



## Toronto Family History Centre Bulletin 2015-34

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<http://torontofhc.blogspot.ca/>

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### Announcements

#### RockStar Genealogists

For the fourth year, John D. Reid has organized the "Rockstar Genealogist" poll on his blog, [Anglo-Celtic Connections](#). *"Rockstar genealogists are those who give "must attend" presentations at family history conferences or as webinars. Who, when you see a new family history article or publication by that person, makes it a must buy. Who you hang on their every word on a blog, podcast or newsgroup, or follow avidly on Facebook or Twitter"*. For the complete list of about 150 nominees, click [here](#). This list includes Toronto Family History Centre volunteer, **Linda Reid**, and our FHC's friend and supporter, **James F.S. Thomson**. Last year John tabulated the results in various ways: Gold, Silver and Bronze, Australia and New Zealand, Canada, Ireland, England/Scotland/Wales, USA, DNA, etc. I found the results very interesting. Vote before Saturday at noon EDT by going to John's blog [here](#).

#### Canadian Society of Mayflower Descendants Meetings

September 11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> in Yarmouth NS

The Nova Scotia Colony of Mayflower Descendants will hold its annual meeting in Yarmouth NS, beginning with a Friday night supper, followed by a day-long meeting on Saturday. Full details are available [here](#).

Saturday, October 17, at the Toronto Cricket Club

They will hold their annual compact meeting and luncheon. The guest speaker at this luncheon is Sue de Groot, who will be making her popular "Dead and Buried" presentation. Full details of this event are available [here](#).

### What's New

**FamilySearch** has updated or added to the following collections:

- Italy Enna Civil Registration (State Archive) 1866-1944 – Large browse only collection (837,000 images)
- Italy Arezzo Civil Registration (State Archive) 1314-1934 – Browse only (68,700 images)
- Brazil Rio de Janeiro Immigration Cards, 1900-1965 – Large browse collection (4 million); 2 million records indexed
- Ohio County Marriages 1789-2013 – Update (4.5 million records)

**Ancestry's** updates or additions include:

- London England Workhouse Admission & Discharge Records 1659-1930 – Large update (10 million records): I found one gg-grandmother in these records. At the time she was widowed, old and poor.
- Alabama Civil War Soldiers 1860-1865 – New (238,000 records)
- UK Civil Divorce Records 1858-1914 – Updated (76,222 records)

**FindMyPast** has added the following datasets

- Southwark, St Saviour's Grammar School Admissions 1690-1895 – New (3,500 transcribed records)
- Australia New South Wales Coffs Harbour District Schools - New (14,500 transcribed records)
- Ireland National School Registers 1860-1920 – New (142,000 records)
- England National School Admission Registers 1870-1914 – Large update (2.7 million records added)

See [FindMyPast Record Sets](#) for the complete description of the new records.

The **Irish Family History Foundation** has added the Roman Catholic parish of Thurles from 1795-1900 to its database at <http://www.tipperarynorth.rootsireland.ie/>.

## News from the Trenches

### Sometimes You Just Get Lucky – Submitted by Sue Reid

I'm researching a man who I believe is likely an ancestor of my great-great-great-grandfather Matthew Hudson of Blackhead, Newfoundland, born in the late 1700s. A man of the same name, Matthew Hudson or Hutson, was living in St. John's, Newfoundland, a full century earlier, and was recorded as living there in 1677 and 1681, but by the first decade of the 1700s, he was no longer there.

The Devon loyalty oaths of 1723 recorded a man named Matthew Hudson living in Topsham, Devon, which was at that time a seaport which regularly sent fishing ships to Newfoundland. Might this be him? Fortunately for me, FindMyPast has recently added images of the original parish register for Topsham, and there, to my amazement, I found this entry:

*"1696, March, The 9th day was baptized Mathew Sonne of Mathew Hutson and Mary his wife this childe was borne in Newfdland [sic] the 4th of September last."*

There is no other entry like it, anywhere in the parish register. I was lucky!

## The Forum:

### Questions.

#### Q2015/34/1. Ontario to Michigan?

My husband's great-grandfather was Valentine Kertcher, a German immigrant to Ontario who was born around 1836 (the 1861 Census has his age as 25 years). He married an English immigrant named Sarah Atkin in 1858 and lived in Milverton, Ontario, where they had 12 children. Perth history books call him "The father of Milverton." He built a "pretentious general store", a hotel, a mill, had a cheese factory and a barrel-making company. He became the Perth County warden in 1880, was the reeve in Milverton from 1873-75 and 1878-80, and the auditor in 1882 and 1885.

