

Remarks of William John Bowe, Jr. to His Extended Family at the Website Launch of *The Families: Vol. 2*

<https://wbowe.com>

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Introduction

Welcome, all. For those of you just joining us, I'm Bill Bowe. Thanks for taking time out from the pandemic and Thanksgiving Week for this unusual family get together to learn more about website that is launching today.

There are only two things you need to remember from my presentation today: the website's internet address and the password needed to view and upload family photos. I'll give you two hints. The website's internet address is wbowe.com. And the password is "bill". If you can't remember those two things, you probably can't even remember my name.

I'll be talking a bit today about our common ancestors Anthony Canavan, Moses Bowe, Richard Gwinn and Paul Riboud and their descendants. Among these four progenitors, Anthony Canavan is related to fully 35 of the 43 families highlighted on the website. He's my great grandfather on my father's side and kin to most of those joining us today.

I don't know why, but I often get the feeling he's looking over my shoulder when I talk about him. He looms large, you might say. My wife Cathy says I'm obsessed with him. That's just crazy talk.

My co-host for this Zoom meeting is Rob Bowe. I entrusted Rob with this job because he has proven to me beyond a reasonable doubt that he is my first cousin, once removed. Using his experience as a school district's technology manager, Rob has muted your microphones during my presentation. That's to keep the foul-mouthed among you from scandalizing the rest of us. Rob will also manage the Chat function during this period for those of you who want to type any comments or questions.

Besides the website's name, internet address and password, the topics I'm going to cover in my overview are the origins of the website, its content, and its navigation. Meg Lynch Meyer will finish up with a few words on getting all those photographic prints you've got in a shoe box digitized and uploaded to your family's galleries on the website. Rob will then tell us about a plan to reconvene over the holidays in a more conversation friendly, holiday party environment. When we finish, the microphones will be turned back on and, for those of you that can stick around, we'll continue our meet and greet until 11:30 a.m. Chicago time (6:30 p.m. Paris time).

Origins of The Families: Vol. 2

We have the pandemic lockdown to thank for the website's origins. Being retired empty nesters for several years now, my wife Cathy and I had already learned how to fill in the time we used to spend correcting the grammar of our sons, whosie-whatsit and whatchamacallit. But by the end of March this year the isolation caused by social distancing was really getting me down. Though it was calming and interesting to look at for a while, before long I became bored staring at my navel.

That's when I came up with the idea of building a website to reimagine my mother Mary Gwinn Bowe's 1970 book *The Families*. Her book had photos, family trees and lots of stories about the extended family. I thought that information could serve as a foundation for a website that would also include my own large library of indexed and digitized family photos, videos and documents. My avoidance of

boredom project was set: create a website for the extended family that would hopefully be a fun and useful resource for everyone involved.

The only thing standing in my way of doing this was the fact that I knew next to nothing about building a website. As you will see, eight months later, thanks to oodles of spare time, YouTube tutorials and a lot of help from a website design consultant and others in the family, *The Families: Vol. 2* is finally ready to launch today.

[Homepage](#)

[Title Segment](#)

I'm going to start at the beginning with the homepage. The first two black and white photos you see were taken at the 1933 wedding of my mother's sister Nancy Gwinn to Jacques Riboud in France. Though Nancy and Jacques weren't around to see it 87 years later, their grandson Teddy Riboud was married recently in the very same, very old church you see. The third, more ancient, photo was taken in the latter half of the 19th Century. It's the family of my mother's grandfather, Richard Gwinn, Sr. Starting with these images from the last two centuries is a cue to visitors that this website is all about yesterday as well as today.

[Greetings from the Bowes](#)

As you scroll down the homepage you next come a greeting from my own family with a message encouraging you to fill in the site's gaps by uploading your family pictures to the photo galleries and to send me family stories and documents to post. This section also shows how to contact me directly regarding the website at the site's email address familiesvol2@gmail.com .

[Family Photo Galleries Gateway](#)

Scroll further down the homepage and you'll find one of several gateways to the website's extensive photo galleries. Counting duplicates, there are almost 50,000 pictures representing 43 families collected here in over 350 individual galleries. The photos range in time from 1861, when photography was the next new thing, to Teddy Riboud's recent wedding this summer in France.

