



# PIONEER RECORD

Newsletter for the Midland Genealogical Society

Volume 30 No. 3

www.rootsweb.com/~mimsgs/

February 2010

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## Midland Genealogical Society Programs for 2009 - 2010

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

Programs for the meetings are as follows.

**February 17, 2010 meeting 7:00 Library**

**Lounge** "Sons of Union Grave Registration Project" by Rick Danes.

**March 17, 2010 meeting 7:00 Library**

**Lounge** "Conducting an Oral History Interview" by Geneva Wiskemann. Program with Midland Library.

**April 21, 2010 meeting 7:00 Library**

**Lounge** "Clark Historical Library Holdings"

**May 19, 2010 meeting 6:00 Carriage**

**House** Annual Meeting and Potluck. Floyd Andrick will be presenting "Burial Customs"

## The Mosquito and the Rideau

By Gloria Kundinger

Water migration routes across North America were the main arteries that carried immigrant settlers to their final destinations. The Rideau Canal in Ontario is the Canadian version of our country's Erie Canal. French-Canadian and Irish immigrant labor fought mosquitoes and malaria to build it. Besides being a commercial highway, it also played a historical part in the settlement of Ontario and places beyond its borders.

After the American Revolutionary War, many in the United States felt that Canada should also be free from British rule. The part of Ontario (Upper Canada) located along the St. Lawrence River from Montreal in Quebec to Kingston, Ontario was felt by the British to be a vulnerable area for a military attack. This area was a major route for shipment of goods and the transporting of settlers to the Great Lakes region of Ontario. It the event of war with the United States, this water link could be easily severed since the United States owned most of its southern shore.

Fixing this weakness became more imperative when a conflict between the U.S. and Britain led to the War of 1812. Even though Canada had not been affected by the war, a decision was made to remedy the "St. Lawrence River route" situation.

Surveys were done after the War of 1812 to determine a different, less vulnerable route from Montreal to western Ontario and the Great Lakes. The chosen route would go from Montreal via the Ottawa River to present-day Ottawa, Ontario at the mouth of the Rideau River. Going south, the Rideau River runs through several small lakes to the Cataraqui River that flows into Lake Ontario near the city of Kingston. Unless a canoe was used, the route could not be traveled completely

with a larger boat without building many locks from Ottawa to Kingston. Since Britain and the U.S. were now on good terms, the costly project had few supporters within the British Parliament.

However, the Duke of Wellington, a Napoleonic War hero and influential politician, supported the project and was able to persuade others to do so, too. This led to the appointment of Lieutenant-Colonel John By of the Royal Engineers to lead the construction of a viable water route through the proposed area.

In 1826 Lt.-Colonel By set up a camp at the mouth of the Rideau River that became known as Bytown and later was renamed, Ottawa. A group of dams and integrated locks were to be built to allow boats to travel unhindered from Bytown to Kingston. The original plan was for a canal with locks only big enough for small barges (22 feet wide by 100 feet long). Colonel By wanted locks that could handle larger ships (50 feet wide by 150 feet long and 10 feet deep; later 5 feet deep). He and the government reached a compromise to build locks 33 feet wide and 134 feet long that could handle ships like the new Great Lakes steam boats. The job was estimated to cost 474,000 pounds.

The design of the canal was done by Lt.-Colonel By and a group of officers from the Royal Engineers. Construction began in 1827 and the work was to be done by independent contractors. Each contractor was assigned to one of twenty-three sec-

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## The Presidents Letter

It is the time of year that our bylaws state when we start the process of selecting next year's officers. Three members have volunteered to serve as the nominations committee. The three are Doug Applegath, Walt L. Bennett Jr, and Wilma Diesen. Walt is the chairman of the group. The committee has the task of finding nominees for the expected vacancies and conducting the election in May.

Several of us have served as officers for a number of years and desire to be replaced. Any organization needs "new blood", new skills, new perspectives, new energy. None of the jobs are too hard and there are many retired officers to help.

If you have never served consider it and if you have, think about taking another term. Please give consideration to one of our offices and expect a call from a nominating committee member. If you wish to volunteer feel free to call a committee member.

