

The Newsletter of the
**Middlesex Genealogical
Society**

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MIDDLESEX GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

2015-2016

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Middlesex Genealogical Society was established for the purpose of helping those interested in genealogy to pursue the investigation of their family heritage and to provide guidance in research to that end. The society holds at least four meetings with a program and speaker during the year, has established a Genealogy Section at Darien Library and publishes a quarterly newsletter (ISSN 1936-3494). Annual membership dues are \$25 per individual and \$30 per couple or family.

Original notices of genealogical interest and queries are welcomed for publication in the newsletter.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Summer is coming! Time will be available to do all the things you have been putting off.

Time to write that family history for your wife's great-grandparents. Time to go on Ancestry.com at the library and find the ship your great-great-grandmother came over on in 1853 from Germany. Time to digitize those photos you got last month from your cousin.

Time to think about getting your husband's Y-DNA tested so you can better understand his deep ancestry. Time to start a Member Page on the MGS website. Time to find a German translator for your great-great-great-grandfather's music sheet that someone sent you after he found the name on your Member Page.

Time to work on that book your granddaughter gave you a while back that asks; "Grandpa can

you tell me your story?" Time to figure out whether you really are related to Grace Kelly back in County Mayo. Time to get organized.

Peter Biggins

Do You Know Who You Are?

By Toni Anastasio McKeen



Most of you have probably seen the TV program "Who Do You Think You Are?" As a genealogist, I do find it exciting that genealogy has become so popular, and that there are several shows and specials on genealogy now seen on TV. The more people that are exposed to the possibilities of finding their roots, the more they will be encouraged to learn about their families.

However, for anyone who is researching their family, you know that it is definitely NOT as easy as they show it to be. Famous stars walk into research centers and are greeted by genealogy experts in their fields, who open a folder and hand them wonderful documents, after doing all the hard, time-consuming research behind the scenes. The star gets to see (and sometimes handle) the old, faded yellow books, newspapers, and documents, and have those documents which are written in another language perfectly translated for them. Oh, to be a famous star and have it handed all to you! But is that what you would really want? (We do have to admit that naturally we all would love a paid trip to the mother country and be able to walk in the town of our ancestors.)

I truly believe that the joy of doing genealogy is found when, after many hours of trying, you finally come across the document you have been searching for. Call me crazy but I feel that the satisfaction and joy when that happens is worth all the time required. It becomes more personal and means so more to us when we have put in the effort. There is great satisfaction in being successful.

But don't we already know who we are? Most of us are descended from generations of humble, hardworking people with little education, people who worked at menial jobs or perhaps tended crops all day long in the hot sun.

We are descended from brave parents or grandparents who left all they had ever known, and everyone they ever knew and loved to brave a difficult crossing over the Atlantic to try to provide a better life for their family in a new culture and a language they didn't understand. Once here they often lived in crowded conditions in cold water flats and faced prejudices while working long hours to save money so they could send for their families.

We are descended from parents/grandparents who gave us a respect for an honest day's work, the importance of religion and education in our lives, the bond of family, and the honor of a handshake and a promise.

We are sons and daughters who had a chance for a better life because of the sacrifices our parents and grandparents made for us.

This Father's Day, let us pay tribute to those who came before us and thank them for their sacrifices and bravery. Their strength and determination have made us who we are, and enabled us to be what we have become.

So yes, I know who I am. Thank you Grandpa Gaetano and Grandpa Federico.

100 years ago, World War I was raging. Almost 50 countries were involved on one side or the other. What were your grandparents/great-grandparents doing? Which side were they on? Write a story about them and send it to the editor to share it with the members of the MGS.

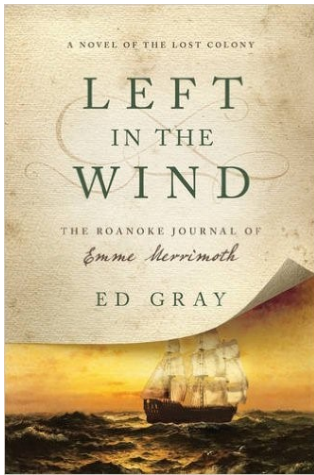
Meet the Author: Ed Gray

Written by Mallory A.

Thursday, May 26th at 7 p.m.

