill

Wild strawberries are quite plentiful. Mrs. Wm. Allswede is on the sick list. Mrs. J. A. Gravelle was at the county seat the 9<sup>th</sup>.

P. Howe and wife of Larkin visited Averill friends last week.

Stevenson's Indian medicine show have pitched their tent here.

Miss Olivia Pawling and A. Beckman were Midland visitors Tuesday.

Miss Ada Cavelry of Midland visited Mrs. A. J. McMullen last week.

Miss Blanche Gunderman is visiting Misses Ruby and Jennie Monroe.

Nellie E See Hive No. 366, L. O. T. M., will give an ice cream social at Sanford the 24<sup>th</sup>.

Mrs. Motz, who has been visiting at A Zimmerman's, has returned to her home in Cleveland, O.

The ice cream social at the residence of L. Pawling Saturday evening was a social and financial success.

### HELP!!!

Diane Sutherland is searching for a picture of Brown School in Jasper Township, Midland County. If you can help her, please call 231-972-2769.

*Pioneer Record*

Midland Genealogical Society  
Grace A. Dow Memorial Library  
1710 W. St. Andrews Drive  
Midland, MI 48640



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### Information about Midland Genealogical Society

The MGS meets on the 3rd Wednesday of Sept., Oct., Nov., Jan., Feb., Mar., Apr. & May at 7:00 PM in the lounge of the Grace A. Dow Memorial Library, 1710 W. St. Andrews Dr., Midland, MI 48640. Visitors are always welcome. Watch the Midland Daily News or local Midland MCTV channel 5 for upcoming speakers, dates and times.

Membership dues are \$14.00 for single and \$17.50 for a couple and can be paid after July 1, but must be paid by Nov. 25, to continue receiving the Pioneer Record. Dues may be paid at any MGS meeting or may be sent to the Membership Chair, Midland Grace A. Dow Memorial Library, 1710 W. St. Andrews Dr., Midland, MI 48640.