



EDGAR EVENTS

**Researching and sharing Edgar family
history No. 35, December 2009**



DNA Update

by James Edgar (Editor) (jamesedgar@sasktel.net)



There isn't much to report on the DNA front, but this might be good time for a short primer for the newbies among us on the subject of DNA testing and the results. So, here goes:

Our testing involves the Y (or male) chromosome, so females can't submit their DNA for testing. The female of the species has two X chromosomes, while the male has an X and a Y. The male's father contributes a Y and the mother contributes an X. In a female's case, it would be her male ancestor who contributed the Y chromosome to one of her brothers or an uncle, going back another generation. The female would only have her mother's DNA — two X chromosomes, neither of which came from her father. Here's a quote of great importance:

In human genetic genealogy (the application of genetics to traditional genealogy) use of the information contained in the Y chromosome is of particular interest since, unlike other genes, the Y chromosome is passed exclusively from father to son.

See also <http://www.smgf.org/pages/ychromosome.jsp>

There is a test done for women in which mtDNA (for mitochondrial DNA) is analyzed, but it can't be used to directly trace one's ancestor — only in a general way can it tell where one's female ancestors originated. See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mitochondrial_DNA

A good tutorial about what DNA actually is, and which describes some different testing methods, can be found at this site <http://www.scientific.org/tutorials/articles/riley/riley.html>

Here's what happens when a person (hopefully a male Edgar 😊) submits their sample for analysis. First the sample is simply some skin cells, scrubbed off the inner cheek with a cotton swab. Once the lab receives the swabs (three of them in each kit – redundancy is good!), the skin cells are analyzed as described at the Web site given in the foregoing paragraph.

Then the results (usually two or three weeks later) are published on the Web site. That's when we get to see how the person's DNA compares to those already posted. Another step taken by the testing lab (Sorenson Genomics of Salt Lake City, Utah, in the case of Ancestry.com) is to predict a Most Recent Common Ancestor (MRCA).

This MRCA value is to be taken lightly, because it is very rough estimate, entirely based on an algorithm(s) that averages the number of generations backward, depending on the number of average mutations per year, or per century, in certain alleles identified for analysis. The alleles chosen are those known to mutate fairly rapidly, that is, more frequently than, say, once every 10,000 years or so. DNA mutating that slowly would not be very helpful for recent mutations, because they wouldn't necessarily show up. We need to look at portions of DNA that mutate every 50 or so years. Or perhaps every 10 years. That way, we can trace those mutations in a group of the population, to see if they have the same or similar mutations, which could place them in a specific group, a so-called Haplogroup having a specific Haplotype (a contraction of "haploid genotype").

After many tests and much analysis at many labs over the past 30 years or so, it is known that certain Haplogroups originated in specific areas of the world. Thus R1b belongs to the Celts from northern Spain/western France; I1 stems from the Norwegian or Danish Vikings (see also Peter Edgar's contribution below), I2b1 peaks in Germany with a limited low frequency in Great Britain, E1b originated in the Near East and spread into the Balkans and the rest of Europe, and so on.

All that aside, having a paper trail – a genealogy – and an MRCA can be very helpful in finding one's relatives. Much is already known and we have much yet to learn about this fascinating subject. Stay tuned for more in upcoming newsletters.

Interpreting DNA



by Peter Edgar, Australia (peter.edgar@internode.on.net)

In addition to the DNA test done at Ancestry.com, I had a further one through Ethno ancestry in which one's results are submitted to Stephen Oppenheimer for interpretation. His reply suggested that my Y ancestors had moved from the Balkans up the Danube or other rivers to southern Denmark (now Schleswig-Holstein) and thence across to East Anglia and further westward and north into Scotland. Oppenheimer classified me as I1a 2'1, the largest (32%) subgroup of the I1a, as he still calls it. The chart he provided shows two English clusters of this type, the first in East Anglia and the second roughly northeast of the Welsh border. Then there is a "shading" up into Scotland, particularly on the east coast but certainly taking in Dumfries. There is also a lighter shading in the north (but only in the north) of Ireland.

Now when I look into it, Schleswig-Holstein is the homeland of the Angles of Angles, Saxons, and Jutes fame, the lot that gave their name to Angle-land (England). This says to me that my ancestors (always assuming that we are talking British ancestors) would not be Vikings but Angles, or pre-Angles (because Oppenheimer suggests that my group got into England 4000 to 5000 years ago, about the same time that the R1bs were getting into the British Isles from Spain up the Atlantic coast of France. Oppenheimer says that there were these two routes into the Isles, from the east and from the south and that the divisions then remained between the "English" and the "Celts."