Clicking on any part of this part of the homepage takes you to the SmugMug photo hosting platform. SmugMug is an integral and seamless part of the wbowe.com website. Apart from our website's payment to SmugMug to host our photo galleries on its servers, there is no financial connection between SmugMug and our site. I did leave buttons in the galleries that permit you to easily order prints from SmugMug, but this is only for your convenience.

[SmugMug Galleries Content & Navigation](#)

Your transition to the SmugMug galleries is immediately preceded by a password request. This is an important part of the website's privacy and security protections. The password, if you remember, is "bill".

With "bill" entered, you're taken to a large, navigable grid of family portraits. This navigable grid is your roadmap to a particular family's pictures. Rolling over the picture tiles in this grid reveals the name of the family whose pictures can be accessed there by a click.

For instance, when I click on the Lynch family here, you're taken to a set of pictures showing you the photo galleries of all the individual family members bearing the name Lynch. Lynch daughters who marry are found in their own family galleries.

In addition to password protection for both the family and individual galleries, the SmugMug platform is set to prevent search engine indexing. This is a bit of a nuisance and may be overkill for the site's benign and historic content, so if anyone wants to make their gallery more accessible to family or friends by removing the password requirement that can easily be done. Just let me know.

I say the site's pictures are benign and historic because the photos in the galleries were primarily inherited by my mother or me or taken by one of us. Many others were sent to one of us as Christmas cards over the years or, more recently, posted publicly on Facebook. This has made it easy to not have photos on the site that are embarrassing or unwanted. Indeed, the effort has been to bend over backwards to have everyone looking their best. It is not an accident that there are smiling faces all over this website. That being said, if you don't like an image or want to feature a different one in a gallery, just let me know. The reality is that from now on neither I nor Meg Lynch Meyer will be spending time curating these galleries. Future uploads will be in the hands of interested family members, if in fact there turn out to be any.

To show you a typical gallery I'll click on the name of Austin Lynch in the Lynch family folder. Moving from the family folder into an individual gallery may cause you to be prompted again for the "bill" password. As you can see, one great thing about the way the galleries are laid out is that you can immediately see captions without having to double click on the photo to open it to full size.

In addition to the option of navigating to a specific family member's gallery, SmugMug has a powerful search tool that takes advantage of all photos that are uploaded with captions. While you may be able add less visible "Comments" in a photo's edit area later, these won't automatically appear as captions in the main gallery.

Note on the upper right corner of the SmugMug homepage you have a magnifying glass symbol. This is the SmugMug search box. Let's start with places: Paris or the Bowe family vacation cottages Cumpy or Wahwa; or individuals: Kay or Daisy; or a well-known pair: Frank, Susan; or a phrase: Frank, Susan, church; or family names: Thompson or Heffron.

We'll come back to the SmugMug galleries after I finish taking a look further down the homepage in the section about The Progenitors.

[The Progenitors](#)

[Anthony Canavan](#)

The life stories of the progenitors function as the organizational backbone of the entire website. The progenitors are each related to many of the 43 families cataloged on the website. It follows that the 350 or so individuals found in the SmugMug galleries are all either direct descendants of one or more of these four or they or someone in their family married one of these progenitor's descendants.

To help you see where your family fits in, each progenitor's story contains a complete list of all the families connected to him. These family names are also hyperlinked to that family's photo galleries on SmugMug.

Thirty-five of our website families alone are related Anthony Canavan and his wife Ann Hughes. When you click on Anthony Canavan's picture, you are taken to their extraordinary story. The narrative explains that he was born in 1822 in Ireland, as were Ann Hughes and the first of the first four of their 13 children. They emigrated from Ireland to Philadelphia with the oldest members of their family in 1840, just before of the Irish Potato Famine of 1845. Their Atlantic crossing took over nine weeks if you can believe it.

You can read their immigrants' tale here in an 1890 obituary of Anthony Canavan. Among other things, you learn that after he arrived in Philadelphia, Anthony was quickly employed in a grocery store.

You then come to a picture of my mother's book *The Families*, now a half century old. The 500 copies originally published have been superseded today by a digitized version that lets you jump around the information through a new hyperlinked table of contents.

