

Society of

Stukely Westcott

Descendants of America

THE WESTCOTT FAMILY QUARTERLY AUTUMN 2021



Reunion at Westcott Beach: Sackett Harbor, New York. August 10, 1936 From the Collection of Betty Acker, recently added to the SSWDA.com website



The SSWDA is pleased to share the 2020-2021 SSWDA Scholarship winner: Alyssa Verruto of Waxhaw, NC! Alyssa is the daughter of Jennifer Verruto and is a Biology major at Virginia Tech University (cont'd on page 11).

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EDITOR'S WELCOME

Greetings, Westcott Cousins:

With my new role as Quarterly Newsletter Editor for the Society of Stukely Westcott Descendants of America, it is with boundless gratitude and reverence that I recognize the giants upon whose shoulders I stand: namely Lyle Wescott and Dana Matteson.

These two have collectively put in decades of effort and organization to compile and share timely updates from around the country -- as well as across the pond -- on the reunions, news, artifacts, history, awards and scholarships, celebrations of birth, memorials for the cousins we have lost, and so much more.

It is my aim to maintain the historically exceptional standards of this publication, while also striving to make it more digitally accessible and dynamic in alignment with developing technologies. Dear Cousins, I simply ask for your patience in this effort, and to allow me your grace as I learn from my inevitable mistakes.

FROM OUR PRESIDENT'S DESK

Greetings Cousins!

As some of you may know, my mother and I have enjoyed visiting Colonial Williamsburg for many years, so it was with great interest that we read the 2020 Colonial Williamsburg Annual Report when it arrived recently. Learning how this world-renowned living museum and historic district fared during the pandemic turned out to be very instructive for this descendant of Stukely Westcott.

I realize that right about now you are wondering... what does this have to do with SSWDA?

I believe the primary message for all of us from the Colonial Williamsburg Report also sums up what many people are thinking or feeling these days, especially those of us who know the stock from which we come — our roots — and who recognize the common threads in our lives now and going back to the times of our ancestors.

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In the Report, CW President Cliff Fleet discusses how the people of actual 18th Century Williamsburg proved time and again that amid nearly insurmountable challenges of their time, the American spirit proved resilient. I believe our 18th Century ancestors got that resilience from their 17th Century predecessors, folks like our common ancestor, Stukely Westcott.

To paraphrase CW Board Chair Carly Fiorina, and adding my own perspective, the years 2020 and 2021 have confronted all of us with uncertainty, turmoil, and division due to the global COVID-19 pandemic, along with the effects of social and political unrest.

As sobering as all this is, I do take heart from it. This is especially true when I reflect on what Stukely Westcott and his family went through during King Phillip's War — the turmoil, uncertainty, and division of the time — yet they kept going, moving forward generation after generation until today. My faith in our country, our future leaders, and our Westcott organization has been strengthened over the past 18 months. We are all blessed when our families do "Know Our Kindred Better" and understand the sacrifice and impact of our ancestors.

June 2022 presents each of us with the opportunity to "Know Our Kindred Better" by attending the SSWDA Reunion in southern Rhode Island. Please do join us! Your attendance and participation contribute to a future worthy of our Society's history.

CW's Ms. Fiorini helps explain how we may help that positive future unfold in her message, stating,

"Our way of life is still an experiment, and it is still in the hands of us - the Citizens. Every generation must prove it is devoted to the adventure of self-government. We remain a global model for representative self-government — freedom, justice, and civil liberty — but if we want a better future for the generations to come, we must understand and support the complex path of our ancestors, and their choices that led us to where we are today. Ours is an imperfect nation - a work in progress - for too many the "American dream" of freedom and prosperity remains an out-of-reach and elusive dream."

A better future for the generations that follow us lies in understanding the complex path of our forebears, and the choices they and we make or made along the way. We, the members of SSWDA, contribute to that understanding with our membership, active participation, and our contributions to the Barlow Westcott Scholarship Program and Fund. (More on the scholarship is found elsewhere in this edition of the newsletter, and at our website, www.sswda.org where there are links to application packets for first-time and returning applicants).