Your board is discussing a couple of

possible new projects. Please bring your ideas to our attention as to how we can make research in Midland County easier and more productive or preserve information that could be lost.

On another note, the "Poznan Project" is an international project to extract marriage records from the former Prussian province of Posen which is in the current Poland. There are already over 460,000 records posted on the internet. I am extracting records from four Lutheran churches in my Linde-Werth line homeland - about 600 from 1835-1881. We found the marriage location for one of my wife's lines in Smogulec. If you have lost German or Polish families this is a quick and easy screening tool.

*MGS President, Bob Mass*

## MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Our total membership for the year of 2009-2010 is 122 including couples, so we are down 12 this year.

Remember to support the NARA project with your monthly donations to the NARA jar. Thank You.

*Linda Fisher, Membership Chair*

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## From The Editor...

We have some excellent programs lined up for the remainder of the year. We would love to have you attend. Do you have friends that are interested in genealogy? Bring them along.

It is that time of year that we begin our recruitment for new officers. We have several officers looking to step down. If you are willing to serve on our board, please help out the nominating committee by saying 'yes'.

For those of you that missed my presentation on podcasting, please check out [genealogygemspodcast.com](http://genealogygemspodcast.com). Here you will find podcasts from the Allan County Public Library. They cover some excellent topics.

A new television program that I would like to point out, airs on Wednesday nights at 8pm ET on PBS. This program began airing on February 10 and continues until March 3. Hosted by Henry Louis Gates, Jr., who uses the latest genealogy tools and dna to explore the family histories of 12 renowned Americans. If you miss an episode, PBS will make a dvd of the show available following the last episode.

*Walt Bennett*  
Editor

## GENE TOONS by Wendell Washer



Warning! Freshly dug graves can be hazardous to your body.

## MEMBERSHIP DUES 2009-2010

The collection of MGS membership dues for 2009-2010 has been concluded. Statements for the 2010-2011 dues will be sent out in early August 2010 and will be due by the first meeting in September 2010. Linda Fisher, Membership Chair, Midland Genealogical Society, 3772 N Meridian Road, Sanford, MI 48657. 989-687-9131. Dues for an individual are \$14.00, for a family they are \$17.50.

### Too much paper ?

When researching your genealogy, you find that you have a lot of paper accumulating which becomes very difficult to search.. There are ways to turn that paper into an electronic copy that is also searchable.

I use an inexpensive program called paperport that works with any scanner to turn your documents into a pdf file. The program also can perform an OCR (Optical Character Recognition) on the document making it into a searchable file. You can create folders and place these files in the folders. I like to have a folder of 'unknown' where I put newspaper clippings of persons who may be related but you can't place. This makes it easy for a quick review.

Walter G Bennett

### Gladwin County Historical Society

The Gladwin County Historical Society will no longer be receiving mail at 515 E. Cedar Avenue. The new mailing address is 221 W. Cedar Ave., Gladwin, MI 48624, which is the address of the Gladwin County Historical Museum. The Gladwin County Historical Village at 515 E. Cedar Ave continues to operate but mail will no longer be received at this address.

May we also take this opportunity to invite you to visit the new museum on Thursdays, Fridays, or Saturdays from 10 to 4.

#### New Books in the Gene Room

11th , 12th, 13th Michigan Infantry.  
(These books will be in the Michigan History with the rest of the set.)

### Library of Michigan Hours

The **Library of Michigan** hours are 10 am to 5 pm Monday—Saturday. Web site at [www.michigan.gov/libraryofmichigan](http://www.michigan.gov/libraryofmichigan). For information call 517-373-1580.

They are closed Nov 26-29, Dec 24-27 and Dec 31-Jan 3 for the holidays.

The **Michigan Archives** reference desk hours are 9am—1pm, Monday, Thursday, 1pm—5pm, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday. Their website is at [www.michigan.gov/archivesofmi](http://www.michigan.gov/archivesofmi). For more information call 517-373-1408.

The **Michigan Historical Museum** hours are 9am– 4:30pm Monday—Friday, 10am-4pm Saturday and 1pm-5pm Sunday, Their website is at [www.michigan.gov/museum](http://www.michigan.gov/museum). For more information call 517-373-3559.