As my mother's account of the Canavan family explains, Anthony left the retail life behind after nine years to join his brother Austin in Kankakee County, Illinois. With its fertile land inexpensive, he took up the life of a farmer just 80 miles south of Chicago. He prospered in that role and later added a political component to his life by serving in Kankakee County as a Treasurer, Supervisor, Trustee, Assessor and Collector.

As was often the case in those times, we don't have a picture of Ann Hughes to know what she looked like. But we do know that she and all the other mothers of immigrant families like her were unsung heroines in all of our ancestors' families.

Moses Bowe

We know much less about our next progenitor, my great grandfather on my father's side, Moses Bowe. The closest we can come to a photograph of him is a picture of his son and daughter, my grandfather John Joseph Bowe and his sister Agnes Bowe Rice.

Moses Bowe had been orphaned in Ireland at the age of 11. He left Wexford, Ireland for the United States at the behest of an uncle already here. In time, he ran away and found work helping dig the Erie Canal in New York State and working for the Illinois Central Railroad in Illinois.

In scrolling down his story, we come to a unique account of what Moses Bowe found when he first settled in Kankakee County. It comes from Julia Bowe's book chronicling her French ancestors arrival there in the mid-1800s. Like *The Families*, her work, *The Generations*, is another resource of family lore that has a digitized table of contents helping you focus on your own interests.

The Bowe families' connection to Anthony Canavan and Ann Hughes came about when the Canavan's second to last child, Ellen Frances Canavan, married my grandfather John Bowe, the son of Moses Bowe and Honora Hurley.

Richard Gwinn, Senior

Our third progenitor is Richard Lawrence Gwinn, Sr. He is the equivalent to Anthony Canavan on my mother's side in that he is my other great grandfather. He was born in Georgia in 1831, joined the Confederate army during the Civil War, was discharged after being wounded, and died in Philadelphia in 1898.

His son, Richard Gwinn, Junior, was a banker and Treasurer of the City of Baltimore. His first wife was my maternal grandmother. She died giving birth to my mother in 1901. In 1907, he ended life as a widower when he married Elizabeth Tack. Soon my mother had three half-sisters, Betty, Martha and Nancy Gwinn. When my mother's sister Nancy Gwinn married Jacques Riboud in France in 1933, this connected the Bowe family not just to the Ribouds, but also over the decades to the Corderoc's, de la Chapelles, Lacombes and Kuhns.

The last of the 13 children of Anthony Canavan and Ann Hughes was Margaret Canavan. She had a big wedding when she married John Casey in 1898 in Chicago's Holy Name Cathedral. Their daughter,

Mary Catherine married Patrick Lynch in 1919 and their son John Casey married my mother's sister Martha Gwinn in 1941.

The upshot of these unions of was that the Bowe families over succeeding years also became connected to the Casey, Lynch, Heck, Heffron, MacPherson, Meyer, Pleil, Reyes, Romano, Sundstrom, Terpstra, Truskey, Turner, Wernstedt and Williams families. Don't worry, there'll be no test on that.

Paul Riboud

This brings us to our fourth and last progenitor, Paul Riboud. Born in Paris in 1872, he lived to be 100. A brilliant student, he was educated in Paris as a civil engineer at École Polytechnique. Over more than two centuries its graduates have populated leadership positions at the highest levels in France's military, government service and business. In Paul Riboud's case he went on to head what became the East Network of the French national railway company.

Of course, his son Jacques Riboud later showed his own brilliance when he married my aunt Nancy Gwinn. But Jacques Riboud also pursued an extraordinary career on his own, much as his father had. He not only managed a French oil company, but he went on to build entire towns as a real estate developer, published a respected political journal as a public intellectual. He still had time left over to write important books on urban development and monetary theory.

“About” Menu Tab

As the name suggests, this menu tab leads to a description of the how the content on the website came to be collected, digitized and organized. It also gives thanks to a number of individuals who had a lot to do with the final product you see.

Early on, after I showed Tony Bowe my primitive first stab at a website, he encouraged me to take it to the next level. His enthusiasm may had something to do with the fact that his full name is Anthony Canavan Bowe. In any event, Tony steered me to web designer Laura Fairman in a suburb near me in Chicago. She helped me work through higher level design problems and implementing the trickier webpage construction tasks that were way beyond my expertise.

