

T W I G T A L K

Newsletter



Celebrating 50 years in 2022

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President's Message

By Dawn Westcomb Kelley -

Hello summer, you are finally here! Now, that we are half way through 2021 it is better late than never. Time is flying by too fast, so put on your brakes, and think what you have done in the year and a half that we have not met in person. We would like you to share. I know for some of you it has not been easy. My thoughts are reflect on you, your families, on all of our ancestors before us. How it must have been for them and what we have been going through this past year and a half.



We are hoping to be in person, **tentatively** starting on September 9 at the VFW for our monthly MCGS meetings. More updates are coming soon in the next couple of months.

Also first class stamps are at 55 cents now, but are going up on August 29, to 58 cents.

We are working on ideas for our 50th Anniversary celebration in 2022. Please send your ideas to 1972mcgs@gmail.com . We would like to know how many years each our members have been researching their family history to put some perspective in our promotional communications. In the **subject** area, put **RESEARCH YEARS**.

4th of July Quote



“Independence Day: freedom has its life in the hearts, the actions, the spirit of men and so it must be daily earned and refreshed – else like a flower cut from its life-giving roots, it will wither and die.” – Dwight D. Eisenhower

What are your plans for the 4th of July? So many of you will be making plans to be with family members that you haven't seen for last year and a half.

GENEALOGY TIP

Provided by Frances Harrington

When You Have a New County

When you have a new county as part of your genealogical research, make certain you know the county seat, when different types of records begin and where they were created, where the county lines are now and where they were when your people lived there, and information on local repositories. These pieces of information *are just to get you started finding the information you need to know*. There is more than this that will be helpful with your research, but these facts are an absolute must.

These websites will get you started:

[The USGenWeb page for the county](#)—some of these are not updated frequently.

[The FamilySearch Wiki page for the county](#)—some of these are incomplete and not always entirely accurate

County Historical/Genealogical society webpages—do a Google search

Web Pages for libraries in the county (or your towns nearby towns if county has a large population)—to see if they have genealogy pages—Google searches should help locate these

Track Your Reasoning

It is important somewhere to keep track of your research logic as you progress. Otherwise you might not remember “why” you are researching a certain person.


Several years ago, I focused on a certain Benjamin Butler in the 1850 census as being “mine.” Using that enumeration as the starting point, I searched other records and made research progress—on the apparent family listed in that enumeration. It became a stack of papers and records. One problem—I didn’t track is WHY I thought this 1850 census entry was for the my Benjamin. It took me hours to reconstruct my reason—time wasted.

When I decided the 1850 guy was “mine,” I should have written down my reasons. That would have saved time later and made it easier to review my reasoning should that have become necessary. Writing up your research, even if for yourself and only yourself, is never a waste of time. Clues like this and documentation will always help.

Tracking the Wrongs

Years ago I was stuck on my Ira Sargent. I spent a fair amount of time locating men with this name in the 1860 and 1870 census in an attempt to show they were “my guy” who first appeared in the 1880 census. For one reason or another I was able to eliminate them as being mine.


The one thing I did was keep a list of every one I found along with the reason why he was not mine. The reasons varied, but included: too old, too young, born in wrong place, wrong wife, etc. Keeping track of the reasons was important for two reasons. One was so that I didn’t need to redo the research. The second was that I could go back and revisit these “wrong” guys if I discovered that what I thought I knew about my guy’s age, place of birth, wife, etc. was wrong. It turns out that one of the wrong guys was a second cousin of my ancestor—another reason for keeping track of those wrong ones.



Looking for genealogy videos of interest?

Check out the Allen County, Indiana Library Webinars in the [The Genealogy Center](#). This is a library of 80+ YouTube presentations of webinars hosted by the Allen County Library. If the link above doesn’t work, copy and paste the link below.

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL8AE558B5D8661B31>



Pioneers Who Helped Make This County and City

Provided by William Hansen
As it appeared in the Muskegon Daily Chronicle
(some minor but obvious spelling has been corrected)
Saturday Evening, September 9, 1899,

John DeHass, 19 S. Terrace Street, in the early 80's served three terms as poor director. He was first elected on the Republican ticket in 1879, the terms as poor director running two years then. He served one term, was reelected and then served a year and a half of the next term. By that time he had become tired of the work of the office which added to his other cares and gave it up. The next election, however, his friends and temperance people came to him and urged him to run again, this time on a joint Republican and Prohibition ticket, which he did and was defeated. The election following, however, in 1885, he was reelected; but the charter in the mean while had been changed, making the office one of appointment instead of one of election; and so Mayor S. H. Stevens appointed him as he had the highest number of votes. Thus Mr. DeHass in all served three terms.

