



EDGAR EVENTS

**Researching and sharing Edgar family
history No. 96, January 2015**



DNA Update



by James Edgar (james@jamesedgar.ca)

Still waiting to hear about the test from **Frank Edgar** in Peru... **sigh** I'm ready to order a replacement kit, thinking this one has gone astray in the mail.

A second test we have pending is for **Steve Edgar** of Napanee, Ontario. I wrote about this possibility in [Edgar Events #94 \(November\)](#). He reports that the kit has arrived, and we'll track it back to the lab, keeping you apprised of the results, of course.

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Last issue, I wrote about the **Edgar Group** on Family Tree DNA's site at [www.familytreedna.com/public/edgar](http://www.familytreedna.com/public/edgar)

Perhaps I should have explained it better... If you want to join, let me know by email and I'll send you an invitation, since I'm the administrator.

Also, if you haven't already done so, you can transfer your DNA test results that were processed at Ancestry.com or Relative Genetics by following this link. There's a \$19 charge, but it's worth it. A few of our former Ancestry-tested people have already done the transfer.

[www.familytreedna.com/landing/ydna-transfer.aspx](http://www.familytreedna.com/landing/ydna-transfer.aspx)

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I received this at the end of last month...

James:

Very glad to receive your e-newsletter about Edgar connections; please make sure I'm subscribed for future communications!

Through my paternal grandmother, I'm the 8th generation from Adam Edgar, who d. ca. 1799 in Chester Co., South Carolina.

I also married Louise M. Edgar, who (so far as we know) is not related at all; her father was John Orville Edgar (1908-2005) and her grandfather was Thomas Edgar, who was b. in Iowa and d. at/near Greeley, Colorado, in the 1950s. We know that she had/has Edgar relatives in eastern Iowa (Louisa County), but I don't believe she knows when or from whence her Edgar ancestors immigrated. So . . . both she and I are interested in Edgar genealogy.

We have not done the DNA tests yet.

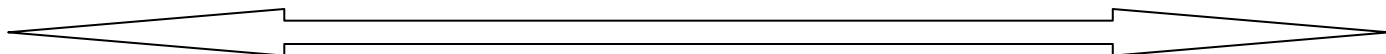
Anyway . . . we would both like to keep in touch with other Edgars worldwide. Thanks!

Robert M. Copeland

rmc@geneva.edu; rmcopeland45@msn.com

rcopelan@geneva.edu

BTW: we're both retired faculty members from Geneva College.



Surname origins



by Steve Edgar (steven-edgar@sky.com)

A new contact

Earlier this month I was contacted by Mona Edgar:-

My name is Mona Edgar I was born on August 24th 1962 my father was Hartford Marion Edgar. I was born and raised in Sullivan, Missouri. I would like to know who my grandparents and great-grandparents were on his side, I never got to know them. It would be wonderful Christmas present if you could. Please email me details about them.
Sincerely Yours

Mona L. Edgar

Always ready for a challenge I decided to step up to the mark and see if I could help. One blessing on this was that her father was Hartford Marion Edgar. Hartford Marion is unusual and is a researcher's dream!

My initial search revealed that there was an HM Edgar the fourth! Sounded good, I already knew who his father and grandfather were likely to be! ...and it proved true! Except I couldn't find a Hartford Marion the first, this was a bit odd!



A birth record showed that Hartford Marion's father was George Marion Edgar, married to Minda Worley and the Find a Grave Web site had photos of them, along with some family details.



This information gave me a basic family tree and pointed upwards to a family of Edgars I had researched a few years ago, the name Preston P Edgar was mentioned. I had originally researched this Preston Edgar and wanted to check to see if he was linked to Preston Edgar, the pewterer, in Bristol in the early 1800s. As it turned out, there was no connection but it did lead me to research this other family. Having now made this connection, it was simple to match the names and build a tree. All this over a couple of nights and a Saturday morning! I managed to trace 9 generations in a few hours, compare this to my family and I haven't done this in 15 years!