## BOOKS FOR SALE

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.)

A collection of "Some Midland Michigan County Records" have been compiled and extensively indexed by Ora L. Flaningam. It is available in PDF format on a compact disc from the Midland Genealogical Society. The collection is mainly out of print books from our society, Harold Moll, and Ora Flaningam. Included are: "Midland County Cemetery Records" 1981, "Midland County Michigan Census 1850-1894 (1983)", "Midland County Michigan Obituary Index 1872-1927 (1994)", "Midland Pioneers", vol 1 (1999) & vol 2, "Midland County Michigan Probate Index 1850-1900", "Early Saginaw Valley History", "Bethany Indian Mission 1843-1855", "Bethany Indian Mission 1851-1868", "In the Wilderness With the Red Indians", "Account Book of Charles H. Rodd", "Indian Build a Birch Bark Canoe", and Index to First Families of Midland County". The cost of this CD is \$25 shipping included in US.

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

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tions of the canal. Each section measured 3 km to 47 km long. The contractors ranged from the well-known, Thomas McKay, Robert Drummond, John Redpath, and Philemon Wright, to contractor newbies. Such a large project offered a great opportunity to all in the business.

Two companies of soldiers who were skilled masons, carpenters, and smiths (known as Sappers and Miners) arrived at the request of Lt.-Colonel By. These 162 men were mainly used as peace keepers, overseers, and guards for the common pick-and-shovel laborers as well as the skilled carpenters, stone masons, quarries, and blacksmiths that were hired. These skilled workers were English-Canadians, French-Canadians, Irish, British or Scottish. Stone was quarried on site to build the dams and locks. Local blacksmiths manufactured the iron parts needed for the job.

Many of the common laborers came from the French-Canadian settlements of Quebec (Lower Canada). They belonged to some of the better-known contractors' summer labor force. These French-Canadians worked in the area lumber camps during the winter and were accustomed to hard work. Digging lock pits and hauling stones were all part of a day's labor for them. Since the lumber business was in a slump during this time period, many French-Canadians were available to work on the canal.

Predominantly Irish immigrants were also recruited to work on the Rideau Canal. They were new arrivals to Canada and in need of a job. In 1827, the failing Irish textile industry left many in poverty. They chose Canada as their new homeland and many arrived with only the tattered clothing on their backs. Lt.-Colonel By had to issue bedding to them so they wouldn't become ill sleeping with no covering.

About 4,000 common laborers and 1,000 skilled workers were needed to build the canal. The project constantly needed new workers to replace those who died of malaria. The wilderness woods and swamps were full

of black flies and mosquitoes which plagued the workers. The Irish immigrants were not used to the Canadian wilderness environment. Many became ill with malaria or other diseases and died or were disabled. No one knows exactly how many died while building the Rideau Canal, but an estimate is 1,000 workers. Half of them died of malaria. Several memorials erected for workers of the canal exist. One is near Kingston.

The 202 km (125.5 mi) Rideau Canal opened in the summer of 1832 and was considered a great accomplishment as well as a feat of engineering. Most of it passed through wilderness territory. It had 47 locks that had block houses and fortified homes for the lock masters in case of a military attack.

The final cost of this major achievement was considered low at 800,000 pounds (less than 4 million dollars) compared to what was accomplished. However the British Parliament reacted to this hefty sum by recalling Colonel By to face a board of inquiry. He was found innocent of any mishandling of the project and was never honored for his accomplishment in building the canal. He died in 1836 disheartened by all that had transpired.

The Rideau Canal became heavily used for commerce after its opening in 1832. Several dangerous rapids existed in the St. Lawrence River between Kingston and Montreal. The Rideau Canal was easier to navigate. Shipments of grain, wood, potash, minerals, and other goods came from Ontario's heartland down the Rideau to Montreal.