I know the pandemic has impacted everyone at diverse levels and points in life. I personally have lost some very dear friends over the past 18 months — people that were at an age where they should have had many more years ahead of them. Life is short and fleeting. The lost friends are a daily reminder for me to make the most of each day we are given.

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To that end, I would like to share that I am writing this at the beginning of my second week of a new job. After 20 years with the Center for Economic Growth, I accepted the position of Manager of Strategic Partnerships with GreyCastle Security. We are focused on cybersecurity all day, every day, in relentless pursuit of enabling our clients to be ready for the challenges that lie ahead. The footprint is national in scope, so as my business travel allows, I plan to reach out to our members who may be nearby. It would be fun to connect with kindred if time and schedules permit!

Additionally, I'm very pleased to highlight some recent SSWDA website updates as well. Thanks to the efforts of David Wescott Smith and Reed Powell, especially, we have some wonderful new parts of the website to check out where we can learn more about our kinfolk. We also have introduced a new way of communicating more directly with our potential members, encouraging them to explore their personal ancestries on the site.

Many thanks are also due Pauline Dennis for sending the "Big Red Book" USB drive to David Wescott Smith and me, with the entire digitized version. David, as Historian, will process the data, and ensure it is appropriately accessible for all members.

The Scholarship Program is now running for the current cycle, and please share this availability with all who may be interested. The application PDFs are up on the website. We are also pleased to offer a second opportunity to apply to those who have applied in the past. The maximum number of scholarship awards is two during one's college career. To that end, we are providing an application packet for returning applicants that is slightly different from the one for new applicants. Please see the website for details.

Speaking of past recipients, we are delighted to highlight Alyssa Verruto as our most recent recipient, while Jack Baumgartner, an earlier awardee, has provided an update on his progress in this edition. As always, if you can, please consider supporting the scholarship program at whatever level you may be able, with thanks from those students who benefit.

Lastly, I am so very thankful for David Leflar for the energy and enthusiasm he brings to the position of Newsletter Editor. A consummate professional, his attention to detail is well aligned to this task in service to our Society. I want to thank Lyle Westcott and Dana Matteson once again for their years of service to the Society as the Newsletter Duo! Kudos!

To sum up, I believe our organization's future and potential is bright and strong. As an organization and as a nation, we have the wisdom of past leaders and the energy of the generations to come. This Circle of Life is always renewing itself in our Kindred, just as nature does all around us.

I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible in attendance at the 2022 Reunion in Rhode Island!

Until then ... May You Know Your Kindred Better, and Happy Holidays!

don

Louise Aitcheson President, SSWDA

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WESTCOTT SOCIETY REUNION IN SOUTH COUNTY, RHODE ISLAND, JUNE 2022

by 2022 Reunion Local Hosts David and Rosemary Smith

Mark your calendar for **June 17, 18 and 19, 2022** and plan to join us when Westcott Cousins gather in Narragansett and South Kingstown, Rhode Island, for the 43rd Reunion of the Society of Stukely Westcott Descendants of America.

Narragansett and South Kingstown are two coastal communities in an area of southern Rhode Island informally known as **South County**. Although it has no official boundaries, South County is rich in colonial history and contains numerous cultural and recreational attractions, one of which we will experience on Friday with activities at the **South County Museum** in Narragansett.