Here is the pedigree I sent to Mona:

Mona Lisa Edgar 1962

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Hartford Marion Edgar III 1924-2000

|

Hartford Marion Edgar II 1895-1939

|

George Marion Edgar 1873-1922

|
William Dillon Edgar 1854-?
|
Benjamin Franklin Edgar 1831 –?
|
William Coner Edgar II 1804- ?
|
William Coner Edgar I 1766-1846
|
John Edgar 1738-?

John Edgar was born in Scotland in 1738 and arrived in Bedford, Virginia, in about 1760. I have no idea who he married, but he had nine children. His son, William Coner, might hold a clue to the wife's name, was she a Coner, Conor or O'Connor? maybe?

William Coner Edgar also founded a large family of nine children, and their births showed that they moved from Bedford, Virginia, to Logan, Kentucky, and then on to Crawford, Missouri.

There are some wonderful names in this family, William Coner Edgar married Pamela Ewing. His bother Zachariah Edgar had a son George Washington Edgar. William Coner's son, William Coner II, had a son Benjamin Franklin Edgar.

I'm sure there are more connections to this family amongst our readership and I'd very much like to hear from any of you to exchange information. To date I have traced 383 family members on this tree and I'm sure there are many more.

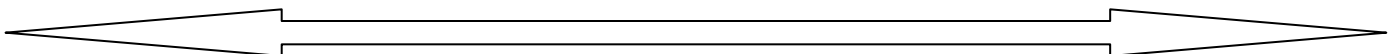
Happy New Year
Steve

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## 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)



Last month, when I wrote that I had received my UEL certificate, I didn't really give a thorough explanation: What, exactly, was the significance? Who was **Benjamin Wood**, and what was his background? Well, here goes...

To begin, let me take to you back to [Edgar Events #26](#) (March 2009), where my sister, **Marylen McKenzie**, wrote a short article about her take on our Edgar ancestry. She gave a subtitle to her piece along the lines of "U.E.L., Americans who remained loyal to the King and left the USA for Canada." In that one short line lies an entirely fascinating story, that of **Jonas Wood** and his family.



Quoting from the excellent book that **Marylen** mentions *Jonas Wood, U.E.L.*, written by **Elizabeth Hoople** and the Wood Research Team in 1984 to mark the Bicentennial of Cornwall, Ontario:

In the year 1759 or thereabouts, Jonas Wood and Sarah Osborne were married at New Hempstead, New York. This date is uncertain, but it seems a likely one since their eldest son, Jonas Junior said years later in a letter that he was born in Kakiat (Indian name for New Hempstead) in 1760. The village of

Kakiat was situated in a fertile plain known as the Great Kakiat Patent. This stretched from the Palisades on the east to the Ramapo Mountains on the west, and southward to the New Jersey border.

Jonas was a grandson of Joseph Wood who had come to Kakiat in 1720 from Hempstead on Long Island. Sarah was probably the granddaughter of William Osborne, another of the original landowners in the Kakiat Patent. This last is not yet proven.

The Kakiat plain was soon filled with numerous descendants of the first settlers so that young couples wanting land of their own were forced to search elsewhere for it. Jonas and Sarah with their children and accompanied by his parents (Jonas Wood the elder and his wife Nelle Errels Wood) with one brother whose name we do not know, joined a group which moved westward across the Ramapo Mountains to the village of Warwick in the precinct of Orange County. The official records of Warwick were destroyed, so we know nothing about the Wood family during their stay at that place.

Eventually Jonas found the property he wanted in a newly opened section of New York known as the Great Hardenburgh Patent, about forty miles northwest of Warwick. This he was able to procure at a nominal rent of five pounds a year, so in 1775 he and Sarah with their seven children left his parents and his brother in Warwick and moved to their new home.

Their property was a fifty acre holding on the south bank of the East Branch of the Delaware River, about half way between the present villages of Margaretville and Downsville. The site is not visible today because the river at that point has since been dammed to form the Pepacton Reservoir. It must have been very beautiful there with the sparkling blue river flowing past in front and the dark hemlock-clad Catskill Mountains rising behind to heights of three or four thousand feet. Jonas and Sarah were not alone there either, as twenty-six other families settled near them, forming the community known as Pepacton.

