



August 15, 2023

This newsletter may interest particular those related to persons related directly or indirectly to Grace and Clifford Retson. My genealogy website is located at <http://www.retson.ca/retsongenealogy.html>

Happy Birthday Maria 103 Years old

Roberta and I visited Roberta's mother Maria Gili in Hamilton Ontario, the week of July 24 when Maria celebrated her 103 Birthday.

Mary Doris Retson born August 19, 1909, and died October 31, 2008, holds the current record for our line at 99 years, 2 months and 12 days.

1. Genealogy – Proving Facts concerning identity, relationship, event, or situations.

During a war in France, twins were born to Jean Descartes and his wife Chrétienne in the village of Village des Rêves. They named the first born, Claude Descartes and the second Rene Descartes after the famous French Philosopher. The two boys were baptized two days after the birth. Unfortunately, in completing the Baptismal records only the first child's baptismal was recorded. The omission was only discovered 5 years later after the Priest had departed the village and the record was never corrected. The second child went through life much like his namesake attempting to prove his existence.



A common task in genealogy is attempting to prove the existence of an individual, his birth date and place, his marriage date and place and the date and place of his death and the relationship of that individual to his parents, wife and children. Genealogy standards have evolved over many years to arrive at the best genealogy practices and created the Genealogical Proof Standard that are used to establish credibility. In 2000, the Board for Certification of Genealogists (BCG) published The BCG Genealogical Standards Manual which in its updated format Genealogy Standards 2nd Revised Edition 2021 are almost universally accepted.

The purpose of the Genealogical Proof Standard is to show what the minimums are that a genealogist must do for his or her work to be credible. There are five elements to the Genealogical Proof Standard:

2. Reasonably exhaustive research has been conducted, emphasizing original records providing participants' information—for all evidence that might answer a genealogist's question about an identity, relationship, event, or situation.

3. Each statement of fact has a complete and accurate source citation, to the source or sources of each information item contributing—directly, indirectly, or negatively—to answers about that identity, relationship, event, or situation.
 4. The evidence is reliable and has been skillfully correlated and interpreted through processes of analysis and correlation—of all sources, information items, and evidence contributing to an answer to a genealogical question or problem.
 5. Any contradictory evidence or conflicts among evidence items pertaining to the proposed answer has been resolved.
 6. The conclusion has been soundly reasoned and coherently written based on the strongest available evidence.
- The research plan aims for “reasonably exhaustive” research, required for genealogical proof. Thorough research gathers sufficient data to test—and to support or reject—hypotheses concerning identities, relationships, events, and situations.

Thomas W. Jones in *Mastering Genealogical Proof* suggests six criteria to make exhaustive search reasonable:

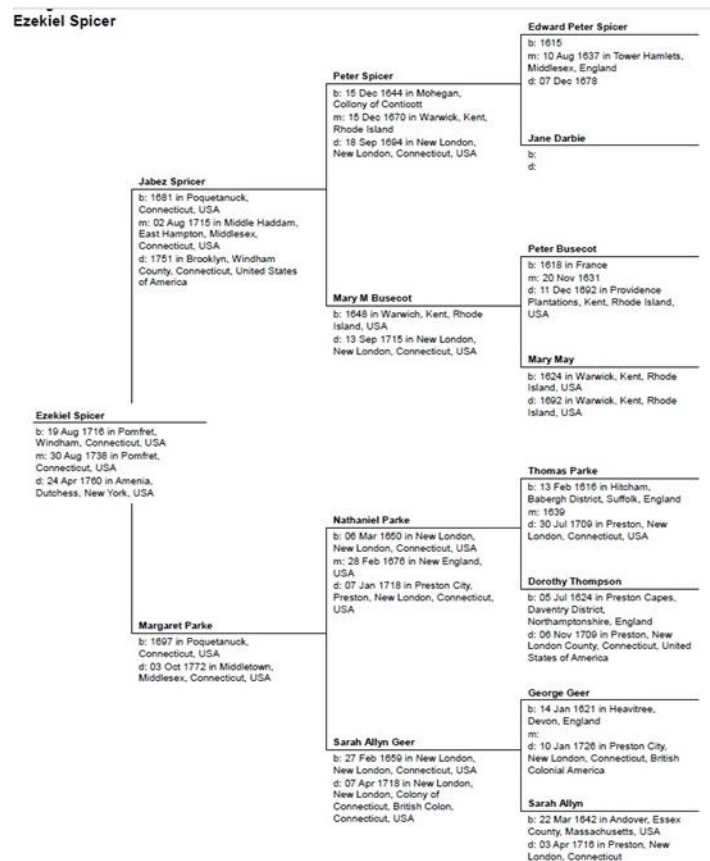
1. At least two independently created items are in agreement.
2. All sources competent genealogist would examine.
3. Some primary information
4. Some original records
5. Relevant authored works, derivative records and secondary information
7. All findable sources that relevant sources and index suggest.