The canal also played a major part in the settlement of Canada. The opening of the Rideau Canal coincided with the years when large numbers of immigrants left Great Britain for Canada. Many immigrants settled in Bytown or along the Rideau route to Kingston. However the majority kept going westward to Hamilton, Toronto, London, and other parts of Ontario. Prior to the canal's opening, the trip inland using the St. Lawrence River was long and miserable. There were four portages needed, and those roads were in poor shape. Canadian officials feared immigrants would opt for settlement in the U.S. instead of making the difficult journey into the Canadian interior.

The early 1830s saw both routes in competition but the Rideau route eventually

won numerous travelers because it was more comfortable than the other. Half-empty shipping barges heading west were now used to transport immigrants to the heartland of Ontario. In a single navigational season, over ten times Bytown's population floated through it. This amounted to 30,000 people out of 44,000 immigrants who came to Canada in 1843.

The immigrant barges were pulled along the canal by steamboats. A pence per person had to be paid at each lock by the ship owners. This transaction furnished an accurate count of the number of immigrants using the canal. The Rideau route was the least expensive part of the trip—one third less than from Kingston to Toronto. It dropped further because of ship company competition. Land transportation costs were outrageous at four times more.

The Rideau Canal became less popular after locks were built in 1849 on the St. Lawrence River to navigate around the rapids. In the 1850s, steamships had more improvements that helped them navigate the remaining St. Lawrence rapids.

Little railroads came into being which worked well with the Rideau Canal for awhile to aid in transporting goods. In 1875 the larger railroads were formed but didn't cause problems for Rideau Canal commerce until the early 1900s when rail shipments became cheaper. After WWI, commercial shipping vanished from the Rideau.

Since the cost of demolishing the canal was too high, the Rideau Canal still exists. It is now used for recreational purposes as a waterway for tour boats, pleasure craft, sports fishing, and hunting.

Although it barely paid for its operation expenses, the Rideau Canal was considered a successful endeavor. The original reason for the canal being built was for it to supply the British military in wartime. It was never used for this, but it helped deter future military conflicts with the U.S. It was a successful commercial route and doubled Kingston's bulk commodity exports.

Its use as a migration route for immigrants was its most valuable contribu-

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tion. It aided in the settlement of Canada by allowing immigrants to more easily reach western Ontario and the Great Lakes. Indirectly it also helped our state of Michigan become settled since many of our early settlers migrated from western Ontario to various areas of Michigan to farm or work in lumber camps.

For those looking for ancestors who may have been canal workers, not much information exists. The McCabe List was a petition signed by 673 people in Bytown in 1829. Most of these were Irish canal workers. Their name, place of origin in Ireland, and relatives in Ireland who may want to come to Canada under the petition's rules were listed. Since workers were hired by the independent contractors, there is no master list of Rideau workers. Part of the McCabe List is online at the "Bytown or Bust" website. A book can be purchased from "Friends of the Rideau" website that lists all of the names in it.

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## **Eulogy to Member Past**

Wednesday, December 30, 2009 was a sad day for many of us “old-timers” in the MGS, when Nancy Lackie lost her valiant fight against the leukemia which had attacked her body in late August 2008. She will be greatly missed.

Nancy was a “thorough-bred” of Midland County. Probably many of you do not know that she claimed fame to nine “Pioneer” persons as part of the First Families of Midland Co., a project which the Society undertook in the early 1990’s. The earliest of these people in the county were her 4th great grandparents(7th generation) Rev. Francis and Polly Green, who had land recorded in Hope Township in 1863. Their daughter, Amanda Malvina Green Wilcox and her second husband, Charles Inman, purchased land in Lincoln Township in 1861. The latter family was on the 1860 census in Jerome Township. Another family came a little later and were on the 1870 census again in Lincoln. The family of J. Peter Raymond is also on the 1870 census. I believe all nine of these people lived their entire life in Midland County.

Nancy was also proud of her two Civil War ancestors who served for Michigan—J. Peter Raymond and David M. Wilcox. Her membership and officer duties in the Daughters of the Union were very important to her. David Wilcox’s father, Stephen, was killed in the Mexican War.

