May 2022 Newsletter

Thank you for your interest in my genealogy site.

Before I became involved in family history I was trained as a scientist. So I approach family history as an aspect of sociology, not as a hobby. In science observations are everything. Any model to explain the system must satisfy all of the observations. For example the classical geocentric model of the Solar System accurately predicted the future positions of the planets, but it did not do so to the accuracy of observations that became possible when the clock escapement was applied by Tycho Brahe in the 16th century, and it did not explain the changes in the brightness of Venus or any of the other planets.

Most family history tools and web-sites support adding citations to the family tree pointing at original documents whose contents justify the conclusions of the author of the family tree. But as a scientist I want to ensure that my conclusions satisfy **all** of the available documents, not just the ones that support my conclusions. So on my site not only does each recorded fact about each individual contain citations to original documents, but my site contains annotations to the original documents which connect them to the family tree. For example the following is a set of marriage registrations recorded in Ontario in 1871:

Ontario: Marriage Registration Update

<--- displaying rows 1 to 10 of 12 --->

Action		Year	Num	Groom Name	BYear	Bride Name	BYear	Date	Marriage Place
Update	Delete	1871	152141	**Ball**, James	1838	**Timewell**, Lizzie	1847	9 Oct 1871	Sparta, Yarmouth, Elgin, ON, CA
Update	Delete	1871	152142	**Tilson**, Thomas	1835	**McGarvey**, Caroline	1837	16 Oct 1871	Sparta, Yarmouth, Elgin, ON, CA
Update	Delete	1871	152143	**Cameron**, Archibald	1845	**McCordick**, Maria	1847	13 Oct 1871	Yarmouth, Elgin, ON, CA
Update	Delete	1871	152151	**Lawton**, George A.	1847	**Carr**, Roxana	1851	5 Dec 1871	Southwold, Elgin, ON, CA
Update	Delete	1871	152152	**Mills**, George	1837	**Mills**, Thurza	1837	27 Nov 1871	Sparta, Yarmouth, Elgin, ON, CA
Update	Delete	1871	152153	**Oke**, Francis	1846	**Squance**, Grace	1851	26 Sept 1871	Yarmouth, Elgin, ON, CA
Update	Delete	1871	152161	**Eveland**, Samuel	1843	**Cattenach**, Annie	1851	1871	Yarmouth, Elgin, ON, CA
Update	Delete	1871	152162	**Hill**, Albert	1850	**Couse**, Louisa Augusta	1854	24 May 1871	Yarmouth, Elgin, ON, CA
Update	Delete	1871	152163	**Nisbet**, John Thomas	1849	**Allen**, Evangeline	1853	9 Dec 1870	Dorchester South, Elgin, ON, CA
Update	Delete	1871	152171	**Hopkins**, Nicholas	1827	**Duglass**, Catharine	1846	5 Apr 1871	Dorchester South, Elgin, ON, CA

<--- displaying rows 1 to 10 of 12 --->

Observe how some of the spouses are linked to the family tree, as indicated by the conventional underlining. At a glance a researcher can see where there is work to be done, linking the remaining individuals whose marriages are recorded her to the family tree. This same organization applies to many of the source documents which is summarized at higher levels of organization by pages such as the following:

1871 Canada District 6 Elgin East Status

<--- district 5 Elgin West district 7 Middlesex West --->

SubDist	Div	Name	Done	Pop.	%Done	%Linked	Action	
A	1	Yarmouth	580	1497	38.74	4.48	Details	Surnames
A	2	Yarmouth	554	1714	31.74	3.73	Details	Surnames
A	3	Yarmouth	878	1200	73.17	13.08	Details	Surnames
A	4	Yarmouth	340	1154	29.20	3.81	Details	Surnames
B		St Thomas Town	60	2197	2.64	0.73	Details	Surnames
C	1	Malahide	483	1443	33.47	3.47	Details	Surnames
C	2	Malahide	100	1304	7.67	1.07	Details	Surnames
C	3	Malahide	100	1573	6.36	0.45	Details	Surnames
C	4	Malahide	199	1242	16.02	1.53	Details	Surnames
D	1	Dorchester South	1001	1113	89.94	13.66	Details	Surnames
D	2	Dorchester South	958	958	100.00	19.94	Details	Surnames
E	1	Bayham	440	1430	25.31	0.21	Details	Surnames
E	2	Bayham	80	997	8.02	1.10	Details	Surnames
E	3	Bayham	60	1263	4.75	0.24	Details	Surnames
E	4	Bayham	146	1206	12.11	2.07	Details	Surnames
F		Vienna Village	0	592	0.00	0.00	Details	Surnames
	Total		5,979	20,883	28.63	3.94		

