

Future Programs Blog

This blog is the work of Isobel Connell, a Brookside Museum volunteer, who completed this research with the anticipation that it would be part of the SCHR Genealogy Workshop scheduled for March 19, 2020 which has been postponed due to the Coronavirus. We plan to conduct this workshop at a later date, but this work is a sample of the research conducted for this event.

What can we find out about William Medlock, resident of Saratoga County Poorhouse? Part 1

Now we are all being advised to practice social distancing, it is a great time to start digging into our family tree, if we haven't made a start already. But where to start? Since the Roundtable's workshop has had to be postponed, let's have a little taste of what to look forward to.

In the workshop, we are going to try to determine what we can find out about people who were residents of the Saratoga County Poorhouse in Milton circa 1900. The list of residents was kindly supplied by Lauren Roberts.



Figure 1 Saratoga County Alms house: Photograph from the collection of Saratoga County Historical Society at Brookside Museum

As the 19th century turned into the 20th century, people could find themselves dependent on a poorhouse both in the short term or for several years. High employment after recessions in the 1890s did not help. An injury or illness leading to being unable to work and support themselves led some people to turn to the poorhouse. "Lunacy" is sometimes listed as a reason, or an inmate is noted as "intemperate". Occasionally someone could even be sent to the poorhouse for a few weeks as a punishment, instead of being sent to jail. There is an interesting article on poorhouses found at

<https://digitalcommons.wou.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1000&context=his> .

Let's take an example from Lauren's list; William Medlock, who is listed as 80 years old, and from England. What is Mr. Medlock's story? Where did he come from? How did he find himself in the Poor House at the start of the 20th century? Did he leave the poorhouse? Does he have any descendants still living?

As online tools, we will concentrate on using ancestry.com (you will need a subscription, or know someone with a subscription!), familysearch.org (free), fultonsearch.org (alternatively fultonhistory.com), which is an invaluable website allowing a search through old newspapers, and finally the online deeds and mortgage documents available through a free subscription from Saratoga County at <https://www.searchiqs.com/NYSAR/Login.aspx>. At the Roundtable's workshop, we will go through in detail how to use these tools. Ancestry.com and familysearch.org have some YouTube videos to help you through navigating them.

Now, Mr. Medlock. As always, we will start with what we know, but allow some wiggle room. It is quite possible that the 1900 records were not exactly accurate, so don't assume he was actually exactly 80 in 1900. 😊 In fact, a good thing to remember, is to not be put off if records are not exact. One census could list a person as being born in 1840, and another one suggests they were born in 1842. Sometimes the person giving the information just guessed it. Women, in particular if they were older than their husbands, seemed frequently to change their birth year as they got older!

Searching in ancestry.com for William Medlock born in England, in 1820 +/- 10 years, and living in Saratoga County, produces a wealth of census data, and we find William, a farmer, with his wife Mary E. Medlock, living in Wilton. Table 1 summarizes the information found in the censuses, but also highlights questions you might want to ask after each discovery. Remember, as with investments, past performance is no guarantee of future results. William came up fairly easily in a number of census records, partly because he didn't move around much. This is not always the case.

Table 2 Results from searching ancestry.com

Search William Medlock, born 1820 +/- 10 in England, Saratoga County		
Document	Summary	Comments/Possible questions
1892 New York State Census, Wilton, Election District 01	William Medlock 80 England Farmer Alien Mary E. Medlock 80 England Alien	He was married and he lived in Wilton
1880 United States Federal Census Place: <i>Wilton, Saratoga, New York</i> ; Roll: 929; Page: 599A; Enumeration District: 094	Medlock, Wm 68 " Mary E. 67 Wife, Keeping house Payne, Hannah 83 Widowed Broughton, Mary 12 Niece At School Everyone and their parents born in England	What relation is Hannah Payne? Is Mary Boughton William's or Mary's niece? Could Broughton be Mary E.'s maiden name?
1875 New York State Census Household number 115 Line 41 Sheet Number 12	William Medlock 63 England Farmer Owner of Land, Naturalized Mary E. Medlock 62 Wife England Mary Broton 8 Niece England	William is naturalized. Can we find his naturalization records?
1870 United States Federal Census Place: <i>Wilton, Saratoga, New York</i> ; Roll: M593_1089; Page: 201A; Family History Library Film: 552588	Medlock, William 60 Farm Farmer Real Estate, \$2000 England Medlock, Elizabeth 60 Keep House England Payne, Hannah 74 Domestic Servant England Evans, Stephen 11 Laborer New York No one can read or write (?), Stephen only one who has been to school, parents of William, Elizabeth and Hannah all from England Post Office: Corinth	Here is Hannah Payne again. But no Mary Broughton Mary E. is now listed as Elizabeth, though it is possible that it is a different wife.
1860 United States Federal Census Census Place: <i>Saratoga, Saratoga, New York</i> ; Roll: M653_856; Page: 474; Family History Library Film: 803856	William Medlock 45 Farmer Elizabeth " 42 William Lavington 40 Farm Lab All from England. None can read or write Post Office: Schuylerville	Do not worry too much about accuracy of ages. They are close.

By the way, a little googling found William marked on an 1866 map of Wilton. Don't forget Google as a genealogy search aid!

As a result of this census search, we know that William was married, and farmed in Wilton, from at least 1860 to 1892. So, what happened between 1892 and 1900 to send him to the poorhouse? Are Mary E. and Elizabeth the same person? When did he arrive from England? Where did he come from in England? Who was Mary Broughton? Tracking relatives can help track the direct line. Who was Hannah Payne? As is so often the case with this genealogy thing, we get sucked in, and create as many questions as answers.

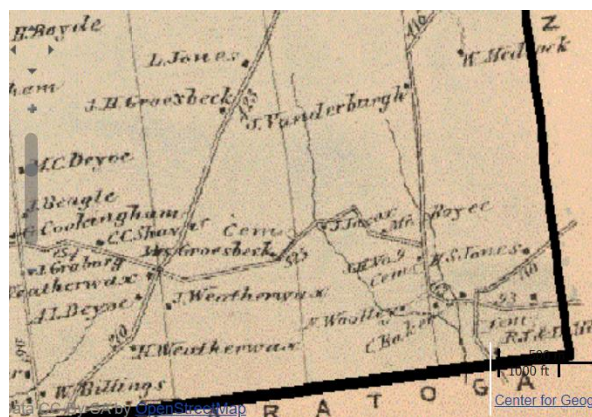


Figure 2 Map of 1866 Wilton. From worldmap.harvard.edu/data/geonode:_wilton_u53, (Accessed 3/15/2020)