Thorough research attempts to gather all reliable information potentially relevant to the research question, including evidence items conflicting or consistent with other evidence items. It emphasizes original records containing primary information.

Beginners in genealogy start out with much lower standards or no standards at all and enjoy the thrill of each succeeding discovery. As time goes by, they inevitably go down various rabbit holes chasing erroneous leads and in time improve their standards. Where conflict exists or evidence is weak, I intend to add more data to ancestral profiles in a section entitled “Researching [named surname]”. An example of one error that I made appears in the research of ancestors of Ezekiel Spicer and Lice Shepard below.

Ancestors of Ezekiel Spicer and Luce Shepard

In an earlier Newsletter I indicated that I had made a recent break through with the ancestors of Ezekiel Spicer our Canadian Loyalist. Up until then I had not been able to locate and that many trees on Ancestry had indicated his wife was in fact Lucy Shepard which did not square with military records which had his wife’s name as Elizabeth.

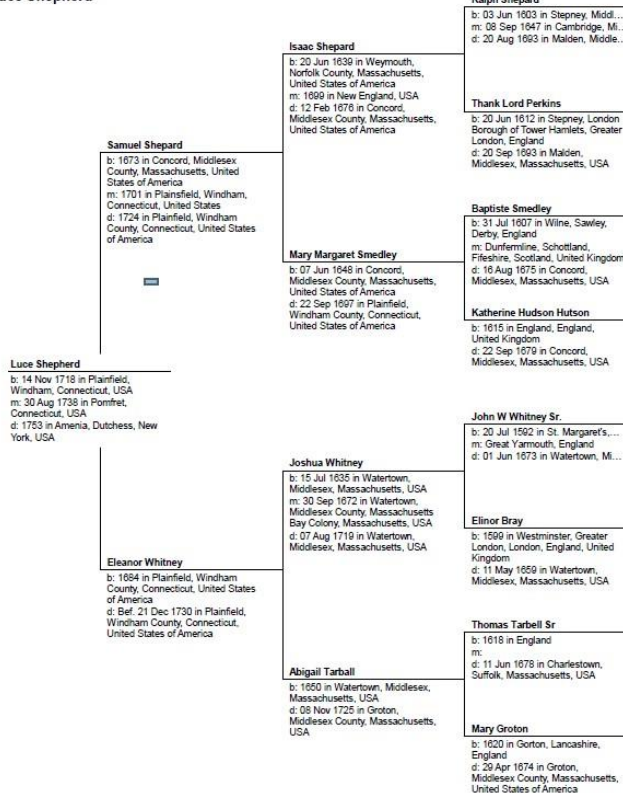


The confusion was resolved for me when I learned that Ezekiel Spicer born March 1, 1741/42's father was Ezekiel Spicer born August 19, 1716, whose wife was Lucy Shepard. An explanation for the double date for 1741 / 42 is that at the time the first date of the year was regarded as March 25 and hence March 1, 1741, under the earlier used Julian Calenda is actually March 1, 1742, under the Gregorian calendar and for genealogist is often given as March 1, 1741/42.

With this breakthrough I could then go on to research the ancestors of Ezekiel Spicer born in 1716, and the ancestors of his wife Lucy Shepard which to date has produced over another 30 direct ancestors shown below.

Ezekiel and Lucy represent the 9th generation of ancestors and those at the further end represent the 12th generation. I believe this represents the dividing line of what I may attempt to verify. If one believes in evolution and DNA science then all the individuals in our ancestors contain all the DNA that a portion of which is passed down through the generations and eventually constituted the author. Up until the 10th generation I have now identified over 330 direct ancestors.