Narragansett Beach and the historic Casino Towers in the Pier are two of the many sights that will welcome Westcott Cousins to South County in June 2022

We are looking forward to welcoming Westcott cousins to our special corner of coastal Rhode Island. This is what has been arranged so far: The hotel for the reunion is Holiday Inn - South Kingstown, 3009 Tower Hill Road, South Kingstown, RI 02874 (Intersection of RI-138 & US-1). A block of thirty rooms has been reserved. We will also have use of the Narragansett Room, which has a capacity of 135, for an evening meal on Friday, all day Saturday for a membership meeting in the morning and a dinner in the evening, and on Sunday morning for a farewell and coffee. Both dinners will be catered by the hotel restaurant, Locanda. The Narragansett Room opens to a patio, which we can use but will be shared with other hotel guests. The outdoor pool is on the other side of the patio. A Hospitality Suite will be set up in a pair of adjoining rooms for our use from Thursday evening through Sunday morning. The Hospitality Suite uses the two guest rooms closest to the Narragansett Room and the patio.

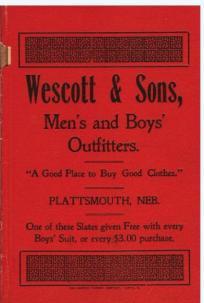
We are working to develop the program, line up speakers and develop a menu of on-your-own activities and excursions in South County, all in time for the next issue of the Westcott Family Quarterly, with a complete event package.

THE CENTURY OLD iPAD

This spring I was amazed at the technology available to our grandchildren, Alana and James Wescott Atwell (ages 13 and 11), as they completed their school year from home. In addition to receiving assignments via the internet and class discussions using Google Classroom, Alana used composition software to write a string quartet and James presented his experiment on photosynthesis in an online science fair.

I held back on comparative tales of the unsophisticated tools of my mid-century schooling (Big Chief pad, No. 2 pencil, Westcott Ruler and a leaky fountain pen), but finally to drive home how fortunate they are, I posed the question "What did school kids have during the great pandemic 102 years ago?" and brought forth a turn-of-the-last-century *iPad* from the Westcott Collection. Here was my pitch:

The Wescott & Sons' Slate Book



This portable notebook features six durable, slate-like writing surfaces. Compatible with most chalks.

Ideal for notes, calculations, composition and doodles.

Convenient do-over feature allows you to dry erase and start again.

Compact (5¹/₄" by 8"), light weight, no batteries required.

Original manufacturer: The Kemper-Thomas Co., Cincinnati, Ohio.



The Slate Book was one of the many promotions and merchandising events that helped C.E. Wescott and his sons Clifford and Hilt keep their clothing store in Plattsmouth, Nebraska in successful operation for 76 years (1879 to 1955) despite a store fire in the first year, the two World Wars, the Great Depression, flooding from the Missouri and Platte Rivers, and, oh yes, the 1918 pandemic. The cover of the slate book announces, "One of these Slates given Free with every Boys' Suit, or every \$3.00 purchase." The date of the promotion is unknown, but it was probably sometime between 1901 when second son Hilt became a partner and 1906 when C.E. retired and moved to California with his wife and their third son, Earl. Clifford and Hilt remained in Plattsmouth and the store was renamed C.E. Wescott's Sons.

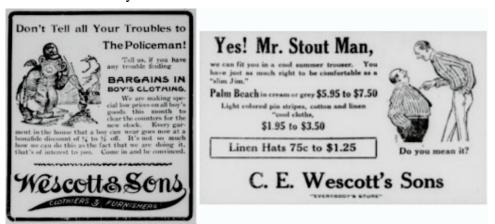




(Left) Flood waters flow down Main Street in Plattsmouth in 1906 in front of Wescott and Son during a flood in 1906. (Right) The storefront in a drier moment about the same time.

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The grandchildren did not abandon their devices for a slate book, but they were fascinated with the variety and low prices of the Wescotts' weekly ads in the Plattsmouth Journal.



