

# *Blackledges in America*

## Preface to the Second Edition

*“Welcome. And congratulations. I am delighted that you could make it. Getting here wasn’t easy, I know. In fact, I suspect it was a little tougher than you realize. ... Not only have you been lucky enough to be attached since time immemorial to a favored evolutionary line, but you have also been extremely – make that miraculously – fortunate in your personal ancestry. Consider the fact that for 3.8 billion years, a period of time older than the Earth’s mountains and rivers and oceans, every one of your forebears on both sides has been attractive enough to find a mate, healthy enough to reproduce, and sufficiently blessed by fate and circumstances to live long enough to do so. Not one of your pertinent ancestors was squashed, devoured, drowned, starved, stranded, stuck fast, untimely wounded, or otherwise deflected from its life’s quest of delivering a tiny charge of genetic material to the right partner at the right moment in order to perpetuate the only possible sequence of hereditary combinations that could result – eventually, astoundingly, and all too briefly – in you.”*

*From Introduction, “A Short History of Nearly Everything”, <c> 2003 by Bill Bryson.*

It does seem somewhat miraculous that all of us have arrived at this point, given the odds against us. And the Team of Compilers of *“Blackledges in America: A Genealogy of Blackledge/Blacklidge Descendants with Roots in the United States of America”* at times wondered if this Second Edition would ever be produced. But here we are, after a long and involved journey, during which so many have contributed to making this edition happen.

The Compilers were thrilled with the response to the First Edition: the most extensive genealogy ever of the Blackledge/Blacklidge family in America. A limited edition was printed in November 2002, and all 200 copies were distributed in less than a year. A second printing was required. Five genealogy libraries purchased one or more copies, and the reprints permitted the compilers to place additional copies in other select libraries. A list of those libraries is available in an Appendix to this book.

That original project had grown to involve more work than any of us imagined at the outset. The effort grew over its six-year gestation period to finally weigh in at 953 pages. However, as editor of that rather overwhelming effort, I realized that we had left out important material. Thus when contributors requested a follow-on volume, the concept was readily embraced. My primary regret after editing the original volume was that I did not insert more pictures. Photos and other graphic images provide a window to our past. They typically are added last in the editing process, and to take advantage of the pre-Christmas 2002 publishing window of opportunity, we simply ran out of time. This Edition has all the photos of the First Edition, plus photo pages filled with memories contributed by our many readers and researchers.

Why a Second Edition? One of the expected outcomes of publishing any genealogy is a collection of errata for the book: some additions, some corrections. Contributors and relatives that we had never contacted before seemed to emerge. Many purchasers offered not only additional text, but also photographs of ancestors and family members. As early as July 2003, contributors were lobbying for a follow-on volume, primarily for photos. Those requests eventually grew to become this book: *“Blackledges in America: Second Edition.”*

This project originally was envisioned as a slim companion volume to the First Edition, having a minimum of narrative, primarily referencing the chapter, descendant name, and descendant number as found in the original book and as described in Chapter 1 of that book. The idea was to seek photos of Blackledge family interest; e.g., identifiable individuals, spouses, families, homes and businesses. The photos would be integrated with the text portion to resemble the original book in its layout. However, it soon became clear that a simple companion volume of photos and errata would not suffice – the revisions and additions required a second edition to include errata, new history and documents, updates, corrections, and historical information on the families.

The compilers gathered not only genealogical information but also some understanding as to whether to publish this work as a hardcover second book or as electronic files on a CD. Once the project grew past 1500 pages, we knew at least two volumes would be required if we were to go hard copy. An electronic publication began to make sense.

All interested parties were invited to submit candidate photographs, corrections, and additional text for consideration in this project. The goal was to not only include all known corrections but also all known additional descendants and new branches that met our original criteria of three or more generations. While the additional photographs found in this volume will be especially welcomed by individuals who were fortunate enough to secure First Edition copies of *Blackledges in America*, we expect that its most valuable and lasting contribution will continue to be the genealogical record to assist future researchers. Unfortunately some prior compilers ended their records as of decades earlier with a dismissive notation to the effect that “facts about subsequent generations are readily available.” We have striven to avoid that limitation here.

All submissions were welcome. Many, many people contributed – so many we cannot name them all – however we should point out large contributions to Chapter 4 (Philip and Descendants) by Charma Blackledge Owens; to Chapter 5 (William and Descendants) by Wilma Herreid; to Chapter 6 (Zachariah and Descendants) by Linda Grace Talbot; and to Chapter 7 (Other Blackledges) by several contributors. To all the contributors we say: Thank you so much! We greatly appreciate your support and thank you for your assistance in this project.

It is entirely possible that someone else someday will pick up this work and start a Third (or Follow-on) Edition – thus we would greatly appreciate receiving any corrections and additions (and documented sources) concerning the presented information. Lastly, as with the original work, we dedicate this follow-on edition to those who have and are to come after us - our grandchildren and their descendants. We have continued to record this history so that they may know from whence they came.

*Michael Allan Blackledge*

23 May 2011