At that time their eldest son, Jonas Junior was fifteen and his brothers not much younger. All of them must have worked hard helping their father to raise his log house, a barn and stable, to clear thirty acres for crops of wheat, rye, oats, and Indian corn and to care for their numerous animals, for as well as cattle, Jonas had nine horses, thirty sheep and ten hogs. Sarah too, must have slaved filling every spare second with spinning and carding wool and weaving it into material for clothes and blankets on her homemade loom.

Jonas was so satisfied with this progress that he arranged to procure a hundred more acres. No doubt he and Sarah looked out with pride upon the farm which they hoped would become their permanent home, little dreaming of the disaster that lay ahead of them.

The American Revolutionary War, also known as The American War of Independence began in 1776, at first Jonas Wood paid little attention to it. But then since was a King's man (or Tory) and to show his loyalty to George III he sacrificed his cattle, driving them through the forest to Colonel John Butler to help feed the British troops. He himself stayed home and kept on farming.

Now it happened that the trail used by Joseph Brant and his Indians, which led from his encampment at Oquaga (near present day Deposit) to the Rebel (or Patriot) settlements along the Hudson, lay right through Pepacton. At intervals Brant with a hundred or so Indians and a smaller group of Tory Volunteers came down this trail on their way to burn and plunder the Patriot settlements.

Before long Jonas Junior, caught up in the excitement of the times, joined Brant's Volunteers and went down the trail with him while his brother Benjamin travelled westward to enlist in Colonel Butler's Rangers at Fort Niagara. (Possibly this was how Jonas managed to "drive his cattle to Col. Butler").

In 1777 the Patriot settlers from the harassed villages on the Hudson exploded in vengeful fury, came back up the trail and laid Pepacton in ruins. Only a few who were known to be Patriots were spared. Jonas Wood's buildings were burned, his livestock and crops stolen. Only by a miracle did he and his family escape unharmed into the forest. The next time Brant went down the trail, Jonas Wood went with him.

In the Revolutionary War, both sides encouraged marauding parties, known as "raids" or "scouts". They were officially approved and instructed to bring home as much provender as they could carry and to destroy the rest, in order to prevent the enemy from using it to feed his troops. In New York State, the Tory raiding parties were often carried out in conjunction with the Indians, and so a Tory came to be considered a devil in human shape in the eyes of the Patriots. If a Tory killed an enemy during one of these raids he was labelled by the Patriots as a murderer, tried for murder and, if convicted, hung for murder. If on the other hand a Patriot killed a Tory in similar circumstances nothing was said about it. This one-sided idea of justice is hard to understand. In describing it, a contemporary newspaper made this remark:

"The Rebels in their accounts of these excursions speak of the Tories as Thieves, Robbers and Murderers while they represent their own people, when concerned in the same kind of transaction as brave Warriors, Heroes and Demi-gods."

The raid on which Jonas Wood went took place in July 1778. It moved rapidly inland and southward to a spot near the New Jersey border where the Neversink River empties into the Delaware. There on July 13 a Patriot named Philip Swartout and two of his sons were killed. The Swartouts knew that the enemy was nearby and they were armed! Later when Jonas was captured and accused of killing one of them he denied it. He was thrown into prison nearby in Sussex, N.J. Then he was moved to another prison at Goschen and finally to the one at Esopus on the Hudson. Altogether he spent two and a half years in prison. He was indicted for the murder of Philip Swartout Jr. This is reported in the Ulster County Records for 1779-1785 as follows:

“Jonas Wood on 7 July was indicted for the murder of Joseph Westfall. He pleaded not guilty. Because, however, the bill of indictment was found to be defective, the jury was discharged. On the same day he was indicted for grand larceny of the goods and chattels of Benjamin de Puy Esq. He was also indicted for the murder of Philip Swartout Jr. to which indictment he pleaded not guilty. Witnesses for the people were Bazaleel Tyler, Joseph Showers and Increase Miller. Wood was found guilty of the felony and the murder and on 8 July was sentenced to be hanged in the Precinct of Newburgh.”

The day before he was to be hung, Jonas, by some super-human effort managed to escape from prison and (so one record says) with others set off across 300 miles of unbroken forest to safety in the British stronghold of Niagara. In his own words he was “Four weeks in distress in the bush”. From Fort Niagara he was sent by boat down Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence to Montreal where he arrived in 1780.