For many years Nancy was very active in MGS; She was program chairman, membership chairman, Michigan Genealogical Council delegate (each for a number of years). She also was part of just about every and all projects—the cemetery and census books, the obituary books, the First Families, and the 1983 MGC seminar. In 1980, Joan Somerville, then a reference librarian, put out a cry for help for a few people to work behind the scenes with our small genealogy collection, as more people were becoming interested in the hobby. Maine McCullen volunteered as ‘the Monday girl’, I was ‘Tuesday’ and Nancy became ‘Wednesday’. This same weekly schedule continued until just recently. How many thousands of volunteer hours would she have given in these 30+ years?

I cannot recall Nancy ever being off sick for any length of time until August 2008. Even after just a few months of chemo, she would say, “I’ll be back, don’t know when, but I’ll be back” (to the genealogy desk). She was so happy when that happened in Late January 2009, and we were very happy to see her and have her again at the desk. During the sixteen months, she was ALWAYS very positive and upbeat. She made herself a number of perky-looking hats to wear and was excited when her hair grew back in curly. As many of you remember, she was featured in an ad in the MDN for the Hospital’s Cancer Department, and I heard there was a huge photo somewhere in the Hospital itself. The photo was taken in the Library.

In the last eight years or so she lessened her activity in MGS and took on the Sanford Historical Museum as her big project. She loved making period clothing for the dolls in the collection, plus many

other duties (including opening up in the spring and cleaning), and really put the Museum on the map. She also was a big part of Founder’s day in September and held several official positions, including President.

I wonder if Nancy ever realized how many people she touched with all her activities and her willingness to initiate or help on any project. Many of us will always remember her friendly smile, her friendliness, her expertise, her generosity of time.

I for one, feel privileged to have worked as closely with her for thirty years when she was well; I know I also benefitted by being part of her “cheering section” for sixteen months when she was ill. Nancy, you are missed.

Jo Brines

## **51st Michigan Antiquarian Book and Paper Show**

This years show will be held on Sunday April 11 at the Lansing Center, 333 East Michigan Ave., Lansing, Michigan.

For those of you that have never attended this event, this is an awesome show that is sponsored by the Curious Book Shop. It features books, maps and many other things from over 80 exhibitors. I have found genealogy and local history books for sale as well as period maps which are very beneficial to genealogy research.

## Coming Events

February 21, 2010 "Genealogical Resource Gems at the HMC", Presented by the Jewish Genealogical Society of Michigan. Holocaust Memorial Center, Farmington Hills. Members No charge, guest \$5. Please RSVP at <http://www.jgmi.org>.

March 19-20, 2010 "Michigan in Perspective: Local History Conference" Presented by the Historical Society of Michigan. The Dearborn Inn, Dearborn, Michigan. More info at <http://www.hsmichigan.org/meetings.php>.

March 27, 2010 "Genealogical Society of Monroe County Seminar", Monroe County Community College, Building A., Monroe, Michigan. Paula Stewart Warren. <http://gsmc-michigan.org/>.

April 3, 2010 "Learning More at the Library of Michigan", presented by and at the Library of Michigan in Lansing. This year's topics are Effectively using Heritage Quest, Online Newspaper research, Ancestry Library Edition, Ontario Genealogy at the Library of Michigan Utilizing Footnote at the Library of Michigan, Vital Records on the internet. See more at <http://www.michigan.gov/familyhistory>

April 11, 2010 "51st Michigan Antiquarian Book and Paper Sale" Lansing Center, 333 East Michigan Ave., Lansing, Michigan. [www.curiousbooks.com/shows.html](http://www.curiousbooks.com/shows.html)

April 28– May 1, 2010 "Follow your ancestral trail", by the National Genealogical Society. TO take place at the Salt Palace Convention Center, Salt Lake City, Utah. For further information see [http://www.ngsgenealogy.org/cs/conference\\_info](http://www.ngsgenealogy.org/cs/conference_info).

May 6, 2010 "English Research", presented by the Huron Shores Genealogical Society. To be held at the Grace Community Church in Oscoda, MI. 1-3pm. Speaker is Edwina Morgan from the Library of Michigan. Contact them at [www.HuronShoresGS@yahoo.com](mailto:www.HuronShoresGS@yahoo.com).