Ed Gray, author of *Left in the Wind*, will be our featured speaker.

Most Americans have heard the story of Roanoke, the first English colony. In 1587, 118 men, women, and children settled at the site, and then later vanished without a trace. They left behind only one clue: the word "CROATOAN," carved into a tree. But where did they go?



In *Left in the Wind*, Ed Gray offers one possible answer to this enduring question in the form of a fictional diary of Emme

Merrimoth, a real Roanoke colonist. The diary brings readers on the harrowing journey across the Atlantic that brought the colonists to America and into the difficult early days of establishing a colony in the untamed North Carolina landscape. As the colonists struggle to survive in a new land, Emme finds herself in the middle of a series of dangerous conflicts—both between the colonists and the native people of Roanoke as well as strife within the colony itself.

Left in the Wind is an engrossing work of historical fiction that studies both the grand mystery of Roanoke and the quieter secrets of one woman's life.

About the author

Ed Gray was the founding editor of the revered *Gray's Sporting Journal* where he discovered and edited the early fiction of E. Annie Proulx, Rick Bass and

many others who have gone on to distinguished writing careers. He subsequently founded Gray-books Publishers and Aisle Seat Books, where he originated and developed the concept of Movie Length Tales™. He is also the author of a dozen books of essays and other writings.

Books will be available for purchase at this event. Refreshments will be served.

Darien Library is proud to sponsor this event with the Middlesex Genealogical Society.

Tips

Collect signatures from immigration and naturalization papers, marriage certificates, death certificates, correspondence, real estate, employment records, union cards, bibles, WWI and WWII draft records and anywhere else you can think of. I use the "snip" tool on my computer to save each signature in a file for easy access. This will be an identifying tool to find ancestors. If you already have a signature, say from a WWI draft record, you can compare it to naturalization papers to identify or eliminate a possible relative.

Set aside some time to organize! Stop re-searching and standardize what you have. You may even find sources you located long ago as a possibility for which you since found corroborating records .

Revisit websites often and look for sources you have failed to locate online in the past. Sites like Ancestry.com, FindmyPast.com and FamilySearch.org are in a constant state of adding to their databases.

Reclaim The Records: The NYC Marriage Index 1908-1929 Goes Online

The following article is from *Eastman's Online Genealogy Newsletter* and is copyright 2016 by Richard W. Eastman. It is re-published here with the permission of the author. Information about the newsletter is available at <http://t.ymlp138.net/hbeavabbjarawyavau/click.php>.

The following announcement was written by the folks at Reclaim The Records:

The 1908-1929 NYC marriage index goes online for free public use

It took one Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) request, one modification of that FOIL request, one FOIL Appeal, one Advisory Opinion issued by the New York State Committee on Open Government, one "Article 78" legal petition filed in the Supreme Court of the State of New York, one legal settlement with the City of New York, 46 brand new microfilm copies created from the master films held in one city agency's vault and another two films from another city agency's vault, one portable hard drive full of high-quality digital scans of the 48 films donated by a kind non-profit organization, several days working in the headquarters of another non-profit to borrow their Internet bandwidth and hard drive space, and sixteen months.

But we did it. Today, Reclaim the Records is very pleased to announce that the index to the New York City Clerk's Office marriage records (the application, affidavit, and license) for 1908-1929 **is now online** and open for public use.

There are no logins required, no paywalls, no copyrights, and no usage restrictions. The index is now free and open data, forever.

39 of the 48 microfilms are now online at the Internet Archive, and the remaining nine films will be put online throughout the next few weeks.

Here's the link!: <https://archive.org/details/nycmarriageindex>

This includes (so far) 48 items scanned from 39 microfilms:

- **MANHATTAN 1908-1929**
- **BROOKLYN 1908-1929**

- **BRONX 1914-1917**

Coming soon are the final nine microfilms:

- **BRONX 1918-1929**
- **QUEENS 1908-1930**
- **STATEN ISLAND 1908-1938**

Details about how to join a new volunteer-led transcription project for these images, to turn them into a free online searchable database, will be announced shortly.

