



# EDGAR EVENTS

**Researching and sharing Edgar family  
history No. 95, December 2014**



## DNA Update



by James Edgar ([james@jamesedgar.ca](mailto:james@jamesedgar.ca))

Last month I reported “We haven’t heard back from **Frank Edgar** in Peru, yet...”, but I’m happy to say now that he received his kit and mailed it back the same day (November 7). That’s all we have on it, though.

Shortly after publishing the last issue, I received this note from Cameron Edgar in Illinois:

Thank you James for adding me to the Edgar DNA project and family history group. I am very interested in my family history and it’s great to have like-minded people that want to know their history to connect with. ... I have done some family history through ancestry.com and I am very interested in joining your DNA project to find out exactly where my family came from and its origins.

As far as some of my family history:

My father's name is Robert Allen Edgar, his father's name was Robert Wesley Edgar, and his father's name was Robert Fulton Edgar. Robert Fulton Edgar was originally from Alabama and moved to Texas to work in the cotton fields. That is where my grandfather Robert Wesley Edgar was born. Robert Wesley Edgar moved to California and that is where my father Robert Allen Edgar was born. My family then moved to Illinois and that is where we still live today. As far as further origins, I have traced my family roots all the way back to Andy Edgar who fought in the civil war and his father — I can't find much information. I believe he was the first of my family to immigrate to the US, which is why I can't find much information on him.

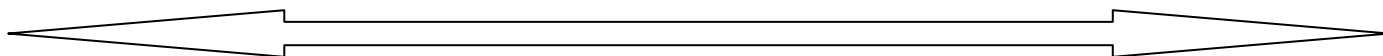
If you need any other information please let me know....

Thanks,  
Cameron Edgar

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Even though Ancestry.com no longer offers Y-DNA tests, we have an Edgar group on Family Tree DNA’s site at [www.familytreedna.com/public/edgar](http://www.familytreedna.com/public/edgar)

If you haven’t already joined us, why not come along and have a look?



## **Surname origins**



by Steve Edgar ([steven-edgar@sky.com](mailto:steven-edgar@sky.com))

I recently looked on the Internet for the origins of our surname and found this

*"The surname Edgar is of Anglo-Saxon origin, with variant spellings Eager, Eagger, Egar, Egarr, Eger, Agar and Agar, is derived from the Olde English pre 7th Century personal name "Eadgar," composed of the elements "ead" meaning "prosperity, fortune," plus "gar," spear. The personal name is found in Middle English in various forms, for example Edgar, Adger and Agar. The surname dates back to the early 13th Century and further early recordings include: Walter Elgar (1234), in the Feet of Fines of Suffolk; Thomas Algor (1260), recorded in the Assize Court Rolls of Cambridgeshire; and Robert Elger (1271), in "A Descriptive Catalogue of Ancient Deeds of Norfolk". Recordings from London Church Registers include: John Agar, who married Elisabeth Holmes on August 12th 1544, at St. Margaret's, Westminster; Margaret Ager, who was christened on August 22nd 1544, also at St. Margaret's, Westminster; and William, son of Thomas Ager, who was christened on February 10th 1596, at St. James', Garlickhithe. The first recorded spelling of the family name is shown to be that of William Algar, which was dated 1221, witness in the "Assize Court Rolls of Worcestershire," during the reign of King Henry 111, known as "The Frenchman," 1216 - 1272. Surnames became necessary when governments introduced personal taxation. In England this was known as Poll Tax. Throughout the centuries, surnames in every country have continued to "develop" often leading to astonishing variants of the original spelling."*

From the above it's pretty clear that spelling variations of our name occur and some are even surprising, Elgar is one example. Notably there are no "Adairs," this name was once thought to be an Edgar variation but a look at the Adair DNA web site shows no matches to any of our Edgars.

Edgars variation in Ireland are relatively easy to spot as it is a relatively new name in that country (unless you believe the story that an Edgar arrived in Ireland with Edward Bruce in the 1300s), but some of the Scottish and English ones are more obscure and could well be the answer to why tracing ancestors proves difficult. Edzear being a prime example. I know from bitter experience that inputting "Edgar" onto a search engine gives "Edgar" results and perhaps a few variations. Typing in an actual variation gives another set of results, and, in some cases even a link to the children or parents of an Edgar, all very confusing.