I also acknowledge here the advice, encouragement and content that I got along the way. Various Bowes, Hanleys, Harts, Ribouds, Kuhns, de la Chapelles, Heffrons, Parishes and Lynches all pitched in to help. And, most importantly, Meg Lynch Meyer jumped in with both feet to help initially populate the SmugMug photo galleries.

“Photos” Menu Tabs

You will have to remember what the password is when you come to the Photos menu tabs. Only those with the password can view or upload photos to the family galleries. This is the privacy and security mechanism underlying the entire website. Here's another hint in case you forgot again. The password is four letters long. It begins with the letter “b” and the last two letters are double “l”. If you forget this complicated password, just email you know who to be told it again.

When you roll your mouse over the Photos menu tab, you'll notice that two drop down submenu choices appear: View Photos and Upload Photos. To view either option at the Photos menu tab, to view either the View Photos or Upload Photo pages you need to enter the password “bill” again.

To simply view the family photo galleries on the SmugMug portion of the website, you can click on the VISIT THE SMUGMUG ALBUMS button you see and, if your browser hasn't remember it enter the password “bill” again to go to the galleries I showed you before.

Or you can stay on this View Photos page and click on any one of the family names or pictures. That will similarly take you to SmugMug.

For instance, if I click on the Thompson family tile, enter the SmugMug “bill” password, I promptly see the individual Thompson family member galleries on SmugMug.

If the Photos tab dropdown Upload Photos is your choice, you reach your upload gallery target in a slightly different way. I’ll show you. First, I find a gallery to upload to. I’ll try Lynch family folder again in this example. Notice the new + sign before the Lynch family name. If I open the Lynch dropdown menu, the name of Austin Lynch is again at the top of the long list of family members.

When I click on his name and enter the SmugMug password, his gallery’s upload page opens. Then I browse my computer to find a photo of Austin to upload and double click it or I can then drag the picture file onto the upload page. In no time, it’s automatically turning up in the gallery I selected. Easy peasy.

Though your cell phone isn’t the ideal size to view the site’s many high-resolution pictures with the SmugMug cell phone app, it’s easy to upload Facebook or other pictures on your phone to particular galleries on the website. Meg and Rob will later talk about the details of all this.

[Trees](#)

Perhaps the most important part of the Trees section of the site isn’t the family trees, it’s the ability to get a link from me that will take you to the one tree that pulls all these individual trees together: my tree at Ancestry.com.

To get the link you just need to send a short email to familiesvol2@gmail.com saying you’d like it. The ancestry.com procedure is that I then send you an invitation to set up what they call a free Guest Registration Account. All you have to do then is enter your email address and a password you choose and you’re set. No credit card is needed. It really is free and the Ancestry.com tree is quite something. Here’s what it looks like.

The rest of the Trees page here on the website is pretty straightforward. You click on a family name and you go to that family’s tree. Given the generational range of some of the 43 families, a particular family tree may encompass trees of several later generations.

[Lynch Related Tree and Sub-Trees](#)

An example of this would be the Lynch related family trees. Once you have digested how Anthony Canavan and Ann Hughes’ 13th and last child Margaret Canavan is connected to the Lynch and Casey families, you can move on to more Lynch related family trees by clicking on the buttons related to John and Roberta Lynch, Frank and Susan Lynch or Walter and Patricia Lynch Heffron.

[Heffron Tree and SmugMug Links](#)

Here’s the Heffron tree for example. Notice as I scroll down the narrative accompanying the trees of has certain family names highlighted. Click on any of these names and you’ll be swiftly connected in typical fashion to that person’s photo gallery on the SmugMug portion of the website.

Parish Tree and Sidebar

If we go to another family Tree, say the Parish family, we see a sidebar on the right. You'll find this sidebar on all of the family trees.

On the top right of the sidebar you see the RETURN TO TREES button. That will take you back to the main Trees page.

Underneath that, we see a search box. Let's type in Parish and see what turns up. The search result pulls up not just the Parish tree but other documents on the website that refer to the Parishes. All the documents on the site have text recognition built in so all are thoroughly indexed to facilitate a random search. Some open to a searchable tables-of-content and the rest can all be searched throughout their text if you download them.

Next down the sidebar we have a Categories search box. It has a dropdown list of all the media, families and individuals indexed on the site. It's a very powerful tool to use to browsing for items and people you may be interested in.