<--- district 5 Elgin West district 7 Middlesex West --->

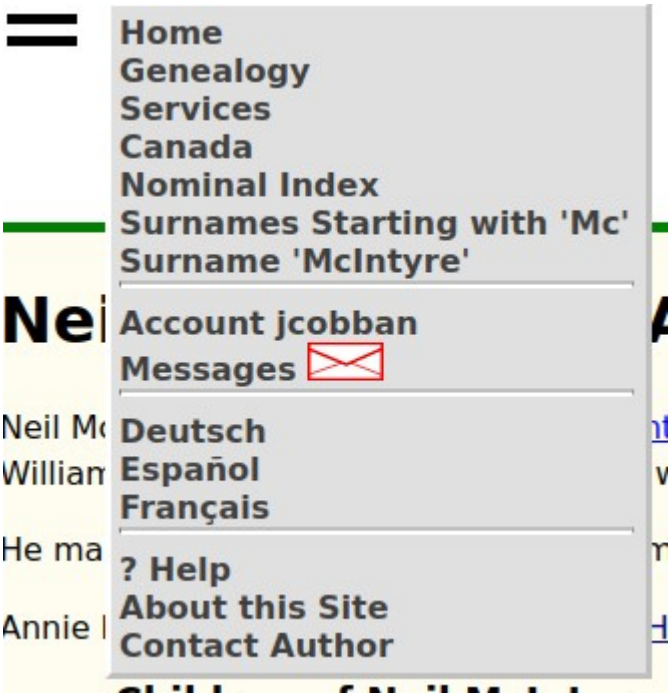
My style of research is to pick a set of documents, say a page of a census or a block of vital records, and try to find matches in the family tree. One of my current ongoing projects is transcribing and linking the register of the employees of the Ontario Psychiatric Hospital at London from its founding until 1922.

Technical Improvements

For most of the past couple of years I have been focused on fixing fundamental design issues. One issue is what is called XSS exploitations. Cross-Site Scripting (XSS) attacks are a type of injection, in which malicious scripts are injected into otherwise benign and trusted websites. They trick the website into executing run-time scripts, written in ECMAScript (also known as JavaScript or on Microsoft® Windows© as Jscript).

Furthermore I have upgraded the site to exploit the capabilities of ECMAScript 2015, also known as JavaScript version 6. All web browsers, **except Microsoft Internet Explorer**, support ES2015 and it provides both improved support for Enterprise design and incorporates common functionality which in previous versions of ECMAScript you had to install 3rd party products, such as JQuery, to obtain. For my development it is particularly useful because it provides program validation tools which have permitted me to identify a number of subtle bugs. If you are still running Internet Explorer some functionality of the site will not work, so you are encouraged to upgrade to Microsoft Edge, Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox, or **any** other browser.

My site is multilingual. Every page in the site is available both in English and French, and the most popular pages are available in Spanish and German as well. If you click on the main menu (hamburger) button at the top left of every page you will see the menu of services.



This contains the hierarchy of pages above the current page, access to your account and messages, a list of other languages the page is available in, and links to help. All applications within the site have now been updated to support this capability

As with any public site remember to change your password periodically. You can do this through the Account option.

New Functionality

The implementation of the account registration page has been made more user friendly:

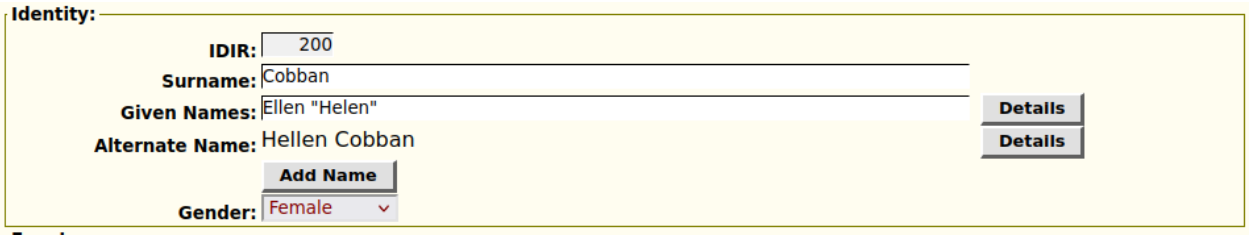
Since both the user name and the electronic mail address are unique identifiers of an account and since users are more likely to remember their e-mail address than their user name for this one web-site the form has been rearranged. Furthermore those casual visitors who filled in the form requesting further

information or who explicitly sent a message to the page author do not know what the user name assigned to the account is. So regardless of whether you have previously registered or how you registered you can simply enter your e-mail address into the form and press Enter. This will locate your account if you have one. The form suggests a user name if you do not have an existing account, but you can change this to anything you prefer. You can then enter a new password, or generate a random very strong password. If you choose to enter a password yourself you are given a rating which changes as you add to the password.

It is advantageous to register as you can:

1. change the user name of the account
2. contribute to the transcriptions of original source documents
3. update the family tree
4. opt out of receiving monthly e-mails
5. turn off the popups that appear to explain how individual input fields and buttons are used, which will become tedious once you have familiarized yourself with the site
6. choose a default language for communications

When editing a member of the Family Tree, you can now explicitly define and edit alternate names for the person.



Thank you for your participation,

James Cobban