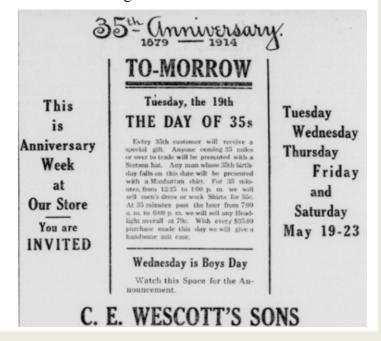
Store founder C.E. Wescott was an eighth-generation descendant of Stukely and Juliana Westcott (Clarence Edgar Wescott8, Stephen Westcott7, Stephen6, Stukely5, Stukely4, Stukely3, Jeremiah2, Stukely1). He was born on October 14, 1841 in Cheshire, Massachusetts and died on January 5, 1924 in Los Angeles, California. A note in Whitman's Westcott genealogy (Vol. 1, Pg. 239) captures some of C.E.'s adventures between Cheshire and L.A.:

He was the eighth child of his father's family and was not yet seven years old when his parents removed from Cheshire to central New York. In 1854, he started on a load of heavy green lumber drawn by three yoke of oxen, from LaPorte to accompany some men to the home his father was building in Nebraska, but fell under a wheel and for months was cared for in a neighboring log house occupied by one Ezra Moe. Early in life, he dropped the third "t" in the spelling of his surname, perhaps for the same reason another Wescott in Vermont did, who thought two "t's" were enough for any name. He taught school, clerked in stores, was a book-canvasser, went to California in 1863, where he was critically ill, and returned home in 1865. His parents then dwelled in Taylorsville, Iowa, where his father was postmaster. After a visit, he returned to LaPorte, Ind., where he again was a clerk in stores and where, in 1868, he was married. He purchased an interest in a dry goods store, then in 1871 removed to Taylorsville, and in 1878, to Plattsmouth, where he established a clothing business which has continued without break, and in 1932 was being conducted under the firm name

of "C.E. Wescott's Sons."

In 1914 C.E. Wescott's Sons celebrated its 35th anniversary with a variety of specials such as a free Stetson hat for any customer who traveled 35 miles to the store and a "handsome suitcase" with **every** \$35 purchase. It was a one-week extravaganza as advertised in the Plattsmouth Journal on May 18.

Two months after the 1929 Crash, when Clifford and Hilt were joined by brother Earl and the next generation for a photo, the Wescotts are as confident as they are dapper. The Wescott merchandising knack continued to work as the store prospered until the mid-century.





Plattsmouth, Nebraska, December 26, 1929 – The sharp-dressed sons and grandsons of C.E. Wescott: from the left, Edgar Street and his father Edgar Hilt; Charles Clifford and his son Mason Eaton; and Shirley Brown and his father Earl Coffin.

David Wescott Smith SSWDA Historian

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Slate book and 1929 photo of the Wescotts from the SSWDA Collection, undated and unattributed.

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LOOKING FOR A STOCKING STUFFER?

LIMITED EDITION WESTCOTT SOCIETY PINS AVAILABLE

Proceeds benefit scholarship fund



Our popular family crest pins can be yours to give, or keep, this year in time for the Holidays! Measuring ¾" by 1 ¾", they are suitable for lapels, hats, collars, and more. Cost per pin is \$8.50, which covers manufacturing, shipping, and handling, and a donation of \$1.00 to the Westcott Society Scholarship fund. (You may, if desired and able to, include an extra amount with your order for the Scholarship Fund. Our young Scholars need and appreciate our support!)

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ANNOUNCEMENT OF 2020-2021 SSWDA SCHOLARSHIP WINNER

The SSWDA is pleased to share the 2020-2021 SSWDA Scholarship winner is Alyssa Verruto of Waxhaw, NC. Alyssa is the daughter of Jennifer Verruto and is a Biology major at Virginia Tech University.

Alyssa's school counselor shared the following on her character reference, stating that Alyssa is a 'curious learner and a motivated student.'

"Alyssa overflows with energy! Most of that energy pours into either a creative endeavor or some kind of community service. She's honest and genuine; what you see is what you get with Alyssa. She's comfortable being the center of attention. She very much values relationship with both her peers and her teachers. She attended a leadership camp that assessed her to have a "peacock" leadership style, which is someone with a deep knowledge of people who is skilled at uniting a group towards a shared goal. That fits her, and it shows up the most for Alyssa on our yearbook staff. Alyssa is also the oldest of three children in her family, the youngest being a four-year-old sister for whom Alyssa is a frequent caregiver. Alyssa is a natural leader and an eager participant in student activities. Her presence will be felt at Virginia Tech.