I then came across a site called "Kings of the Angles" www.theangles.org, which theorizes that the Angles branched out from Denmark to Kiev and to the Volga and down into Bulgaria. They also went to Paris and to York where they were known as the "Parisii" (in both places). Now it would appear that the word "gar" (meaning thorn or spear) was an important one to these people. The Kings of the Angles site suggests that "Bulgar" means round spear, hence the name of Bulgaria and also of the "Volga Bulgars." Gar also appears in Germany and plenty of other places. All this suggest that the name Ed-gar might be a whole lot older than we thought.

I have been reading a couple of books, namely - Brian Sykes' Blood of the Isles and Stephen Oppenheimer's Origins of the British. The latter I have only just got and it is most interesting. Both are recommended.

My sense of my origins has always been that my forebears were "lowland Scots," that is, more akin to the English than the Scots (Celts), and strong Protestants rather than Roman Catholic.

Oddly, if as seems to be the case, James and I have a connection some 1200-1500 years ago, that would coincide with the arrival of the Angles on British shores circa AD 500-600.

[Ed. Here are some further thoughts from a recent email exchange...]

- There are Edgars of Suffolk, hey? On my Dad's mother's side, we trace our lot back to the Simperts of Suffolk (Bury-St-Edmunds)
- I'd say the R1bs are the non-Saxon Edgars. They are not the only Edgars in Scotland. The I2b1s are there for a start. Oppenheimer refers to the R1bs as the "Celts" but not in the sense that some of us have understood the Celts in the past. He says they all came from Spain and are the biggest part of the British Isles' population
- Bear in mind that the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes were somewhat related and "gar" seems to have been a name common to them all. "Ed" (rich, prosperous) is probably found in "Angle-speak," as well as in Saxon.
- I'm talking about the "borders" between England and Scotland, that disputed stretch of land into which the English were encroaching or the Scots were encroaching, depending on your point of view and whether you believe Mel Gibson in *Braveheart*.
- Crinan's roots would appear to be "Celtish/Pictish" etc., under the old (and Oppenheimer would say now discredited) 19th-century description. Oppenheimer is turning all this on its head, because the DNA is much more reliable than the outdated genealogical analysis.
- The "Viking" DNA refers to a circle of lands taking in Norway, Denmark, and others. People like Ken Nordtvedt have been saying that they can't distinguish between Viking and Anglo-Saxon DNA from this general area, which is why Oppenheimer's placement of me in "Angle-country" (Schleswig-

Holstein) is so interesting. Some time ago, I wrote saying that my set of numbers seemed to carry about three markers that Nordtvedt thought might be Anglo-Saxon, distinguishing that from Norse and Ultra Norse. From memory, James had a 14 where I had a 13, making him Norse but I seem to recall that the other two of his markers were also Anglo-Saxon rather than Norse, whereas I had all three as Anglo-Saxon.

- The Y chromosome is a certain guide. It takes you back through your father and his father, *etc.* Now admittedly, this does not include certainty about the names of these men, but it can show the progress of the generations from the Black Sea or wherever across Europe and into England. Furthermore, it can show a “most recent common ancestor” at an estimated point, indicating a definite connection, whatever the name. Your study has definitely shown your group links and the rest of us can say the same, irrespective of the name.

Don't know what it all means but it is interesting.

Peter Edgar

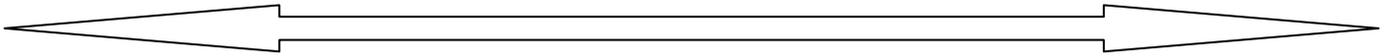


Figure 1 The glorious twin-spired cathedral in Armagh, Northern Ireland

EDGAR RESEARCHER'S REPORT



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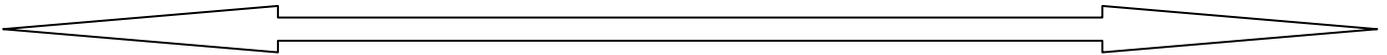
As always, Bill has been busy and recently compiled a large document of Edgar deaths in England. This 10-page report includes many early dates starting in the 1500s, plus the locations of burials. The National Burial Index for England is found here <http://groups.ancestry.com/site/35433882/files/view.aspx?iid=87047297>

Steve of Crewe, UK, sent more records for the County Down Pre-1804 Database and I will update the database shortly. Thanks to Bill and Steve. Also Thanks to GC Edgar and Elaine Leslie who have volunteered to take on my stacks of documents and get them in files at our Edgar ancestry.com site.

