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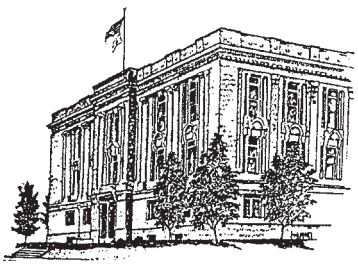

NEWSLETTER

Volume 41 Number 2 Summer 2021

Upcoming Meetings

MCGS is going to resume having meetings in 2022. The meetings for January and February will be conducted using Zoom. This will do away with any problems driving at night or with bad road conditions. If you would like to receive an invitation and link to a Zoom meeting, contact Mary Westerhold at **mtw127@gmail.com**

We will, hopefully, begin having our meetings in the Edwardsville Library Community Room starting in March 2022, assuming there are no more restrictions on public meetings indoors.

Check the MCGS website or Facebook page for upcoming meeting topics.

DUES! DUES! DUES! DUES! DUES! DUES! DUES!

Dues for 2022 are now being accepted. We would very much appreciate receving your renewal checks ASAP. Send your renewal checks to:

Madison County Genealogical Society
Box 631
Edwardsville, IL 62035-0631

Meetings and Publications

Meetings

We are looking for speakers, so if you have something you would like to present or know someone who would like to make a presentation, please contact me at **rwridenour566@gmail.com, 1-618-377-9096, or Robert Ridenour, 4814 Loop Road, Dorsey, IL 62021.**

Publications

We have been playing catch-up with the publication of The Stalker since early 2019. We changed editors three times, one printer went out of business, presumably due to Covid, and we had to find a new printer.

Since early 2020, we have published eight issues of The Stalker – 2019 Vol. 39 No. 2-4, 2020 Vol. 40 No. 1-4, and 2021 Vol. 41 No. 1, and have two more – 2021 Vol. 41 No. 2-3, in the last stages of preparation. We plan on publishing these last two issues before the end of 2021, and put out only three issues for 2021.

We will then start with a clean slate with Volume 42, Number 1 in 2022.

If anyone would like to receive The Stalker by email, please contact me at **rwridenour566@gmail.com, 1-618-377-9096, or Robert Ridenour, 4814 Loop Road, Dorsey, IL 62021**, and we will look into that possibility.

The Madison County Genealogical Society has a varied list of publications for sale. That list is on the last page.

Death of a Member

Victoria "Vickie" Fischer, 75, of Troy, Illinois, born Friday, April 12, 1948, in Highland, Illinois, passed away on Sunday, November 7, 2021, at Anderson Hospital, Maryville, Illinois.

Vickie was a faithful lifetime member of Friedens United Church of Christ, where she was active with the Women's Guild and the quilters. She was a graduate of McKendree College with a degree in Business Administration. She worked at Hawthorne Animal Hospital for many years. Vickie was a member of the Madison County Genealogical Society and the Troy Historical Society. She enjoyed flying in their plane, boating, camping, and travel.

Surviving are her husband, Thomas "Tom" Fischer, whom she married November 3, 1979, at Friedens United Church of Christ; her daughter, Rebecca (Mark) Emanuel; and her granddaughter, Evelyn Emanuel; her nieces, nephews, cousins, and many dear friends.

Visitation was on Thursday, November 11, 2021, at Richeson Funeral Home and on Friday, November 12, 2021, at Friedens United Church of Christ. Funeral services were held on Friday, November 12, 2021, at Friedens United Church of Christ, Troy, Illinois, with Rev. Tim Harrison officiating. Interment was in Friedens Cemetery, Troy, Illinois.

Memorials may be made to Friedens Cemetery.

New England & Maritime Canada: Some Differences in Record Keeping

By

Dr. Terrence M. Punch, CM, FRSAI, FIGRS, CG(C)

From Genealogical.com post February 2021.

Editor's Note: *The late Terrence Punch was the leading authority on immigration into Canada's Maritime Provinces. In this article Dr. Punch explains the differences in recordkeeping between the New England states/colonies and the neighboring Maritimes, which some future New Englanders used as a stopping-off point. Persons with Scottish or Irish ancestry should refer to Footnotes #1 & 2 below for more information about possible family connections in the Maritimes themselves.*

From the perspective of most of North America, the New England states and the Canadian Maritime provinces are near neighbors, sharing many cultural and genealogical similarities. Yet, an international border separates them and the story of their settlement and record keeping reveals some differences that effect genealogical research. Let's look at four of these potential stumbling blocks.