Next on the sidebar is a primer on how people are related to one another in genealogy-speak. This is useful and, being both self-centered and a narcissist, I love the way the whole chart starts with me. Right away I figured out that the "Self" on the chart is the person who takes my selfies.

I mentioned Rob Bowe is my First Cousin Once Removed. I know this because he looked at this chart and persuaded me that since my Uncle Augustine Bowe's son John is my first cousin and in my generation and Rob is his son in the next generation, Rob is one generation removed from me or my First Cousin Once Removed. Before Rob explained this chart to me, I was feeling sorry for him because I thought he was once removed because he was evicted for missing mortgage payments.

Notice the next option down the sidebar is to go directly to various family documents you'll find at the Documents menu tab. The last item on the sidebar is a quick connect list to some of the other family trees.

Videos

The next menu tab is Videos. As the name suggests, you'll find here an early selection of what I think will later become a rich collection of film and video content from a broad selection of families. Already we have amazing Jacques Riboud family films from the 1930s and '40s, a few of my own family moments and remarks, as well as content related to some of the other families on the site.

The Jacques Riboud and many of the other videos have chapter points embedded within that make it easy to jump to points of interest.

I should warn you that one of the videos is very disturbing and for mature audiences only.

[Show "Thriller" Video]

That's was the de la Chapelle children trying to put their best foot forward in a manner of speaking. Sad to say, that video shows the unfortunate presence of Zombie DNA in some of our French de la Chapelle cousins. Personally, I'd rather catch Covid-19 than end up a Zombie like the poor de la Chapelle kids.

Family Stories

The next to last menu tab is Family Stories. Note that like the Photos tab it has a dropdown option for Audio.

In this case we have an oral history of Roberta and John Lynch recorded by their children. It has an introduction from their daughter Meg Lynch Meyer and links to the transcript of the entire set of interviews.

The Family Stories page should serve as a useful blog posting site for all of you to post short items about your family, be they historic or more recent.

This page has been programmed to automatically pull up the most recent items posted, so it should be the place to go to catch up on anecdotes, recent family news items and major events such as births, deaths and marriages.

Just email me and I'll be happy to post your videos or documents wherever they fit best. The email box on the right side-bar for this purpose again shows address for website matters: familiesvol2@gmail.com.

Note again, you have access in the sidebar to the general Search and Category search boxes.

Documents

The documents tab is the last part of the site I have to show you. As the site launches today, we have 65 documents from nine families. The content on this part of the wbowe.com is bound to increase as it should serve as a unique place to safely save important parts of our family histories, while at the same time making the documents accessible 24/7. I hope this alternative stimulates some of you to find time to digitize those papers in the attic or basement that you don't want the next generation to miss.

Canavan Genealogy

Departing from the rest of the site's standard use of alphabetical order, the Canavan Materials are first in line under the Documents menu tab. That reflects the reality that most of the families on the website are in some way related to Anthony Canavan and Ann Hughes.

The first Canavan document I'll show you is the most important genealogical document on the entire website. It's the *Descendants of Anthony Canavan and Ann Hughes*. When you click on the link, you're take immediately to the hyperlinked index of this 507-page work. It's a compilation of decades of Canavan research that starting with my mother's book *The Families*.

To help you find your way around I've highlighted many of the families featured on the website. When you click on any part of the Contents pages, you'll immediately jump to a family tree of the persons involved, with an accompanying narrative about their family. Often you'll also see photos taken from their family SmugMug galleries. At the end of this comprehensive work there's even an index of individuals, cities and countries.

Canavan Genealogy: Hanley Pages

For example, if you click on the entry for Elizabeth Canavan, a granddaughter of Anthony Canavan and Ann Hughes, you see the family from her marriage to John Hanley and their offspring. And so it goes on for hundreds of pages in cataloging the many Canavan descendants not pictured on the website.

[Canavan Genealogy: Descendants of Anthony Canavan and Catherine Kirby](#)

You can go to the next document in this section of the Documents page too, but frankly you really have to be a glutton for Canavan punishment to do so. This work catalogs a few more families by adding an earlier generation of Canavans to the previous mix. This compilation is the *Descendants of Anthony Canavan and Catherine Kirby*.

