

The 2002 OCAPG Award

Report

D. Russell Morton

Linda Murray of Calgary, Alberta was the winner of the 2002 OCAPG Award, offered by the Ontario Chapter of the Association of Professional Genealogists for the best short essay on an unsolved problem in Ontario genealogy. The contest, open to anyone except APG members, was publicized on the OCAPG website and elsewhere. The award included an assessment of the problem by professional genealogists, up to three hours of research, and a recommendation for new approaches. The OCAPG Award is being offered again in 2003. Details on www.rootsweb.com/~onapg

The Problem

Linda Murray's winning problem was titled "Mary Ann Who?" Her great great grandparents, Timothy Livingston and Mary Ann, maiden name unknown, born c.1830, were living in Dungannon Township, Hastings County, Ontario in the 1861 census. By 1871 Mary Ann was a widow with 8 children, including Linda's great grandfather Timothy, born c.1867. By 1881 Mary Ann had apparently married Francis Pelshaw (b. Quebec) and had another child, age 9. Francis was Catholic; Mary Ann was at various times Presbyterian, Anglican and Methodist. Timothy (1867) married Minerva Sager in 1895, moved to Manitoba in 1904 and raised a large family. Mary Ann died in 1909.

Linda had been searching for almost 20 years without success in the Ontario B/M/D indexes, the census records, and various other sources for records that might provide Mary Ann's maiden name, or any trace of the other 8 children. She had written to others researching the name Livingston, and even paid a librarian to search in local histories for Hastings Co.—all dead ends. She submitted her essay in the hopes of finding some information to share with other family members by the next Livingston family reunion, in 2004.

A Brief Critique of the Essay

The 1,000-word limit can make it difficult to include all relevant information, to cite all references, and especially to describe all unsuccessful searches. Linda made a valiant attempt. But a little more information would have been helpful for our review of the problem. e.g. Reel and page numbers were cited for some, but not all of the census findings. Timothy Sr.'s age and place of birth from the 1861 census were omitted. It was unclear if her search for children included both the Livingston and Pelshaw surnames. She said Mary Ann's death certificate provided "little personal information," and that a great aunt had a brass plate inscribed "Mrs. Mary Livingston, died June 4, 1909, aged 95." We were left wondering: where did Mary Ann die, was her surname Pelshaw or Livingston, and could the certificate or plate be for the wrong person?

Publication and Preliminary Review

The problem was published with a request for comments and recommendations to all OCAPG members, and was discussed at the February 2003 OCAPG meeting. Several ideas and leads were developed, and it was agreed that Linda Murray should be contacted for clarification of a few points before proceeding further with the research.

Linda provided one new piece of information received since she had submitted the essay—an 1877 Hungerford Twp, Hastings Co marriage record for Timothy and Mary Ann's son, George Livingston. It did not give Mary Ann's maiden name. She also clarified some points. e.g. In 1861 Timothy was 36, born in Ontario. Mary Ann "Livingston" died in Manitoba.

Research and Comments

1.0 Linda said she searched “the Civil Marriage Registration Indexes 1873–1895 (Film #1819490)” for marriages of Mary Ann’s children, and also “could not find a marriage between Frances Pelshaw and Mary Ann”. We surmised that the latter search might have missed some pre-1873 records.

1.1 The original Ontario marriage registrations for 1869–1873 were not numbered, and are not included with the B/M/D indexes held in many libraries. The handwritten indexes for that early period, giving volume and page number, are available on microfilm at the Archives of Ontario, have been published (Rumpell, Renie A., and Slingsby, Carrie, *Index to marriage registrations of Ontario, Canada 1869–1873*, Ontario Indexing Service, Waterloo, 1996, 6 vols.), and are also searchable on at least one on-line data base. One OCAPG member searched for Francis Pelshaw and separately for Mary Ann Livingston, and found a possible match—the two names led to one page: Hastings County, 1871, vol. 17, page 142 (RG 80-5, MS932, reel 5, unit 80-5-0-18).

1.2 The detailed record for 1.1 above was consulted at the Archives of Ontario. It provides an exceptional amount of information as illustrated by these few excerpts:

On July 27, 1871, Francis Pelshaw, widower, age 48, born Quebec, residence Lot 22 Concession 13 Dungannon, married Marion Partels, widow of the late Timothy Livingston, age 40, born Township of Moray Ont., parents Richard Partels and Sarah Porter. The handwriting on this record is reasonably clear, but the spelling is suspect. There is no “Moray” township in Ontario—it is likely “Murray”, Northumberland County.