The first thing to remember is that the Maritimes were not part of Canada until 1867 or afterwards, which means that there are no records at the federal level until then. This gives Americans about a 90 year head start. The second point to keep in mind is that people born in the Maritimes or coming there from the British Isles before 1947 were British subjects when they sailed from Britain and remained so over here. The third thing to remember is that the pattern of government evolved quite differently. A fourth matter to recognize is that record keeping was not very assiduously carried out here and that, when records were created, they were not always preserved for posterity. Each of these facts impinges on what records were required and therefore exist to be utilized by researchers now.

These facts are so important that I will reiterate them briefly:

1. We have no federal records prior to 1867.
2. British subjects going and coming until 1947.
3. We have a different pattern of governance.
4. Incomplete records.

1. In the absence of the many federal records which are familiar in the USA, this means that there exist no national census records for Canada until 1871. Those in the States began in 1790. That means that you must look for census records created on the local or provincial level before 1867. There are bits and pieces of population reports, but there are few surviving province-wide records before Confederation. Prior to that date there were census surveys made in the 1770s for a few areas of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. An incomplete 1798. census of Prince Edward Island was published as an appendix to an out of-print history of the island. For Nova Scotia, one or two counties survive from the 1817 census, a bit more of the 1827 census, and most of that made in 1838. Again the 1851 census survives for just three counties. You can take some comfort in the knowledge that at least one census exists for each area of the province before 1860. New Brunswick did a nominal census – the first in the region – in 1851, but parts of that are lost.

There are also the lists of parishioners prepared by Abbe Sigogne in Digby and Yarmouth counties at various times between 1816 and 1844. Another census substitute is the poll tax lists compiled between 1791 and 1795 in Nova Scotia. These at least tell the names of men over the age of 21 in each district.

Canada's founding document, the British North America Act, mandated that a nominal census be taken in 1871 and every tenth year thereafter. Those for 1871, 81 and 91 are available online. The returns for 1901 and 1911 are also online. The transcriptions for all of these offer the option of viewing the digitized originals as well. The 1921 census has been released but in general can be viewed only at pay sites. Given the sloppy spelling, poor penmanship, and sometimes the quirks of the individual census taker, not to mention the illiteracy of many people in the earlier census periods, it is prudent, indeed

necessary to track a family through several decades of returns to ensure greater accuracy.

For the diligent seeker, there is recourse to petitions to the Legislature for various purposes. People sought funds for schools, roads, churches, lighthouses, and a dozen other reasons, and these are well worth the search. A road petition would have been supported by virtually an entire community and thus serves as a kind of census substitute. The heyday of this sort of petition was between 1802 and 1860, although these dates are by no means exclusive. The Archives hold some polling and voters lists which can be used for much the same purpose of standing in for a population return when no other exists.

2. An area where the difference between our two countries is most apparent is records concerning citizenship. Following its independence, the United States expected its residents to be or to become American citizens. In the Maritimes the issue did not arise until the late 1940s, except in two or three unusual circumstances. There was not the same emphasis upon a formal process of naturalization of foreign citizens, mainly because people from what is now the United States were considered to be already British subjects until 1790. The same was true for immigrants from the British Isles down to the twentieth century. The English, Scottish, and Welsh war brides after two world wars partook of the same British citizenship as native-born Canadians until the passage of the Canadian Citizenship Act in June 1946, effective 1 January 1947. People born in Canada were transformed from British subjects into Canadian citizens that New Year's day.

As a consequence, the only naturalizations that took place were those of some of the "Foreign Protestants" who wished to vote in the earliest elections for the House of Assembly. Whereas many among the multitudes of Irish, German, and British immigrants who settled in the United States followed the process: declaration of intent, petition, oath of allegiance, and final papers, such was not the case here. Consequently, there will be no helpful paper trail of this kind.

In practical terms for researchers, the different legal requirement, affected our record keeping in another major way. Little care was given towards keeping track of the passengers on the hundreds of vessels which disembarked emigrants prior to Confederation. By consulting publications such as my Irish and Scottish series and other books you will see at once that it is necessary to comb dozens of assorted types of records to find even a few indications of who came in which ship or even when they arrived here. Bureaucracy here had so cavalier an attitude in this respect that they seldom made lists and usually when they bothered at all, they saw no reason to preserve them.

