

THE BLAIR FAMILY MAGAZINE

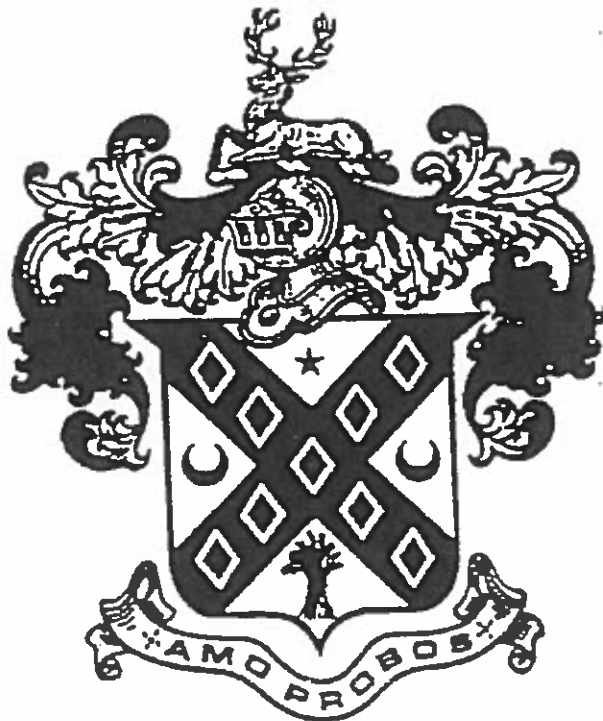


TABLE OF CONTENTS

From the President's Desk.....	21
BSGR On Line.....	22
Convention News.....	23
Alfred Blair and the 1889 Johnstown, Pennsylvania Flood.....	24
Uncle Johnny "Scalpy" Blair.....	26
Accidents: Mrs. Phoebe Blair; Evelyn Blair Pennoyer; Andrew J. Blair.....	27
Story Behind the Folk Ballad of the "Wreck of the Old '97".....	28
Train accidents: David C. Blair; Hugh Blair.....	29
Daniel Blair and Mrs. J. D. White; John W. Blair.....	30
Russell H. Blair Tragedy 93 Years Ago.....	31
Jane Blair Endsley Cummings Struck by Lightning.....	31
Meanest Miner on the Jackson-Josephine Border.....	32
The Titanic - A Blair Who Missed the Boat.....	33
Devastating Alabama Tornado; Robert H. Blair, Jr., Disaster Relief Volunteer.....	34
New Members of the Blair Society for Genealogical Research.....	35
FGS Conference in Cincinnati.....	36
Member Changes.....	37
Queries.....	37
Disasters of Charles Blair, Civil War Soldier.....	39
BSGR Ongoing Records Collections.....	40

From the President's Desk

Dear Members,

Edward P. Blair is going to be a tough act to follow. Under his leadership and guidance, the Blair Society has been strengthened tremendously. Our willingness to help beginners, help each other, our presence on the Internet, contributions to various library sites, publications, conventions, and our substantial and still growing database, are all initiatives Ed has led in an effort to attract members from all over the world. At the same time, he has worked to make the Society more useful and enjoyable to all its current members. While Ed steps down from his third term, let's look where we are and where we are going.

When many of us began searching for our ancestors we traveled great distances to find them in cemeteries and in court house records. Although these proven methods of research are still necessary, many of our new members do not yet have the free time or resources to enjoy them. But they do have something that many of us did not - a family computer. Today, a lot of work can be accomplished from the comfort of home. Communication is fast and easy. A database of information and a network of other researchers are at their fingertips. While answers may come easily to the researcher lucky enough to find his roots on the Internet, there are drawbacks too. Electronic information is only as reliable as the individual who provided it. A sense of who our ancestor was in his own time escapes the descendant. He must dig deeper into the source to get his answers.

A true family historian is not only a collector of data. Birth, death and marriage dates do not tell us everything we should know about our ancestors. We can study the family as a unit. We can examine the history of the area where they



made their homes. For these reasons, our convention sites and agenda are critical to the researcher. Now, we are working to plan our meetings and seminars years in advance. Our varied agenda will offer something for everyone. We will continue to provide information to help researchers, new and old, and provide information on the Blair families in that area. But at the same time we will offer the history of the area through walking tours, historical and knowledgeable speakers, and sites of interest. With increased attendance, we can negotiate with convention centers to provide lower rates. We hope our members will take advantage of free information packets and plan side trips to locations their whole families will enjoy.

The Blair Society is a wonderful organization because of our efforts, hard work, and generous spirit. This is *your* society, so let us hear from each of you. We strive to meet the needs of all our members because we know that your support and commitment are necessary for our success.

Sincerely,

Nancy Schaffer

BSGR On Line by Blair Leatherwood

Here we are, midsummer and here in California it might as well be spring! One good thing about research on the computer is that weather doesn't matter. With all of the cemetery information on line, you don't have to get your feet muddy (unless, of course, you really want to!). I hope those of you who went to Fort Wayne had a great time—you usually do—and that you made some progress on your searches.

I want to take some time in this issue to talk about money. Most of what's available to us in libraries and on the net is free. Since most of what we're looking for is a matter of public record, that's as it should be. Sure, we need to pay a fee on occasion to get copies (certified and other-wise) and that, too, is as it should be.

But how do we approach those sites which operate as a commercial venture? Is it worth it? Is it fair and reasonable? It depends.

I recently signed up with ancestry.com (<http://www.ancestry.com>) for the privilege of searching through their databases. A year ago I wouldn't have done so. However, I've been subscribing to their daily newsletter (go to their site for instructions) for a while now. It's free and only takes a couple of minutes a day to review. Ancestry is continually adding new databases at the rate of several a day. A couple of weeks ago, they finally hooked me. Now that I'm able to access all of the databases, I'm finding a wealth of information. For the \$5 a month it'll cost me, I think this one will be worth it.

You may also have heard about the Scottish Records Office going on line; I believe I've mentioned it earlier. On the Blair mailing list, someone has pointed out that much of the same information is available from the LDS. The SRO information is somewhat costly; the LDS data is free. You figure that one out.

As the presence of genealogists on the web increases, so will those companies who will recognize that money can be made out of this hobby. Tread carefully; make sure you can at least have partial access to information (there are a great many free databases on Ancestry's site and the new databases are generally free for a week or so) before you make a financial commitment.

So far, Ancestry is the only company I've subscribed to. I know Family Tree Maker's (<http://www.familytree maker.com>) site has a lot of information, but you sub-

scribe to it by buying their software. I must admit, too, that I have a problem with their practice of accepting all sorts of data from people without verification and then charging the rest of us for the fruits of individuals' hard labor. If the company itself did the work (or at least ran the darn things through a spell-checker), I might not feel this way.

Anyway, that's it for now. Oh, by the way—if you get anything from Bath, Ohio, toss it! But you already knew that....And, if anyone runs across a site of interest or has a favorite they think I should look at, please let me know! bleatherwood@ibm.net.

* * * * *

New Website

Have you tried our new website: www.clinton.net/~daver/blair.htm? It has lots of links, history (including Northern Ireland), pictures, letters, maps and other goodies. You can even order a Tee-shirt with the Blair crest on it!