'Tis the season.....and I have waited all year to share this wonderful Christmas story with you. James Edgar, a Scottish immigrant, is credited as the first department store Santa Claus in the U.S. What an honour this is for all Edgars, and, as you read his story, I hope you recall your own childhood memories of Santa Claus!

Merry Christmas,

Sharon



James Edgar's Santa Claus — the spirit of Christmas



Brockton Public Library

James Edgar became the nation's first department store Santa in 1890. He was the owner of The Boston Store in downtown Brockton.

BROCKTON —

To the children, he was “Uncle Jim,” to fellow businessmen he was the big-hearted, wholesome man with a sound, hearty handshake and greeting. Today, James Edgar’s memory is alive in the spirit of the Santa Claus that he brought to life in 1890. “Children need to believe in the make believe,” said John McGarry, who continues the tradition in the spirit that Edgar embodied. After all, said McGarry, Christmas is all about children.

To Edgar, a Scottish immigrant whose dry goods store became a landmark in downtown Brockton, every day was about children. “I have never been able to understand why the great gentleman lives at the North Pole. He is so far away ... only able to see the children one day a year. He should live closer to them,” Edgar once said, according to Jamie Kageleiry’s account of “The First Department Store Santa,” that appeared in Yankee Magazine’s December 1990 issue. Edgar practiced what he preached, becoming “Uncle Jim” to the children he entertained in his store and at annual July 4th extravaganzas — renting trolleys to carry thousands of Brockton youths to holiday outings where he would dress in costume to delight them. “I love children and they love me,” he said in a 1902 interview in The Enterprise.

“James Edgar was a born showman,” Brocktonian Robert A. Kane wrote in his late 20th century biography of the person who would become the man behind the costume, “the P.T. Barnum of Brockton.” Through the years, “Colonel Jim,” as he was known, was photographed in a variety of costumes, from the historic — George Washington — to the sportsman — a cricket uniform — and even as an Indian — “Big Chief” for one of his annual outings for children. At Christmastime, Edgar would dress as a clown and walk through the store, visiting with children.

Then, in 1890, he brought Thomas Nast’s 1862 drawing of Santa Claus — jolly and round and dressed in a red suit — to life. In a custom-made red suit, the tall, ample-bodied and bearded Edgar became the first department store Santa Claus, a designation widely recognized today and about to be memorialized in a plaque in downtown Brockton.

That plaque will be dedicated at Main and Centre streets on Nov. 23, the first in a historic trail noting the city’s “15 rounds of history.” To John Merian — downtown businessman, president of the Downtown Brockton Association and a true believer in the spirit of Santa Claus — the plaque represents the significance of Edgar’s contribution to the department store Santa of today and to the memories that have been made since that day in 1890. Merian envisions a restored downtown Brockton as “Christmas Town,” where the holiday is celebrated 365 days a year and where Santa Claus lives on in the character that Edgar created. “Without his persona, the millions and millions of happy memories may have never been a reality,” Merian said. Those memories reach back to Edgar’s earliest days as Santa Claus.

Edgar, born in Scotland in 1843, came to Brockton in 1878 and died at his summer home in Lakeville in 1909, five years after he was partially paralyzed by a stroke. By then, he was known as “Brockton’s grand old man,” a businessman, family man and a man whose love for his community and the children would live on. His store was the first in the city to have electric lights and cash registers. He instituted the Edgar Layaway Plan. And, in 1906, he built the James Edgar Building.

Edgar shared his good fortune, paying for children’s medical care, offering jobs to youths in need and passing out pennies to children who came to his store. “He captured the very essence of Christmas in his philanthropic ideas,” added Merian.

