



# Heritage Newsletter

*California African American Genealogical Society*

*Celebrating 25 Years*

**January 2011    Volume 23    Number 1**

Ten Issues Published Annually

ISSN 1083-8937

**California African American Genealogical Society**

P.O. Box 8442

Los Angeles, CA 90008-0442

**General Membership Meetings**

Third Saturday monthly at 10am (except July and August)

**Mayme Clayton Library and Museum (MCLM)**

4130 Overland Ave., Culver City, CA 90230-3734

(Old Culver City Courthouse across from VA building)

**2011 Board of Directors**

Ronald Higgins - President

Lloydine Outten – First Vice President

Carolyn Conway – Second Vice President /Membership

Lloydine Outten – Corresponding Secretary

Linda Rush – Recording Secretary

Marjorie Sholes – Treasurer

Ophelia Sanders – Parliamentarian

Gena Weaver – Webmaster (visit us at [www.caags.org](http://www.caags.org))

**Committee Chairs**

Ruth Palmer – Book Sales and Acquisitions

Betty Smith – Public Relations

LaVerne Anderson – Librarian

DorothyLou Sands – Historian (Interim)

Monica Maurasse – Newsletter Editor

Colette DeVerge – FGS Delegate/Fundraising Chairman

Norma Bates – Volunteer Chairman

**ANCESTRY.COM Creates Strategic Alliance with  
National Geographic Digital Media**

*New Features Bring Further Discovery of  
Family History Online*

Ancestry.com is pleased to announce it has created a strategic alliance with National Geographic Digital Media to help individuals make new discoveries in their family history. As part of the relationship, NationalGeographic.com will host a family history experience online, developed by Ancestry.com, which enables visitors to learn more about researching their genealogy and provides specific tools for them to search their ancestral roots located on the Genographic Project website.

The new feature is an add-on to National Geographic's existing Genographic Project Web portal that helps chart the migration history of the human species using DNA analysis. This additional online experience offers the ability to start an online family tree, tips on how to get started with researching family history and links to important historical record collections that are searchable on Ancestry.com.

For anyone interested in learning more about their ancestors, or to experience the family history tools offered by Ancestry.com and National Geographic, visit <http://bit.ly/ACOMonNatGeo>.

**About National Geographic Digital Media**

National Geographic Digital Media (NGDM) is the multimedia division of National Geographic Ventures, the wholly owned, taxable subsidiary of the National Geographic Society, one of the world's largest education and scientific nonprofit organizations that works to

*Neither the newsletter editor nor CAAGS guarantees publication of any submission. Submissions for the newsletter are due by the third Saturday of each month. Please email your submissions or inquiries to [CAAGS@hotmail.com](mailto:CAAGS@hotmail.com) Our new meeting location, Mayme Clayton Library and Museum, 4130 Overland Blvd., Culver City, CA.*

inspire people to care about the planet. Holding many top industry awards, NGDM publishes Nationalgeographic.com; produces short-form video for broadcast markets; manages marketing and content partnerships across broadband, mobile, gaming and other consumer digital platforms; and provides video and film footage to commercial, theatrical, educational and other digital footage markets.

Family History in Europe	<a href="http://www.familysearch.org">www.familysearch.org</a>
Acadians in France	<a href="http://pagesperso-orange.fr/froux/">http://pagesperso-orange.fr/froux/</a>
Victims of the French Guillotine	<a href="http://les.guillotines.free.fr">http://les.guillotines.free.fr</a>
Poitou Acadie Bretagne	<a href="http://pagesperso-orange.fr/froux/St_malo_arrivees/index_arrivee.htm">http://pagesperso-orange.fr/froux/St_malo_arrivees/index_arrivee.htm</a>
French National Library	<a href="http://www.bnf.fr">www.bnf.fr</a>
French National Archives	<a href="http://www.archivesnationales.culture.gouv.fr/chan/">www.archivesnationales.culture.gouv.fr/chan/</a>
Access to Archives	<a href="http://www.a2a.org.uk">www.a2a.org.uk</a>
United Kingdom genealogy	<a href="http://www.genuki.org.uk/">www.genuki.org.uk/</a>
Origins Networks	\$ <a href="http://www.originsnetwork.com/">http://www.originsnetwork.com/</a>
Free BMD	<a href="http://freebmd.rootsweb.com/">http://freebmd.rootsweb.com/</a>
Free Census	<a href="http://www.freecen.org.uk">www.freecen.org.uk</a>

**2011 Calendar of Events**

**January 1, 2011**

Happy New Year!