My own family have "Eagar" variants back in the 1700s in Co Monaghan and a David Eagar being the father of George Edgar in Newry in 1785. Due to my DNA being E1b1b, it may well be that my surname was developed from another surname that became Eagar and then became Edgar. Even the forename spellings in my family vary --Jain = Jane, Burns = Byrnes and Meary Jane = Maryjane.

We as Edgars are pretty open minded about our spelling variations and accept what may be possible. Viewing surname variation sites such as Eggar, they do not seem to acknowledge

that their name possibly has variations. Perhaps it's time we started looking at their Web sites for our origins and inviting them to take a DNA test?

## Names in Ireland

I have recently been in contact with "Woz from Oz," (Warren Gillespie-Edgar in Perth, Australia) who has been looking for his ancestors in Ireland for a very long time. He keeps blanking in his search for his ancestors' family. James left Ireland as an Edgar, married a Gillespie in Scotland, had family in Scotland, left Scotland as an Edgar and arrived in Australia as a Gillespie, very odd!

He knows that his ancestor was from Co. Down, but no idea as to who the ancestor's father was. I had a brainwave (rare occurrence, but it does happen!) what if we apply the Irish naming pattern formula to the children born in Scotland?

- *First born son named after his father's father*
- *Second born son named after his mother's father **Fit- Charles Gillespie***
- *Third born son named after his father **Fit- James Edgar***
- *Fourth born son named after his father's oldest brother **Maybe Joseph?***
- *Fifth born son named after his father's 2nd oldest brother **Maybe Allen ?** or his mother's oldest brother*

*First born daughter named after her mother's mother*

- *Second born daughter named after her father's mother*
- *Third born daughter named after her mother*
- *Fourth born daughter named after her mother's oldest sister*
- *Fifth born daughter named after her mother's 2nd oldest sister or her father's oldest sister*

I tried it and it was a pretty good fit—apart from a possible birth after their marriage date. There is a gap of about three years from when they married in 1848 to the first recorded birth of a child in 1851 whose name "fits" as a second born child, according to the tradition. There is no birth recorded in the gap, but I'd like to bet that if Warren can trace a birth in this gap, and the child was baptised, it will have the same name as his father! The naming pattern predicts that James's father's older brother would have been Joseph and another brother of Allen?

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[Ed: Further to this, when **Jodie** and I attended the Family History Conference in Basildon, Essex, England, this past September, one of the speakers was **Debbie Kennett**, who wrote *The Surnames Handbook: A Guide to Family Name Research in the 21st Century*.

She describes Deviant Spellings: A deviant is a transitory spelling found as a result of a clerical error in recording or transcription. In contrast, a true variant spelling will have been perpetuated for several generations, even if the usage has not been consistent.]

## **Pewter Badges**

Are you in the market for the Edgar Crest? At \$18, plus shipping, they're a great way to say "I love my family!" (Pewter buttons also available.)

Email me [james@jamesedgar.ca](mailto:james@jamesedgar.ca)



## **Believe it or not...**



by Steve Edgar ([steven-edgar@sky.com](mailto:steven-edgar@sky.com))

**The first person to dress up as Santa Claus was (wait for it...) James Edgar!**



**James Edgar** (1843 – 1909) was a businessman who has been credited with being the one who first came up with the idea of dressing up as Santa Claus for Christmas. He started the tradition in 1890 in his Brockton, Massachusetts, department store. He was born in Edinburgh, Scotland, in 1843. In 1878, he arrived in Brockton, and he eventually set up a dry-goods store on Main Street. In 1890, he got the idea to dress up as Santa Claus. Within days, children from as far as Boston and Providence came by train to see Edgar.

Although he might be best remembered for dressing up as Santa (pictured here as a clown), he was also known for the sharing of his good fortune. He helped to pay for children's medical care and he also offered jobs to youths in need.

After his death, people still carried fond memories of Edgar. One man, who was in his 90s at the time, said in 1976: —*"You just can't imagine what it was like. I remember walking down an aisle and, all of a sudden, I saw Santa Claus. I couldn't believe my eyes, and then Santa came up and started talking to me. It was a dream come true."*

## **The accuracy of the records on the Internet**

James and I get numerous requests for help each month and we do our best to answer them, Jodie (Mrs. Poirot) is our stalwart defender of the truth and record researcher, but if Jodie says it ain't right, better believe her! Sometimes though, the records we find don't match to what we would expect and a guess has to be made as to the accuracy of the record.

I thought I would test this on my own family and in particular on Benjamin William Edgar. This name is not totally unique, but has only (to my knowledge) been used by 4 people.....ever! Therefore it seems reasonable to conduct an accuracy check on something of which I am 100% certain.