The Genealogy pertains to three branches of the Brice Blair and Esther Peden line. If this isn't your family, check out the LINKS for pages that are of interest to all Blairs. Stop by and let us know what you think. Suggestions VERY welcome.

Morgan Blair Rajcevich and Nancy Knox Schaffer

Thanks to all who helped us with this special "disaster" issue by contributing material. Apart from telling the stories of individual Blairs, these accounts often give important genealogical data. We urge all members to search microfilm of early newspapers in your local libraries for any news items relating to Blairs, whether or not relevant to your own research. Send to the editor of BFM who will either print the material or direct it to our database or other appropriate BSGR information collectors. Always give dates and sources, of course, and any genealogical information known.

Our contributors make the publication of the magazine possible and, at the same time, help grow and preserve Blair data for future Blair descendants. Your efforts are very much needed and appreciated.

Convention News

Outgoing President Ed Blair opened the 1998 Convention in Fort Wayne on June 19th to fifty BSGR members and guests from thirteen states across the country, who ranged in age from sixteen (Angel Blair) to ninety-one (Gladys Ludens). All were eager to use the excellent facilities of the Allen County Library, to interchange once again with one another, and hear our distinguished member/lecturer Dawn Slater-Putt. Thanks to our hosts Joan and Richard Robison who worked so hard to arrange things for us.

Our speaker gave good basic rules for genealogical research, ideas on how to do research without leaving home at all, touched on writing up family histories, and gave members an excellent walk-through tour to show how to quickly access the large collection of genealogical resources held by the Allen County Library. Information valuable to both beginner and experienced researcher was given, including advice to search the card indexes of obits, etc., often found in local libraries, their surname folders and microreels of old local newspapers - to obtain data often available *only* at the local level.

We were reminded that we should collect every document about a person – marriage *applications* often contain more valuable information than licenses; back up family records with birth, church, marriage, death documents to flesh out date records, and much, much more. The Society is truly fortunate to have Dawn as a member and as lecturer at our convention.



Dawn Slater-Putt



Once again, Lethene Parks brought her excellent Oregon Trail research and photographs.

At the business meeting following the lectures outgoing Vice President Marvin Kelley was given a plaque for his service to BSGR over the years, as was Morgan Rajcevich for her current work on Membership. Also acknowledged were Irvin Morse, stepping down after many years as BSGR Treasurer, Doris Osten, retiring Archival chair, and Ed Blair for his years as President (he will now serve BSGR as Treasurer). Thanks are given to all; their hard work has helped keep BSGR viable and growing. Art Webb was also commended for his great work on setting up our BSGR web site, and his continued servicing of it.

Bryce Blair, Recording Secretary, read notes from the minutes of the Executive Board meeting. These will be placed on the web site in the family only section. (If you don't have a home computer hookup, check with your local library; our web site is BlairSociety.org.)

Members are reminded that those in charge of data banks – grave sites, obits, archives, database -- need your input, and that while they can look things up for you, they should not to be expected to do research – their volunteer time is stretched to the limit. [If you want to help out in any capacity, contact Benjie Blair: general@internettport.net.]

With all our activities this year, increased mailing costs, our computer work, etc., BSGR ran a deficit last year. Members voted on a \$3.00 basic membership increase beginning in 1999 -- \$15 to \$18 for annual memberships. We are reminded that in contributing memberships everything above this basic fee is tax deductible.

Seminars and conventions for future years were voted on: 1999 - Frankfurt, Kentucky, to honor our founder A. Raymond Blair; 2000 - Charlestown, South Carolina; 2001, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; 2002 - Nashville, Tennessee. It is hoped that Blair families will plan family vacations around these dates and that more members, especially our newer ones, will attend to become acquainted with other Society members. The Blair archives repose in Frankfurt, so we look forward to seeing you all there next June!

Alfred Blair and the 1889 Johnstown, Pennsylvania Flood

By Charlotte Blair Stewart, BSGR Mem. #022

As torrential rains inundated Johnstown, Pennsylvania on May 31, 1889, the vast majority of the residents went home to sit out yet another spring flood or fled to the higher ground of the hills surrounding the city. It had happened before with quiet regularity in this town built entirely on the flood plane created by the junction of the Little Conemaugh and Stoney Creek Rivers. The weather had been rainy off and on for four days and even before the heavy rains of May 31, both rivers were close to overflowing their banks.

But, this flood would take on an added dimension, caused by sheer human negligence. High above Johnstown and fifteen miles upstream a dam held back the waters of Lake Conemaugh. This dam was owned by the South Fork Hunting and Fishing Club and around the lake was a summer resort for a small group of extremely wealthy residents of Pittsburgh including such social giants as Andrew Carnegie, H. C. Frick, Henry Phipps, and Andrew Mellon.

The dam had been purchased and reconstructed ten years before. It was 900 feet across, 72 feet high and held back some 20 tons of water in a lake that varied from 2-1/2 to 3 miles in length. With the rains of the past week the reservoir was extremely high. Further, the dam had been reconstructed incorrectly and improperly maintained for years and had become a part of local folklore. Every time it rained heavily in Johnstown the rumor would spread that the dam was about to burst. Thus, in May of 1889, when warnings were sent down the valley to Johnstown telling them that the dam was in danger of collapse, few people in the valley paid much attention. They had heard this too many times before.

Directly upstream of Johnstown on the Little Conemaugh River lay the busy mill town of Woodvale. It was a company town built by the Cambria Iron Company. The houses which stood in neat white rows of identical architecture had been built and were owned by the company. Most of the 1,000 to 1,200 residents were employed by Cambria Iron, which had also built a woolen mill to give employment to the wives and young girls of Woodvale. Maple Avenue was the main street and stretched for about a mile, a lovely tree-lined street with a trolley line which connected the town to Johnstown proper. Woodvale also contained the Rosenthal Tannery, two school houses, but no saloons.

Cambria Iron Company did not approve of saloons in their company towns.

When the dam at South Fork Hunting and Fishing Club collapsed at 3:05 on that rainy afternoon, Woodvale had absolutely no warning that a wall of water seventy feet high in places, was about to wipe out the entire community. We have no way of knowing where Alfred Blair and his family were on that day, but we do know that in the approximately five minutes it took for the water to go through Woodvale, they would be counted among the many victims.

We don't know much about Alfred. He apparently came to Johnstown in late 1879 or early 1880. He was listed on the 1880 Census:

Alfred Blair, white, male, age 43, carpenter, born Canada, both parents born Canada

Locata Blair, wife, age 41, keeps house, born Canada, both parents born Canada [this name was difficult to read, but probably Locata]

Oliver, son, age 15, at school, born Vermont

Eva, daughter, age 13, at school, born Vermont

Gilbert, son, age 11, at school, born Vermont

Alfred, son, age 4, born Canada

Amanda, daughter, age 2, born Canada

Rosanna, daughter, age 9 months, born Vermont

They appear to have had another daughter born in 1882 as an obituary appeared in the Johnstown Tribune on 25 May 1882 which read "died in Woodvale on the 25th, an infant daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Blair. Internment will be in Lower Yoder Catholic Cemetery tomorrow."