At that time Muskegon had two acting poormasters. They used to divide the work by sections. Each director looked after the locality in which he lived although they occasionally made general tours of inspections.

Mr. DeHass says: "At that time the poormaster had full sway. It was not as it is now. We issued our own checks and had full power, which is not the case now. We were not limited; every month we paid our bills ourselves. After the office was changed to an appointive one that was all changed and we brought over bills to the common council and they made out the checks.

"Some years in my times more money was spent than others. On an average it was in the neighborhood of \$4,000 or \$5,000. Some years there was a great deal of poverty here. The population then, in the latter part of the 80's was larger than it is today and at that time the city didn't include Lakeside and Port Sherman. The expenses are double now that they used to be then. Wages are lower. Eatables are lower, too, except meats. Meats are pretty high. Poor people get very little meat, though. If they get any, they get the poorest kind of stews. According to the expenditure there was hardly as much destitution as now.

"In summer months the amount spent wouldn't run up to quite \$200, but in winter it would reach \$400 or \$500 a month. We distributed clothing and provisions and sometimes gave transportation to other parts of the country."

Muskegon Daily Chronicle, Saturday Evening, September 9, 1899, p1 c4

The Joshua Davies Family By Frances Harrington

Joshua Davies was born in 1818 in Sidney County, Maine, to Charles and Melinda Davies. As a young man, he worked in a cotton mill. He was industrious, hard-working, and saved as much as he could. In 1842, he married Sarah N Gay, daughter of Abner Gay and Anna Warren, one of 12 children born in Ackworth, New Hampshire. After their marriage, with the money Joshua had saved, they moved to Kenosha, Wisconsin, where he started a foundry and machine shop. They had 2 children born there. The oldest was daughter Genevieve, then son Squire. The youngest son, Reid, was born in Muskegon.

In 1857, the family moved to Muskegon, Michigan and arrived here on Sarah's 36th birthday. It was the abundance of saw mills in the area that attracted Joshua. He started the Davies Iron Works, a foundry and machine shop that made and repaired machinery and parts used in saw mills and later, marine and stationary engines. It was located on Western Avenue. Decades later, Lakey Foundry was established on the site. Joshua held many U.S. patents having to do with his business which was very profitable. In 1882, the annual product was valued at \$40,000 (\$1,038,733.33 in today's money). Muskegon had no shortage of lumber mills. In fact, Joshua, along with his two sons bought the Major Chauncey Davis Mill (where Squire had worked for a time) and operated it under the name of the Davies Brothers Mill. During their ownership, a young man was injured (losing both his legs) and sued the Davies Brothers mill for negligence in the amount of \$20,000. They sold the Mill not long after that. At one point, Joshua Davies owned the entire lakefront property at the end of Western Avenue once known as "Brewery Hill". The family home was located on the corner of Fourth and Clay. Joshua died suddenly of a heart attack in 1885 in Muskegon at the age of 67.

During their marriage, Joshua wasn't the only Davies family member to hold U.S. patents. He and Sarah together held a patent issued in 1859 for a Bread Slicer. In 1860, Sarah was issued a patent for a Clothes Sprinkler that consisted of a bellows filled with water attached by a tube to a head (like our shower heads only much smaller). The bellows were squeezed to force the water through the tube and out of the head and onto the clothes. It did a much better job than flicking water from your fingers onto the clothes. In the year 1859 alone, over 6000 patents had been issued in the U.S. Up to that point, only 52 patents had been issued to women. So, for a woman to have a patent in her own name in the mid 1800's was not a common occurrence. After the death of her husband, Sarah became the major stockholder and was elected President of Davies Iron Works, a position she held for 10 years. She owned real estate and was one of a few women who held stock in Lumberman's Bank. She died 1 November 1895 at the age of 73. She left the bulk of her estate to her two eldest children, Genevieve and Squire. She left her youngest son, Reid, \$1. Her Will stated that it wasn't done of ill-will or unkindness but because she felt she'd done enough for him already. According to an inventory of her assets at the time, Reid already owed her \$864 (almost \$28,000 today). He contested the Will saying she wasn't of sound mind at the time.