[Documents Menu Page: Bowe and Casey](#)

As I continue to scroll down the Documents page, you'll see other documents and family histories from the Bowes, and Caseys.

[Documents Menu Page: Hart](#)

By the way, a little further down in the Hart family part of the Documents page, I'm partial to the terrific memoir of their son James Austin Hart because it mentions my father:

“November 11, 1918, Armistice Day, ending World War I, was duly celebrated with a parade in downtown Des Moines. I vaguely remember the festivities. My memory is far better of a visit earlier in 1918 by Bill Bowe in full army uniform. Bill's mother Ella Canavan Bowe and my maternal grandfather John Canavan were siblings. Bill, a Chicago lawyer, had served with America's army in France and had lost part of his foot in a railway accident. He had just been mustered out at Fort Des Moines and visited our home. I had never seen a soldier before...

Bill Bowe was one of the kindest and most personable men I have ever known. Later during my years in Chicago, Bill and his wife Mary were delightful friends...

While visiting in Chicago I spent some time with Bill Bowe, the young soldier who came to our home in 1918. Bill and Gus (his older brother) were both prominent Chicago lawyers. ... Gus and Bill Bowe liked to tell stories about Grandfather Canavan, their Uncle John. He would accompany a railroad car full of his cattle to the Chicago Stockyards, sell them early in the morning, and be at the Bowe and Bowe Law Office in the Loop at 127 North Dearborn before his two nephews came to work. He was quite critical over their short working hours.”

[Documents Menu Page: Heffron](#)

In the Heffron segment, you might be interested in reading Patricia Lynch Heffron's history of the Canavan, Lynch, Casey and Bowe families.

[Documents Menu Page: Lacombe](#)

Moving further down we have Gregory and Florence Lacombe's wedding invitation. To this day I regret work kept me away for this wedding celebration in Switzerland.

[Documents Menu Page: Parish](#)

In the Parish section there is family memorabilia and many news articles showing the prominence of the family in the history of Momence, Illinois and also Naples, New York.

[Documents Menu Page: Riboud](#)

Last alphabetically are wonderful materials in both English and French about the lives of Paul Riboud and his son Jacques and their many American connections.

Conclusion

Well, that's a brief *tour d'horizon* (tour door-ee-zan) of *The Families: Vol. 2*. I hope you'll come back and plunge more deeply into its contents. There is much there I haven't begun to touch on in this overview.

Besides hopefully creating a broad family resource, one of the other things I most wanted to achieve with this project was to make sure that my own children learned that the comforts of life they grew up with were not present or routine for the families that preceded them. I want them to know and appreciate the fact that those families often had to face and overcome poverty and deal much more regularly with the tragedies of an early death in the family.

I can only hope that if and when my children hit a rough patch in their own life, it might help to remember that others in the extended family often had to make their way forward in a sometimes very unfriendly world. This includes of course my mother, their grandmother. She may have come into the world motherless, but with the support of her father and extended family she went on to build herself a wonderful life filled with achievement and a loving family.

While the website is now launched, it's hardly finished. It needs a lot more content to be fully representative of the families now a part of the site. This is a good time for those of you with an interest in this to leave your own mark on the website.

Also, I'd like all of you to alert me to errors you'll undoubtedly run across. I'm sure they'll range from typographical errors, to dead links, to mixing up people and to genealogical mistakes. I'm eager to learn about these and fix them all.

I'm interested too in your feedback on what you think of the website and what you would like to see added to *The Families: Vol. 2*. Please use my website email address familiesvol2@gmail.com for all these kinds of communications.

I'll shortly be sending you a notice of another family Zoom meeting on Saturday, December 12th. It will be structured to let the larger group break up into smaller, more conversation-friendly groups of your choice.

Now, before the meet and greet conversation resumes for those of us who can stick around, I'd like Meg Lynch Meyer, our SmugMug photo gallery guru, to offer a few pointers about getting your photographic prints digitized and up where they belong on the website.

Then Rob talk briefly about our planned holiday party on December 12th..

And Rob, when you're finished, please turn everyone's microphone back on so we can resume our meet and greet conversation until adjournment at 11:30 a.m. Chicago time (6:30 Paris time).

Meg, you first. Please proceed.