In the city directory of 1884, Alfred is listed as living at 29 Maple Avenue, Woodvale, and his occupation is that of a pattern maker. By the time the 1887 city directory appeared he had moved to 35 Maple Avenue. His son Gilbert was listed in the same directory as a clerk in the Gautier Office (a local steel mill) but still living at home with his parents. Son Oliver was listed as a machinist, boarding at Adam and Railroad Streets in Conemaugh Borough, just across the river from Woodvale.

Information for a city directory to be printed in 1889 was gathered in April and early May. The books were printed and in the bindery when the flood hit Johnstown. Following the flood the publisher rescued the proof sheets and following a registration of the survivors, reprinted the directory, adding a notation of the number of members of the family before and after

the flood. Alfred Blair would appear in the directory, still a pattern maker, living at 35 Maple Avenue. The notation would indicate that there were six persons living in the home before the flood. There is no notation for the number following which points to there being no one left to supply the information. Neither of his sons has a separate listing in the 1889 directory.

Mrs. Blair's body was recovered some miles down stream and taken to the morgue which had been set up in Minersville, south of the city. Alfred, age 53, Oliver, age 25, Alfred, Jr., age 14, Amanda/Emanuel age 12 and Rosanna, age 10 were listed among the unidentified missing. It is quite possible that they were among the victims who became trapped in the debris which accumulated behind the stone viaduct of the Pennsylvania Railroad just south of Johnstown on the Big Conemaugh River. This debris formed a new dam composed of people, houses, cows, horses, barns, barbed wire rolls from the mill, railroad engines, entire lines of railroad cars and every other thing the flood waters had gathered on their rampage down the Conemaugh Valley. The debris caught fire as the water levels fell, causing an inferno that could be seen for miles. Many of the victims of the flood became further victims of the fire as the night wore on. Survivors would recall it as the "night in hell."

The first edition of the *Johnstown Tribune* following the flood would appear two weeks later. It contained a list of over 15,000 people who survived the flood, based on books the residents signed to prove they were still living. None of Alfred's family appeared on the list. The paper also contained a list of the known dead. Only Locata, listed simply as Mrs. Blair, appeared among the dead. However, these lists are not proof that none of the family survived. There were other Blairs in Johnstown on that fateful day and all of them survived, yet only one in those families is on the list of known survivors.

Gilbert Blair, son of Albert, somehow survived. It is possible he was not in Johnstown at the time, or perhaps he was one of the lucky ones to make it to the

hills. The only trace I have found of him was when he filed a claim for losses, like so many others, with the charitable trust that had been set up to distribute the vast amount of money that poured into Johnstown from all over the world. According to the formula, Gilbert was credited with \$4,000 worth of losses and was thus entitled to receive \$490. The category under which he was paid indicated that he had suffered property and personal losses, that he had been in comfortable circumstances prior to the flood, continued to be steadily employed, and was not in dire need. I have found no trace of him in the Johnstown area after the flood and, like so many others, he probably simply picked up and left the area.

The possibility exists that his sister Eva also survived. She would have been old enough to have been married and may have been on the lists under her married name. I have checked the newspapers for a marriage notice for her but to date have been unable to find one, or that she survived.

Mrs. Blair was buried in Lower Yoder Catholic Cemetery, presumably by her infant daughter. If anyone ever placed a headstone on her grave, it is now gone. This cemetery has been badly vandalized over the years, and there are stones lying on their faces and entire areas without stones at all.

The Johnstown flood became famous world wide. It was the largest natural disaster in United States history to that time and media flocked to Johnstown from all over the world. The official accounting listed 2,209 dead; however, there were many people never accounted for and an accurate tally has never been made. One in three bodies found would never be identified, and one in every ten people living in Johnstown prior to the flood were killed. In excess of 750 unidentified bodies were eventually buried in neat rows in Grandview Cemetery, marked by matching white marble headstones. Perhaps Alfred Blair and his children lie there; we will never know.



Uncle Johnny "Scalpy" Blair

By Margaret Vance Webb, BSGR. Mem. #015

John Calhoun Blair trudged down the Chicken Pike after ending his day clearing land on Silver Hill in the newly settled Cumberland area near Fort Nashboro (a tourist attraction today in Nashville, Tennessee).

John's activities were limited to day-light hours because of continuous Indian raids and he with his wife, Nancy "Agnes" Blair and his family and slaves were living at John Buchanan's fort nearby. He was building a log cabin on a little rise about a mile from Stone's River but had not moved in.

In the year 1789, John Calhoun Blair, born 12 May 1764 in Guilford County, North Carolina, had just turned twenty-five when a grievous incident occurred. When the day became dark, an Indian way-laid John on the gloomy path, got behind a log and shot him through the body. Johnny staggered but did not fall. The young brave silently pursued Johnny, now swaying and bleeding from the wound. Johnny fell upon his face and as he laid there, he felt the sting of the hunting knife cut into his head as he was scalped, then he was stabbed, which was the usual death blow, was then stomped on the back and left for dead.¹ After a little while he recovered consciousness, carefully surveyed matters, and seeing no Indians, made the rest of the way to neighbor Andrew Carnahan's.²

He asked for water and the man dipped his hat full of water and Johnny drank it. He threw up a lot of blood which made him feel better, and was then carried to the fort. Family legend is that while Johnny was lying semi-conscious wolves came and licked his scalped head, or he may have dreamed this. Another legend is that a doctor pulled a silk handkerchief through his wound where he had been shot by the Indian.

Dr. Patrick Vance, a physician in the military service, has been credited in perfecting a method of treating pioneers who had been scalped, and perhaps someone in the fort had been taught how to perform this surgery which included pricking the skull with a shoemaker's awl. Flesh was said to spring up through the holes allowing a new covering to form on the denuded skull. Johnny Blair had such an operation, and Nancy nursed him back to health at Buchanan's fort.

¹ *Draper Manuscripts*, pages 456-457.

² Quote from daughter Alice Blair Andrews in, *John Blair of Guilford County, North Carolina* by Lucy Echels Blair, pages 40-41.

John Calhoun Blair and his brother Samuel Ruth Blair were among the one thousand pioneers who had come with the Blairs into the Cumberland area from Guilford County, North Carolina. The brothers' land may have been part of the 640-acre land grant in the territory of Tennessee issued in 1783 to their father, Major Thomas Blair for Revolutionary War service. Major Thomas had married Jane Ruth, "widow of Robert McQuiston," who was the mother of John Calhoun and Samuel Ruth Blair.

John Calhoun received a grant including land where Nashville stands today, but since it was not suitable for farming, the brothers had exchanged it for more fertile land at Doneison, bordering Stone's River.

Johnny wore a skull-cap for the rest of the sixty-four years after he was scalped, probably to hide the scars from his many children and the children of his brothers and neighbors. However, his catastrophic body condition was never forgotten because in all accounts of his life, he was known as "Uncle Johnny Scalpy."³

On the Cumberlander Character*

It is doubtful if the average pioneer thought of himself as an empire builder. He was determined to live, and regardless of how near or far death waited, the Cumberlander lived until he died. Even the thrifty Scotch or German farmers, so much a part of the scene, showed by the things each left behind him, that the most important thing to do with life was to live it.