Squire was the 2nd living child and the oldest son, born in Kenosha in 1849. During his life, he worked in a saw mill, was elected city treasurer, was part owner of Davies Brothers saw mill, he and brother Reid started a hennery with 1500 chickens to sell at the Muskegon Market. When he was 25, he was Secretary and Treasurer of Davies Iron Works and after his father's death he became its proprietor. He owned real estate and stocks, and was on the Muskegon Board of Trade. He was an avid fisherman and Vice President of the Muskegon Game and Fish Protection Association. He never married. Squire died suddenly of a heart attack (just like his father) in 1896 (before his mother's Will was completely probated). He was only 46 years old. After some confusion, his last Will, dated January 2, 1896 was found in his safe deposit box where it had been overlooked earlier. The Will provides for the purchase of a cemetery plot for the family, *except* for his brother Reid and any of Reid's family members. He left to his friend Dr. W. B. Hendel his boat and fishing outfit (reels, lines, hooks, etc.) He left his nephew Earl, his best watch and chain. The rest of his remaining property both real and personal was to be divided between his sister Genevieve and his best friend, Mrs. Minnie E. Lewis. His Will states that "In making my last will and testament, I have not forgotten one Reid Davies, my brother. I have left him nothing because I believe him to be a dishonest, untruthful, avaricious, unprincipled, lazy, scheming person, devoid of nearly all manhood and unfit to be looked upon as my brother". So apparently, somewhere along the way, the two brothers had fallen out. At the time of his death, Davies Iron Works owed more in mortgage and taxes than it was worth. The total value of his estate was less than \$6000 before his bills were paid. This amount included \$2,100 from his mother's estate which had not yet been settled. Reid contested Squire's Will saying he wasn't mentally capable at the time and was overly influenced by his friend Minnie E. Lewis. I was unable to find out if Reid ever prevailed in contesting either his mother's or Squire's Wills.

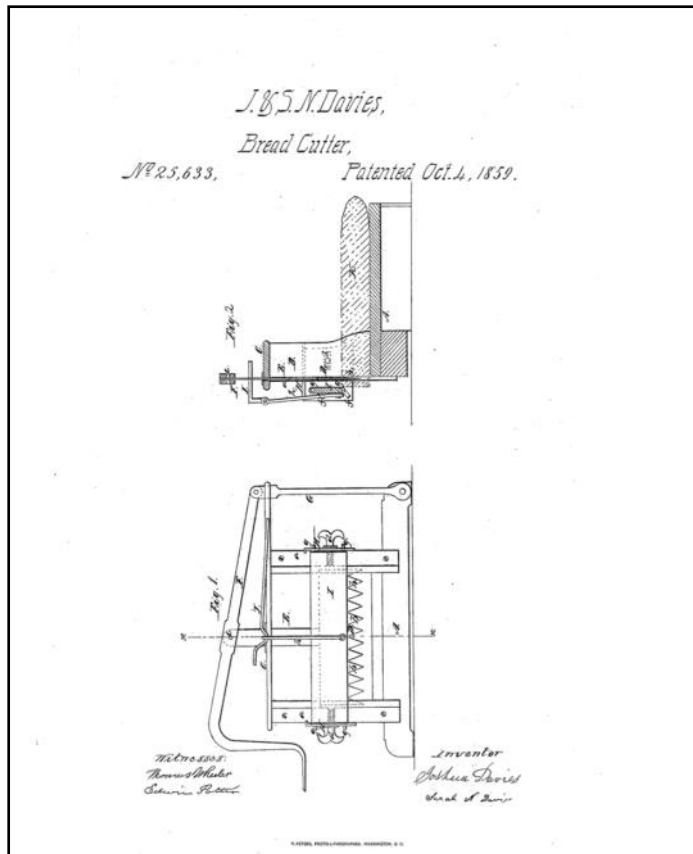
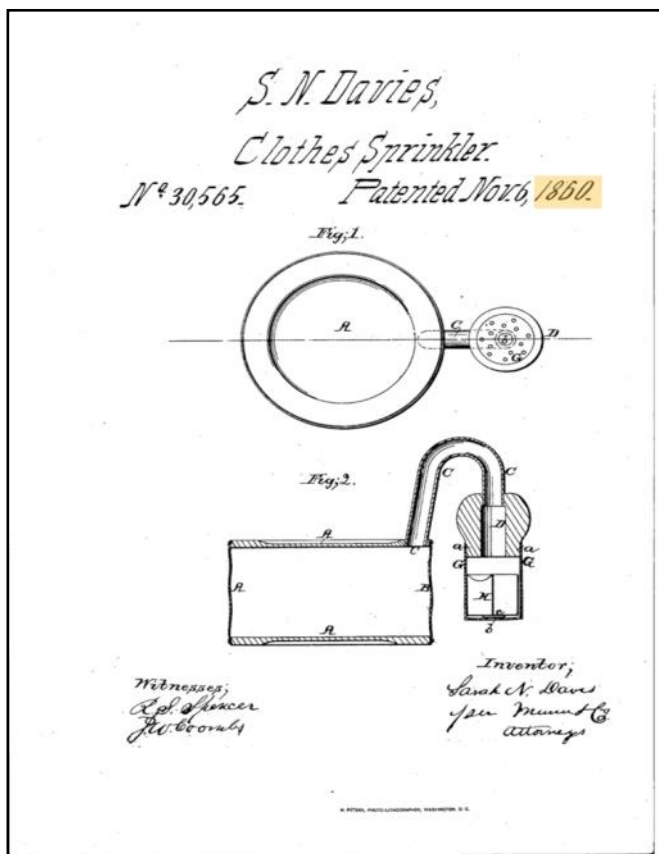
Reid Davies was born in Muskegon in 1858. He was the youngest of the three siblings. He had-