Meantime, Sarah with the rest of her family took shelter with a friendly neighbour named Nathaniel Parks. Soon two more of the Wood boys, William and John, went off to fight, enlisting in Sir John Johnson’s Corp, the King’s Royal Regiment of New York (sometimes called the Royal Yorkers). She then had with her, only the four youngest, Roger aged thirteen, Nathaniel nine, Sarah about six and Stephen still a baby.

Conditions in the Pepacton region became steadily worse until for fear of their lives many Tories had been obliged to flee to Canada. Among these were the Barnhart, de Witt, Bush, Cairnes and Middagh families. Nathaniel Parks decided to follow their example. He took with him his own family and that of Sarah Wood. They evidently worked their way up the East branch of the Delaware, over the height of land there, down the other side of it to the headwaters of the Schoharie and down that stream to the Mohawk. How did they get boats we wonder. Did they perhaps take their own canoes with them portaging them over the hills? From the mouth of the Schoharie they turned up the Mohawk and followed it to its source near Fort Stanwix (New Rome) crossed the height of land westward to Lake Oneida and then worked their way with great difficulty, down the Oswego River to the British fort at its mouth. There they procured bateaux [Ed: bateaux = boats] and descended Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence to Montreal.

What difficulties and dangers they must have met on that trip of nearly 440 miles. How did they get food on the way? How did they slide past enemy strongholds unharmed? We will never know. Schools were almost nonexistent on the frontier in those early days and our ancestors could not write. However by an extraordinary piece of luck we do have a first hand account of their itinerary told by Roger, who was on the expedition, to his son John R. Wood of Osnabruck and repeated by him in 1879 to the editor of the Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry Atlas who then printed it in that book.

Arrived in Montreal, Nathaniel Parks handed his protégés over to the authorities there and went off to join his regiment. There were at that time well over 3000 loyalist refugees in Montreal and those in charge must have been at their wits end to know how to care for them.

They crowded them into military Barracks on Isle Jesus and at Terrebonne and fed them on meagre military rations. There is a brief report on the Wood family at this time which reads:

Sheet 94

Sarah Wood - 1 woman, 2 boys over 6, 1 boy under 6, 1 girl over 6 -Total 5. - Rations 2 1/4 - Attached to Royal Yorkers - Quartered at St. Clair.”

In 1780 Jonas too arrived in Montreal and then with the exception of the four oldest boys, away serving with their military units, the Wood family was reunited, safe on British soil and unharmed!

After this, three and a half years went by while the British Government signed treaties with the Indians to acquire land for the Loyalists, sent surveyors out ahead to divide this land into townships and lots and then made arrangements to convey all the refugees and their soldier sons and husbands, who were by then disbanded, up the St. Lawrence River in bateaux.

In June 1784 that great expedition set forth. Poling the boats upriver against the current was heavy work, especially through the Lachine, the Cascades and the Cedars Rapids. At the rapids everyone had to disembark and straggle alongside on shore in order to lighten the load. At night they all camped out between the forest and the river.

Eventually they arrived at the prearranged meeting place at the head of Lake St. Francis. A spot there had been chosen for the future town of New Johnstown (later Cornwall) and there the lot-drawing ceremony was to take place. Each private was to receive two hundred acres, freehold, divided into two sections of one hundred acres each. One hundred acres was to be situated on the waterfront (to be near transportation) and the other was to be somewhere inland in the, as yet, unbroken forest. The officers were to receive much larger grants according to their rank.

When the ceremony was over Jonas found he had drawn a lot in Charlottenburg Township on the concession south of the South Branch of the River Raisin.

**Fast forward (or backward?) to Jonas and Sarah's son, Benjamin, my ancestor:**

### **BENJAMIN'S BRANCH**

Benjamin joined Butler's Rangers in 1777 and fought with that regiment all through the Revolutionary War and for several years afterward, as that corps was not disbanded in 1783 as were the others. It was kept on duty for some years guarding the Canadian Border at strategic points such as Niagara and Detroit.