Most died, preparing for an earthly future; Jacob Castleman to leave his flax "unbroke," and young heifers that would in time have made cows; some left "cotton in ye seed," others unused cloth for the new suit, gears for the new wagon, pewter for the new spoons. Most were killed or wounded not in Indian battles, but while going about the business of their lives: "a woman washing at the spring," "carrying a basket of clothes," "sitting by the fire and singing at the top of his lungs," "with a load of cane on his shoulder for his horse," "he had just had a log rolling," "at the springhouse," "behind a nursery of trees," and "on their way to school." Pages would be required to enumerate the incidents surrounding the deaths, but in them all there is nothing to indicate either men or women neglected their work through fear of Indians. Cautious they were, but clothes got washed, cows milked, children taught, fields cleared and stables built; the fortified home made life possible. Life never consisted in hiding behind walls. ... The story of John Blair, scalped, shot, trampled upon and left for dead, is the only instance I found of a white man who hated all Indians, and of him the narrator remarked, "He dislikes Indians to this day."

* Harriette Simpson Amow, *Seedtime on the Cumberland*. (Lexington, Kentucky: University of Kentucky Press, 1983), p. 346ff

³ *Blair Magazine*, Vol. 1, November 1926, No. 3, page 44.

A Fatal Accident

Harlan, Iowa, 29 October, 1887. On Monday morning last, Mrs. Phoebe Blair, mother of William and Thomas of this city, was shockingly burned in such a manner as to cause her death on the following day. It is thought that her clothes were set on fire by a pipe which she had put in her pocket without extinguishing. Her grand-daughter discovered her clothes to be on fire and with great presence of mind threw a quilt over Mrs. Blair's shoulders, but this failed to put out the fire, and she threw a pail full of water over her, which put out the flames but they had accomplished their work, and after terrible suffering she died about 3 o'clock on Tuesday, it being her 87th birthday. Her funeral was held in the M.E. Church yesterday at 2 p.m., Rev. Ramsay conducting the services.

Phoebe Davis (nee Atkins), born 26 October 1799, married William Hamilton Blair in Fleming County, Kentucky in 1822. He was the son of John and Eleanor (Hamilton) Blair of the Alexander Blair/Elizabeth Cochran line, being researched by Mem. #240, Mary Powers (see *Blair Family Magazine*, Volume XIV, Summer 1996, page 29ff., and Volume XVI, No. 1, Spring 1998, page 6ff.). Phoebe had survived the early loss of her first husband, life on the frontiers of Kentucky, Ohio and Iowa, and the birth of ten children, all of them living to become productive adults.

* * * * *

Kerosene Can Explodes

Mrs. Evelyn Pennoyer, 20 of Madison, Killed
Friday, December 23, 1932,
The Ashtabula Star, Beacon, Ashtabula, Ohio
Submitted by Marilyn Bobseine, Mem. 561,

Madison, December 23—Horribly burned by flaming oil showered upon her when a container of kerosene exploded, Mrs. Evelyn Pennoyer, 20, formerly of Ashtabula, died at 3:00 a.m. today in Geneva Hospital. The fatal accident occurred at 9:05 Thursday at the Pennoyer home, 139 Union Street, this village. According to informants, the container of kerosene was near a heating stove in the home and exploded. The blazing oil completely engulfed Mrs. Penoyer, burning her from head to foot.

Mrs. Pennoyer is the daughter of Mrs. Sarah Blair, 1720 East 48th Street, Ashtabula. She was married to Samuel Pennoyer, Madison, 14 months ago. The couple had been living in an upstairs apartment at the home of Mr. Pennoyer's mother.

Besides her husband and mother, Mrs. Pennoyer is survived by three sisters: Mrs. A. J. Cimorell, 4505 West Avenue, and Mrs. Ruth Barrett of Ashtabula; Mrs.

Jean Cauffield of Geneva, and a brother John Henry Blair, Jr., of Canton, Ohio. Her father, John H. Blair, preceded her in death. At the time of his death he was an inspector at the Aetha Rubber Company in Ashtabula.

Mrs. Pennoyer was graduated from Ashtabula High School in the class of 1930, and was a member of St. Peter's Episcopal Church, Ashtabula. Funeral services will be held at 2 p.m. Monday at the Zaback Funeral home, Park Avenue, Ashtabula. Rev. J. E. Carhartt of St. Peter's officiating, burial in Edgewood Cemetery.

Mrs. Cimorell is reported dangerously ill at her home and the family has requested that she not be informed of her sister's tragic death.

Evelyn was descended from Capt. Henry Blair and thus back to the Matthew Blair of Erie County, Pennsylvania, and the Blairs of New England, as outlined in *Blair Family Magazine*, Vol. XIV, Winter 1996, page 68ff., and Vol. VIII, #4, Winter 1990, page 12ff.

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Andrew J. Blair Is Killed in Mine

Johnstown Tribune, 16 November 1926
South Fork Man Crushed Beneath Rock Fall;
Brother-in-law Hurt Yesterday
Submitted by Charlotte Blair Stewart, Mem. 022

South Fork, November 16—Andrew J. Blair, aged about 44 of B Court, was instantly killed about 1 o'clock this afternoon when caught beneath a fall of rock while at work in the Forks Coal Mining Company Mine. The victim was badly crushed.

Mr. Blair's brother-in-law, Abraham Childers, was injured in the same mine yesterday, having the ligaments of his leg torn. The two men worked together, but on account of injury sustained yesterday, Mr. Childers was not at work today.

Mr. Blair is survived by his widow, Mrs. Bertha (Childers) Blair, and four children—Genevieve, wife of Ralph Vivian, of South Fork, and Vada, Leroy and Donald Blair, all at home. Several brothers and sisters also survive. The deceased's daughter, Genevieve was married last Saturday evening. Her husband left last night for Detroit, but she decided to remain here for a week or more. Mr. Blair was a member of the Christian and Missionary Alliance.

Coroner Annie F. Swabb, of Johnstown, was notified of the fatality and the body was later turned over to George Bros., local undertakers. Arrangements for the funeral have not yet been completed

Andrew was descended from Andrew and Susannah (Adkins) Blair of Bedford County, Pennsylvania, being researched by Mem. #298, Robert D. Gates of Altoona, Pa.

The Story Behind the Folk Ballad of the 'Wreck of the Old '97'

Material supplied by BSGR Mem. #828, Charles Massey

The Wreck of Old '97

On a cold frosty morning in the month of September,
When the clouds were hanging low,
Ninety seven pulled out of Washington station,
Like an arrow shot from a bow.

Oh, they handed him his orders at Monroe, Virginia,
Sayin –“Steve, you’re away behind time,
This is not 38, but it’s old '97,
You must get her to Spencer on time.

Oh, he looked around his cab at his black, greasy fireman,
Sayin –‘shovel in a little more coal.
An’ when we cross the White Oak Mountain,
You can watch Old '97 roll.

It’s a mighty rough road from Lynchburg to Danville,
And the line’s on a three mile grade,
It was on that grade that he lost his air brake,
And you see what a jump he made.

He was going down the hill at ninety miles an hour,
When the whistle broke into a scream,
He was found in the wreck with his hand on the throttle,
And a’ scalded to death with the steam.

Now, ladies, you must take warning,
From this time evermore and learn,
Never speak harsh words to your true loving husbands,
They may leave you never to return.