A substantial portion of the Scottish Highlanders were put ashore at remote points along the coast by skippers who wished to avoid regulations and customs officers. A considerable part of the Irish arrivals before 1820 simply crossed over in coastal vessels from the Newfoundland fishery and carried on as before in their new location. Passenger lists survive for no more than 5% of the Scottish and about 8% of the Irish immigrants to the region before Confederation.

The third point is a different path of governance. Nova Scotia was founded as a royal province. Many of the thirteen colonies had been established by corporations, such as Virginia; by proprietary grants, as were Pennsylvania or Maryland; or by religious groups such as Plymouth Bay or Rhode Island. In Nova Scotia's case there was no lord proprietor, nor a tradition of townships, which elected their own officials and largely governed their local affairs. Control was vested in a governor and council appointed by the mother country. This model continued until the attainment of responsible government in 1848.

In 1759 Nova Scotia mainland was divided into five original counties: Halifax, Lunenburg, Annapolis, Kings, and Cumberland, but merely for administrative convenience, to permit the setting up of county land registries, probate courts and the appointment of local petty officials. Until the charter of Halifax as a city in 1841 there were no self-governing municipalities in Nova Scotia, hence there is not much to seek in terms of local governmental records prior to the 1840s. New Brunswick was part of Nova Scotia until 1784.

Nova Scotia and New Brunswick did indeed have townships, mainly in areas settled by New Englanders in the 1760s and 70s. There survive a number of useful township books, in which at least the births and marriages of the proprietary or shareholding families were recorded, along with such information as the earmarks of cattle and the like. Some books were well kept while others were not, or have been lost.

If you seek the sort of records possessed by many a town clerk in New England, you will be disappointed in the Maritimes. The governing establishment made sure that the townships enjoyed little self-government in any of the ways that mattered. Democracy in the political sphere was as dreaded as enthusiasm in the religious.

A major consequence of this record deficit has been to render church registers of much greater significance to genealogical researchers. The best served communities in this respect are Halifax and Lunenburg. In both cases, some church registers go back to the first settlement in the mid-eighteenth century. Apart from some Acadian French registers, fewer than a dozen church books predate the coming of the Loyalists in the 1780s. Speaking generally, Anglican/Episcopalian records are the oldest we possess. Since people availed themselves of the services of the only church around, the Anglican records frequently registered the baptism of children to parents who were any of several other Christian denominations.[1]

Congregationalism was largely supplanted after 1783 by the rise of Baptist and Methodist churches in the region.

Presbyterianism prevailed in some areas of Scottish settlement, while Lutheranism was strongest in Lunenburg County, Nova Scotia, settled by Germans. Substantial Roman Catholic congregations existed in wherever there were Acadian or southern Irish populations.

The fourth and last consideration to remember is the fact that Maritime records are a challenge to the researcher who seeks to find a wide variety of records upon which to draw for genealogical evidence. As already mentioned, the records of naturalization are scanty, passenger lists are scarce, and until quite recent times, the conservation of records was primitive, resulting in the destruction by mold, carelessness and abuse of a great part of the written heritage.

There is little sustained and dependable funding for historic matters. What is done tends to be piecemeal or directed towards one-shot projects rather than to the more mundane but far more important goal of finding, conserving, and preservation of records. Private individuals and small local societies have performed yeoman service in this field. Without those loyal volunteers and the professional staff of the Archives, the situation would be much worse. As matters stand, the researcher must use his or her ingenuity to sniff out documentation of use in the quest.[2]

[1]For a list of early church registers held at the Nova Scotia Archives, see Terrence M. Punch, *Genealogical Research in Nova Scotia,* new revised edition (Halifax: Nimbus Publishing Limited, 1998), pp. 70-82.

[2]Terrence M. Punch is the author of *Erin's Sons: Irish Arrivals in Atlantic Canada,* Vols. I-IV (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 2008 - 2010) , and *Some Early Scots in Maritime Canada,* Vols. 1-111 (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 2011-2012), both rich collections of source records.

Assessing Genealogical Sources
By
Thomas W. Jones, Ph.D., CG, CGL, FASG

Posted in January 2021 by Genealogical Publishing

[From time to time we have excerpted portions of the extraordinary book, Professional Genealogy: Preparation, Practice & Standards. Edited by Elizabeth Shown Mills, one of America's most respected genealogy authorities, and written by eighteen leading experts on the substance of genealogical research, Professional Genealogy: Preparation, Practice & Standards is a priceless collection of methodological guidance not just for professional genealogists, but for anyone who takes research seriously. "Assessing Genealogical Sources," by Thomas W. Jones, Ph.D., was taken from Chapter 12, "Reasoning from Evidence."]