Benjamin married Agnes Benedict and they had eight children as follows: **Jennet m. John Snyder**, Roger m. Margaret McIntosh, Hiram m. Jennette McDonald, Mary m. Duncan Ferguson, Sarah m. David See (or was this Lee?), Jonah m. Mary Ann Spear, David m. Catherine Crites, Benjamin (b and d in 1808).

Benjamin and Agnes settled on the west half of lot 22 in the Concession south of the South Branch of the River Raisin in Charlottenburg. This was not Benjamin's crown grant. He must have either exchanged his for it or bought this one outright. He and his descendants have remained on it ever since, passing it down from father to son for two hundred years. It is now owned by Stephen Wood, a great great grandson of Benjamin (from Benjamin to Roger to Stephen to Daniel to Stephen).

We have a picture of Benjamin handed down by word of mouth, that of a contented family man whittling on long winter evenings in the glow of his own fireplace - an affectionate man who cared enough for his wife to carve her spoons and needles and to decorate her loom - an artistic man who could reproduce deer heads in wood - a loving father whose daughter Mary never forgot him. This description was passed along verbally through four generations and then



was finally put on paper by his great great granddaughter, Agnes Alguire in 1932. We quote from her letter:

“When at home on the farm Benjamin was extremely clever in the use of tools. All were made by night by firelight as daylight was so precious. Grandmother remembered seeing some of the darning needles, spoons and knives made of deer horn, a special knife to clean pumpkins, and a loom which was made from an old oak tree that he found at the bottom of a pit. He carved deer heads on it.”

The south branch of the River Raisin ran close to Benjamin's land. It was probably much deeper then than now especially during spring floods. Thus he and his neighbours were able to roll (or perhaps drag with oxen) the trunks of the great forest trees which they had felled into it and float them five miles downstream to Williamstown. There they tied them into a big raft and prepared to sail it down the St. Lawrence to market at Quebec. This was in the spring of 1808. Benjamin never came back from that expedition. The raft was wrecked and Benjamin was drowned. A year later his family got word that his body had been found by some French Canadians and buried by them in their little Catholic cemetery on the shore.

Benjamin's son, Roger, then only a lad of nineteen, took over the farm and ran it so successfully that he was able during his own short life to build a fine brick house and to collect enough land to leave each of his sons a hundred acre farm. Those sons evidently thought a lot of him for they erected in his memory in St. Andrew's Cemetery in Williamstown a fine monument.

The inscription reads:

“Sacred to the memory of Roger Wood who was born in the year 1790 and died in the year 1831 aged 40 years. This stone is erected by his affectionate sons John Wood, Benjamin Wood, Stephen Wood, James Wood, Donald Wood, Alexander and William Wood.

Go home dear friends and cease your tears I must lie here till Christ appears.”

### **Back to my narrative,**

In the middle paragraph on the previous page, I've highlighted Benjamin's daughter Jennett, who married John Snider (possible original spelling “John P. Schneider”), another U.E.L. Their daughter, Ann Elizabeth “Betsy” Snider, married my great-grandfather, James Edgar in Lancaster, Ontario, on 1840 January 21. Their fourth child, Charles Stephen Edgar was my grandfather (whom I never met—he died 14 years before I was born at age 83!). He married Christena McRae in 1883, and their youngest son was my Dad, Stephen Leslie Edgar.

Were it not for the persistence and tenacity of Jonas Wood, escaping from wrongful imprisonment in 1780, I wouldn't be here writing this!

I chose to commemorate his son, Benjamin Wood, in my U.E.L. application—he died much too young.

Here's an image borrowed from the quoted booklet.



## **Picture Time**

When Jodie and I visited Northern Ireland last September, we stayed with her cousin, Laurence Bindley and his wife, Jenny, at their home in Larne. Laurence sent me this shot he took of the excursion train crossing the [Cefn Viaduct](#), near Chirk, Wales, in late November. Laurence says the clouds cast a dark pall over the scene until the train started over the viaduct. Then the Sun came out in a moment of perfect timing.

Laurence is a RailFan (sometimes deprecatingly referred to as a “Train Spotter”), so he knows all the good places to take photos like this one – isn’t it wonderful?