1) First, BWE son of Joseph and Elizabeth :-

Name: Benjamin William Edgar  
Event Type: Death  
Event Date: 26 Aug 1907  
Event Place: Philadelphia, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania  
Gender: Male  
Race: white  
Age: 70  
Birth Year (Estimated): 1837  
Birth Date: 04 Feb 1837  
Birthplace: England **Incorrect, he was born in Newry Co. Down**  
Marital Status: Married  
Father's Name: Joseph Edgar  
Father's Birthplace: England **incorrect, he was also born in Newry**  
Mother's Name: Eliza James  
Mother's Birthplace: England **and again, born in Newry**  
Occupation: Gardener  
Burial Date: 30 Aug 1907

2) Second, BWE son of BWE above:-

Name: Benjamin William Edgar  
Event Type: Draft Registration  
Event Date: 1917-1918  
Event Place: Albany City no 3, New York, United States  
Gender: Male  
Nationality: United States  
Birth Date: **28 Oct 1881**  
Name: Benjamin William Edgar  
Event Type: Birth Registration  
Registration Quarter: Oct-Nov-Dec  
Registration Year: **1878 the above record in the USA states 1881 as his birth**  
Registration District: Selby  
County: Yorkshire  
Event Place: Selby, Yorkshire, England



3) My grandfather BWE. He was the nephew of BWE b. 1837

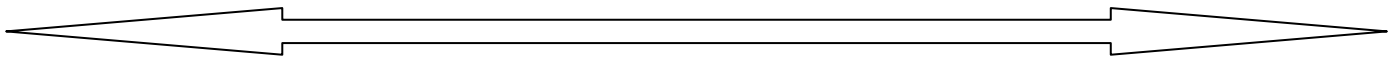
Name: Benjamin William Edgar  
Event Type: Birth Registration  
Registration Quarter: Oct-Nov-Dec  
Registration Year: 1895  
Registration District: Salford **all correct!**  
County: Lancashire  
Event Place: Salford, Lancashire, England

4) My father BWE son of BWE above

Name: Benjamin William Edgar  
Event Type: Death Registration  
Registration Quarter: Oct-Nov-Dec  
Registration Year: 1999  
Registration District: Stockport  
County: Lancashire  
Event Place: Stockport, Lancashire, England  
Birth Date (available after June quarter 01 Nov 1921 **wrong, he was born 9<sup>th</sup> November** 1969):

Bearing in mind that there are only five records of Benjamin William Edgar on the IGI, two are definitely wrong and two show discrepancies and only one is correct!

This level of inaccuracy is a bit concerning.



For some good news, have a look at the entry on the United Empire Loyalists' Association of Canada page for Benjamin Wood, distant ancestor of many of our readers and relatives. [www.uelac.org/Loyalist-Info/detail.php?letter=w&line=517h](http://www.uelac.org/Loyalist-Info/detail.php?letter=w&line=517h)

My application for membership has been accepted and my certificate is shown below. Tada!



*A.B. These Loyalists who have  
adhored to the Majesty of the Empire,  
and joined the Royal Standard  
before the Treaty of separation in the  
year 1783, and all their children, and  
their Descendants by either sex, are to  
be distinguished by the following  
Capitals affixed to their names  
U.E.  
Attending to their great principle  
The Majesty of the Empire*

*N* MC 13889-14



**United Empire Loyalists' Association  
Of Canada**

*This is to certify that*

**James Somerville Edgar**

*Has provided acceptable documentation proving descent from*

**Benjamin Wood**

*A United Empire Loyalist*

*Given under our hands at  
The Dominion Office of the  
Association, Toronto  
This 07<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2014*

*Bonnie L. McPherson U.E.*  
President  
*J. Ann M. Luskin U.E.*  
Secretary



## Picture Time

**Maggie Eleanor Edgar** was born November 19 to **Gareth Edgar** and **Deborah Young**, of Annalong, Northern Ireland.

Congratulations to all on the birth of this newest Edgar!



In Kamloops, B.C.



*Annie Pankowski (daughter), Steve (B.C.) Edgar, Diane Craig (mother)*

*Follow Annie's hockey exploits on Facebook. She's currently at the North American Hockey Academy in Madison, Wisconsin. She was in Kamloops playing on Team USA in the Four Nations Hockey Tournament. (Canada won...)*

*Diane and husband Richard Pankowski were up from California to watch Annie play.*