"Sources are containers of information that may provide useful evidence. Assessing sources helps researchers validate – or invalidate – the evidence that a source's information provides. The first step in evaluating sources is to determine whether its creator intended it to be a narrative, an original record, or a derivative record:

- *Narratives* draw content mostly from diverse prior sources. Most include conclusions, interpretations, and ideas that the underlying sources do not state. Narratives are authored, but the author may be unknown. A newspaper's obituary, for example, may base an overview of a deceased person's life on information from informants and prior news items. It might or might not show the writer's name. Other examples of narratives include articles, family histories, lineage-society applications, research reports, and notes or transcriptions of interviews that provide hearsay along with the interviewee's direct observations. Genetic reports are narratives when they compare or interpret test results.

- *Records* draw content primarily from actions, events, and utterances – matters that the records document, report, refer to, or memorialize. As a rule, records include few, if any, interpretations or conclusions. A newspaper death notice, for example, reports the facts of a death, creating a record of that event. Records include censuses (recording names, residences, and other details), deeds (recording land sales), depositions (recording sworn statements), tax rolls (recording tax assessments, payments, or both), and vital records (recording births, marriages, and deaths). Records usually appear in groups and subgroups – a household in a census volume or series of census volumes, a paper in a collection of court or pension files, or a will in a series of will books or probate packets. In evaluating records, genealogists assess facsimile images as if the images were the sources.

"Genealogists mentally categorize records into two subcategories.

- O*riginal records,* which represent an event's first recording, regardless of whether it was made at the time or later, even decades afterward. Original records include artifacts (like gravestones and needlework), audio and video recordings, documents (like family and official records), and photographs. DNA samples and test results are genetic records. (Comparisons of DNA test results, however, are narratives.)

- *Derivative records,* which are transmutations of an original record. Derivatives include abstracts, keyboarded databases, indexes, transcriptions, and translations. Record images with hidden or modified information also are derivative records. Identifying a record as a derivative requires us to recognize what it may have been derived from, whether that record survives or not. Otherwise, the record likely is an original.

"Derivation processes add errors that original records do not contain. People creating derivatives do misread, misinterpret,

and mistype. Abstractors and indexers omit information both intentionally and accidentally. Clerks preparing certificates for third parties can misread and mistype. Authors of narratives introduce errors and omissions by misinterpreting and abridging their source materials.

"Because genealogists need accurate information to form evidence, we prefer original records over derivatives and narratives. If the evidence we assemble to support a conclusion includes no evidence pulled from information in original records, our conclusion is unlikely to be convincing. The most-credible genealogical proofs are supported entirely, or nearly so, by original records.

"Many sources provide information of mixed evidentiary value. Therefore, we avoid characterizing materials as "primary sources" or "secondary sources." Both terms give equal value to all information a source contains – higher for "primary" and lower for "secondary" – and thereby mislead the user. Applying "primary" and "secondary" to individual information items within a source, not to the source as a whole, yields a more precise and accurate assessment. It is more likely to produce reliable and useful evidence and conclusions.

"Genealogists also assess details of each source's physical characteristics, context, and creator. Like source categories, details have implications for the reliability of evidence formed from a source's information items.

"A physical assessment will address the source's structural integrity and legibility, spotlighting issues that might lead to misinterpreted evidence or wrong conclusions. Charring, fading ink or ink bleed-through on a page, deterioration of paper, plant or animal damage, and water stains may remove or obscure information—making a source harder to read or understand. Cross-outs, erasures, overwriting, and smears all suggest an inattentive record-keeper. Emendations and erasures indicate carelessness or imply fraud. For example, in a family Bible record an alteration that changes someone's age or extends the period between a wedding and a first-child's birth is suspect.

"A context assessment considers the source's history, which may bear on the validity of evidence formed from the source's information. This assessment addresses the source's purpose, provenance, storage, and protections from alteration. If the source was open to public challenge and official correction, its information's evidence will be more reliable than evidence arising from sources that only an author or recorder reviewed. Sources created for personal gain or social prestige are vulnerable to exaggeration or falsehood, diminishing the value of ensuing evidence. Understanding a source's purpose, governing laws, and regulations will help us glean evidence from its information.