In the 1891 Census, his wife says she is a widow. I haven't been able to find a burial in Ontario, but there is one in Lansing, Michigan, of a Valentine Kertcher, born in Germany in 1841, who was married to Emma Kertcher, born in 1859. The 1890 US Census says she was born in New York. They had a daughter, Alice, born in 1898 in Lansing. On Alice's birth certificate, it says her mother was born in Canada and her father in Germany. Alice lives in the Lapeer State Home in Michigan, a home for "those not mentally capable of coping with life in the community." and dies in 1982 at 83.

The Lansing Valentine Kertcher is listed in the 1898 city directory as a commercial traveller, then in 1902 as an optician. His obituary in 1910 on the front page of the Lansing newspaper says he was born in Germany and resided in Lansing 18 years which would get him there in 1892. The 1890 census for Lansing City, Michigan says Valentine Kertcher has been married 8 years and was married in 1882. I can find no marriage record. So now for the questions: If there are two Valentine Kertchers, where was our Ontario one buried? If the Lansing Valentine Kertcher is my husband's great-grandfather, what proof is there that he left his wife and family, moved to Michigan and started a new life with a younger woman? I can't find anything connecting them in the way of proof although people have been recording them on family trees as the same person for a few years.

Strangely, when Sarah Atkin died in 1900, the Milverton Sun says she was buried in the Methodist cemetery and that she "married Mr. V. Kertcher." You would think that "The father of Milverton" would get more mention.

Sarah's will states she is a widow. Her property is valued at under \$800. Personal effects are under \$100. She also directs that any money left be used for the care and keeping of her daughter, Sophia Kertcher. Then too, where did the money go? Milverton didn't have a newspaper when Valentine lived there. The Stratford newspaper has nothing about any scandals involving Valentine Kertcher. So there's the mystery. Can anyone help shed some light on it?

## Were You Aware...

### County Archives Information Found on the National Archives UK

Researchers for the United Kingdom & Ireland can look for online records at the National Archives UK [Discovery website](#). **Discovery** holds more than 32 million descriptions of records held by The National Archives and more than 2,500 archives across the country. Over 9 million records are available for download. Many of you may have found pre-1858 PCC wills (now available on Ancestry) or military records and downloaded them. But have you looked at what you can find in those other 2500 archives. If you go to [Discovery's Advanced Search](#), one can look for references to names in county archives and some of the results can be quite informative. If they do not give you enough information, you can take the reference number with a view to following the reference up or not. Contact details for each archive are a clickable link on the reference page.

I tried this advanced search for a patron who was interested in the Powell name in Solihull, Warwickshire. In the advanced search, the words POWELL and SOLIHULL were entered in the "Find all these words" box, the Search Other Archive box was checked, and Warwickshire County Record Office was chosen for the Held By box. There were eleven references with descriptions found; the most interesting was this entry dated 1708: "*Marriage settlement of Richard Powell and Margaret Man: being a lease and release of a messuage or burgage now of Richard Powell with the appurtenances and free passage over 1 rood of land, Little Meadow, Streete Brooke Roffe now Leas, Gosty Close and a meadow*", a record in the Solihull deeds. This may be a good clue to the patron's many-g-grandparents.

Searching for my 5g-grandfather, Chevell, in the Cambridgeshire County Record Office, I found the following reference for 1777: *Settlement Examination: John Chevell, 22, tailor and wife Elizabeth. Born in Ely Trinity. Apprenticed to John Ellis of Thetford, Norfolk. Worked for William Topping of Littleport, tailor.* This verified John's birth place and the reason he moved to Littleport. [In the 1700s one had to apply to be allowed to settle or live in a place where you were not born. The new parish did not wish to be responsible for supporting you if you were unable to look after yourself. Obviously this young tailor was able to support his wife and child in their estimation.]

