

My Guilt Was Swept Away

BY GEORGE D. DURRANT

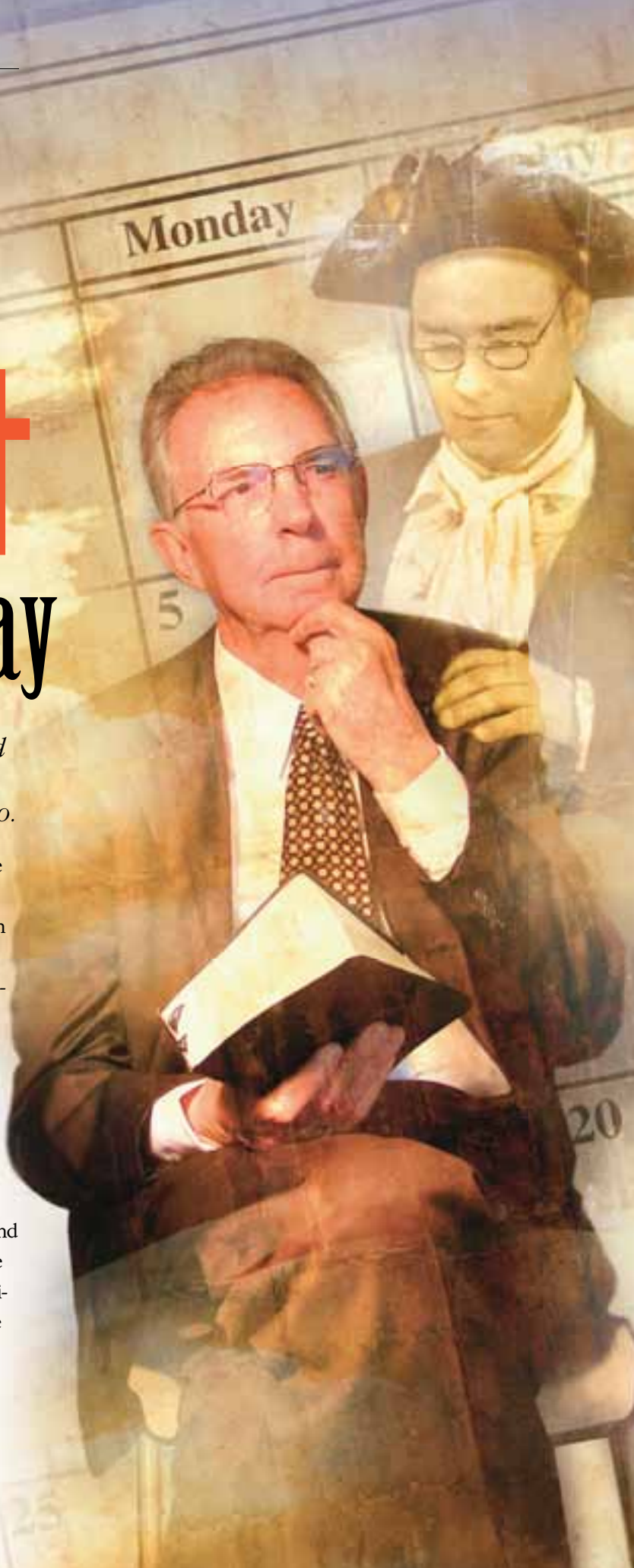
I left the family history class upset. I felt I had done enough, yet a stirring within my soul told me there was something more I could do.

A couple of years ago in a Sunday school class, the teacher encouraged us to do our family history research. He directed the message to everyone in the class, but I felt singled out. I felt I had done my duty and more. My family lines were traced back as far as possible; there was no more I could do.

I left the class upset. I felt I had books to write and pictures to paint and just did not want to give all my twilight years to family history work. I felt I had done enough, yet a stirring within my soul told me there was something more I could do.

I knew I could not rationalize away my guilt. I was not at peace. As my mind raced back and forth, I recalled a friend with whom I had served on a family history committee. She had told me to set aside a specific time each week and dedicate it to family history research and that I would become more effective in the other things I did. I liked this sister, but I didn't want to believe what she told me.

Then, as I sat there stewing, I had a quiet and simple revelation: To do family history research I did not need





to give up writing or painting. I just needed to spend each Monday morning from 8:00 a.m. until noon doing the work. That would still give me time to paint, write, perform my work as a temple sealer, and attend a temple endowment session each week.

I decided it was time to give in and rid myself of this lingering guilt. I looked across the room and saw Brother Ricks, one of our ward family history consultants. He had some experience in research and had offered to help me many times.

I told him my feelings and desires, and he agreed to help me every Monday morning. As I drove home that Sunday, I remembered that my mother once sent money to a researcher in England to work on her family line, the Mayne line, but he never could find her third great-grandfather's marriage or birthplace. So I decided to begin my research there, determined to give it my best.

At our first meeting I showed Brother Ricks the Mayne line. When we began searching, we knew my third great-grandfather, George, had lived many years in Wath, Yorkshire, England, but there was no record of his birth or marriage there. Parish records showed that William, my second great-grandfather, had a father named George, whose wife was named Mary, but we did not have her last name.

We approximated a marriage date around 1785. We entered a general search for George Mayne and found a

listing for a George Mayen married to a Mary Holdridge in 1781. Since *Mayen* is a common misspelling of *Mayne*, we pursued the lead. The record stated they had been married in Northallerton, Yorkshire. We looked at a map and found that Northallerton was within 20 miles of Wath. We were also intrigued because we knew George was married to a Mary.

We then found a Mary Holdridge in the International Genealogical Index who had been christened in Wath and realized we had likely found our George and Mary.

We learned that the Northallerton parish records had not yet been extracted, so the next Monday we went to the Church Family History Library in Salt Lake City and looked through the microfiche records, where I was thrilled to find the marriage of George Mayen to Mary Holdridge. Brother Ricks also searched christening records and found the births of George and four of his siblings to George Mayen and Catherine Aston. And then I found *their* marriage!

I think these people are the ones who made me feel guilty when I refused to get involved! Now that they are found, other ancestors will probably leave me feeling a bit restless as well. But I will continue to devote my Monday mornings to family history research. Somehow I just feel better about life and my self-worth. My guilt has been swept away, replaced by excitement and love. ■