**January 10-14**

Salt Lake Institute of Genealogy [www.infouga.org](http://www.infouga.org)  
Whittier Area Genalogical Society 28<sup>th</sup> Annual Seminar

**January 29**

Regional Seminar, Speaker: Lisa Cooke owner of Genealogy Gems [www.cagenweb.com/kr/wags](http://www.cagenweb.com/kr/wags)

**January 15**

CAAGS general meeting 10am -2pm, Mayme Clayton Library and Museum, Speaker Alice Fairhurst will join us to discuss Adventures In Genealogy and DNA Testing.

**February 10-12**

The first-ever RootsTech Conference. Salt Palace Convention Center, Salt Lake City, UT. Learn more at [www.rootstech.org](http://www.rootstech.org).

**February 19**

CAAGS general meeting 10am -2pm. Mayme Clayton Library and Museum. Francella Henderson, speaker

**March 12**

Annual Discover Your Roots Conference, details to come.

*\* Calendar is subject to change without notice*

***Condolences to our members, Barbara Thomas whose sister's in law Rene Andrews died and Colette DeVerge on the death of her brother Augustus Moncrief.***

**Don't Miss the \$99 Early Bird Registration for RootsTech 2011**

February 10-12, 2011, Salt Palace Convention Center, Salt Lake City, UT

Join Ancestry.com at the first-ever RootsTech Conference. Save 33% if you register by January 7, 2011.

From the Community Zone and participant-driven “un”conferencing discussions to the RootsTech Playground, RootsTech is where technology creators (Microsoft, Dell, FamilySearch, Ancestry.com, and brightsolid) and technology users (genealogists and family history buffs) can come together in a fun, collaborative environment.

Sessions include:

- Hands-on workshops
- Interactive presentations
- Sneak peek demonstrations of new products and services
- Panel discussions
- Common-interest gatherings
- “Un”conferencing discussions (last minute, on-the-fly sessions requested by attendees)

Individual sessions target novice, intermediate, and advanced users of family history technology. See the RootsTech 2011 Conference program for levels of specific classes.

\$99 through January 7  
\$150 beginning January 8

RootsTech is sponsored by Ancestry.com, Microsoft, Dell, FamilySearch, the National Genealogical Society, brightsolid, the Federation of Genealogical Societies, the

**Websites of Interest**

**Online Genealogy Sources**

Enhance your knowledge: Choose for over 150 courses from beginners to experts. [www.genealogicalstudies.com](http://www.genealogicalstudies.com)

**Ethnic web sites:**

\$ = Fee-based or may require membership

National Archives and Records Service of South Africa  
[www.national.archives.gov.za/](http://www.national.archives.gov.za/)

**European genealogy:**

New England Historic Genealogical Society, and Brigham Young University. Learn more at [www.rootstech.org](http://www.rootstech.org).

## **Oral Recordings From Black Families To Be Archived By Planned Smithsonian Black History Museum**

*By Brett Zongker, Associated Press Writer*

The Corporation for Public Broadcasting announced a new project Wednesday that hopes to record at least 1,500 oral histories from black families over the next year to be placed in the archives of the Smithsonian's future National Museum of African American History and Culture.

"One of the greatest treasures of African America is the stories, the words, the family memories," said Lonnie Bunch, director of the museum, which is planned for the National Mall.

"In essence, this is really one of the ways we will help America to remember by preserving those words," he said.

The audio CD recordings will be produced by the New York-based nonprofit group Sound Portraits Productions, which produces the StoryCorps interview series on National Public Radio.

The first recording sessions are planned for February 15 in Atlanta through a mobile recording studios that will stop in nine cities over the next year.

