

Serving Calhoun County, Michigan, family history researchers
since 1988

President's Message

We are well into fall but just beginning a new year of meetings and programs in our Society. We have lost some officer's, (due to the time limitations of our By-laws), and we have gained some new. We have only one new to the Board. She is Cindy Wilson. Cindy is our new Corresponding Secretary. We would like to welcome her. Dave Wallace, our newsletter editor has also taken on the position of Vice President, and is busy working on keeping us all entertained and enlightened with some exciting programs. Anita Stuever, our Past President is now, also our Recording Secretary, Dave Ruble retains the position of Treasurer and I, that of President. We also have some very valuable Chairpersons on board. We divided the duties of Publications Chair to include: Sandy Redmond, Publication/ Webmaster; and Verla Potts as Publications/Printed Matter. Verla is also Chair for the Pioneer Certificate program. Other committees remain the same: Ilene Woodman, Membership Promotion Chair; Ruth Kaiser, Cemetery Transcription Chair; Cindy Kulig, Records Preservation Chair and Marlene Steele, Michigan Genealogical Council Delegate. I think we have a great team.

We will be calling on volunteers this year to proceed with our many projects. Sometimes I think we forget Our Mission Statement, which is:

To gather and preserve information of genealogical value
To encourage the deposit of such information in suitable depositories

To aid genealogists in the study of family history through the exchange of Knowledge

To publish and promote Calhoun County and other genealogical materials

With our Mission Statement in mind, I hope some of you were able to see our Family History displays at local libraries. A lot of time and thought went into these informative and creative displays.

We have planned a research trip to the Library of Michigan in Lansing on March 25th, 2006. We will be going to Lansing instead of Fort Wayne this year, as there was quite a bit of interest shown.

February's program will be presented by Kris Rzepczynski, from the Library giving us some help on how to use the Genealogy Dept. at the Library.

I encourage you all to bring guests to our meetings and hope to see you soon.

Judy Groat, President

Imagine picking up a history magazine and finding a story that might be about one of your ancestors. That's what happened with our very own Patricia Geyer. She was reading "*The Great Sawmill Heist*" in the January/February 2001 issue of *Michigan History* and had a feeling that what she was reading sounded familiar. What Patricia ended up doing was discovering some facts about one of the participants in the robbery of the Moiles brother's sawmill from the small upper peninsula town of De Tour, Michigan and writing a story which gives life to that participant, her grandfather, **WILLIAM OSCAR WILKINSON**. You can find this fascinating biography in the Sept/Oct 2005 issue of *Michigan History*, vol. 89 #5. You can read the original story that started Patricia's quest on-line at www.michiganhistorymagazine.com. It's a great tale that begins with 50 "tough looking customers" showing up to overhaul De Tour's only saw mill. Along the way, the town's solitary phone has its wires cut, a local youth makes a ride "rivaling that of Paul Revere" to Sault Ste Marie to use their one phone to call the sheriff in Chippewa county so he can stop the tug *Tom Dowling* and the 2 barges it's pulling from making off with the saw mill's machinery. The tug gets caught up in the icy Lake Huron waters and . . . you'll have to read "*The Great Sawmill Heist*" to find out what happens, then get a copy of Patricia's story "*Grandpa Helped Steal a SAWMILL*" to find out more about her "fiery" ancestor.

Thanks to: Juli Risener Morgan While researching Lunenburg County, Virginia records, I came across a death register... There I found a Joe PHILLIPS, who died 30 January 1867 at age 65. Cause of death is listed as "worn out." Previously published in *RootsWeb Review*: 21 Sept. 2005, Vol. 8, No. 38.

Buried in Wool

While doing research on my family (Buckthought/Verney) in England and Leroy, Michigan, I came across several references to "Buried in Wool". Being snoopy I decided to find out what it meant.

During the reign of Charles II (1630-1685) one had to be buried in wool. The law required a form signed by the officiating clergy and a witness, then given to the local magistrate within 8 days. The reason for this custom was that the wool industry was the chief source of wealth in Britain and people were encouraged to use wool in every possible way. (Linen was the typical cloth used for burial garments.) During this period there was a glut of home-produced wool. This law also demanded that coffins be lined with wool and the shroud had to be made with wool. Cloth was woven in many village cottages and was one of the oldest most useful crafts.