These little clues may not seem as monumental as finding the baptism for John or the marriage record for Richard and Margaret, but it adds a lot of detail to their family history. We know that Richard Powell was reasonably well-off and that John Chevell was a tailor who had apprenticed to two other tailors and had chosen to live in Littleport. Among the 32 million descriptions of records held in **Discovery**, I am sure that there are some gems for researchers here. (There are some archives for Scotland and Ireland included here as well.)

### Middle Names

Monica Kanellis wrote to the Bulletin about middle names in her family history: "Middle names from family surnames seem to come about 1800 in my family and have been helpful in tracing lines. I have John Garrard Finch (b c 1800), George Barber Osborne (c 1800 in Sussex), Colin Campbell McPherson (b. 1795 in Scotland) and John Lock Bowden (b 1795 in Devon). John Lock Bowden was illegitimate and later dropped his mother's surname of Bowden keeping his father's surname Lock, and George was likely illegitimate as his mother was a Barber and he is called in a family will "George Barber commonly called George Barber Osborne." So middle names might be helpful finding a father or mother." She adds: "I hunted for the latter's records for years under the name John Lock before accidentally turning him up in an entry for John Lock Bowden when FindMyPast updated their Devon records not long ago. He married once and had a daughter under the surname Bowden, but after that (two more marriages and the census) he is found as John Lock. Fortunately, he was from a small hamlet in Devon and was a blacksmith, so it was easier to piece it together than if there had been a lot of other Locks about." [Note that this is the second wonderful discovery in the Devon records on FindMyPast reported to the bulletin this week.]

Leslie Dorschell discussed naming patterns with Ken and me. She referred me to the German Genealogy Facebook page which had some interesting comments: *My family members from Mecklenburg and Brandenburg had 4 names; my other family members from just west of there had 1, maybe 2...* [This was consistent with Leslie's experience.] *This was dependent on where in Germany they were born... Part of my line is from Hesse and they all went by their middle names... The middle name is known as the "Rufname" or calling name and it is the name that person is known by... Up to about mid 1800's most German babies were given Johan, Anna or Maria as a first name and they always used the second name.*

### Wills for England & Wales

Margaret Taylor wrote to remind readers that wills from 1858 to the present can be ordered from the government's [website](#). The cost is £10 and they will be delivered as a pdf copy. Don't forget the cheaper alternative of ordering films of wills 1858-1925 from the Family History Library for \$8; ask your FHC volunteer for help in finding the right one.

## The Challenge

I challenged readers to write a story about one of their relatives to publish in the Bulletin. I have received the following submission this week. Alan Billing has found another helpful archivist. What story can you write this week?

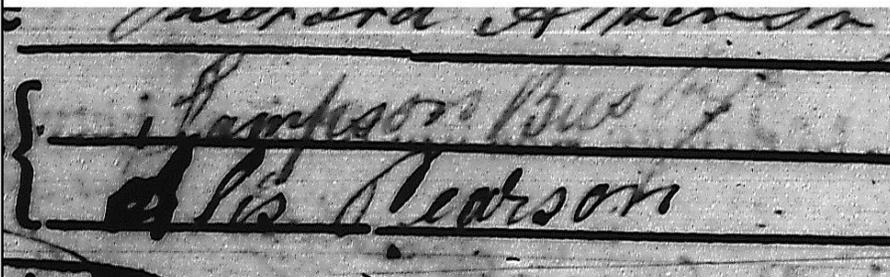
## The Signatures of Sampson Busby: The Sequel – Submitted by Alan Billing

I have been trying to determine whether Sampson Busby, a Methodist minister in Atlantic Canada in the early 1800s was the same person as my ggg-uncle of that name who was born in Rainton, Yorkshire, England in 1790. I had only limited conventional evidence supporting this theory, and I thought that extra evidence could exist, if the minister's signature matched an original signature I had on my ggg-uncle's marriage near Rainton in 1810. After efforts to find an original signature of Sampson Busby the Methodist minister at the archives of Mount Allison University in New Brunswick were unsuccessful, I discovered that the original register of baptisms and marriages in Carbonear, Newfoundland during Sampson's stay 1813-1817 might still exist. I thought that these would have been written by, and signed by, the officiating minister.