The wreck of the fast mail train, the Old '97 in September 1903 was not the worst train wreck in railroad history; nine men were killed and seven injured, tragedy for them and their families, to be sure. Good reporting and spectacular photographs gave rise to the ballad, and the memory became part of Danville, Va. folk history.

The story ran with the headline: “**HORRIBLE RAILROAD CASTASTROPHE. Fast Mail Takes Fatal Plunge from Trestle,**”¹ and continued:

“The train operating between New York City and New Orleans, the fastest train on the Southern Railway, was wrecked just outside of the North Danville Yard limits yesterday afternoon. The train left the track just as the engine was approaching a high trestle that spans a creek north of the city. The trestle is on a steep grade and curve. It is supposed that, definite information being unavailable on account of the death of the engineer and conductor, the train was running at an unusually high

rate of speed, and that the flange on a wheel of the engine broke off when the curve was struck. The engine, followed by mail, express and baggage cars, ran some distance on the cross ties of the trestle before plunging seventy-five feet to the creek below. The engine left the track fifty feet north of the trestle, at the beginning of the sharp curve.

“Of the sixteen men who composed the train, mail and express crews, nine were killed outright and seven seriously injured. The engineer, J. A. Broadey of Saltville, Virginia stuck to his post and was thrown some distance from his cab. J. Thomas Blair of Spencer, North Carolina was killed instantly and was one of the first to be recovered from the wreck.... Blair had suffocated under a mountain of mail....The bodies of the dead men were broken almost entirely to pieces and horribly mangled....The scene itself baffles description.

“All the coaches are piled upon one another in the utmost confusion. All the cars except one are battered into kindling wood. The engine itself is buried in the mud at the bottom of the creek with the debris of the wreck piled high above it. The one car that remained intact broke through the trestle in the final plunge, making a gaping hole in the trestle, which will have to be repaired before traffic can be resumed. The telegraph wires running parallel to the road were torn down and communications are being delayed. Fire which broke out in the wreck was extinguished by the Danville Fire Department.

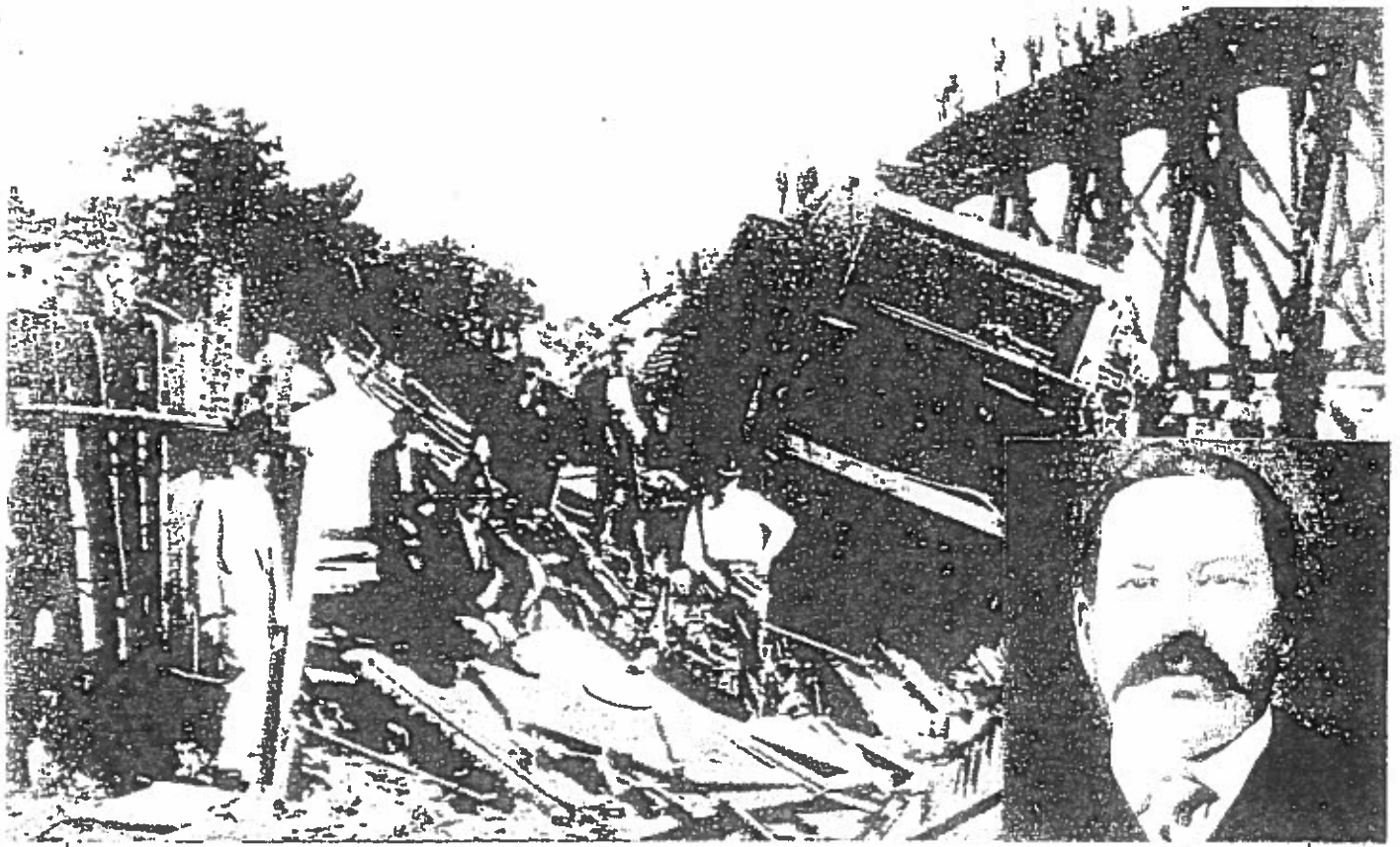
“People living in the vicinity along either side of the track, many of whom were eye witnesses to the disaster, say that they were appalled at the rate of speed at which the train was running....

“When given his orders, engineer Broady was told that late trains on the Baltimore & Ohio and the Philadelphia, Wilmington & Baltimore Railroads had been responsible for 97’s tardy start from Washington. He was instructed to make up this and other time lost enroute to Monroe, and was even provided with an extra fireman to help him get more speed.

“The body of conductor Blair was prepared for shipment to Spencer, North Carolina. However, his wife wired that she preferred to bury him here at Danville. Mrs. Blair is a Danville girl, the daughter of Mr. Lewis F. Bunger. Blair, 37, had a wife and four daughters and was considered a level-headed and responsible man.”

¹ *The Bee*, Danville, Virginia, Monday, September 28, 1903.

Editor’s Note: Charles Massey is a descendant of J. Thomas Blair. If anyone knows the ancestry of this elusive Blair, please contact him, BSGR genealogist Charlotte Blair Stewart or the BFM editor.



Five brilliant photographs of the famous wreck were taken by Leon N. Taylor of Danville; inset is J. Thomas Blair

Train Accidents. . .