A special "Thank You" to Mary Lou (Buckthought) Gibson, Redding, CA, a descendant of James Verney, (1729-1886) and Elizabeth Buckthought (1823-1895) James was ordained a minister in the Congregational Church 1868 in West Leroy. He became a citizen of the US (from England) on 28 May 1896. Both are buried in the Congregational cemetery in West Leroy.

An Illegitimate Ancestor In Your Family Tree?

Old parish registers often reveal this information in various ways—sometimes in Latin.

"Ignotus" means unknown. Sometimes records say "nominee ignoto" meaning the father's name was unknown.

"Filius Populi" means son of the people. This reference often covers cases where the father was known to be a local man, but might be one of two men. It also can mean that the father was anybody's guess.

"Filius nullis" means son of none. This terminology was used in cases where the father was a stranger (in that parish) or the mother couldn't or wouldn't say who he was. If you find a record that reads something like "Johannes filius Mariae Jones et reputat (ur) de Johanni Smith", it translates to John, son of Mary Jones and by repute of John Smith. What that means is that the father either admitted paternity or that paternity had been proven.

If the record reads "Johannes filius Mariae Jones et reputat de Johanni Smith", it means that the mother claimed the father was John Smith, but he wouldn't admit it or else the case hadn't been settled.

A common way of showing illegitimate paternity in English records was to give a child his father's full name and his mother's surname. The idea was that if the couple married later, the mother's surname could be dropped.

Previously published in SCS NEWSLETTER September 2005.

Where We Were A Century Ago

The average life expectancy in the U. S. was 47.

Only 14% of U. S. homes had a bath tub, 8% had a telephone.

Alabama, Mississippi, Iowa, and Tennessee were each more populated than California. With 1.4 million residents, California was the 21st most populous state. There were only 45 states a century ago.

More than 95% of all births took place at home.

90% of all U. S. physicians had no college education.

Most women only washed their hair once a month and used Borax or egg yolks for shampoo.

The 5 leading causes of death in the U. S.:

Pneumonia & influenza

Tuberculosis

Diarrhea

Heart disease

Stroke

Marijuana, heroin and morphine were available at any corner drugstore. According to one pharmacist, "Herion clears the complexion, gives buoyancy to the mind, regulates the stomach and the bowels, and is, in fact, a perfect guardian of health."

Crossword puzzles, canned beer, and iced tea hadn't been invented. Coca Cola contained cocaine.

There were only 8,000 cars in the U. S., only 144 miles of paved roads with a maximum speed limit of 10 mph in most cities.

There was no Mother's Day or Father's Day.

Previously published in Van Buren Echoes Vol XIII No. 4 May 2005.

Check out this site: Making of America : Cornell University Library's contribution to Making Of America (MOA), a digital library of primary sources in American social history from the antebellum period through reconstruction. The collection comprises digitized pages of actual books and journals written during this period. Thanks to Judy Groat for passing along this site.

Walking Over the Vicar

Thanks to: Nova Gilroy in Perth, Western Australia
Seen in the porch of the Church of St. Mary the Virgin, Bishop's Lydeard, Somerset, England a panel to the memory of John Geal, vicar from 1714-1733. He asked to be buried under the first flagstone of the porch, saying:
"My parishioners have tried unsuccessfully to walk over me while I am alive; they shall not be denied this pleasure when I am dead."

Previously published in RootsWeb Review: 14 Sept. 2005, Vol. 8, No. 37.

Generations

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JOHN REESE

August 22, 1791 – April 26, 1871

My 3rd great-grandparents, John Reese and Anna Maria "Mary" Giltner, came to Calhoun County from Moore township, Northampton County, PA in 1845. There are many other families of German origin who migrated from the same area and settled in Calhoun and surrounding counties.

John Reese's birth was recorded as August 18, 1791 in a German family bible, but baptismal records show August 22. Research indicates his father Jacob Reiss was born in Philadelphia, and he was likely the son of an immigrant. Mary's grandfather had been a German immigrant to Philadelphia. John purchased farm land in Eckford in April 1845, and one of the witnesses to the deed was Mary's brother, Abraham Giltner. Sadly, Mary Reese died on Christmas Day 1845. John was never located in the 1870 census and no death records have been located in Calhoun Co., MI or Northampton Co., PA. However, he is buried in West Eckford Cemetery with his wife.