Academically, Alyssa has done well in a college prep curriculum that has gotten progressively more difficult with each passing year. She's been learning where her limits are in balancing schoolwork and her outside activities, something evidenced by her decision to drop AP Euro in 11th grade when it proved to be too much to manage four AP classes in her daily schedule. She's not quite certain what to choose for a college major, but she knows she wants to make an impact. Perhaps she'll choose to become a dentist and pursue a life of international service with this career? Or perhaps she'll choose something that builds on her creativity. She loves photography and currently serves as the photography editor for our yearbook. She also loves graphic and interior design, and then of course there's music. Alyssa plays the violin in our orchestra and has taught herself to play five additional instruments. She spends her free time playing music, especially if it involves picking up a new instrument that she hasn't tried before. Somewhere in all of these ventures, Alyssa will find a college major and probably a minor or two. She genuinely enjoys learning and will enter college ready to succeed and contribute.

Alyssa also has a pretty strong sense of adventure that has taken her around the world. She's traveled to France and Kenya with our J-Term program and made such a strong connection on the Kenya trip that it turned into a summer internship with the sponsoring organization called With Open Eyes. She's traveled to Europe quite a bit with her family too. All of this has made a semester-long study abroad experience a must for Alyssa and has also prompted her to desire a location that will stretch her comfort zone a bit...she's set on someplace like Egypt."

Please read her winning essay on the following pages – congratulations Alyssa!

For more information about the SSWDA Scholarship, including information and links for new and returning applicants, please visit www.sswda.org/about-us/scholarships/

THE DEADLINE FOR RECEIPT OF COMPLETED APPLICATION, ESSAY, AND ALL SUPPORTING MATERIALS IS APRIL 1, 2022.

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"Men and women sailing to start a better life,

Enduring deathly diseases that flooded its way through the entire ship,

A shortage of food to the extent of barely having a bread roll,

And a lack of a clean environment

With dark, damp beds from an unfixed overhead leak,

Moldy shoes from the lack of a dry floor,

And a rat infestation –

I come from Puritans escaping to religious freedom.

I come from a new life established in 1635."

- Alyssa Verruto, 2019

Earlier this year, I was assigned a project in AP Literature to present a poem with the prompt, "Where I'm From". Very quickly, I realized that apart from my immediate family and close extended family, I had never really ventured into seeking out who my ancestors were and how and when my roots were planted in America. While there wasn't much information regarding my father's ancestors, my mother, Jennifer Verruto, began telling me of all the genealogy research she and my grandfather had been doing, which led her telling me about Stukely Westcott. Hearing of his fearless journey for a more prosperous life inspired me and I knew that's how I wanted to open up my poem; a valiant leap of faith deserves a valiant opening.

My mother, following alongside her father, has become a major genealogy geek; handing out tubes with the request of the person's spit to ship off to Ancestory.com has become a family inside joke. For years, trips up to Hornell, NY for annual family reunions were not considered over until my mom took my sister and I out to numerous graveyards, photographing weathered gravestones from the frigid winters and humid summers of upstate New York that made any engravings faint as could be. While her efforts to inspire her daughters the way she was inspired by her own parents did not go unnoticed, my sister and I simply lacked any sliver of interest. Granted, those reunions were almost a decade ago, and this poetry assignment last fall gave me a second chance to understand what has fascinated my mother for all these years. And, I have to admit, I began to see it.