The Corporation for Public Broadcasting is funding the \$1.4 million StoryCorps Griot project. Part of the project's name, "griot," is derived from the West African tradition of storytelling where a respected tribe member, a "griot," is a living repository of the community's history.

The mobile recording units also will travel to Chicago; Clarksdale, Miss.; Detroit; Memphis, Tenn.; Montgomery, Ala.; Newark, N.J.; Oakland, Calif.; and Selma, Ala.

On the Net: StoryCorps Griot:  
<http://www.storycorpsgriot.net>

## **Familyrelatives is proud to announce the addition of 1,000,000 New Post Office & Trade Directories**

Familyrelatives.com today announced the release of over 1 million Post Office records. The exciting new collection is set to grow over the coming months and will prove to be an extremely valuable resource and complement the existing Trade Directories, allowing them to be used side by side. The Post Office collection is, in effect, a Victorian version of today's Yellow Pages covering over 25 counties and

major cities of Great Britain spanning nearly a century during Britain's most prosperous years.

The records hold interesting information of not only ordinary families but also well known past and present companies and high street brands such as Lyons, Marks & Spencer's and Woolworths, listed as "Toy and Fancy Dealers."

There are a number of famous names that stand out - residences include Charles Dickens residing at Gads Hill House in Higham, Kent as well as Charles Darwin who was famous for his theories of evolution and wrote *The Origin of Species*, he is listed as living in Down, Kent as a Private Resident.

The Postal & Commercial Alphabetical Directory, referred to as Kelly's, contains information organized by County. The early editions, "will be found superior both in quality and extent of information to the Edition previously issued." The beginnings of these Directories can be attributed to Frederic Kelly when he was appointed "His Majesty's Inspector of Inland Letter Carriers" at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Kelly established his company and expanded on the original publications and produced directories for a number of UK cities and several other titles.

The earliest directories were published in London where demand for commercial information was greater, followed by other major cities in the United Kingdom. Using Kelly's association with the Post Office to considerable advantage, he was partnered by Isaac Slater and taking over James Pigot's in 1853, his market dominance was established so becoming the largest directory publisher in the late nineteenth century.

It is not surprising that these guides were used over 170 years ago by travelling salesmen as reference guides when looking for new trade and opportunities, in effect these Directories were the predecessor to the telephone directory and the Yellow pages.

The format of the publications is split into sections which provides a topographical description of settlements and cities as well as landmarks together with statistical information on the population. Generally alphabetical lists of the Clergy, Gentry, commercial occupations, streets, classified trades and advertisements are published. Many of the later Directories include private residents. An example of the sort of information a Post Office provides is shown below - which includes a fascinating combination of trades including a farmer, a farrier, a boot and shoe man, a beer retailer, and a number of shopkeepers.

Robert Woods a spokesman for Familyrelatives.com said "We are very pleased by the progress our digital archive department is making and we will continue to add further

cities and counties covering a larger part of the UK allowing researchers the opportunity to learn what their ancestors were doing over the past 170 years.”

The collection is only a small part of 700 million historic records available online to all members and visitors by way of an annual subscription of only £30.00 or US\$50.00 at [www.familyrelatives.com](http://www.familyrelatives.com)

### Historic Catalogs of Sears, Roebuck and Company, 1896-1993

Was it a Daisy Red Rider BB Gun or a doll with a real metal head? Wander through the gifts and goods your family was pining for over the last century in our collection of historic catalogs from Sears, Roebuck and Company. While you won't find your ancestors by name, you will get a glimpse of Americana, 1896-1993.



### Five Sources for Black Sheep Ancestors

Your black sheep ancestors may turn up collections beyond prison records. Here are five rich sources of information.

#### 1) Court Records

If your ancestor had legal troubles or a run-in with the law, you may find record of his or her day in court. Start your search for court records with a visit to the state archives website. A growing number of archives are posting indexes online.

Don't be surprised to find ancestors listed for seemingly minor infractions. In the index to the Posey County Circuit Court Historical Records at the Indiana State Archives, Abel Smith is listed in 1821 for "Profane swearing." (Is there any other kind?)

In the Missouri State Archives' Missouri Judicial Index Database, William T. Smith was cited as a Public Nuisance because his hog farm, slop, and sties were too close to a

boarding house.