Although some of John's nephews (sons of sister Catherine Reese Bartholomew) came to Eckford, John Reese's siblings remained in Pennsylvania, except for his itinerant brother Daniel. Daniel had a wife and children in Pennsylvania, yet he fought in various wars including the Mexican War, and lived with a nephew in Marshall late in life. At the age of 80, after visiting several saloons on June 22, 1881, Daniel was struck by a train. The family would not claim his remains, and he was buried in Potters Field at Oakridge Cemetery in Marshall.

John and Mary Reese had nine children, all born in Moore township, Northampton Co., PA. Daughters Polly George, Catherine Reph and Lucy Rapsher remained there with their families. After Lucy was widowed in 1850, she came to Calhoun Co. with her children, some of whom stayed in the area, including James Rapsher, Mary Jane Smalley, and Clara Hoffman. Lucy returned to Pennsylvania with son William, who later served in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives from Carbon County.

The remainder of John and Mary's children migrated to Eckford with them. They are:

Solomon Reese (3/7/1822 – 12/12/1905), married 10/22/1851 to Diana Lazarus (1829-1923); daughter Lucy Hornbeck.

Susannah Reese (1/26/1824 – 3/14/1905), married 8/10/1845 to Daniel Deamer, two children; married second about 1860 to Christian W. Kinch, two children. The family later settled in Ringgold, Nebraska.

Michael Reese (3/22/1829 – 1/26/1907), married 1/8/1857 to Elizabeth Lazarus (1839 – 1916). Nine children: Peter J., John F., Julia Hinkle, Allen S., Christiana Bartholomew, Mary, Lewis Henry, Elizabeth Snyder, and Edna Butler.

John Reese (2/3/1832 – 10/26/1876), married 10/6/1859 to Mary Ann Williams (1841 - 1913). John committed suicide after he shot and attempted to kill his wife over marital problems. Seven children: Albert J., Laura Ramsey, Malinda Lazarus, George F., Mary Davis, Nellie Smith, and William.

(Samuel) Peter Reese (7/6/1836 – 11/11/1925), married about 1867 to Esther D. LNU, (1852 – 1932). Twelve children: William, Catherine, Samuel P., James, Albert, Jennie, Ada, Charles "Frank", Michael B., David Henry, Julia May Farmer, and Grover C.

George B. Reese (7/3/1839 – 9/28/1895), married 2/26/1873 to Ada Rozelia Fenton, (1856 – 1931). Private in 24th Michigan infantry, Civil War. Three children.



George Reese
1839 - 1895

George and Ada Reese were my great-great grandparents, and were married after George built a house in Eckford. They later heard about inexpensive prairie land from George's sister Susan Kinch, and left Calhoun County in April of 1880 to homestead near Lexington in Dawson Co., Nebraska. George's nephew Peter, Michael Reese's son, apparently accompanied their family.

George eventually became very ill, and in 1895 he and Ada traveled to Rush Hospital in Chicago where he was diagnosed with lip cancer. In addition to farming, he was a carpenter with a lifelong habit of holding nails in his mouth. Learning his days were numbered, George wanted to return to his childhood home in Calhoun Co. to see his old friends, and Ada accompanied him. His will was hand-written there on August 20, 1895, witnessed by brother Michael Reese and nephew James Rapsher. He died there the following month and is buried next to infant son Freddy in Oakridge Cemetery.

— Submitted by Shirley Reese Siltala, blueshighway@msn.com

The **Calhoun County Genealogical Society** has received a transcription of a diary written by Susan Errington in 1880. Like most diaries, it is a "day in the life of" this young girl living in Muskegon, Michigan. While not exactly Calhoun County, it is none the less an interesting look at what life was like in our area at that time. **GENERATIONS** will print excerpts as space permits. We wish to thank Myra Herron for the time and effort she has given in transcribing this diary and for giving it to us. *Thank you, Myra.*

**THE YEAR 1880 FOR
SUSIE ERRINGTON
MUSKEGON, MICHIGAN**

**INFORMATION TAKEN FROM A DIARY GIVEN
TO SUSIE ERRINGTON, WITH THE INSCRIPTION**

**"SUSIE ERRINGTON, A CHRISTMAS GIFT,
1879, MUSKEGON"**

Sunday, January 18, 1880 I have been sick all day and did not go to church or Sunday School. Mattie has felt better today. I have been studying S. S. lesson for next S. It is Mat (Matthew) 4, 1-11. Christ tempted of Satan. I am going to bed.

