


# #52 Ancestors 2020 Week 26 Middle

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#52 Ancestors 2020

Week 26 Middle

My cousin Mark is the only Mason descendant of our generation with the middle name Giles. He understands that he got the name from his grandfather, Alfred Giles Whitten, and the family story was that Alf's parents were impressed by the heroics of the Australian explorer, Ernest Giles, the first white explorer to cross the deserts of Central and Western Australia, and the first white man to see the Olgas (Kata Tjuta).

This may well be true, but there are at least six other members of the family called Giles, most of them older than Alf, which suggests that the name has another significance. I set out to investigate who they all were.

The first Giles I can verify is **Giles Armitage Mason** (1837 -1912) who was the eldest son of our 2 x great grandparents, Richard and Jane (Armitage) Mason. Calling their first born Giles would usually indicate that there was a parent or grandparent of that name – Irish families generally followed that pattern of naming and their first two girls were named for their mothers, Phoebe and Grace. However, Jane's father was Richard Armitage, Richard's was Peter Mason and we know that one grandfather was William Powell. No Giles has yet been found. The complexities of Protestant Irish records of the period make it particularly difficult.

Giles Mason was only five when the family arrived in Australia. There is little known about him, but we know he married Mary Ann Sisley and they had two daughters. Judging from her obituary in "The Methodist", in 1922,\* Mary Ann was a pious soul, so one wonders why she and Giles appear not to have lived together for very long. The obituary notes that she had lived in Moruya "excepting for a very short interval" for most of her life.

Giles died in 1912 and the funeral was announced by his sisters, Mrs Whitten (Charlotte) and Mrs Moss (Jane). He appears to have been living with Jane at the time of his death.

In the next generation there are six men with the name "Giles"



Giles Armitage Mason

Jane and Richard's eldest daughter Phoebe married Stephenson Moore and they had 13 children together. Their third son, born in 1862, was called Giles.

**Giles Moore** became a prosperous grazier in the Guyra district of the New England Tablelands. On his retirement and the sale of his property, "Valley Dale", there was a lengthy testimonial in the local newspapers. He recalled the shooting of the bushranger, Thunderbolt at nearby Kentucky Creek, and also the days when the "Mother of Ducks" Lagoon at Guyra covered a vast area and was teeming with waterbirds.

Giles Moore was a well known and respected breeder of cattle and horses – particularly draught horses – and a successful exhibitor of Clydesdales. He married Caroline McMullen in 1884 and they had five children. After her death he married again, to Beatrice Palmer and had four more children. His eldest son, Ernest, was killed at Gallipoli in 1915.

In 1874, Grace Mason and her husband Alexander Bathgate named their fifth son **David Giles**. Born at Murrurundi, he spent most of his adult life at Quirindi, where his aunts Eliza and Charlotte lived and there were many cousins. He married Anna "Nance" Smith and had two sons. His carrying firm went bankrupt in 1901, but he appears afterwards to have led an exemplary life and was secretary of the Presbyterian Church in Quirindi at the time of his death in 1920.

Another Giles of this generation was **Giles Moss**, elder son of Jane (Mason) and her husband John Moss. The first of their ten children, this Giles was born at Patrick's Plains, near the original Australian home of his grandparents and spent most of his life in this area. He married a local girl called Margaret Dunne, and they had five children. Their youngest daughter, Grace, served as a nurse in Palestine during WW11. *The Singleton Argus* published a very interesting letter to her parents about her experiences there in 1940.\*

**Giles Talbot Moore** was the son of Anne (Mason) and William Moore, (who was a nephew to Stephenson Moore, their families having travelled to Australia together from Ireland) Born in 1885, Giles was the sixth of their seven children and, like his cousins Alfred Giles Whitten and Albert Whitten, he studied for the Methodist ministry and was ordained in 1916. He served throughout country NSW over many years. He married in 1917 and had three children. He had a particular interest in welfare and served with the church's Social Services Department as their psychologist towards the end of his career. Jane and Richard's youngest daughter was Frances, known as Fanny. She married Roy Stretton, and they called their fifth child **Roy Giles**. Born in Bathurst in 1893, he enlisted in WW1 with his brothers Cecil and Clarence, serving in Egypt, the



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Giles Moore

Sinai and on the Western Front, before returning to Australia in 1919. He married Beryl Coleman in 1925 but they were separated by 1928 and divorced in 1934. I have been unable to find any descendants

The sixth Giles in this generation was **Alfred Giles Whitten**, my great uncle, about whom I have written before. His grandson Mark appears to be the only one of any of the successive generations of Whitten descendants who has inherited the name.