If your ancestor was convicted of a more serious crime, you may find some comfort in learning his side of the story. The State Board of Charities interviewed prisoners with life terms in the state prison at Michigan City, Indiana in the early 1900s. An index to these interviews is online through the Indiana State Archives and copies can be requested, as well as mug shots.

Even if you don't find an index online, some states have posted research guides that will help with your search, like this one from Utah.

Also check on the county level and you may find helpful guides like this one for King County, Washington.

#### 2) Census

Ancestors who found themselves on the wrong side of the law at the time of the census were enumerated in prison. While in many cases, you'll only find them listed with "Inmate" in the "relationship to head of household" field, in 1850 and 1860 the census takers were instructed to "state the crime for which each inmate is confined."

#### 3) Newspapers

The antics of your black sheep relative may have landed him or her a spot in the newspaper — and not just locally. When Henderson Gibson, Byrd Powers, F.F. Hamblin, and John Gibson of Whitley County, Kentucky, were arrested after prohibition agents seized their stills and liquor in December 1920, news of the raid made the front page of the *Morning Herald* of Uniontown, Pennsylvania.

Search historical newspapers for your ancestor's story.

#### 4) Biographies and Local Histories

Local histories sometimes include mentions of a city or town's more notorious residents. *The American Metropolis: New York City Life in All Its Various Phases*, by Frank Moss, LL.D. (1897) includes an entire chapter on the Five Points neighborhood with stories, descriptions, and in some cases engravings of 6th Ward ruffians.

#### 5) International Collections

Your ancestors abroad probably include a few rogues and there are a growing number of collections on Ancestry.com in which you can learn more about them. William Arnold is among the criminals that can be found in the England & Wales, Criminal Registers, 1791-1892. He was convicted of highway robbery and sentenced to death in the Old Bailey, April session, 1820.

*By Juliana Smith, Ancestry.com 21 October 2010*



# Heritage Newsletter

*California African American Genealogical Society*

*Celebrating 25 Years*

## **President's Message**

**By Ron Higgins**

Happy New Year and thanks to all of our members and friends who continue to attend our meetings. I'm determined to make this one of the best years in CAAGS history. This year I'm asking all members to bring a friend to a meeting.

If you don't know this year the California African American Genealogical Society is celebrating our 25<sup>th</sup> year. I'm very thankful to have been here from the start. My years of service to CAAGS have been a pleasure and delight for me. It would be a pleasure to have some of our old members come back and do a show and tell on their research. We hope that some of their findings could be beneficial to you and your research. Everyone has had a good time with their researching and finding ancestors. Make plans to come to one of our meetings this year if you have not been in a while. Come help us and be a part of our activities. We need someone to teach beginner genealogy classes as well as some volunteers for various committees and projects.

I want to thank all of the volunteers that did a great job last year, this includes Ron Fairley, Gena Weaver, Carolyn Connors, Mary Alequin-Sosa, Norma Bates, Gerard McKay and those who donated refreshments for our meetings.

The future exists because of what happened in the past, it is all connected. Our future comes from the past, and we are richer because of our past experiences.

Remember save the dates March 12<sup>th</sup> for the annual Discover Your Roots conference. Also March 19<sup>th</sup> is our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration. We will be hosting an all

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Monica Maurasse – Newsletter Editor

Colette DeVerge – FGS Delegate/Fundraising Chairman

Norma Bates – Volunteer Chairman

*Neither the newsletter editor nor CAAGS guarantees publication of any submission. Submissions for the newsletter are due by the third Saturday of each month. Please email your submissions or inquiries to [CAAGS@hotmail.com](mailto:CAAGS@hotmail.com) Our new meeting location, Mayme Clayton Library and Museum, 4130 Overland Blvd., Culver City, CA.*

day conference here at the MCLM. Please plan to attend both events if you can. Check our website for the details. Welcome to the new officers, I'm looking forward to working with you all. Again, thanks and wishing everyone a Happy Valentine's Day.

