

Mother County Genealogical Society

Established 2000

Bladenboro Historical Building

818 South Main Street

Bladenboro, NC 28320

910-863-4707

<http://www.ncgenweb.us/bladen/mcgs.htm>

October, 2008 Newsletter

Attendees:

Jason Bordeaux, Sam Pait, Lewis Smith, Henry Singletary, Bernard & Margaret Frink, Margie Bridger

Treasurer Report:

The Society has \$2,923.56 on hand as of September 16, 2008.

Minutes:

Linda Smith has spoken with Linda Rivenbark of D.A.R. and to Nash Odom and both have agreed to give presentations next year.

Jason Bordeaux made business cards for the Society.

Jason mentioned that Allen & Betty Johnannes of Meridian, TX have expressed interest in donating their Bladen County research to the Society.

Jason has photos of the new Veterans Memorial online and has provided a form for ordering bricks online. <http://www.ncgenweb.us/bladen/bladenboro/veterans.html>

Jason gave a 1930's photo of Old Abbotsburg School to the Society. The photo was provided by Troy Bordeaux. Sam Pait and Margie Bridger are going to attempt to identify the children in the photos. Sam mentioned that a model will be made of Abbotsburg School. The picture is available online at

<http://www.ncgenweb.us/bladen/pictures/schools/abbottsburg/abbottsburg1930s.html>

Henry Singletary has made a complete photographic inventory of about 12 cemeteries in the Bladenboro area. He has provided the data to the Society and Jason is searching for volunteers to help post the data online.

Henry congratulated Sam Pait on the tremendous effort he has made over the last 40 years compiling histories of our Bladen County families.

Jason mentioned that his uncle has agreed to contribute to the King DNA project. This will hopefully help us determine the origins of the George King family of Bladen County.

Jason has organized the books in the genealogy room and offered to do an inventory of these books sometime in the future.

Lewis Smith found an original copy of the 1934 bicentennial edition of the Bladen Journal. This paper was divided into 4 sections: Bladen County, Bladenboro, Clarkton, Elizabethtown. Lewis has made copies and compiled each section using tape. He is selling each section for \$5. Lewis proposed that these be made available in the gift shop.

Lewis brought up a previous topic of making the Bladen County Historical Society books available for purchase in the gift shop.

Jason gave a presentation on the math of genealogy.

Lewis brought a notebook with copies of Wanda Campbell's entire Singletary collection.

Jason volunteered to take this book, scan it in, and make it available online.

<http://www.ncgenweb.us/bladen/vrecords.htm>

Sam adjourned the meeting with a prayer.

2008 Presentations:

February 9th - Lelia Bryan - presented by Lewis Smith

April 12th - African American Lewis family - presented by Dewitt Kennedy

June 14th - Johnson family - presented by Jason Bordeaux

August 9th - DNA in Genealogy - presented by John Williamson

October 11th - The Math of Genealogy - presented by Jason Bordeaux

December 13th - Business meeting and 2009 elections - Layton Dowless; Revolutionary War in Old Bladen - Sam West

2008 Officers:

President - Layton Dowless

Vice-President - Jason Bordeaux

Secretary - Linda Smith

Treasurer - Margie Bridger

Next Meeting:

December 13th, 2008 at 12:30 pm at the Bladenboro Historical Building.

The Math of Genealogy

Presented by Jason Bordeaux to the Mother County Genealogical Society on October 11, 2008

We think we have relatively few ancestors because our historical vision is so shallow. Just a few centuries into the past, the number of our ancestors becomes immense.

Some Americans may think of themselves as having ancestors only from England, but that means they probably also think of themselves as purely European or "white." Similarly, most African Americans might think that most or all of their ancestors are from Africa, despite the long history of genetic mixing in the Americas.

In fact, all human beings have ancestors from throughout the world. The reason we think about our ancestry in such limited terms is because we are considering just our immediate ancestors -- our two parents, four grandparents, eight great-grandparents and so on. We are overlooking the more distant past, where the power of exponential growth kicks in.