Quick notes and updates

- Our first court date in our Article 78 legal petition in the Supreme Court of New York against the New York City Clerk's Office, seeking the first-ever public copies of the 1930-2015 NYC marriage index under the New York State Freedom of Information Law, has been pushed back one month, to May 9, 2016. We will let you know how it goes.
- Our case to be reimbursed our attorneys fees by the New York City Department of Records and Information Services (DORIS, parent agency of the NYC Municipal Archives) is scheduled to have its oral arguments on May 25, 2016. We'll let you know how that goes, too.
- Last month, Reclaim The Records was one of the organizations that was a signatory to a letter to Senators Grassley, Leahy and Cornyn, all of the Senate Judiciary Committee, for the Endorsement of Immediate Passage of FOIA Improvement Act of 2016. Yup, Reclaim The Records is going to start getting involved in governmental lobbying efforts to improve FOIA and strengthen state Freedom of Information laws.

The start of the avalanche

Thank you to everyone who has supported us on this journey to make this dream of open records a reality.

And we're just getting started... There's more news coming soon.

Do you have comments, questions, or corrections to this article? If so, please post your words at the end of [this article](#) in the Standard Edition newsletter's web site where everyone can benefit from your words. You might also want to read comments posted by others there.

My 6,000-Year-Old Family Tree

by Peter Biggins

Since I started working on family history in 2002, I have traced my patrilineal line back to my great-great-grandfather Patrick Biggins who was born in Ulster in 1807. There was a Hugh Beggan in County Cavan who may have been his father, but I have no idea when he was born. So, I have only gone back about 200 years.



In 2008, I started DNA testing at Family Tree DNA, a company headquartered in Houston, Texas. I eventually found that my Y-chromosome DNA matched seven men named Biggins, Bigham, Beggan, Beaghan, and Little. It turns out that these names all come from beag, the Irish word for little. I also found out that the eight of us matched men with names that ancient Irish genealogies say are descended from three brothers named Colla, who lived in fourth century Ulster. This was all accomplished through a series of markers called STRs. An STR is a Short Tandem Repeat, or count of repeats at a physical location on the chromosome.

I also learned I had SNPs. A SNP is a Single Nucleotide Polymorphism, which is a change (or mutation) in the DNA code at a specific place on a man's Y chromosome. "SNP is pronounced "snip." I learned I had four SNPs: P312, L21, DF13, and DF21. These SNPs all occurred in that order thousands of years ago.

In the last few years, a new kind of Y chromosome testing has become available. It tests a large swathe of the Y chromosome. By testing a large swathe, many more SNPs could be identified, even ones that have occurred only recently. I ordered this new kind of testing when it first became available in 2013. I had it done by Family Tree DNA. They call the test "Big Y." Through Big Y, I have found 49 SNPs, including the ones just mentioned, that take my patrilineal line back 6,000 years.

SNPs occur in a single man and are inherited by his sons, and their sons, and so on. SNPs

are rare. They occur on average once every four generations, or 120 years. So, my 49 SNPs take me back around 6,000 years. SNPs occur randomly. Two SNPs can occur at the same time in one ancestor. Or there can be no SNPs for many generations.

Alex Williamson has created a "Big Tree" that reflects the results of Big Y testers and testers from a few other companies. His tree starts with the P312 SNP. As of March 2016, there were 2,342 testers analyzed by Alex Williamson who had the P312 SNP. Alex is an amateur genealogist with a PhD in particle physics. His Big Tree can be seen online at: ytree.net

The historical order of SNPs can be determined if there are multiple testers who have a SNP but only a subset has another SNP. My 49 SNPs fall into 12 groups that range in size from one to 20 SNPs. The oldest group contains two SNPs that were found in 2,342 testers. The next oldest group contains seven SNPs that were found in 1,646 of the 2,342 testers. We don't know the order of the two SNPs in the oldest group or the seven SNPs in the next oldest group, but we know the first group is older than the second group.

As the number of testers increases over time, the 49 SNPs (and the 6,000 years) will stay much the same. But some of the new testers will be found not to have all the SNPs in the group, thereby subdividing the group. The 12 groups will increase, and the SNPs per group will decrease.

DF21 is estimated to be 4,700 years old. So, prior to Big Y, I had 4,700 years of unexplained ancestry. That's a pretty big "brick wall." Through Big Y, I learned of eight more SNP groups that take me down to a few hundred years ago.

6,000-Year-Old Family Tree.