With what I assumed to be excitement of her daughter finally taking an interest in her work, my mother began rambling off names upon names and stories upon stories of amazing things my ancestors have done for both their family and themselves. She told me of her trip to Yeovil, England this past October with her father and all that they saw: the church where Stukely married, Plymouth, England where it is believed Stukely departed to America, and more. It was in this conversation where my great-great-grandfather James Milton Wescott was introduced. Although born in Pennsylvania in 1867, he later moved to Hornell, New York where he was a railroad conductor in an industry that was quickly building the United States. Providing for six children and his wife, he was the epitome of a "family man". Even with the lack of money, my great-great-grandfather worked tirelessly with plenty of late nights, even some spent out on the tracks transporting goods from one part of New York to another. After finally retiring at age 70, he died a short two weeks later, leaving what little money he had saved up for his children.

James spent his life diligently providing for others, both his family and the developing nation. It was my junior year when I realized I wanted to do the same; serving others is something I wanted to make my whole life. I was on a service trip in Kenya January of 2019 when I realized I wanted to find a career where I could serve others in underdeveloped areas, whether domestically or overseas. The children I met and got to spend my week with were filled with such pure joy that I fell in love with the country and its people within a mere few days so much so that I volunteered to return the following year.

Months later, in the fall of my senior year, after I had narrowed down my interests as college was becoming closer and closer around the corner, I finally knew what I wanted to do and how I wanted to make my mark on the world: I decided I wanted to become an Orthodontist and take my medical knowledge to areas struggling from natural disasters, war-torn villages, but specifically severely underdeveloped countries that lacked basic health care to teach simple oral health care techniques and skills that do not require advanced technology and tools to average citizens to help better dental care of people worldwide.

I may not be escaping a tyrannical country searching for a better life like Stukely was, but instead I want to do my part in any which way to help better the lives of those who may be feeling the way Stukely and his family did. Living in America, I think we often forget that government abuse and tyrannical rule still exists in the world; there are still people being persecuted by their rulers. We have been blessed with such a plush life, despite the size of our house or pay checks, because we are all granted unalienable rights by our Constitution. I think so often we take for granted these freedoms we are given and fail to recognize that there are still groups of people being denied these basic civil and human rights. To have the skills and opportunity to hands-on shape people's lives, doing all I can do better what their government might be stripping them of, would be a dream come true. Stukely's quest was courageous and hopeful, but in today's world, thanks to brave men and women like him that took that leap of faith and later men and women like James Wescott who helped modernize our nation, America has flourished into a country with resources that we should be willing to share back into the world where people, possibly like Stukely, are eagerly searching for help.



UPDATE FROM RECENT SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT

Baumgartner Pivots Education Focus – Garners Sophomore Year Job Offer Upon Graduation by Jack Baumgartner

Let me begin by restating how grateful I am for the SSWDA Scholarship awarded to me in 2020; it has truly made a difference and enabled me to offset some of the costs of my first year in college.

When I embarked on my education at Northeastern University, I thought architecture was the right career for me – it was what I had focused on and began working towards even in high school. My first semester was abroad as part of the "NUin Program" with a cohort of Northeastern University students studying at McGill University in Montreal, Canada. I learned a lot about architecture, culture, and living independently – due to being abroad I was responsible for getting my own groceries, cooking my own meals, and ensuring I kept up on my studies. I met great people and made friends from around the world – the experience truly enabled me to grow as a person and developed my awareness of other cultures. My second semester was just getting underway in Boston on Northeastern's main campus when Covid-19 hit and we all had to go home and take classes remotely. Missing out on "the college experience" certainly was a bummer, especially since it was my first time being on our main campus. However, it was during this time that I realized I no longer wanted to pursue architecture as a profession. Thanks to the extra time at home, I was able to discuss potential career paths with my family members and ultimately landed upon business/finance.