Math teachers sometimes introduce their students to exponential growth through the story of Sessa, the 15th-century Indian mathematician who supposedly invented chess. According to legend, the king was so delighted with the game that he told Sessa to name his reward. Sessa said, "Sire, I would like to have two grains of wheat for the first square of the chessboard, four grains of wheat for the second square, eight for the third, 16 for the fourth, and so on until the board is filled." The king was greatly annoyed at being asked for such a trifling award. "You have insulted me by not asking for more," he told Sessa. "Go, and my servants shall bring you your sack of grain."

At dinner the king asked if Sessa had been paid and was told that the court mathematicians were still calculating the exact amount of grain Sessa should receive. The king frowned; he'd expected that such a simple task would be carried out more quickly. He said, "Before I am awake tomorrow morning I want Sessa to have his reward." The next morning the king called for his chief mathematician and asked how many grains of wheat Sessa had received. "Sire," said the mathematician, "it is more than the amount of wheat that exists anywhere in the world. The number of grains that must be placed on the final square of the chessboard is 18,446,744,073,709,551,616" (18 quintillion).

Family trees work just like Sessa's reward. Say you wanted to make a family tree showing all of your ancestors 64 generations ago. The number of your ancestors in that generation would be 2 to the 64th power -- the same as the number of grains of wheat on the 64th square of Sessa's chessboard.

But how can that be? Eighteen quintillion people are more than ever have lived or ever will live. The way out of the puzzle is to realize that over time, distant cousins, or sometimes not-so-distant cousins, marry and have children. Every time that happens, the same person occupies two or more of the positions on the family tree of those children. If you actually could construct your family tree for 64 generations, some names would show up in that earliest generation many trillions of times.

A particularly important transition occurs between about 10 and 28 generations ago. Going back 10 generations, each of us has 1,024 ancestors. Look back 28 generations and each of us has about 268 million ancestors. At that point, the number of our ancestors becomes 7 times the entire population of Europe. Someone of European heritage could include on his or her family

tree the majority of the 38 million who lived in Europe in about the year 1000 A.D. Once your ancestors include most of the people from a particular part of the world, that situation continues indefinitely back into the past. Therefore, everyone of European ancestry today is descended from most if not all of the people who lived in Europe before the year 1000 A.D.

Source data extracted from Steve Olson, author of "Mapping Human History: Discovering the Past Through Our Genes"

4000 B.C.

World Population: 7 million people
of Generations from Today: 171 generations
of Ancestors: 3 with 51 zeros ancestors

1000 B.C.

World Population: 50 million people
of Generations from Today: 86 generations
of Ancestors: 77 septillion ancestors (or 77 with 24 zeros)

1 B.C.

World Population: 200 million people
of Generations from Today: 57 generations
of Ancestors: 144 quadrillion ancestors (or 144 with 15 zeros)
720 million times the population of the world

1000 A.D.

World Population: 300 million people
Population of Europe: 38 million people
of Generations from Today: 28 generations
of Ancestors: 268 million ancestors
7 times the population of Europe

1500 A.D.

World Population: 475 million people
Population of Britain: 4 million people
Population of France: 16 million
Population of Germany: 12 million
of Generations from Today: 14 generations
of Ancestors: 16,384 ancestors

1700 A.D.

World Population: 650 million people
Population of Britain: 8 million people
Population of France: 21 million
Population of Germany: 15 million
Population of American Colonies: 250,000 people
of Generations from Today: 8 generations
of Ancestors: 256 ancestors

1790 A.D.

Bladen County Population: 5,084 people

of Generations from Today: 5 to 6 generations

of Ancestors: 32 to 64 ancestors

Note: Estimates give about 35 years between generations.

Sources:

Historical Atlas of Population History

<http://www.tacitus.nu/historical-atlas/population/>

Wikipedia – World Population

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_population

US Census Bureau – Historical Estimates of World Population

<http://www.census.gov/ipc/www/worldhis.html>