Following are the 12 SNP groups of my tree, with comments. Each group is named after one of the SNPs in the group. The labels include really rough time frames and rough places of origin. Time frames are based on the number of SNPs in each group, assuming 120 years per SNP. (The number of SNPs and testers on Alex Williamson's Big Tree are shown in parentheses.)

P312 Man, 4120 BC to 3880 BC, Europe.
P312 is the most common SNP today across

much of Western Europe. (2 SNPs, 2,342 testers)

L21 Man, 3880 BC to 3040 BC, Western Europe. L21 is sometimes referred to as the "Atlantic Celtic" SNP. (7 SNPs, 1,646 testers)

DF13 Man, 3040 BC to 2800 BC, Western Europe. DF13 is common among members of the Middlesex Genealogical Society: Pete Kenyon, John Driscoll, Don Cavett, and Len Christie. (2 SNPs, 1,547 testers)

DF21 Man, 2800 BC to 2680 BC, Isles. A December 2015 study by scientists at Queens University Belfast and Trinity College Dublin identified the DF21 SNP in the bones of a man uncovered in a Bronze Age cist behind McCuaig's Bar on Rathlin Island off the coast of County Antrim in Ulster. The man was named Rathlin 1. His bones were carbon-dated back to 2025-1885 BC, but he had six SNPs downstream of DF21, so we estimate that DF21 occurred around 2700 BC. (1 SNP, 261 testers)

S971 Man, 2680 BC to 2320 BC, Isles. (3 SNPs, 85 testers)

Z3000 Man, 2320 BC to 80 AD, Isles. This long stem, 80 generations, is a fairly unusual situation. So far, none of the men in these generations had brothers whose current-day descendants have done Big Y. As a result of mutations during this long stem, four unique STR markers evolved: 511=9, 425=0, 505=9, 441=12. (20 SNPs, 80 testers)

Z3006 Man, 80 AD to 200 AD, Isles. The great grandfather of the Three Collas may have been Z3006 Man. (1 SNP, 60 testers)

Z3004 Man, 200 AD to 440 AD, Ulster. The Three Collas lived in this time frame. They fought in the Battle of Emain Macha in 331 AD. (2 SNPs, 56 testers)

S953 Man, 440 AD to 560 AD, Ulster. Men with the S953 SNP appear to be descendants of Colla Uais. (1 SNP, 23 testers)

BY516 Man, 560 AD to 1040 AD, Ulster. Two BY516 testers can trace their genealogy back to Lt. Brian McDonald of Co. Wicklow, Alasdair Og, Somerled, and Colla Uais. (4 SNPs, 14 testers)

BY3164 Man, 1040 AD to 1640 AD, Ulster. BY3164 is shared by Mark Bigham, FTDNA kit N86783, and myself, FTDNA kit 127469. Surnames were adopted in Ireland for the first time in the 11th and 12th centuries. As a result of

mutations early in this period, one unique STR marker evolved for all eight in the Biggins/Beggan group: 413b=24. (5 SNPs, 2 testers)

17705431-C-T Man, 1640 AD to 2000 AD, Ulster or USA. Only I have this SNP so far. It could have originated with me or my known ancestors back to Patrick Biggins born in 1807, or an earlier Biggins/Beggan. It looks different from the others because no one has seen fit to name it. The eight digits indicate the location on the Y chromosome. The C-T indicates the mutation of a C to a T. Mark Bigham has three of the private SNPs, while I only have one. (1 SNP, 1 tester) For more on my 6,000-year-old family tree, see: peterspioneers.com/bigginssdeepancestry.htm

Technical Note on Time Frames. Time frames are based on the number of SNPs. The last SNP group has only one tester (me), making its one SNP unreliable as an indicator of time frame. For purposes of the time frame for the last SNP group, therefore, the number of SNPs for that SNP group was increased from one to three. This raises the number of SNPs downstream of the Z3000 group to 16, which is the number of SNPs downstream of the Z3000 group for all 80 testers with the Z3000 group of SNPs. By way of reference, Mark Bigham, FTDNA kit N86783, has four SNPs in his last SNP group. The time frames are based on the number of SNPs. The years per SNP are set such that the DF21 SNP group fits the carbon-dated age of Rathlin 1 Man. That number is 120.