*Submitted by Charlotte B. Stewart,
BSGR. Mem. #022*

David C. Blair

Johnstown Tribune, 19 April, 1920

David Blair, passenger and freight agent for the Pennsylvania Railroad at Conemaugh, Pennsylvania was drowned in the Allegheny River at Aspinwall, Pittsburgh, at 4:30 yesterday morning when he stepped from the caboose on a trestle near Brilliant pumping station. Men in skiffs and a motorboat and an expert diver have been searching the river for the body since the accident. He made his home at 441 Thomas Avenue, 5th ward, and went to Pittsburgh on the noon train Saturday to act as extra flagman...[more details of the accident here].

Robert Blair, Freight Agent for the Pennsylvania Railroad at East Pittsburgh came to Johnstown last night to inform Mrs. Blair of the death of her husband. David was born to the late W. J. Blair and was born at Sunbury 39 years ago. He came to Johnstown about 1897 and worked as an architect for a few years for the late George T. Smith before working for the Railroad ...[more details of his work career here].

Survived by Widow **Bertha Yost Blair**, a native of Shamokin. His mother, **Mrs. W. J. Blair**, resided in Kansas, his brother **Robert**, formerly of this City, now of Wilkinsburg; two sisters, **Mrs. A. J. Harter** of Luzerne County, Pennsylvania, and **Mrs. Jennie Blair** of Kansas. He was a member of Cambria Lodge F & A.M. of the City, and a member of Bethany Presbyterian Church, Morrellville.

Note: David was descended from the Blairs of Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania as outlined in a book written by Mem. #311, Mrs. Frances M. Blair of Willoughby Hills, Ohio.

* * * * *

Killed by the Cars - Hugh Blair's Death at Geneva

Crawford County, Pennsylvania, 3 December 1879. On Wednesday morning Mr. **Hugh F. Blair** was instantly killed at the Geneva station on the A. & G. W. Railroad. Mr. Blair had ridden on horseback from his home about two miles from Sheakleyville, near the county line, and intended taking the train for Meadville. Freight train #32 was standing on the side track, and the engine was blowing off steam. Mr. Blair started up the main track from the crossing to get to the station. Being deafened by the escaping steam, Mr. Blair did not

discover the approach of the express, the engine of which struck him and threw him directly under the wheels of the freight train, killing him instantly, and mangling his body in a fearful manner. Mr. Frank Wishart, one of the crew of train 32, and from whom the particulars of the accident were obtained, says that the body was forced so tightly under one of the car wheels that it was with great difficulty it could be removed. He was at once taken to the station and afterward borne to his home from which the funeral will take place. So heavy was the blow of the engine that one of the slats of the pilot of the engine was broken.

Mr. Blair is about 60 years of age, a highly respected citizen of the county, and was well known throughout this section as an upright and energetic man, and his sudden and violent death was a severe shock to a large circle of acquaintances and friends.

Note: Mem. #022, Charlotte Blair Stewart, and Mem. #665, Helen Knowles of Wilcox, Arizona, are direct descendants of Hugh Blair and Jane Thompson who came from Donegore, Ireland.

* * * * *

Two Persons Killed

Forreston Journal, Forreston, Ogle County, Illinois
28 October 1871

Submitted by BSGR Mem. #679, Morgan Rajceovich,

Mr. Daniel Blair and Mrs. J. D. White while returning from the funeral of their brother-in-law, the late H. M. Bole, who was buried at Venango on Saturday afternoon, and while crossing the A. & G.W. Railroad track near the Broadford bridge in Woodcock township were struck by a locomotive and instantly killed.

Mr. Blair was 52 years of age and formerly lived in Woodstock township, but in 1850 went to California, where, by industry and close attention to business, he had become quite wealthy. He was the son of Patrick Blair late of Woodcock township, was unmarried and had recently returned to visit relatives and friends in this county after an absence of 21 years. His untimely death is a painful illustration of the uncertainty of human affairs.

Mrs. White, his sister, was also visiting friends and relatives in Woodcock, and intended soon to leave for her home in Illinois, where an anxious husband was awaiting her return. Instead of news of her early coming the stricken husband received a telegram announcing her tragic death, and today, Thursday, reached Woodcock where he found his wife's and her brother's remains.

The bodies were shockingly mutilated and will be buried at 11 o'clock on the morrow in Woodcock Cemetery (Mt. Blair).

Mrs. Bole, widow of the late H. M. Bole, is nearly distracted with grief over the almost simultaneous loss of husband, sister and brother, as is also Mr. White, over the shocking death of his wife and sudden departure of two brothers-in-law. The sympathies of the entire community are extended to the stricken families. The late H. M. Bole was a brother to W. R. Bole, Esq., of this city, and Mr. Blair and Mrs. White were brother and sister of F. S. L. Blair, also of Meadville.—*Crawford County [Pennsylvania] Journal*.

We will add to the above that Mr. Blair and Mrs. White are brother and sister to Capt. Blair of this place, and that the Captain is now East to pay the last tribute of respect to his deceased relatives. *Forreston Journal*.

Note: The Capt. Blair referred to in the above article is Matthew Blair of Forreston, Illinois. Contact Morgan if you are interested in this line.

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Another train accident. . .

Submitted by Carol Tucker, BSGR Mem. #863

Elderly Swanzey Man Killed on Railroad

John W. Blair Loses Life When Struck by "Gas"
Car near Sawyers Crossing
Keene Evening Sentinel, Monday, April 6, 1931

John W. Blair, 76, resident of the Sawyer's Crossing road, was instantly killed Saturday night while walking on the Boston and Main railroad tracks between West Swanzey and Sawyer's Crossing. He was struck by a car propelled by a gasoline engine. The funeral will be held Tuesday at 2 in O. J. Howard & company's funeral parlors. Friends are invited.

Mr. Blair is survived by three sons, William and Richard Blair of Swanzey, Henry Blair of Mineville, N.Y.; three daughters, Mrs. Sadie Huntoon of East Swanzey, Mrs. Mary Smith of Barberton, O., and Mrs. Lily Hemett of New Russia, N.Y.; four brothers, Joseph Blair of Wilmington, Mass., Edward and Frank Blair of Bennington, Vt., and Richard Blair of Dalton, Mass.; also by 20 grandchildren.

Accidents . . .

Mr. Blair, who had been in ill health several months, was missed from his home in the evening and his tracks were followed by a son and grandson. They found the tracks of the elderly man by the side of the railroad and as they approached the trestle between Sawyer's Crossing and West Swanzey, the two searchers waited for the train to pass and within a few minutes heard the whistle and the application of brakes on the car. They rushed to where the train had stopped and learned that a man had been struck by the train. Mr. Blair had been taken aboard the train and was being brought to Keene when the younger Blairs arrived at the scene. They came to Keene and identified the body at the undertaking parlors.

Note: John Willis Blair is the great grandfather of Carol Tucker through his daughter, Mary Ellen (Blair) Smith, born 2 December 1893 in Hancock, New Hampshire. John Willis's parents were John Blair, born 4 May 1826 in County Donegal, Ireland, and Eliza E. Sweeney, born in 1822 in Buffalo, New York. John's parents were William Blair and Elizabeth McDowell from County Donegal, Ireland.

* * * * *

Story of Tragedy 93 Years Ago

Submitted by BSGR Mem. #448,
Marjorie Barber Schuster

The life of a very fine Blair descendant was suddenly taken on 4 October, 1905. Russell H. Blair was 29 years old, and a graduate of the Y.M.C.A. Law School, and had been admitted to the bar.