2.0 Search for Richard and Sarah (Porter) Partels. “Partels” seemed a very unusual surname. Nothing similar was found in a brief scan of the 1871 Ontario Census - Head of Household Index (Family Tree Maker, CD #116) nor in an 1881 Canadian Census Transcript (Family Search, Family History Resource File, CD #3)

2.1 A search in the early Ontario Militia Rolls (Elliott, Bruce et al, *Men of Upper Canada: Militia Nominal Rolls, 1828-1829*, OGS, Toronto, 1995) under the 3rd Regiment Northumberland, which included Murray Township, gave two very interesting findings: Parcels, Richard age 38, page 171 and Parcels, Richard age 40, page 173.

2.2 A second search for “Parcels” in the 1871 Census CD referred to in 2.0 was unsuccessful. A search in the 1881 CD gave this result in Murray, Northumberland East:

Sarah Parsels, widow, age 84, German origin, born Ontario, living with William and Ruma Rogers, ages 79 and 81, married, both of German origin and born in Ontario.

(Ref: FHL film 1375875, NAC 13329, Dist 123, sub E, div 3, page 129, Family 136)

3.0 The above findings opened up many possibilities for further research. First priority was given to the 1851 Census for Murray Township.

3.1 A partial transcription of this census (Tackaberry, Brian, *1851–52 Murray Township Census: A Transcription from the Original Records*, Quinte Branch OGS, 1990) is available at the Canadiana Department, North York Central Library, Toronto ON. It lists households by order of lot and concession but lacks a cross reference to the original page numbers. Several Parcels and Livingston listings were found, including a Timothy Livingston, age 26 on page 7 and a Mary Ann Parcels, age 21 on page 8.

3.2 Search of the original records for 3.1 above. (NAC C-11740) The 1851–52 census taker in Murray, Division 1 left some gaps in the records, and the microfilm is quite difficult to read in some places. Here, as

best we have been able to decipher, are further details on two households:

<u>Page & Line</u>	<u>Names of Inmates</u>	<u>Birth Place</u>	<u>Male Female</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Marr or Single</u>	<u>Religion</u>
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pgs 51 & 52

29	Walter Parcels	Canada	M	23	M	W. Methodist
30	Mary Ann Parcels	do	F	22	M	do
31	Richard Parcels	do	M	61	M	do
32	Sarah Parcels	do	F	54	M	do
33	Sindarilla Parcels	do	F	17	S	do
34	Christina Parcels	do	F	17	S	do
35	Oliver Simmons*	do	M	10	S	do

*Not a family member

pgs 61 & 62

1	Peter Livingston	USA	M	60	M	Presbyterian
2	Ann Livingston	Canada	F	57	M	do
3	Aaron Livingston	do	M	29	S	do
4	Christina Livingston	do	F	56	S	do
5	Francis Livingston	do	M	32	S	do
6	Timothy Livingston	do	M	26	S	do
7	William Livingston	do	M	21	S	do
8	Eliza Livingston	do	F	13	S	do
9	John Livingston	do	M	12	S	do

Comments and Recommendations for Further Research

We can be reasonably sure that “**Mary Ann Who?**” was **Mary Ann Parcels** (or Partels, Parsells, etc.) born to Richard Parcels and Sarah Porter in Murray Township. Was she the same person as the Mary Ann listed as “Married”, presumably to Walter Parcels, in the 1851 census? Perhaps—that is an enigma for now. We would speculate that the Parcels and Porters may have been United Empire Loyalists, given their apparent very early arrival in the Bay of Quinte area. We would also suspect that Timothy Livingston may have been the son of Peter and Ann Livingston of Murray.

There are many possible avenues for further research to confirm and expand on the above information. In addition to searches for members of the Parcels, Porter and Livingston families in the 1861 and later census records for Murray Township, we would recommend searches of the death records, and subsequently the local newspapers (e.g The Trenton Advocate) for obituaries, the Northumberland Co Estate files, the Crown and township land records, and the numerous Loyalist sources.

Genealogical research entails many hours searching all possible sources, often with disappointing results. Sometimes a record contains little useful information; sometimes a record just doesn’t exist. On this problem we were not only very fortunate to find a key record (Mary Ann’s marriage) quickly, but also to find such an exceptionally informative one. What if this record had not been found? We could still have pursued numerous other sources—land records, probate records, church records Or, as a different approach, we could have predicted Timothy and Mary Ann’s origins based on the general patterns of settlement. Those in the “back townships” such as Dungannon, who were born in Ontario before about 1830, usually came from “The Front”—the townships along Lake Ontario. A search in the 1871 census index for other Livingstons born in Ontario before 1830 would have found several interesting possible connections in the Front,

including Peter Livingston in Murray.

Genealogy is a puzzle which is never finished. We have solved Linda Murray's "Mary Ann Who?" problem but presented several new problems, including "Ann Who? Livingston."

Acknowledgments

A committee of Elayne Lockhart, Janice Nickerson and D. Russell Morton planned and executed the OCAPG Award program, with advice and suggestions from other OCAPG members.

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