

Contributing to *Blair Family Magazine*

Thanks to the contributions of many of our members BSGR now has an award-winning newsletter. Blair Family Magazine was awarded Honorable Mention (third place) in the National Genealogical Society 2000 Newsletter Competition, Family Society category. We can all be proud of our publication. However, if we are to keep to this standard, and further BSGR's mission to collect, preserve and disseminate Blair data, the newsletter will need continuing member support. If you haven't yet sent your research findings to Blair Family Magazine, consider doing so. By publishing your data, you assure that it will be available to future researchers of your line of Blairs, and you will be assuring that our newsletter remains a good one.

Future Issues

The fall issue of the Blair Magazine will feature the Society's special projects areas. Those most closely involved with these will be telling you about their invaluable work (and how you can help them with it). Also in this issue, you will be given an opportunity to advertise your own genealogical work. If you've published your genealogy, send us a paragraph about it, including how to get it, any costs, and the surnames other than "Blair" treated. This should be received by the editor by 1 September 2000, the deadline for the fall issue.

To emphasize the Society's interest in collecting data about non-surnamed Blair lines, members are asked to submit material dealing with the descending lines of Blair daughters and the families from which Blair wives descend. If you have stories, documents, or genealogical information (not lineage lists per se) send them along to the editor.

The next convention, in June 2001, will be held in Philadelphia. Be thinking about contributions dealing with **Pennsylvania** both for the Summer 2001 *BFM* issue, and for Charlotte Blair Stewart, who may be putting together a publication about Pennsylvania.

Also, if you have **areas of interest** you'd like the newsletter to address, let the editor know. The editor also welcomes **opinions**, comments, additions, corrections or clarifications of material printed in the Magazine.

Send your **queries** to *Blair Family Magazine* as well as to Internet lists. Your areas of interest in Blair research

will then become a matter of record, available to those who read the magazine in future years.

Of course, continue to send copies of Blair data, gleaned while searching your own line, found in printed material in local libraries or amongst family papers and Bibles, or found in library surname files. These might not help in your own research, but may very well contain a clue to help another member scale an encountered blank wall. Always give complete references (author, title, page numbers, publisher), and quote exactly. Citing where you found the documentation (library, genealogical society, county court house, etc.) might also be helpful to readers. You might like to just photocopy the material - always the most accurate way to transmit material - but be sure to send the source information and your name and member number when you send photocopies. Write this on the back of the copies.

Writing Up Your Research

To assist those who might be thinking about writing up an account of their research findings but don't know where to begin, here are some suggestions.

First, **have in mind what you're trying to get across**. Is it simply to show new evidence to prove or disprove a genealogical relationship? Are you introducing new documentation? Showing inconclusive or conflicting data? Telling a story handed down within your family? Telling what you know so far, and asking for additional help?

Begin your paper by **stating what you intend writing about** - i.e., the good old "thesis statement" of your school day term papers. An example is,

There have been a variety of oral stories that Alexander Blair (1816-1865) served and died in the Civil War. One story had it that he died in a Confederate prison Below is the true story. [from Don Dickason, Blair Family Magazine, Volume XVII, Number. 3, page 46.]

Then, because everyone is not as familiar as you are with the Blair line being discussed, give a **brief overview** with enough information to help the reader understand the paper. Cite references here - to other BFM articles, to specific documents such as deeds, wills, etc. Quote these if this will make the article clearer, or, if a supporting document has not been published in BFM

before (the editor can check this for you), send a copy of it (never send original documents, of course.)

Then, continue telling your point of view by simply **walking through your evidence**. You might wish to arrange your material here by making an outline – or you could simply stack up what you've collected in logical order and go from there. Again, **cite references**. And, read through what you've written to see if stranger could understand it.

In showing **conflicting data**, give a little background to inform readers about the points under dispute. If possible, give sources for each viewpoint. You might wish to ask specific questions for which answers are still needed.

Try to send clear photographs with the main image in focus and with good contrast, light to dark, and of an appropriate size to appear in the magazine. If a photocopy must be sent, ask your copy center for a master quality image, and check to see how it prints. You might wish to have a photo copied in a photo shop. This will make the best master if the copy is in focus, not too dark, and on glossy paper. Old newsprint pictures may still be usable if copied to provide the best image possible. Do your best to send clean copies of maps and other **graphics**. The quality of photos in the magazine needs to improve. Better originals will help.

The Editor's job.

In an effort to standardize within each issue of the newsletter, a few editing standards have been adopted. When received, typed articles are changed to a standard format - margins, columns, and so forth. This need not concern the writer - a good clear typescript or clear handwritten material is enough to send.

The preferred spelling found in Webster's Collegiate Dictionary (the first spelling given) or that found on computer spell check lists is used. For better accuracy, most words are written out rather than abbreviated: "Lancaster County, Pennsylvania" instead of "Lancaster Co., PA" and "born," "married," and "died" instead of "b." or "m." or "d." which might be misunderstood, and certainly more difficult to read. To further avoid confusion and to be consistent within the newsletter, we prefer that dates should be written "2 January 1900," not 1/2/00 or January 2, 1900, with the added comma.

Don't, however, worry unduly about these basics. The editor will check over the papers received and make

changes to our standard form (but do check over the spelling of names of people and places, and check dates).

Printed documents sent in their entirety are as a rule not edited to our standard, although selections may be extracted from lengthy documents, that is, the whole document not reprinted, at the editor's a discretion. Send these exactly as they appear - again, photocopying may be the easiest way to be the most accurate.

Copyrighted material.

If you are using the words of another author verbatim, quoting exactly, you must put them in quotes or indent them, and give proper acknowledgment. If you paraphrase information from someone's research, this should also be acknowledged, even if it is not quoted exactly or set apart. You may either acknowledge in a footnote or within the text.

If you're sending a photocopy of a preprinted article, give the editor as much information as possible so that the author or publisher can be contacted to acquire written permission to reprint in our publication.

Historical material reprinted by a reprint house, such as Genealogical Publishing Company in Baltimore, may require permission to print, so give us the name, date, and whatever address of the reprint house that's shown in the publication as well as the original source and date.

Material from a computer source should be so designated, giving the "address" where found. If there is a statement about using the material, copy this out and send it along. An example is that the "Missing Links," of the *Rootsweb Review* has its "Permission to Reprint" statement at the back of each issue, and shows how the acknowledgment should be written. If you get permission to quote material, send a copy to us or give us a reference to check.

If you have any questions about the right to copy, contact the BSGR editor, or visit: <http://www.law.cornell.edu/topics/copyright.html> for an overview of the copyright law.

Thanks for you help.

Mary J. Powers, editor, *Blair Family Magazine*
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