

MIDWEST HISTORICAL & GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

ALERT

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Library Hours:

Tuesday & Saturday

10 a.m. to noon

Inside this issue:

- Latest Library Additions
- Items of Interest
- Calendar of Events

EVERY CLOUD HAS A SILVER LINING

I believe, even though I have no real proof as yet, that my father was born in Canada. The story goes that he was "adopted" in Canada when members of the Brandt family from Barton County, Kansas, emigrated to Luseland, Saskatchewan, Canada in the early 1900s for a land-grant opportunity presented by the Canadian government to help populate a really big area that had too few Canadians. My "grandmother" Mary Brandt wrote to the provincial government after they had been there a few months, to ask if there was a child she could care for. My dad had been in a foster home that couldn't keep him, so he was offered to the Brandts, who happily accepted him. I know that this new family brought him back with them to Barton County, and that is where he lived until he moved to Wichita. When World War II came around and he went to enlist, imagine his surprise to find out that he didn't exist, not legally, anyway. The US government had no record of him. The Brandts believed that he had been naturalized with them when they had repatriated in the mid 1910s, but there was no record of this with the US government. Thus began a long relationship with the US Customs and Immigration Department, culminating in his official naturalization that took place in 1968. I know because I attended the ceremony and I have the certificate. He voted, owned a business, a home, and raised children in the United States. He retired, received Social Security, and died in the United States. I have documentation of most of his life after the enlistment debacle, and still-living relatives can attest to his loyalty to his faith, his country, and his family including the Barton County relatives that we are as loyal to as if they shared our DNA.

My problem with all of this, from my genealogist point of view, is his name. Documentation says that his name at the time he was given to the Brandts was George Thomas Carey. When they returned to Kansas, they called him Clarence William Brandt (Bill or Clarence to his friends) from about one year of age, and he had been baptized in Luseland, Canada as Wilhelm Brand. The Canadian government still referred to him as George in correspondence up until 1930, of which I have copies, so that shows that the Brandts didn't tell them about changing his name, but they were aware that he was in Barton County because the letters were sent there. Searching for traces of him in Canada reveals absolutely nothing under the George Thomas Carey. Those of you who research, do you see my agitation growing with this story? By 1915, there was a child living in Barton County who had three names already, or possibly more if George Thomas Carey wasn't his actual birth name. Since the Brandts changed his name without any legal documentation anywhere, it's possible that the foster home he was in prior to their receiving him may have changed his name, also. I have to accept that this part of the mystery may never be solved. In 2019, I contacted the Canadian government, sent quite a bit of

paperwork proving who I am, who he was, what I knew about his circumstances, etc., only to find out that they have no record of him and he was never legally adopted. A court search in Barton County showed that he was never legally adopted in the US, either. To my knowledge, he never had a birth certificate. Times were different then. Imagine trying to get through bureaucracy today without legal identification and with a potentially illegal adoption!

I'd be okay without knowing his birth name if I could just find a relative on his side, which brings me back to DNA. I have an older brother. He had his DNA tested to see if anything could be revealed about our father. Through DNA testing, we found out that his father isn't my father! We certainly didn't see that coming! We'll probably never know the details, except to say that my dad married my mom when she was 8 months pregnant, and not a word about it was ever spoken until we uncovered the secret about 3 years ago. Through diligent investigation, my half-brother found his birth father and has inherited a whole bunch of half-siblings through that side. Happy for him, I was devastated to find out that he couldn't help me find my father's relatives, until I realized that he could! My sisters and I are biological sisters, of this we are certain. We've all had our DNA done and I share nearly 50% with both of them. If relatives show up on our lists of DNA relatives that don't show up on my brother's list, they must be from my dad's side. What a way to turn a negative into a positive! My search continued.

Months later, I got an email notification that I had new DNA relatives on 23AndMe, which happens about once a month. So far, I have nearly 1400 DNA relatives on my list. I glanced through the list of new ones and a word jumped out at me from the page: Saskatchewan. Two of them had listed Saskatchewan as their residence! I'm sure you probably heard my shouts of hallelujah all over town! I was so excited, I couldn't wait to contact the new (3rd or 4th) cousins and see what they knew! After much jumping around and shouting, I sat down to email them and tried to temper my enthusiasm just a bit. The next day, I got a reply from them via email and they were just as enthusiastic as I was! This was going to answer my questions... I just knew it! I was elated! Because of the way that 23AndMe displays DNA relatives, I made a cursory look for my brother on the new cousins' lists, but I didn't see him on there so that just bolstered my elation. The Canadian cousins are actively searching for their relatives, too, so we agreed to work together and began a lovely long-distance relationship, sharing info as we get it.