Monday, January 19, 1880 Written Friday. Was sick all day and did not go to school all day. Finished reading The Talisman, learned my Grammar lesson for next day, played Authors and mended my stockings in the evening. Went to bed.

Tuesday, January 20, 1880 Written Friday. We washed (word scratched out) then I went D. Goucher emptied 2 washed tubs. I got breakfast – ate it – washed dishes, went to school, carried an excuse to Mr. Gayley, Staid (sic) to Society after school.

Wednesday, January 21, 1880 Written Friday. Cousin A. & Clarence, Uncle G & Aunt M went to Mrs Gustin & Mrs Davis. Mrs. Collier was here after school. I lent her my Father's Talisman and Cousin Addie's umbrella.

Thursday, January 22, 1880 Written Friday. Went to school, was thoroughly provoked at G. Read, so was Mary A. because she wanted us to finish our story during work. Went to lecture, it was splendid. Theme. Homer wrot (sic) the story. Friday, January 23, 1880 Written Saturday. Was examined in Arithmetic, oral & written, in the morning. Uncle G. and Aunt M. came from Twin Lakes. I think Aunt Melissa the loveliest (sic) woman I ever saw or knew. She has done me so much good.

Saturday, January 24, 1880 Helped do up the Saturday work. Got ready for company, Mrs. Davies, Mrs Gustin, and Miss Gustin were here to tea. Miss G is very nice. She wears a wig. Mattie & Uncle G are playing dominoes. Received a letter from Belle Seamant this morn.

Sunday, January 25, 1880 Went to church this morning. The text was Psalms XIX 8-10. I did not like the sermon much. I am very tired tonight and not going to church. I wonder if I shall ever be a good girl.

Monday, January 26, 1880 This has been 'blue Monday'. Cousin A was cross. Mr. Houseman read our standing. I was 53, and he was cross, Gayley was cross and so was I. I don't know but I may have to go down in the Grammar School.

Tuesday, January 27, 1880 Clarence has been sick all day, better tonight. Uncle, Aunt went away today. It has been just lovely all day. This light is horrid.

Wednesday, January 28, 1880 Written Friday. Cold and windy. I don't remember much what I did except finish the ironing. Clarence was a little better. Mattie has the headache. I made one mistake in spelling. We had a nice long letter from Mother. They all write nice letters but Mother's are best.

Thursday, January 29, 1880 Written Friday. Cold, rainy and windy; a dismal day. I am learning to parse and to understand Radicals and Proportion. We went to Dr. Vester's for tea. I enjoyed it immensely. Clarence is worse has high fever.

Friday, January 30, 1880 A horrid day, rainy, cold and the winds goes clear through. Clarence is very sick with pneumonia. We had our paper read this afternoon. It was super fine. Cynie meant originally a littly (sic) growling, snapping cur.

Saturday, January 31, 1880 Written Wednes(day). Windy and raw. Mattie went to Teachers meetings from there to town, bought her a dolma (sic)(?) it is very plain and very pretty. I was sick after supper consequently did study much. (Probably meant did NOT study much)

Sunday, February 1, 1880 Written Feb. 11, '80. Clarence was very sick so that M & O did not go to church. But we did go to S. S. (Sunday School) and how we did enjoy it. My class did beautifully. Was going to Temperance meeting but could not because Clarence was so sick.

Monday, February 2, 1880 Written Feb. 11, '80. Went to school, was almost sick all day. Came at night and went to washing. Finished it about nine. Studied a little and went to bed. I think it was a pleasant day but am not quite positive.

Tuesday, February 3, 1880 Written Feb. 11. My poor diary has been greatly neglected. I should have written this over a week ago. Wrote an application for a Bucktown School. Stormy day, I believe. Staid (sic) after school to our Society. Ironed when I got home.

Wednesday, February 4, 1880 I have felt better today. Came home to dinner, so did Mattie. It has snowed nearly all day. We were examined this afternoon in Grammar, don't expect to pass. Cousin Addie begins to look ---- (sic).

Thursday, February 5, 1880 Written the 11th. A horrid, dirty, squally day. Jeanie was not at school today, her little cousin is very sick and she stay at home to do the work. Cousin C has been away a week today. Clarence getting better. We are all so glad and thankful.