Two men were instantly killed and one injured by a terrific explosion of gas in Hamilton County, Ohio Court House. The Superintendent had been looking for a leak with a lighted match that set off the gas. The roar of the explosion was followed by great, heavy flagstones crashing through the ceiling of the Commissioners Room.

Russell was a member of the Montgomery Presbyterian Church and President of Young People's Christian Endeavor. When he died, his pocket Bible was in his shirt pocket. The bells which tolled for his funeral were to have rung on the 18th of October for his wedding day. Mr. Blair was to have been married to Miss Ruth Buckingham of a pioneer, Miamiville, Clermont County, Ohio family. Burial was in Hopewell Cemetery, Montgomery, Hamilton County, Ohio.



Russell H. Blair

Russell was born 11 November, 1876 in Montgomery, Hamilton County, Ohio, the son of James Milton and Annie Phoebe Laskey Blair, the grandson of William Hayes Blair, Sr. and Clarissa Addison Blair. He was the nephew of the County Commissioner W. H. Blair, and left three sisters and a brother, George Blair.

Note: Marjorie Schuster is the daughter of Russell's sister, Luella, born October 1892, who married Albert Barber.

Elderly Woman Killed by Lightning Belfast, Tennessee, 1839

Submitted by BSGR Mem. #002, Edward P. Blair

Jane Blair Endsley Cummings, age 93, was struck by lightning and killed in her home at Belfast last night. She was sitting in her rocking chair by the open fireplace during a thunderstorm, when lightning came down the chimney and killed her, even melting the metal frames of her eye glasses.

Jane Blair was the daughter of Hugh and Mary (Dawson) Blair of North Carolina. She was born at sea on 20 August 1746. She first married James Endsley, and had two children. After the death of Mr. Endsley, she married John C. Cummings, and had four more children. She came to Tennessee with her son John Endsley in 1816, and settled in Belfast.

Note: This story is from the book, *John Blair of Guilford County, North Carolina*, by Lucy Echels Blair, and is being used with her permission.

The Meanest Miner on the Jackson-Josephine Border¹

Contributed by BSGR Mem. #230, Leitha Trefren

Henry Wines, a 36 year old German miner, came to Oregon from California in 1866. He bought a mining claim in a marshy basin on Jump-Off-Joe Creek on the Jackson-Josephine border. Wines built a cabin and laid in a stock of provisions. It wasn't long before he discovered gold. Little attention was paid to his bragging, then David Sexton began panning below Wines's claim and found a piece of gold worth \$13. This started a wild gold rush. In the dead of winter with three to six feet of snow on the ground, a hundred miners arrived. Many miners came from Jacksonville and claims were located for a mile along the basin....It wasn't long before the miners on Jump-Off-Joe began squabbling over claims.

Wines was tall and of a "spare but powerful build." He had a sullen disposition and never talked about himself, nor did he ask others about their business. Whenever he was asked questions he would answer in one or two words, without expression. It was said he never uttered more than five words in an hour. Wines kept prospecting and acquired other claims on Jump-Off-Joe Creek and several acres of land near the Jackson-Josephine County border. His claim was in a section of land being disputed by the two counties. Wines was known for his "hoggishness" for seizing a five mile land claim supposedly fabulously rich in minerals, and for holding that claim against all comers at the point of a rifle. He built a cabin and guarded his possessions like a man obsessed....he became bitter and didn't trust anybody. Several prospectors visited Wines's diggings and attempted to take possession of a part of it, but they mysteriously disappeared and were never heard from again.

Henry Wines's fearless reputation was the talk of nearby miners. It was rumored he had killed at least a dozen who dared come near his claim. A young miner thought to be one of Wines's victims was a boy new to the area. The boy had a watch of unusual make that his mother had given him which he showed around town. He headed up Jump-Off-Joe Creek to mine and never returned. His mother wrote several letters trying to locate him, one to the postmaster at Woodville asking him to find her son. The postmaster went to Grants Pass and while in a jewelry store, saw the young man's watch. It had been left there for repairs by Wines, but when questioned, Wines grumbled and refused to say where he got it.

Other stories circulated about Wines: that two Chinamen had disappeared up Jump-off-Joe Creek; that a young man hired by Wines to help mine had begun to shovel from a certain spot and was driven off by Wines, rifle at the ready, who told him to get his dirt from somewhere else.

In 1894 Henry had two partners helping him work the hydraulic equipment for a share of his claim. They were Al Palmer and Al's half brother, John Blair. Palmer and Blair bunked together, while Wines stayed in the next cabin. In February 1894 Palmer and Blair noticed Wines acting strange. Then one night Blair awoke and found Wines standing by his bed with his gun in his hand. When Blair asked him what he was doing, Wines made some trifling excuse and went to bed.

Two weeks later, the three men sat around the fireplace. Palmer and Blair retired for the night, but Wines stayed up. Blair and Palmer were sound asleep when a shot rang out. The bullet zinged past Al Palmer's head and lodged in the log wall on the backside of the bed. Al jumped out of bed and saw Wines standing in the dim doorway with a rifle in his hand. Al grabbed a pistol and shot at Wines. Wines returned the fire, but missed. Palmer rushed at Wines and got Wines's gun beneath his arm and at the same time managed to shoot Wines in the head. Wines fell crumpled to the floor.

At the coroner's inquest held at Wines's Mines, John Blair testified, "*I had been suspicious of Wines for a considerable time and had not got a night's sleep for a long time. I had watched him very closely as he was acting very strange. I heard the sound of a heavy gun and saw a flash. I heard a noise as Al jumped from the bed. I then heard a pistol shot. I saw both of them go over, and heard Palmer say, 'Drop that gun.'* The first sight I got was Wines standing on the floor and Al was down and it looked to me as though the rifle in Wines's hands was pointed at Al. I heard several shots. Al asked me to see if Wines was dead. I straightened the deceased up and his head dropped over."

Three bullets were found in Wine's body, two in his chest and one in his head. The Coroner's Jury reported, "*We further find by the evidence and surrounding circumstances that said Al Palmer we believe he did kill the deceased in self defense and that a trial was unnecessary.*"

¹ From "Settling the Rogue Valley, The Tough Times-The Forgotten People," by Barbara Hegne.

After Wines's death, a silver watch was found rolled up in a newspaper in his bed. It was identified as belonging to the young man who had disappeared. A miner seeking the hiding place of Wines's gold dug near the cabin and uncovered two skeletons.

Perhaps Wines thought his partners were cheating him and the idea played on his mind. Maybe he was just one of the many unexplained statistics who crossed the line between sanity and insanity during the gold mining days.

The miners searched for Wines's buried gold. Whether anyone found it is not known. Perhaps his treasure still lies buried, held in a death grip, beneath the bones of one of his victims.

If anyone has any information about this John Blair, please contact the editor. No Blair was found listed in the 1890 or 1900 United States Census records for either of these counties.

* * * * *

The TITANIC - A Blair Who Missed the Boat

Submitted by BSGR Mem. #002, Edward P. Blair

The recent hit movie has sparked great interest in the ill-fated luxury liner *Titanic*. There is a little known Blair connection to this tragic story.