"Source creators also affect the value of evidence their information provides. Corporate, governmental, and religious entities with impartial and trained interviewers, observers, and recorders do ordinarily produce more-accurate sources than private or untrained individuals.

"Tests of sources and information items will give us indications of accuracy but do not determine it. The value of these tests lies in their implications for our decisions and actions. Assessments will help us understand whether research is complete or incomplete. When it is incomplete, the assessments often show the course of action needed. If we have relied upon a derivative, for example, identification of that record as a derivative should prod us to seek the original.

"Source and information assessments also help us resolve conflicts in information or evidence. Sources and information with attributes of accuracy are likely correct. Incompatible evidence from sources and information that show few attributes of accuracy might be discarded.

"As researchers, we need to perform assessments carefully, routinely, and often mentally. The process begins when we consider what to include in a research plan. It is most intense while examining sources. It may continue through the stages of evidence assembly and hypothesis testing. Source and information assessment typically does not end until a proof statement, summary, or argument is in its final form."

Comparing Records: A Genealogical Necessity
by the late Terrence M. Punch

Wouldn't it be nice if all the records of our ancestors were clearly written by folks whose spelling was excellent and the records were carefully compiled and complete? In real life, everyone who researches the past knows or learns that " 'tain't necessarily so."

Having a run of four consecutive census returns from Guysborough County, Nova Scotia, handy, I dipped into these to find a family to exemplify some of the many things a careful researcher must watch out for.

The first issue struck me as soon as I took down the family group from the 1871 census. I had never heard of a family who wrote their name "Benawa." Only when I saw the origin as French did I realize that this was an anglophone census taker's version of the French surname "Benoît." Confidence in his spelling wilted as well when I saw Lemul for Lemuel.

Ten years later (1881), the family had increased by three children: Hannah, Annie and "Gorge." Daddy was Stepen, so the census taker was still not winning the spelling bee. For the first time in a census, we find the family given as Benight, which has become its anglicized form, and it is a good example of a surname "Made in Nova Scotia." If someone tries to sell you the "Benight coat of arms" call the BBB or the fraud squad, because there isn't one. The Mary of 1871 is

called Elizabeth in 1881, so probably her full name had been Mary Elizabeth.

By 1891, three further children had been born: Garfield, Gorden, and Martha. Mother is garbled as what can be read as either Jama or Jana, and daughter Mary Elizabeth no longer appears, most likely having gotten married in the 1880s. "Gorden" may have been Gordon, but, as we shall see, he may not have been.

If you have been following along with the chart (see below), you will by now have noticed some odd things going on with the recorded ages. If Stephen was 26 in 1871, should he not be 46 in 1891? Then again, if he only aged 17 years in 20, his wife beat him by only aging 15 years in the interval. The children are generally within a year either way, except for young "Gorge" who managed to be 9 in 1891 and got recorded ten years earlier as being 5 months old, born in October [1880]! Clearly the 1891 census has made a mistake, or "Gorge" died and George took his place.

The fourth census, that of 1901, shows the departure of Hannah and Annie, both of marriageable age, from the household, together with the birth of the youngest child Robena. Now we seem to discover that "Gorden" was perhaps not Gordon but Borden. Lemuel occurs with a separate household next door to his parents. I have shown him on the chart but not his wife Anne (33) or their children: Peter (7), Freddy (5), George (3) and William (7 months). They are entered under the surname Benight.

Space does not comfortably allow me to add a column for the 1911 census. By then the family are being called Benoit once more, the children Gorden/Borden and Robena are gone, and Lemuel and his wife have added Lottie, Alexander and Byron to their family, whilst Peter is no longer shown.

As you can see, following a family group through a series of census records not only gives you their names, but demonstrates the inconsistency of information in so many official records. Stephen's age suggests birth dates ranging from 1843/4 to 1847/9, while his wife Jane's birth year floats between 1843 and 1850. By going to another record, the death registry of the province, it appears that Stephen died in February 1912, aged 68, which is consistent with the birth date recorded in the April 1901 census: 12 September 1843. Jane's death record only serves to muddy the waters, because she died on 9 June 1927, reputedly 89 years old, so born in