The next day, when my excitement had calmed and I had time to scroll through all 70 pages of my brother's DNA relatives on the 23AndMe website, 20 people per page, each person requiring a click and some reading to see if they gave any personal info, I am sure you could hear my cries of frustration when, on the bottom of page 69, I found that my brother was indeed remotely related to my new Canadian cousins. I had convinced myself, when I saw Saskatchewan, that these were my dad's relatives, but no. To add to my dismay, my mother and her siblings had never ever mentioned anything about Canada in their back story. I realize now, after much research, that they didn't know about the relatives who had migrated to Canada. The connection between my Canadian cousins and my mother goes back to England, before some relatives came to Virginia, North Carolina, and Tennessee, and some went to Canada and this whole concoction started coming together.

As of today, I've hit a wall with researching my mother's people. I'm still working on that side of the mystery, and still trying different avenues of attack on my father's side. A friend recently suggested searching for birth records under the last name Carey in the states bordering Saskatchewan. It was worth a try but no joy so far. Another friend suggested writing back to the Canadian government and asking if there are any other records about foster children that could be searched for that time period, maybe searched by disposition rather than the child's name (since I can't even be sure what that was). I have yet to do that, but it's on my list. I'm not a quitter, but at times, this is all almost too much. My friends at Midwest Historical and Genealogical Society keep me buoyed and encouraged. I'll keep digging.

So, what did I learn so far from this experience? First, as in emails from Nigerian princes and most other things, if it looks too good to be true, it probably is. It's okay to get your hopes up as long as you don't mind if they're occasionally dashed. Second, Occam's razor isn't always right. This time, the simplest explanation wasn't the correct one. Just because someone is from Saskatchewan doesn't mean they're related to the people I'm hunting for in Saskatchewan. Finally, never give up. Ask for help. Get other opinions. It's okay to admit you're stuck and ask for other people's thoughts on the matter, any matter. Regarding that, my research continues. If anyone has any suggestions, comments, or if you've had a similar situation, please contact me through Midwest. I'd appreciate hearing from you. In the meantime, if you hear a distant "yahoo", it might be me, having made the discovery of a lifetime.

By Teresa Cansell nee Brandt, amateur genealogist

ADDITIONS TO THE LIBRARY

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| The Book Club Archives | Internal Network |
| The Bicentennial of the United States of America: a final report to the people | Online |
| Beckwith Notes: Marvin Beckwith and his wife Abigail Clark | Online |
| Wichita High School North Tower 1941 | R-210 SG 091 |
| University of Wichita Alumni Magazine | R-210 SG 225 V 1 |
| Wichita Consistory Scottish Rite Yearbook 1964 (S) | R-210 SG 226 |
| To-Day, Beginning, Yesterday: A History of Neosho Falls, Kansas | R-210 WO 06 |
| The English origins of the "Mary & John" passengers | R-260 065 |
| Historic Sites of Warren County [Missouri] | R-300 286 |
| Marthasville—Rich in History | R-300 287 V 1 |
| The Genealogical Dictionary of Rhode Island | R-420 015 |
| Elm Grove Cemetery Inscriptions, North Kingstown, Rhode Island | R-420 016 |
| Washington County, Rhode Island births and marriages from gravestones 1688-1850 | R-420 017 V 03 |
| Washington County, Rhode Island, births 1760-1860 from death /marriage records | R-420 017 V 08 |
| Newport County, Rhode Island marriages from probate records 1647-1860 | R-420 017 V 10 |
| Births, 1590-1930, from Newport Common Burial Ground inscriptions | R-420 017 V 11 |
| Newport County, Rhode Island births 1751-1860 A-J | R-420 017 V 12 |
| Newport County, Rhode Island births 1751-1860 K-Z | R-420 017 V 13 |
| Memoir concerning the French Settlements and Settlers in Colony of R. I. | R-420 018 |
| A History of Kingston, R.I., 1700-1900: Heart of rural South County | R-420 019 |
| The History of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations | R-420 020 V 3 |
| The First Seventeen Years – Virginia 1607-1624 | R-470 391 |
| Turff and Twigg | R-470 392 V 1 |
| Search for the Passengers of the Mary & John 1630 | R-610 121 V 01, 02 |

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Library open Tuesday and Saturday, 10 am to noon.
Email library@mhgswichita.org to make a special research appointment.
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| POWER-UP SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP Second Tuesday @ 1:30 to 3 pm Led by Julia Langel ON HIATUS | RESEARCHING THE HISTORY OF A HOUSE, BUSINESS OR A FARM Third Saturday @ 1:30 to 3 pm Led by Julia Langel ON HIATUS |
| PHOTO MYSTERIES Third Tuesday @ 1:30 Led by Rex Riley ON HIATUS | AFRO-AMERICAN SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP Fourth Saturday @ 1 pm ON HIATUS |

Midwest Historical & Genealogical Society

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