By Elaine Allegrini **ENTERPRISE STAFF WRITER** *Posted Nov 15, 2008 @ 11:38 PM*

www.enterpriseneews.com/homepage/x1013044544/James-Edgar-s-Santa-Claus-the-spirit-of-Christmas More info and more pictures

www.southofboston.net/entreports/salute/index.html More James Edgar Santa Claus stories and a picture of a plaque dedicated to James Edgar

www.1stdepartmentstoresanta.com/ Picture of James Edgar as Santa Claus and lots of other info

Sentimental me, I just purchased the official James Edgar ornament for my Christmas tree in memory of my father, James Edgar, and my first immigrant to the U.S., James Edgar.

Sharon

[Ed. I received this short note after publishing the last newsletter, so I share it with you all. If you have any tips for Kimberly, drop her a line at kl.kelley@comcast.net]

Dear James,

My ancestry is as follows: My great grandmother is Jane Edgar (b. 1814), TN: father, Andrew Blackburn Edgar (1769-1849) NC, USA: grandfather, George Edgar (1750-1811) VA, USA: George Edgar, Sr., b. about 1704 in Carnac, Scotland and died 22 Oct 1755 in Bedford, VA, USA.

Has anyone contacted you regarding the George Edgar Sr. from Carnac?

I am a mother of 4 children and don't have time to read all the newsletters, but had a moment and read this one. I would appreciate if you could post my request in a future newsletter or email forward with my contact email.

Thank you so much!

Kimberly Kelley

George Edgar, Sr. was born abt 1704 in Carmac [Ed. This place name is unknown. Any help here would be most welcome.], Scotland. He died in Bedford, Virginia, USA. He was married to an Elizabeth who was born abt 1708. The three children I have found so far are:

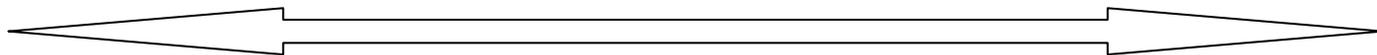
Their son was named George Edgar, Jr. who was born 1 Jan 1850 in Bedford, Virginia, USA and died 4 Sept 1811 in Jefferson, Tennessee, USA. He married Isabella Blackburn who was born abt 1760 in Scotland. They had three children:

- Andrew B. Edgar b. 1 Nov 1769 and died 1 Apr 1849 in Jefferson, Tennessee, USA. He married Agnes Jean "Jenny" Henderson. They had John, Mary, Andrew, Sam, James, George, Isabella, Peggy, Emaline and Flora. (I am descended from Jane)
- Mary Wilson Edgar b. 1778 in VA and died before 1860 in Jackson, Alabama, USA. She married William Patton 13 Aug 1796.
- Margaret Mathes "Peggy" Edgar b. 1788 died 12 Feb 1840 in Jefferson, Tennessee, USA

I am hoping someone else knows about George Sr. and his siblings or his parents and how to research in Scotland. Does anyone else have ancestors from Carmac? Have them contact me at this kl.kelley@comcast.net. Thanks so much!

Kimberly Kelley

[Ed: Since Kimberly wrote this note, I've suggested to her that "Carmac" might be Carnock, Scotland, near Dunfermline.]



Check out this newly placed list on the Ancestry.com site. It's the people who have had the DNA test done, with their contact details. We placed it only at the Ancestry site, so it is password protected, and not available to anyone outside our group, but it is there for the serious researcher. The file is available at groups.ancestry.com
Of course, you have to have membership in our group in order to access the list. If you don't already have such membership, contact me at jamesedgar@sasktel.net

The saga of the elusive Benjamin William Edgar continues...



by Steve Edgar of Weston, Crewe (steven-edgar@sky.com)

A couple of issues ago I related the story of Benjamin William and how he travelled from Liverpool to Yorkshire remarried, went to Birkenhead and thence on to Philadelphia. He was most elusive, almost as if he were on the run.

As usual, I was acting as “Hastings” to Mrs Poirot’s investigations (a.k.a. James’s wife, Jodie). One thing I must point out here is if Mrs. P. ever gets on your case, watch out! All your family secrets get found out and revealed in all their sordid glory!!

Anyway, it had started snowing in Melville and Mrs. P. couldn’t get out, so she decided to revisit Benjamin William. She found a Joseph Edgar married to Anne Stringer in Lancashire, also a marriage of Benjamin Edgar to “Margaret,” also in Lancashire some years earlier. After looking at the later census records, Margaret is shown as a widow, with son Joseph.