The "Benight" Family of Wine Harbor, Nova Scotia

1871 CENSUS	1881 CENSUS	1891 CENSUS	1901 CENSUS
BENAWA, Steven, 26	BENIGHT, Stepen, 36	BENOIT, Stephen, 43	BENIGHT, Stephen, 57
Jane, wife, 26	Jane, wife, 33	Jana, wife, 41	Jane, wife, 57
Gilbert, son, 6	Gilbert, son, 17	Gilbert, son, 27	Gilbert, son, 37
Mary, dau, 5	Elizabeth, dau, 14		
Lemul, son, 3	Lemuel, son, 12	Lemuel, son, 24	Lemuel, head, 32
	Hannah, dau, 6	Hannah, dau, 15	
	Annie, dau, 4	Annie, dau, 12	
	Gorge Wm, son, 5m	George, son, 9	George, son, 20
		Garfield, son, 8	Garfield, son, 17
		Gorden, son, 7	Borden, son, 15
		Martha, dau, 4	Martha, dau, 11
			Robena, dau, 9
Comments Steven = Stephen Lemul = Lemuel Surname written as Spoken to the census Taker: "Be-na-wa.."	Comments Stepen = Stephen Gorge = George First census appearance Of the later anglicized Form: "Benight."	Comments Jana = Jane Gorden = Gordon Census uses original French name "Benoit."	Comments "Borden" seems to be the "Gorden" of the previous Census. The anglicized form "Benight" turns up Again.

1837/38. Given that her youngest child, Robena, was born in 1891, and the eldest, Gilbert, in 1863, I think it prudent to suggest that she was born closer to 1845/46 than eight years earlier.

This family, to which I am not related, was chosen at random to illustrate the importance of working back and forth between records to try to establish as accurately as possible the composition and vital details of the several members of a family. In the case of this particular family, we find the interesting sidebar that there was no fixed form of the surname until well into the twentieth century. Using a series of census records does let you build up a good idea of the family fairly quickly. Then comes the task of correlating what you have, and corroborating or debunking the details by delving in other directions. "Tally ho!"

How to Clean a Gravestone – Cemetery Preservation by Unknown

(Originally published in February 2013, this article is still full of valuable tips to bear in mind—before you go to the cemetery!)

In April 2012, I posted an article about cemetery research resources. This fall, as I visited cemeteries in both Massachusetts and Virginia, I was reminded how much I enjoy walking their paths, surveying the gravestones, and gleaning family information where I can. As I walked in a Virginia cemetery with a friend, she related a story of how, some years ago, the women of the church, concerned that many of the stones had become difficult to read or looked dingy, washed and scrubbed each of them with bleach. While the cemetery apparently looked wonderful after its cleaning, it is now noticeable that the polish on the many marble stones has been completely destroyed. (Any gravestone preservationist reading this anecdote has just suffered a metaphorical heart attack!)

Despite the cold weather and perhaps snowy conditions many of us are now experiencing, spring is coming, bringing with it weather more conductive to cemetery visits. So. here are some topics to consider both as you plan a cemetery visit, and while you are in the cemetery itself. (By the way, Google™ defines a gravestone as "an inscribed headstone marking a grave" and a tombstone as a "large flat inscribed stone standing or laid over a grave. Please note that in this article, I have chosen to use only the term "gravestone.")

First, do your homework prior to arriving at the cemetery.

- Purchase (or borrow from your local library) a copy of Lynette Strangstadd's *A Graveyard Preservation Primer* (AltaMira Press, 1995) and read it to become familiar with issues surrounding the care and preservation of gravestones.
- While you are noting the cemetery's address and hours, also identify the individual owner or the organization responsible for the cemetery, as you may need to contact them in order to gain access or to receive permission to clean a particular stone or even to photograph it.
- Gravestone rubbings have long been popular among family researchers, and you will find instructions in many locations on the Internet. However, you will want to determine if there are any laws in effect governing your ability to do so. These laws have been enacted at the federal, state, county, and local levels. For example, no stone rubbings are permitted in the national cemeteries operated by the Veterans Administration. At the state level, New Hampshire law states, "No person shall make gravestone rubbings in any municipal cemetery or burial ground without first obtaining the written permission of the town selectmen or the mayor of a city … [who] will ascertain to the best of their ability that the person making the request knows the proper precautions."[1] Michigan has published the *Michigan Historic Cemeteries Preservation Guide* which recommends against gravestone rubbing, stating that they are "no longer considered an acceptable practice because of the harm and damage that can occur." The article outlines the concerns posed by this practice, which are worth summarizing:[2]
    - Rubbing paper may tear allowing rubbing wax to come into contact with the surface of the stone itself. The residue of this wax may discolor the stone, interact with acid rain and accelerate the deterioration of the surface.
    - The edges of raised artwork and incised letters can be damaged by the pressure of the repetitive rubbing process.
    - The pressure of rubbing may exacerbate any previous damage to the stone surface and design elements.
    - The adhesive from tape used to hold the rubbing paper on the stone may leave damaging residue.