Pedigree Chart for Luce Shepherd



Artificial Intelligence Has Arrived

After attending an excellent presentation on the 1883 Battle for Rat Portage where the presenter made excellent use of the artificial intelligence tools provided by Microsoft Soft I made my initial entry into the field.

I googled Artificial Intelligence and chose <https://www.bing.com/new> website

I commenced by entering the Battle for Rat Portage and received an overview report which provided an overview of the historical events. I found if I repeated this I got more details on a subsequent attempt. I then ask for Reports on the Battle for Rat Portage and got 3 or 4 excellent articles on the topic.

I then tried “Write me a story about Ralph Shepard who arrived in North America on the Abigail in 1635” and got the following [Abbreviated by omitting fanciful story about being attacked by pirates and other details about condition of ship]

“Ralph Shepard was a tailor from Stepney, England, who dreamed of a new life in America. He had married Thanklord Perkins, a young woman with a peculiar name and a strong faith, in 1632 at St. Bride’s Church in London. They had a daughter, Sarah, who was born in 1633.

In 1635, they decided to join the Great Migration of Puritans who were seeking religious freedom and economic opportunities in the Massachusetts Bay Colony. They boarded the Abigail, a ship that carried about 220 passengers and livestock, under the command of Captain Richard Hackwell. The ship left Plymouth on June 4th and sailed across the Atlantic Ocean.

After four long months of hardship and danger, the Abigail finally arrived in Boston on October 8th, 1635. The passengers were greeted by their fellow Puritans who had settled there earlier. They were happy to see land again and eager to start their new lives.

Ralph and Thankslord settled first in Watertown, then moved to Dedham, Weymouth, Rehoboth, and finally Malden. They had more children: Thomas (born in 1635), Isaac (born in 1640), Abraham (born in 1644), Jacob (born in 1646), Edward (born in 1648), Mary (born in 1650), Hannah (born in 1652), John (born in 1654), Daniel (born in 1656), Samuel (born in 1658), Jeremiah (born in 1660), Joanna (born in 1662), Abigail (born in 1664), Jonathan (born in 1666), Ephraim (born in 1668), Elizabeth (born in 1670), Joseph (born in 1672), Benjamin (born in 1674), Nathaniel (born in 1676), Rachel (born in 1678), Ruth (born in 1680), Deborah (born in 1682), Rebecca (born in 1684), Sarah (born in 1686), Lydia (born in 1688), Esther (born in 1690), Naomi (born in 1692), Leah (born in 1694), Dinah (born in 1696), Zilpah (born in 1698), Bilhah (born in 1700).

Ralph Shepard died on April 20th, 1693, at the age of 87. He was buried at Bell Rock Cemetery in Malden. Thankslord Shepard died on February 25th, 1694, at the age of 82. She was buried next to her husband.

They left behind a large family that spread across New England and beyond. They were remembered as brave pioneers who endured many trials and tribulations for their faith and freedom.

Sources:

- 1: <https://www.americanfamilyhistory.com/Shepard%20Family/ShepherdRalphThankful.html>
- 2: <https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Perkins-3692>

It does not take a very careful reading to point out some absurdities: example couple gave birth to 30 children, 3 of whom were born after the couples' death. The story is simply a story generated from various sources available on the World Wide Web regardless of the accuracy or truth of the information contained in the various sources.

Genealogists would verify every assertion or statement contained in the story. Next month I will examine the process that I followed to tell my story of Ralph Shepard, my 9th great grandfather. My current research is located at <https://www.retson.ca/shepard.pdf>. Research must be conducted according to standards referred to earlier in the newsletter. Sources must be examined for reliability, documented with citations of where one could review the evidence for identities, relationships, events, and situations from records such as church records of baptisms, marriages, deaths, ship lists, cemetery burial registries, court reports, land registry, tax records etc.

Additions to <http://www.retson.ca/retsongeneology.html> since August 1, 2023
Frost Ancestors <http://www.retson.ca/frost.pdf>
Shepard Ancestors <https://www.retson.ca/shepard.pdf>

This newsletter was sent to individuals who have expressed an interest in this genealogy at some time. If you do not wish to receive future updates, please email me at jretson@shaw.ca and indicate so.