Giles Talbot Moore

\*Mary Ann Mason's obituary

**4 Feb 1922 "The Methodist"**

**MARY ANN MASON (nee Sisley.)**

***Moruya Circuit lost one of its choicest souls recently when Mary Ann Mason was called home. She was born in Sussex in the year 1842. From her parents, Edward and Elizabeth Sisley, who were noted for their, piety, she received a sound religious training. In 1855, after the death of her father, she came with her mother and brother to Australia, in which country her uncle, Mr. Jacob Luck, a noted figure in Moruya Methodism,, had already settled. The family took up its abode***



Mark Giles Whitten at the Giles Weather Station, 2019

***in Kiora, near Moruya. Here Miss Sisley, at the age of 16, through the preaching of the late Rev. James Somerville, made - a full surrender of her life to the Lord Jesus. About this time she lost her brother, and, then mother and daughter moved to Moruya. Here in 1869 Miss Sisley married Mr. Giles Mason, of Murrurundi, who pre deceased her by nine years. Excepting for a very short interval Mrs. Mason passed the remainder of a long life in Moruya. Every minister's family found in her a true friend. Her conversion proved to be a deep and abiding work of grace, for her experience proved that she was daily growing in grace and knowledge. Her life was a separated one from all she deemed worldly, and one noticed in her a deep affection for her church, so that her seat was only vacant when strong reasons prevented her attendance. Towards the end she was called to suffer much through a dread malady. Her faith only brightened under the test, for no cloud seemed to intervene between her Lord and herself, and no expression of doubt as to her position as a child of grace fell from her lips. Towards the close she longed for home, and on the day of her triumphant entry she- said, 'I 'm so happy, ' asking for her favourite hymn to be sung, My Faith Looks up to Thee.' She joined in the singing. Soon aiterwards she fell on sleep, proving the words to be true, 'These Christians know how to die.' ' She leaves***

*two daughters to mourn their loss. Appreciative letters were received from two former ministers, Revs. J. H. Somerville and B. N. Hyde. — HJST.W.*

**\*Singleton Argus 22 November 1940**

**JERRY'S PLAINS GIRL IN PALESTINE  
LETTER FROM SISTER GRACE MOSS**

*Sister Grace Moss, with the Australian forces in Palestine, in a letter to her parents, Mr and Mrs Giles Moss, of "Hill Grove," Jerry's Plains, writes as follows:—*

*"I have just returned from a week's leave in Jerusalem, which was delightful. I saw more tombs and churches than one could imagine possible, and trod ground so historical of biblical times. At Bethlehem the Church of the Nativity was visited. It was really beautiful. I went down into the cave which was the manger. It is lighted with lamps, and is like a little chapel. One morning a visit was paid to the Dead Sea. The distance is not so far actually, and I was back at the hostel for lunch. Most of the country passed through on the way was hilly and barren—not a sign of vegetation until one came upon the town of Jericho, which was a patch of lovely green nestling on the shores of the Dead Sea. The latter is not at all pleasant to bathe in, though some of the girls did so.*

*With others, I took a whole day and did the trip to Galilee. It was very beautiful, especially when we arrived at the sea. Tiberius, the oldest city in the world, is situated right on the shore. The sea itself is the most glorious colour, and canoes and sailing boats dotted here and there on the surface make a pretty sight.*

*"A stop was made at Nazareth on the return trip, and I saw a church built over the workshop where St. Joseph and Our Lord were supposed to have worked. Just a short distance from the city is the Garden of Gethsemane and Mount of Olives. I walked the Via Dolorosa, or Way of the Cross, in the old city, and the crucifix which I bought and am sending to you I got at the Church Io Ecce Homo, which is built over the courtyard where Pontius Pilate condemned Our Lord to death."*