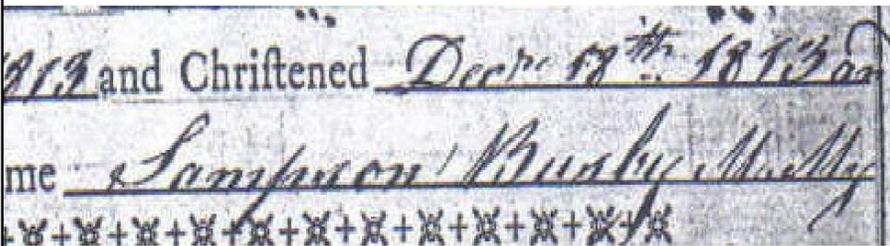
It turned out to be very easy to find them. The records were most likely to have been held by the United Church of Carbonear (the United Church was formed by a merger of four protestant groups including Methodists). An online search found that Bethany United Church of Carbonear had an excellent website; the icing on the cake was to find that the church had an archivist (wow!), with a listed e-mail address.

So once again I sent off my bizarre question to an archivist, this time Bert Parsons. [Bert Parsons is author of the book *Blackfoots - Our History 1788-1988 (History of the United Church, Carbonear)*.] His response was even more rapid. A first e-mail gave me information on Sampson, his wife, and their time in Newfoundland (including his reported birth in Rainton, Yorkshire, England). A second e-mail attached scans of three pages of baptisms, and two pages of marriages, that together had 15 signatures of Sampson Busby spread over his time in Carbonear.

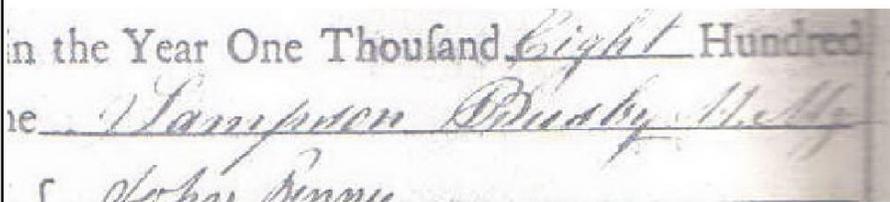
1810 (Own) Marriage, Topcliffe, Yorkshire, England



Untrained visual comparison of some of the Newfoundland signatures to the Yorkshire signature of Sampson Busby in 1810 showed them to be very similar, and consistent with signatures by the same person (compare the upper two images below, from the Yorkshire marriage in 1810, and the minister's signature in 1813). Combining this with all my other information has convinced me that it is reasonably probable that these Sampsons were one and the same person.



1813 Baptism, Carbonear, Newfoundland, Canada



1815 Marriage, Carbonear

It is my experience that different signatures by the same person are recognizably similar. It is this characteristic that has helped me solve my problem of identity. But a warning is also warranted: a distinctive difference between two signatures may not mean that they are by different people. The "B" at the start of the signed surname in both 1810 and 1813 are simple, and very like one another. But most of Sampson's signatures in 1815 and 1816 have a more florid and different "B" (see the lowest signature below). It appears that the signature of Sampson Busby was very similar at ages 20 and 23, but it had changed somewhat by the time he was 26 years old.

Sue Reid sent some suggestions for Newfoundland research if the archivist at Carbonear had not been so helpful.

"Another place to look is the Provincial Archives of Newfoundland (known as "the Rooms"), which has many of the original parish registers. The website is at [http://www.therooms.ca/archives/family\\_history\\_collections.asp](http://www.therooms.ca/archives/family_history_collections.asp), and the phone number

is 709-757-8040; or e-mail them at <http://www.therooms.ca/contacts.asp>. The United Church Newfoundland & Labrador Conference Archives are also in St. John's. Go to <http://www.united-church.ca/contact/archives> for the contact information (although the web address does not work)."

**Listing of New Films at the Toronto FHC has been discontinued.**

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**(Always phone us if you do not have a booking to ensure that we are open.)**

Tuesday 9:30 am to 2 pm (Linda)

Wednesday 9:30 am to 3:45 pm (Ann, Joe am, Helen & Leslie pm); 6:30pm to 9:30pm (Helen)

Thursday 9:30am to noon (Don & Roberta); 6:30 pm to 9:30 pm (Don & Roberta)

Saturday, 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> of each month, 10am to 1pm (Grace & Charlene) For Chinese research

**For a copy of a searchable listing of all films, fiche, CDs and books held at the Toronto Family History Centre in pdf format, click [here](#).**

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