Our thanks to **Chick Scribner** for the recent Inventory of MGS Library holdings. It consists of 17 pages and will be available on the website soon. Go to <http://mgs.darien.org> and click the Library tab. The last inventory was done in 2012 also by Chick.

TORONTO:

For Immediate Release

The **Great Canadian Genealogy Summit** (CANGEN) is pleased to announce their inaugu-

ral conference, to be held **October 21-23, 2016**, at the Courtyard by Marriott, Brampton, Ontario.

The Summit showcases Canadian genealogists who have an expertise in the record sets relating to the early settlers of Canada.

On Friday, October 21, we have arranged a day at the **Archives of Ontario**. And better still, for those with Loyalist ancestors who are mind boggled with the documentation required for your UEL certificate, former **UELAC Dominion Genealogist** Kathryn Lake Hogan will be offering a workshop at the Archives. Kathryn will share her expertise on what documentation is required and how to access the records **at the Archives**.

Our Opening Plenary speaker on Friday evening is genealogist and author **Jennifer DeBruin** who will share with us some of the struggles of our Canadian ancestors. This energetic talk will be followed by a social time. A time to get to meet fellow Canadian genealogists, an opportunity to get to know the speakers better, or browse the vendors/exhibits in the marketplace.

Saturday's programming offers five streams of research. Registrants are welcome to mix and match:

- **Ruth Blair** - who will talk on researching Irish ancestors
- **Mike Quackenbush** - who will talk on researching English ancestors
- **Louise St Denis** - who will talk on researching French Canadian ancestors
- **Kathryn Lake Hogan** - who will talk on researching Canadian ancestors
- **Christine Woodcock** - who will talk on researching Scottish ancestors

Sunday starts with **Louise St Denis, Director of National Institute for Genealogical Studies**, sharing her extensive knowledge on Methodology. THEN she is providing each registrant with a certificate for a FREE course at the Institute.

We wrap up the weekend with **Lynn Palermo, The Armchair Genealogist**, who will help us to get a better handle on writing our family stories so that our work can be preserved for future generations.

REGISTRATION for the full weekend is just \$159cdn (\$125 USD). Registration for the Saturday only is just \$119cdn (\$93 USD) <http://www.cangensummit.ca/>

All registrations include breakfast and lunch on Saturday, free access during the weekend to Findmypast.com, and admission to the exhibition hall/marketplace.

A Trip to NGS 2016 Family History Conference May 4 - 7 2016, Ft. Lauderdale Fl.

by Sara Zagrodzky

I went not knowing anyone. I planned all my classes and every lunch at the conference center.



I met lots of wonderful people. Two ladies from Oklahoma let me tag along with them when we weren't in classes. I met a woman from Stamford and a member of our MGS. I also met someone whose family built a cabin that is located in a historic park in Wisconsin. The

unique fact is that my family's memorabilia is housed at the same park!

What did I learn? It is fun to attend a genealogy conference. Don't overbook yourself! Meet people. I took a random track of classes but they all had to deal with organization, research strategies, and technology tools of the trade.

The War of 1812 Pensions Digitization Project, raised just over \$10,000 from the week at conference. I was not familiar with this project before I attended the conference. I have used many online resources in my research and see the value of digitized records for all researchers. These are among the most requested documents at the National Archives. Unfortunately, these fragile documents are in urgent need of digitization. With the level of use, these valua-

ble records, available in no other format, are in danger of grave deterioration.

7.2 million images are to be captured, 180 thousand files will be saved and over 4 million images are now available.

[Ancestry.com](http://ancestry.com) has generously stepped up and agreed to cover costs to digitize HALF of the War of 1812 pension records. So every dollar donated will actually go twice as far. At a cost of \$0.45 per digitized page, your tax deductible gift of \$45 would normally digitize 100 pages, but with the help of ancestry.com, it will digitize 200 pages.

War of 1812 twitter feed @1812pensions
5/13/2016 5:35pm

Preserve the Pensions <http://www.preservethepensions.org>

“Why pay money to have your family tree searched? Go into politics and your opponents will do it for you!”

Author unknown

LEAVE THEM SMILING



**2016
OCTOBER 1,
NEXT MEETING**

**Middlesex Genealogical Society
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