worked as a bookkeeper for S. C. Hall Lumber Company and had a couple of business ventures with his older brother, Squire, earlier in life. He was married to Helen "Nellie" H. Hackley, niece of Charles H. Hackley, in 1882. They had one child, Eva Louise Davies. They divorced in 1887. He later married Lettie Wylie in 1893 and moved from Chicago to Minnesota. In Minnesota, he was employed by the Shevlin Lumber Company. In 1900, four years after his brother's death, Reid was admitted to the Minnesota State Asylum with a complete physical and mental breakdown. He died in the Asylum in 1907, at the age of 49. His body was returned to Muskegon and he is buried in the family plot in Evergreen Cemetery despite his brother's final wishes.

Joshua and Sarah's daughter Genevieve was their oldest child, born in 1845 in Kenosha, Wisconsin. She was 12 years old when they moved to Muskegon and finished her grade school education here and then went to college in Galesburg, Illinois. She returned to Muskegon to become one of its prominent teachers. She was married to William Murray and had two sons, Rowe and Guy Murray. After his death, she married Lyman E. Patten and had a daughter and son, Jessie Belle (Mrs. Ralph Banks) and Earl Patten. She and her husband were well known citizens of Muskegon. She died in Muskegon in 1909 at the age of 64.

(Sources: Ancestry.com, GenealogyBank.com – Muskegon Chronicle, Hackley Library – Genealogy & Local History Dept., Romance of Muskegon, Lakeshore Museum, patents.google.com)

The Patents of Sarah and Joshua Davies





MCGS MEETINGS

2nd Thursday at 6:30 p.m.

VFW Post 319

5209 Grand Haven Rd.

Norton Shores, MI



TENTATIVELY

**First time in person meeting
for 2021 on
Thursday, September 9**

Genealogy Family

History Workshops

Torrent House Local History &
Genealogy Department
315 W. Webster Ave.

No news yet

**All workshops are
cancelled until
further notice.**



LOCAL HISTORY & GENEALOGY DEPT.

Changes to the Local History & Genealogy
Department. PLEASE call ahead of time at
231-722-8016 Tuesday thru Friday from
10:00 am to 2:00 pm.

Check Hackley Public Library website for
new updates on opening and closing at
<https://hackleylibrary.org/>

Click the Local History & Genealogy but-
ton on top of the page and check out the
Research Resources .



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HISTORY BOOK VOL. 2

We care what happens to our members, their fami-
lies, and everyone around us. Our History Book, Vol-
ume 2 will be extend until further notice. It is very
important to start working on your stories now. Do
not wait.

If you have any questions or need help, contact us at
our 1972mcgs@gmail.com or send your information
to Kathy DeCormier at middlaker@frontier.com

In the subject area put "History Book Volume 2".

TWIG TALK

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