August 18-21, 2010 "Rediscovering America's First Frontier", Federation of Genealogical Societies annual seminar. Co-hosted by Eastern Tennessee Historical Society and Kentucky Historical Society and will be held in Knoxville, Tennessee. For further information see [www.fgs.org/2010conference/](http://www.fgs.org/2010conference/).

### MGC Report

#### Faye Ebach, Delegate

Council met on January 14, 2010 at the Library of Michigan in Lansing. Mark Harvey, representative from the Michigan Archives reported that Rebecca Humphries was appointed to the director position of the new Dept. of Natural Resources and Environment. The Archives are now a part of that department. New public hours for the Archives have been reduced to a half day schedule – 1-5PM M-F.

Randy Riley, representative from the Library of Michigan, reported no change at the library yet. However, a 20% reduction in the 2011 budget is anticipated which will result in more reductions. New hours for the LOM are 10 AM-5PM, M-S. He also re-

ported that the death records on Seeking Michigan website are now 99.9% complete. The Abrams Foundation, long time supporters of the LOM and the Genealogy Collection has put on hold all donations to the LOM due to the current investment market.

Cindy Grostick, President of the MGC, announced that scheduled construction projects at the LOM has resulted in cancellation of the annual MGC Seminar that is held every fall, during Family History Month in conjunction with the LOM.

The Winter 2010 issue of the MGC Newsletter provides an update on the redesign of various websites formerly part of the now abolished Department of History, Arts, and Libraries. Many of these websites were favorites of genealogists and now have new web addresses. Since the list is rather long, please note the newsletter on the shelf in the Midland Genealogy Room at the Library.

Due to requests from member societies, the Council has scheduled an "Officer Workshop" to be held on Saturday May 15 in Lansing. Workshop chair is Connie Olson, [cbk53@hotmail.com](mailto:cbk53@hotmail.com). The focus of the workshop will be on programs and the office of society president, two topics selected via an online survey of council delegates. This workshop will be open to all society members, not just officers or committee chairs. Comments from the Council indicate that in the past, when Council annually sponsored this type of workshop, they found that program presentations, the exchange of ideas, and networking were very valuable to individual society members.

# A Look at the Decade: 1890-1899, Part One

By Juliana Smith

## Epidemics and Disease

As the decade opened, the world found itself largely in the grip of “La Grippe,” an influenza outbreak that would continue through the early years of the decade. [The Decatur Daily Dispatch](#) (Decatur, Illinois) of 7 January 1890 reported that the disease was widespread on both sides of the Atlantic, and that members of royal families across Europe had fallen victims to the disease. Another article from [The Atlanta Constitution](#) of 5 January 1890 detailed the epidemic’s effects in New York, Boston, Paris, and Berlin. While the flu pandemic died down by 1891, in February of 1892 a typhus outbreak in New York was traced to immigrants, mostly Jews from Eastern Europe, who arrived on the *Massilia*. Health officials raced to quarantine immigrants from the ship, both sick and healthy. This and a later outbreak of cholera in New York spurred the National Quarantine Act of 1893. The act put in place standards for inspecting immigrants, ships, and cargoes. [The Middletown Daily Times](#) (Middletown, New York) for 16 February 1892 included reports on the efforts to quarantine immigrants who arrived on the *Massilia*.

That same year there was also a cholera epidemic in parts of Russia and Germany. In Hamburg, 142,000 people (13 percent of the population) died of the disease.

## Immigration and North American Expansion

In the 1890s, 3,687,000 immigrants made their way to the U.S., primarily southern and eastern Europeans as well as Russian Jews who came to escape pogroms and Armenians escaping the Hamidian Massacres of 1894-96.

To accommodate the growing numbers of immigrants to the U.S., on New Year’s Day in 1892, the Ellis Island Immigration Center was officially dedicated. On that day, a fifteen-year-old Irish girl, Annie Moore, from County Cork, was the first person processed at Ellis Island. She arrived on the SS *Nevada* and was presented with a ten-dollar gold piece.

The first immigrant station on Ellis Island would last only five years. A fire

destroyed the pine frame buildings in 1897 and a new fire-proof receiving station reopened in 1900. During the rebuilding phase, immigrants were processed at stations in New York City. By the time Ellis Island closed in 1954, more than 16 million immigrants had passed through the gateway.