My Benjamin William was born in 1837 and his original trail only really started in 1878 with the birth of his son Benjamin in Selby, Yorkshire, by Margaret Anne Hunt. He was 41 by this time. We could never find their marriage certificate. When Margaret Anne died in 1885, he took up with Hannah Milligan, and had a child with her in 1887 in Birkenhead. He was now 50 years old, Hannah was 27. Again, no marriage certificate. The same year they left for Philadelphia, and had five more children, four of whom died. The strange thing is that the traditional family name was Joseph, and he did not call any of his children by this name. That is until Mrs Poirot started sleuthing around...

It turns out that Benjamin William married Margaret and had a son Joseph, in 1859, BWE would have been 22 years old. There is a gap of 19 years until the birth of his next child with Margaret Anne Hunt. This looks very much like the marriage of BWE and his wife Margaret continued, but she declared herself a widow when they split up. Divorce was out of the question due to cost and scandal. There are no traces of more children (yet!). This looks like BWE and Margaret split up, he took up with a “younger model,” and lit off to Selby, Yorkshire, out of the way. He then went to Bradford, and would have been close to some Edgar cousins, with whom he may well have had contact. After Margaret Hunt’s death, he left the area again and started a new life in the USA.

A lot of conjecture can be made about scandals, misdoings, bigamy, adultery, etc, and all would likely be true. It was only by the miracle of the Internet this story could be unravelled.

BWE’s first son, Joseph, travelled with his mother to Salford in the 1880s and was living around the corner from my family — they must have had contact. His mother is still down on the census as a widow, whilst her husband is very much alive with girlfriend #2 in Philadelphia. The reason we can’t find marriage certificates for Hannah Milligan and Margaret Anne Hunt is because they did not marry BWE, that would have been bigamy!

A story in my family has always been that Joseph Fox Edgar, my grandfather’s brother, was the “black sheep” of the family. This Joseph was born in 1902, he married Doris Rawson in 1936; Doris was a widow. What he did to become the “black sheep” I don’t know, but I suspect he might not have been the “baddy.” More likely it would have been his cousin Joseph, son of BWE. His father left him and his mother to fend for themselves, also, this

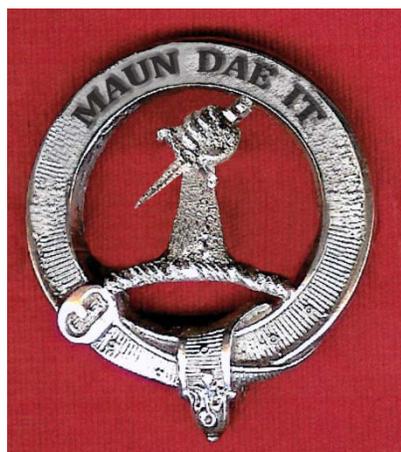
Joseph married a Roman Catholic - Anne Stringer – even stronger reason to be the “black sheep”; perhaps I have given the title to the wrong man?

Another controversy belongs to BWE’s sister, Sarah Maria, who married Joseph Fletcher. When she died in 1935, it looks like she died intestate, i.e. without a will; her two children had also died by this time, so her house and assets were split by the lawyers between the children of her four siblings. My gr-grandfather Joseph, her brother, had six children, so they would have each received a 1/24 share.

Significantly BWE’s family are not mentioned in the distribution at all, so it looks like all contact had been lost by 1935. There were some of BWE’s descendants still living, the Krickory’s in Philadelphia, who lost out on their share.

As usual, I owe a lot to Mrs. Poirot and her powers of investigation. It’s those little grey cells, you see.

Edgar Pewter Badges



The response to my last newsletter item about these badges was superb!

We have over 40 orders, so are proceeding with the production.

The price will be **\$18 CAD each**, shipping extra. Each pewter badge will have a substantial pin across the back, sufficient to hold a couple of layers of stout tartan cloth!

As I wrote earlier, I entered into a contract with the artist, **Mark Wells**, who will create a proof copy before the end of January. We will hold exclusive rights to the mould, once it is done to our satisfaction. I’ve already sent him a cheque for his start-up costs of \$230. Once we have recovered this start-up fee, any profits will go to our DNA Trust Fund to aid in future tests.

You may recall I also mentioned that producing buttons having the Edgar crest were a possibility. I haven’t progressed much with that, but there have been some queries totalling about 20 buttons. Let me know if you are interested, as we’d need orders for 100 or more to make it worthwhile.