When we were finally able to get back to campus in the fall of my sophomore year, I began my business classes. My experience in Northeastern's business school has been nothing short of incredible. My first co-op was January – July 2021, an internship as part of the last half of my sophomore year. I was a Corporate Actions Operations Specialist with Brown Brothers Harriman in Boston, MA. In this role I was responsible for the reconciliation and management of entitlements, claims and payments for Securities Lending Clientele in Corporate Action Events. In a reference letter from my supervisor, she states, "I was immediately impressed with Jack's eagerness to learn, and his receptiveness to training. He quickly learned to execute assigned tasks without need of direction and constantly asked for more ways in which he could assist the team. This desire to learn and willingness to take on more allowed Jack to develop into a very relied upon and flexible member of the team. A prime example of this is for a 3-week period while the Team was under-staffed, Jack back-filled fully and seamlessly the duties, responsibilities, and workload of a full-time employee – this was not an easy task and Jack exceeded all expectations. Another example of this is because of his recognized superior knowledge, Jack was entrusted by management with training a new full-time employee (a responsibility almost never given to a Co-op). Throughout his time at BBH, Jack was noticed and praised by upper management for his high-quality work and outstanding job performance."

As my time at BBH came to a close, the senior management at BBH made a point of telling me to reach out to them upon graduation regarding full-time employment. While I don't know yet if I will end up working at BBH after graduation, I do know that my work ethic and attention to detail is derived from my family and my upbringing – my knowledge of our family history going back to Stukely Westcott and other ancestors motivates me to carry on our tradition of duty and service. I am very excited to start my next co-op this coming January. I will be working for Coverys, a medical liability insurance company in Boston, MA, where I will be doing Corporate Accounting and Finance. This position will enable me to further my education academically and experientially, the "Northeastern way."

SSWDA WEBSITE & ARCHIVE UPDATE

by **David Smith**, SSWDA Historian

Next time you have a few minutes (or maybe more) head on over to the new Archive tab on the Westcott Society website (<u>sswda.org/archive</u>). It's called the Westcott Society Collection and it features revision of 52 pages of stories and photos from the first SSWDA website, plus additional items from the society archive that I maintain as the historian and from the collection at the Warwick Historical Society in the Arnold House in Warwick, Rhode Island.



The Westcott Society Collection (currently) lists 25 topics each with links (in blue) to one or more pages of narrative and photos. Each of these pages, in turn, has additional links to source material such as newspaper accounts, genealogies and some rather hokey ads and promotional items. For example, the <u>Westcott Wrench</u> page offers competing claims as to who invented the iconic S-handle adjustable spanner, patent records, and examples of the remarkable advances in tool technology in the 19th century to which many Westcotts (and Wescotts) contributed.

You can also access these pages from a pull-down menu from the Archive tab at the top of the page. The very last item in the menu displays the Archive tab from the legacy website. The work goes on as additional content remains to be migrated and, in my basement, there are nine storage boxes of our shared history that wants to ascend to the internet. Browse the collection early and often, and enjoy.

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THE WESTCOTT FAMILY QUARTERLY

Issued quarterly or thereabouts through the year with news of the Society.

Free to members

Non-members \$10.00 annually.

www.sswda.org

Editor:

David Leflar 110 Bowen Cir SW Atlanta, Georgia 30315

newsletter@sswda.org

SOCIETY OF STUKELY WESTCOTT DESCENDANTS OF AMERICA

President: Louise K. Aitcheson, East Greenbush, NY

president@sswda.org

Vice-President: Lynn Hulkow, Marshall, MI

vicepresident@sswda.org

Treasurer/Registrar: Bart Westcott, Palo Alto, CA

<u>treasurer@sswda.org</u>; <u>membership@sswda.org</u>

Secretary/Chaplain: Laura Westcott, Forest Park, IL

chaplain@sswda.org

Historian: David Wescott Smith, Narragansett, RI

historian@sswda.org

Quarterly Editor: David Leflar, Atlanta, GA

newsletter@sswda.org

Webmaster: Jim Leflar, LaGrange, IL

webmaster@sswda.org

Scholarship Program: Edmund "Pete" Bentson, Arlington, VA

scholarship@sswda.org

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