Create a "cemetery kit" to carry in your car. This kit should include at least some of the following:

- Gardening gloves; hat; umbrella; bug repellant; sun screen; water or drinks, etc. (These items are to help preserve you!)
- Brush and grass clippers; white nylon bristle-white handle brushes; white, non-lint cloths. Do not use wire or natural-bristle brushes, or those with colored bristles.
- Bottled water and a non-ionic detergent such as *Orvus Quilt Soap* or *Photo-Flo*. The former is a PH-neutral solution that, strangely enough, is used to wash horses,

but is also endorsed as a cleaning product for everything from gravestones to heirloom quilts. It can be purchased at many tack stores or seed and feed outlets. The latter is a solution, in what again appears to be a strange pairing, often recommended for cleaning photographic equipment as well as grave stones. Photo-Flo decreases water-surface tension, minimizes water marks and streaks, and dries uniformly. It can be purchased in camera stores. Do not use bleach or household cleaners.

- Camera; tablet or smart phone containing your genealogical files
- Small mirror – if possible, one the size that you would hang on the back of your closet or bathroom door, but at least 8×10."
- Notebook and pencils.

Once you are in the cemetery and have identified a stone of interest, and any necessary permission to clean or photograph it, you can do the following, which includes instructions on how to properly clean a gravestone:

- Assess the material out of which the stone was created. Depending on the age of the cemetery and individual plot or stone, these materials may include slate, sandstone, limestone, marble, granite, (and more recently bronze). Each of these types of stones has a different density or hardness measured by the Mohs hardness scale, ranging from limestone and sandstone as the softest and granite as the hardest.
- Assess the condition of the stone.
  - If it is flaking or sounds hollow when you rap it with your knuckles, do not attempt cleaning to prevent further damage.
  - Is it covered with dirt, dust, lichen, mold, fungus, or other such growth? If so, wet the entire stone evenly and then clean the stone in a light circular motion with a soft cloth. Use one of your brushes (gently) if growth or dirt needs to be removed from incisions or lines of artwork detail. Rinse well. While it may seem self-evident, do not use a power washer.
  - In your notebook (or on your tablet) note the location of the grave in the cemetery (street/avenue/path name, as well as row and stone number). In addition to the information on the stone, make notations of the cleaning efforts you have undertaken, including the date, as it is not recommended that cleaning be repeated more frequently than every ten years.
  - Photography is the best alternative to gravestone rubbing. Take several pictures of the stone, both close-up images and longer-range shots which establish the location of the stone in relation to its larger setting. If the surface incisions are difficult to discern, use the mirror in your cemetery kit. The mirror will help create shadows on the face of the stone, or conversely may direct sunlight onto the face of the stone, thus enhancing picture clarity. Do not use chalk to fill in the letters and numbers in order to make them more readable. Chalk contains materials such as plaster of Paris, which is non-biodegradable and can cause discoloration or further damage if not rinsed completely. Do not use shaving cream. This compound contains stearic acid which when applied can act like concentrated acid rain and cause significant damage to the stone. In addition to your stone photographs, also make sure that you have taken a picture of the entrance to the cemetery itself in order to document the location.

Further information is available online, including the following:

- *Association of Gravestone Studies*
- *Cyndi's List*
- *Gravestone Preservation Info*

[1]New Hampshire, Statutes, Title XXVI, Section 289.22.
[2] Gregg G. King, et.al., *Michigan Historic Cemeteries Preservation Guide* (Saline, Mich.: McNaughton & Gunn, 2004), 150-151.

Stalker Needs Articles

Due to medical problems, after the Fall 2021 issue, Vol 41, No. 3, Scott Delicate is relinquishing the job of Stalker editor and Mary Westerhold has agreed to take on that responsibility. We want to thank Scott for the many years of effort he has given MCGS in producing The Stalker.

The Stalker is in dire need of articles. We need input from all members. Send your contributions to Mary Westerhold at

mtw127@gmail.com