In 1894 there was a proposal to expand New York City, consolidating it with neighboring counties, and although it met with opposition in some of those counties, the vote in New York County overruled those opposed. Eastern areas of the Bronx were annexed in 1895 (western areas had been annexed in 1874), and in 1898 the boroughs of Brooklyn (Kings County), Queens (Queens County), and Richmond (Richmond County) were consolidated with Manhattan (New York County) and the Bronx (Bronx County) to form Greater New York.

The independent Kingdom of Hawaii was invaded by United States Marines in 1893 and its Queen Lili’uokalani surrendered her throne to a provisional government made up of white sugar plantation owners. The U.S. annexed Hawaii in 1898 despite a petition protesting the move that was signed by more than half of the Hawaiian population.

The western U.S. was becoming more populous and in 1890, the U.S. Census counted 62,979,766 people. Unfortunately, in 1921 a basement fire in the Commerce Building in Washington, D.C. destroyed most of the 1890 federal census. Ancestry.com has created a census substitute, which includes the surviving census fragments, state censuses, city and county directories, voter lists, and alumni directories from 1890 and surrounding years.

That same year Idaho was admitted as the 44th state. The western division of the U.S. still had the lowest population of all areas of the country with only 3,027,613 people enumerated in the states of Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, Nevada, Idaho, Washington, Oregon, and California. The majority of the population was centered in the

Midwestern states. Nearly 65 percent of the population still lived in rural areas, while only a bit more than 35 percent lived in urban areas.

In Utah, strides were taken for women’s rights as suffrage was granted to women for the second time. It had originally been granted by the territorial legislature in 1870, but Congress revoked that right with the Edmunds-Tucker anti-polygamy Act in 1887. The Utah State Constitution restored women’s suffrage in Utah on 5 November 1895 with the provision that “the rights of citizens of the State of Utah to vote and hold office shall not be denied or abridged on account of sex.” Two months later, on 4 January 1896, Utah became the 45th state to join the Union. The news prompted a celebration, with business suspended in Salt Lake City.

In 1893, Colorado women won the right to vote by election as well.

In 1897, small tent towns began springing up in Seattle following the arrival of prospectors whose tales of gold from the Yukon Territory ignited the Klondike Gold Rush. Gold seekers would face a long and



dangerous trek through some of the most difficult terrain and weather conditions, only to find that most of the most valuable gold field claims had already been staked. Writer Jack London was among those who sailed to join the rush and it was his experiences in the Klondike that fueled books that helped him make his fortune through writing. The following year, the Yukon Territory of Canada was established with Dawson City as its capital.

(From *Ancestry Weekly Discovery*, Feb 8, 2010)



## Looking Back in Midland County

Taken from *Portrait and Biographical Album of Midland County, Michigan* (pub. 1884)

### Biography of Byron Burch

Byron Burch, attorney, at Midland, was born Oct. 12, 1850, in London, Canada. His father, Lewis Burch, was born in the state of New York, Aug. 8, 1825. He was a farmer and bridge-builder, and died Nov. 26, 1860. The mother, Julia (Freeman) Burch, was born Aug. 15, 1826, and is yet living, in London, Canada.

Mr. Burch came to St. Clair Co., Mich., in his boyhood on a visit to friends, and several repetitions of his visit awakened in him a liking for the regulations and customs in that section of the Peninsular State, and he finally came to Brockway and engaged one year in teaching in the vicinity. He taught one winter near Lakeport in the same county, and went thence to Ypsilanti, for the purpose of obtaining the advantages of the State Normal School. He studied there three terms, alternating each with teaching. He went next to Amadore, Sanilac County, where he taught school one year. He also operated in a like capacity at Ruby, St. Clair County, and returned to Amadore, teaching a year at each place. As opportunity had served, he had passed considerable time in reading law with Messers. Devine & Wexon, of Lexington, and also at Port Huron. In the fall of 1875 he went to Ann Arbor, where he entered the Law Department of the University and completed the required course of study. He came to Midland in the spring of 1876 and became associated with M. H. Stanford, with whom he remained until the fall

