



**QUESTING HEIRS GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY
LONG BEACH, CALIFORNIA**

**Hybrid meeting: May 18, 2025
beginning at 2:00 PM PDT**

**St. Thomas of Canterbury Episcopal Church
or attend via Zoom**

Speaker: Sara Cochran

From a Box in the Closet to a Treasured Family Heirloom

MONTHLY MEETINGS

Our monthly meetings are held on the third Sunday of the month at 2:00 p.m.

**St. Thomas of Canterbury
Episcopal Church
5306 E. Arbor Road
Long Beach, CA 90808
Between Bellflower Blvd. and
Clark next to Pan American
Park or via Zoom**

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MEMBERSHIP LEVELS

Dues are \$30 per year for an individual or \$45 per year for a family.

Look for us on the Web:

<http://www.qhgs.info/>

or on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/QuestingHeirs/>

[QuestingHeirs/](https://www.facebook.com/QuestingHeirs/)

E-mail: questingheirs@gmail.com

QHGS is an IRS recognized 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation. Donations are tax-deductible.



**3rd Great Grandfather
of QH member Sandy McDonald**

QHGS President's Message

Bob Prager



My grandfather Howard Clinton Risley (1887-1977) lived much of his life in Oneida, Madison County, New York. No – the City of Oneida is not in Oneida County – that would be too easy! Anyway, he was a terrible driver – and I found out why!

He started working for the phone company before 1910, and was called to the regional office (probably Syracuse or Utica). He took the train, reported in to the local company office, and was asked if he could drive an automobile. He responded negatively, so his superior told him it was easy – and he'd show him! After receiving a demonstration to the edge of town (and I'd have loved to have heard stories about that drive!), the man giving the demonstration got out and walked back to the office while my grandfather drove back to Oneida.

Licenses weren't mandatory in New York State until 1924; since he was already driving, apparently successfully, at some point New York just gave him one. Of course it occurs to me that my father, born in 1905, possibly drove before licenses were mandatory, but since he lived in New York City, a license was required before that date – if the driver drive more than ten days a year!

Okay, do you have a brief story about any of your ancestors or relatives you'd be willing to share? We'd love to hear it! If you don't send something you're going to become awfully tired of hearing only about MY family!

Welcome: Sara Cochran

From a Box in the Closet to a Treasured Family Heirloom



If you're overwhelmed by the collection of photos your family has accumulated, you're not alone! After a brief history of photography, we look at organizing techniques, digitization basics, and options/ideas on what to do with your photos so they can be enjoyed by generations to come, instead of collecting dust in the box.

Sara's passion is telling the stories of the people in the family tree. Genealogists do this best by recording the stories of our elders, locating and preserving the photos and stories our ancestors left behind, and researching the records created by and about our people.

Sara has Bachelor of Science (Liberal Arts/ Library Science) and Associate of Science (Library Science) degrees along with many certificates from various continuing education programs. She has been researching for 25+ years and is affiliated with many groups including the Association of Professional Genealogists (APG) and the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR).

Revolutionary War Patriot of QH member Sandy McDonald

My 3rd Great Grandfather, John Jacob Storts enlisted in the Continental Army at the age of 13 to relieve his father (Christian Sturtz) who was needed to care for his large family on the family farm. He stated in his request for a pension that he was born in Bucks County, Pennsylvania on July 10, 1763 and his birth was recorded in German. He enlisted at Red Hill, Pennsylvania on April 5, 1777. He was in the Battle of Valley Forge and was one of General George Washington's boy soldiers. Serving for five long years, he lost his hearing before mustering out.

John Jacob was married to Mary Ann Polly Burkhardt, widowed, then married to Christina Keller and had fourteen children in all. John Jacob moved to Perry County, Ohio after receiving a land grant of 1,000 acres for his service. The surname of Sturtz was changed to Storts in the land records and the family never corrected it.

His youngest daughter, Mariah Storts Allen, was born when John Jacob was 82 years old. She was a DAR member and is considered Ohio's Last "Real Daughter" of the American Revolution. The term "real daughter" refers to a woman whose father actively participated in the American Revolution rather than a descendant of a Revolutionary War patriot.

Beneficiary Identification Records Locator Subsystem (BIRLS)

Update from QH member Pat Prager: I made four requests so far - my father's (disabled WWII vet with probably a lot of redaction in his records!), my uncle's (lost at sea during a training mission just after he married my aunt, never got to meet his son), and two first cousins of my mother. I went to the new "reclaim the records" BIRLS index/fake fax machine and searched for 8-10 people, found four so far and ordered them in late December. At the time I read the "what to expect" FAQ section of the website or the email they sent which gave me some idea how long each step would take. It said the VA is supposed to respond within 20 days but was (at the time) taking about 6-8 weeks to send out the initial letter which is a combo of 1) acknowledgment of receipt of your request and 2) an acceptance or denial of your request. Once you receive this letter, it's supposed to take several weeks or months more to get the actual files on a DVD.

Editor Tina's Note to Members: Now go to www.birls.org and order your ancestor files.

Free! Legacy Family Tree Webinars

10 New Tools for New York Research

Presented by Kory Meyerink - Wednesday, May 28, 2025 @ 11:00am PDT

<https://familytreewebinars.com/webinar/10-new-tools-for-new-york-research/>

As genealogical interest continues to grow, new sources become available, new tools are published and new approaches are developed. Successful research demands keeping up to date, especially for a state as complex as New York. From colonial to 20th century, both online and print only, these new tools can supercharge your stagnant New York research problems!



**St. Thomas of
Canterbury
5306 E. Arbor Rd.
Long Beach, CA**



Questing Heirs Genealogical Society Board

- President.....Bob Prager.....(2024-2026)
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- 2nd Vice President – Membership ..Sandy McDonald.....(2024-2026)
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QHGS Volunteer Positions

- Digital Archivist.....Christina "Tina" McKillip
- Research/Historian.....Tina Yanis
- Social Media/Facebook Coordinator.....Jerry Hardison
- Webmaster.....Mike Powers

Submissions for newsletter articles should be emailed to us at: questingheirs@gmail.com and will be included in future issues as space allows.

The newsletter has been published since 1969 by Questing Heirs Genealogical Society, Inc. Submissions, including queries, corrections, or any questions regarding the newsletter should be sent to Newsletter Editor, QHGS, P.O. Box 15102, Long Beach, CA 90815-0102, or emailed to Questingheirs@gmail.com. We are not responsible for the accuracy of material published but will gladly print corrections.

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In order to receive the monthly newsletter, one must be enrolled as a member of the Society.

To join, please contact Membership Chairman at:

Questingheirs@gmail.com