The *RMS Titanic* was built in the shipyards of Belfast, Northern Ireland, and was registered as a British mailing ship by White Star Line. She was the largest, most luxurious ocean liner of her time, with accommodations comparable to the finest hotels found in Europe. She was also considered to be the safest ship ever built; one journalist remarked that, "Not even God himself could sink this ship."

With great fanfare, the *TITANIC* departed Southampton, England on 10 April 1912 for its maiden voyage, bound for New York City with more than 2,200 passengers and crew on board. On Sunday, 14 April, at 11:40 p.m. it hit an iceberg off the coast of Newfoundland. Three hours later the ship sank below the surface of the icy North Atlantic, carrying more than 1,500 people to a watery grave.

David Blair was originally assigned to the *TITANIC* as Second Officer, the fourth highest ranking officer on board. He participated in the ship's sea trials on 1 April 1912, and in the 470 mile run from Belfast to Southampton. For some reason, a change of officers was made at Southampton. William Murdock came on board as Chief Officer under Captain Edward John Smith. This change bumped Chief Officer Henry Wilde down to First Officer, and First Officer Charles Lightoller down to Second Officer. David Blair was relieved of his post and left the ship on 9 April, the day before it was scheduled to sail. The Second Officer was in charge of the "lookouts," and though David Blair was doubtless thankful that fate had spared him, one might wonder if had he been there that fateful night, the iceberg might have been spotted in time to avoid the disaster.

If anyone has more information about this David Blair, please share it with us.

REFERENCE: *The Titanic Conspiracy*, by Robin Gardiner and Dan van der Vat.

ERRATA: In *BFM*, Volume XVI, No. 1, page 7, there is an error in listing the wife of William Blair; Eleanor Evans was the wife of William's brother, Thomas. William's wife was Catherine Evans. They were sisters, daughters of Thomas Evans and Mary Rutledge. William's brother John's son, also William, married Eleanor Hamilton and the names are often confused, even by the author.

In the following article, page 13, the word "chair" was substituted for "chain," the latter showing that the subject was involved in surveying. Also on page 12, footnote 23 was somehow omitted. It should be, "Alfred E. Lee, A.M., *History of the City of Columbus, Capital of Ohio* (Munsell & Co., New York and Chicago, 1892, page 139," and the footnote used should be for footnote 24 on page 13. Also, "Suzannah" in the title should have been spelled, "Susannah." Sorry, Russ.

Devastating Alabama Tornado

Submitted by Mem. #359, Marvin H. Kelley

It wasn't supposed to happen to a church, but on Palm Sunday, 27 March, 1994, tornadoes wrecked six churches in northeast Alabama killing nearly 40 people in several states, and inflicting millions of dollars of damage. The tornadoes snapped 200-year-old trees and ruined houses in five states.

"Goshen was the centerpiece of an agony shared by Spring Garden, Rock Run, Possum Trot, Bennefield's Gap, Knighten's Crossroad, and Webster's Chapel. At Mt. Gilead Church, about ten miles from Goshen, the wind pulled tombstones from the earth and smashed them.

"People here are accustomed to storms and the damages that the winds do, but what happened at the Goshen Church last Sunday was off the scale of their experience. Rescue workers found neighbors limp and broken on the ground, and strong men sobbed like babies when the last of the living and dead had been dug from the rubble...."

Twenty members of the congregation of Goshen United Methodist Church died that day during a children's religious pageant. Some families lost several members; the Rev. Kelly Clem, her four-year old daughter.

"Ethelene Blair, 54, died in the church where she had recently started decorating the altar for Sunday services. Friends said Mrs. Blair, survived by her husband Jack, was a dedicated church member."

The above is from the *Gadsden Times* newspaper, Sunday, 3 April, 1994.

The rural community of Goshen is next to another area known as Blair Town, both located on Alabama Highway Number 9. Blair Town is named in honor of Ezekiel Stone Blair who came to Cherokee County, Alabama in the 1830's with his wife, Jane Henry. They were natives of Monroe and Blount Counties in East Tennessee and left many descendants in Alabama and Texas.

When the tornado demolished the Goshen United Methodist Church on Palm Sunday, only one person by the name of Blair was killed. She was the Ethelene Blair, wife of Jack Blair, mentioned above. However, many families have intermarried and are related either by blood or marriage and are descendants of Ezekiel Blair, even though they do not bear the name. The exact

number of Ezekiel's descendants killed by this tornado is unknown.

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Robert H. Blair, Jr., Mem. #330 Disaster Relief Volunteer

BSGR Member, Robert H. Blair, Jr., has not been idle since selling the Blairs' Book Service (which continues on the Web as a major seller of genealogy books, CDs, etc.). Prior to selling his book business, he became a full-time volunteer with the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR), the disaster relief arm of the United Methodist Church, with some 32,000 churches and over eight million members in the United States. He explains that it was a natural way for him to serve, as he retired some six years ago from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, after over twenty-six years working in over 300 major disasters which had been declared by the Office of the President.

UMCOR keeps Bob busy. He says, "I concentrate on disasters east of the Mississippi, but have occasional trips to Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands." Earlier this year he worked on Guam for three weeks after the super typhoon. "So far in 1998, I've had several trips to Florida, plus other southeastern states, and just returned from working on tornadoes in Atlanta, Birmingham, and Nashville."

His work involves early assessments of damage, liaison with FEMA and the states, plus public affairs, which includes fund raising, solicitation of donated goods, and recruitment of volunteers.

Bob says he yearns to do a complete re-write of his book, "The Blair Memorial," published in 1991 by Heritage Books, but, "there isn't much time left over after running my 100-acre Christmas tree farm and work for UMCOR.

Robert is a descendant of the New England Blair line of Robert and Isabelle (Rankin), who came from Aghadowey, Ireland to Worcester, Massachusetts in the early 1700s.

The Disasters of Charles Blair - Civil War Soldier

Submitted by BSGR Mem. #130, Irvin L. Morse

From the pension application records for Charles Blair of 21 April 1886 we find: "Charles Blair, age 45 years, who was enrolled on the 2nd day of September, 1862 in Company D of the Thirteenth Regiment of the Kansas Infantry and was honorably discharged at Little Rock, Arkansas on the 25th day of June 1865. That while a member of the organization aforesaid, in the service and in the line of his duty at Fort Smith, Arkansas in July of 1864, he contracted chronic diarrhea and at the capture of the train on Boston Mountains, Arkansas about 1864, he had two toes on his right foot mashed (wagon ran over foot), also sustained rupture at the same time; by accident at Fort Scott, Kansas, about July 1863 had the second finger on his left hand broken when thrown from a horse. From the effects of said disabilities he is now rendered almost wholly incapable for the performance of manual labor."

Charles was born 24 May 1839 in Cass County, Michigan and died in a soldiers' home in Boise, Idaho, 6 May, 1914.

Charles is the son of James C. Blair who was born and married in New York. By 1840 James' first wife is gone (probably deceased), and he is living in Michigan with his second wife. By 1850 his second wife is gone and the family is living with relatives.

This gives some indication of the trials and tribulations of soldiering.

Editor's note: War and soldiering by definition are fraught with disaster and death; for this reason, accounts of death and disaster in military service have not been included in this issue, although they certainly abound among Blairs.