of 1877, when he opened his present office. Meanwhile, in September, 1876, he was admitted to practice in the State Courts of Michigan at Port Huron. His legal practice is extended and prosperous, and he combines therewith transactions in real estate and operates as an insurance agent, representing the following companies: Fire Association and Insurance Company of North America at Philadelphia, Traders' of Chicago, Northern Insurance and Norwich Union of England, and the Grand Rapids Insurance Company. Associated with Dr. W. E. Burtless, he owns upwards of 2,000 acres of land in Larkin Township, and has other heavy real estate interests. In 1878 he acted as Attorney and Clerk of the village of Midland. He is a member of the Masonic Order.

The marriage of Mr. Burch to Lena Cline occurred June 15, 1872, at Port Huron. The three children which constituted the issue of this marriage were born as follows: Lewis, June 6, 1874, at Amadore; Floyd, June 8, 1876; Edna was born Jan. 8, 1881, and died Sept. 1, 1882. The two youngest were born at Midland.

Taken From *The Midland Sun* January 8, 1897 p. 8

#### Sanford

Frank Alswede is learning telegraphy.

W. H. Peck is at Saginaw this week on business.

Geo. Richardson of Midland spent Sunday in town.

Joseph Openo and family have moved back to this place.

Miss Bena Peterson of Saginaw is visiting her parents here for a few days.

Mr. Mead of Wyandotte has commenced the erection of a house on his farm here.

Nearly all traffic on the roads is stopped on account of high water. It is going down now.

Miss Eva Holmes, formerly (a) teacher in the Thornton school, will commence teaching in Hope township Monday.

The party given New Year's eve at the residence of Frank Dower for the benefit of the Catholic church was a success; 42 numbers were out. The quilt raffle netted \$10.

Anson Sanford Post No. 44, G. A. R. installed the following officers for (the) ensuing year: C., John M. Howe; S. V. C., John F. Briggs; J. V. C., Louis J. Utter; A., John Verity; Chap., N. W. Ellsworth; S., Miles Flowers; Q., Geo. Allswede; O. D., Geo England; O. G., Frank LaFlamme; S. M., Ed Randall; Q. M. S., Joseph Campbell; representative to (the) national encampment, John Verity; alternate, John M. Briggs.

Anson Sanford W. R. C. No. 176, Dep. of Michigan, installed the following officers on Saturday. Several members of (the) Midland Post and W. R. C. were present. Dinner was served and a good time enjoyed by all: President, Mrs. Mary E. Lane; S. V. P., Mrs. Jane Francis; J. W. P., Mrs. Minnie Madison; treasurer, Miss Jessie Francis; chaplain, Mrs. Dora Allswede; conductor, Mrs. Etta Lacure; guard, Mrs. Paulin; assistant conductor, Lucy Campbell; assistant guard, Mrs. Laura Bishop; secretary, Miss Dora Howe.

#### Homer

Pine River school will close next Friday.

Mr. Knapp's brother from near Plymouth is visiting him.

Mrs. Laura Walsh and Miss Mabel Camp are quite sick.

The social at Mrs. Marsh's last Friday night netted \$6.10.

Mr. & Mrs. Francisco returned to their home last Thursday.

L. Sinclair sprained his ankle quite badly last Thursday evening.

Both the Windover and Fulmer schools closed last Thursday.

The M. E. ladies' aid will meet with Mrs. Wesson next Wednesday morning.

Mr. Bishop says he has bought the timber on the Gordon forty back of Mr. Serrine's and will prosecute anyone found cutting any of it.

*Pioneer Record*

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



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Pioneer Record is published quarterly (Sep., Nov., Feb., & Apr.) by the Midland Genealogical Society. Queries are free to members and should be sent to: PIONEER RECORD, Midland Genealogical Society, Grace A. Dow Memorial Library, 1710 W. St. Andrews Dr., Midland, MI 48640. We welcome genealogical material which would be of interest to the general membership. Articles to be included in PR should be submitted to the above address by the 15th of August, October, January and March.

### 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.