### 2011 Calendar of Events

#### February 14

Happy Valentine's Day

#### February 19

CAAGS general meeting 10am -2pm. Mayme Clayton Library and Museum. Ophelia Sanders, Intermediate Class Instructor, What Do You Expect To Find In Any Obituary. Francella Henderson, guest speaker. Wear your African attire to our meeting in celebration of Black History Month.

#### March 12

9<sup>th</sup> Annual Discover Your Roots Conference, 1209 South Manhattan Place, Los Angeles, CA 90019  
Pre-Registration \$25 (by March 4<sup>th</sup>). At the door \$30. Guest speaker Charles Meigs. For more info [discoveryourroots.org](http://discoveryourroots.org)

#### March 19

CAAGS 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Genealogical Conference, Mayme Clayton Library and Museum. This will be an all day anniversary celebration. More details to come.

#### April 16

CAAGS general meeting 10am -2pm

*\* Calendar is subject to change without notice*

### Websites of Interest

#### Century of Toledo funeral home records unseals history for black community

To view the contents on toledoblade.com, go to:  
<http://www.toledoblade.com/article/20110103/NEWS16/1020381/0/news09>

#### Ethnic web sites:

##### *Canadian and French Canadian:*

National Library of Canada [www.nlc-bnc.ca/index-e.html](http://www.nlc-bnc.ca/index-e.html)  
Library and Archives of Canada  
[www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/index-e.html](http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/index-e.html)  
Family History in Canada [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)  
Genealogical Research Library [www.grl.com](http://www.grl.com)  
Early Canadiana Online [www.canadiana.org](http://www.canadiana.org)  
Images of Canada [www.imagescanada.ca/index-e.html](http://www.imagescanada.ca/index-e.html)  
Canadian Genealogy Center [www.genealogy.gc.ca](http://www.genealogy.gc.ca)

Nova Scotia Coal Miners Tribute Page  
<http://thepitsofcapebreton.com/cb.html>  
American French Genealogical Society [www.afgs.org](http://www.afgs.org)  
French Genealogy of North America [www.francogene.com](http://www.francogene.com)  
French Canadian Genealogy  
Research [www.happyones.com/genealogy/research.html](http://www.happyones.com/genealogy/research.html)  
University of Montreal – PRDH  
[www.genealogie.umontreal.ca/en/](http://www.genealogie.umontreal.ca/en/)  
Drouin Genealogical Institute [www.drouininstitute.com](http://www.drouininstitute.com)  
British Columbia Cemetery Finding Aid  
[www.islandnet.com/bccfa/](http://www.islandnet.com/bccfa/)  
British Columbia Archives [www.bcarchives.gov.bc.ca](http://www.bcarchives.gov.bc.ca)  
New Brunswick Provincial Archives  
[archives.gnb.ca/Archives/Default.aspx](http://archives.gnb.ca/Archives/Default.aspx)  
Home Children  
[www.collectionscanada.ca/02020110\\_e.html](http://www.collectionscanada.ca/02020110_e.html)  
Quebec and Eastern Townships Genealogy Research Page  
<http://simmons.b2b2c.ca>

### Genealogy Classes

If anyone is interested in going to San Diego for genealogical classes Marti Lewis of the San Diego African American Genealogy Research Group will be teaching instructional classes on African American Genealogy on Thursday's thru February 24, 2011, from 7:00 - 8: 00 p.m., at the Family History Center, 4195 Camino Del Rio South.

Most of the classes will be "*Researching Your Ancestral Roots*" With Particular Emphasis on the Challenges Unique to Researching African Americans.

Dates: February 10, February 17, and February 24, 2011

For more info contact, Margaret Lewis - Vice President  
San Diego African American Genealogy Research Group  
P.O. Box 741956  
San Diego, California 92174-1956  
(619) 262-5810 cell# (619) 507-7676

### Family Stories: Separating Truth from Fiction

The holidays always bring back memories of my grandma. She and Grandpa spent a lot of Christmases with us, and after dinner she would regale us with stories of her family. She was one of those relatives that a family historian dreams of—full of details and interesting stories about her parents and other family members. Most of the time she had her facts right, but some of the stories were more of a mixed bag—some with “embellishments,” others with honest mistakes. The tales our family members tell us are often like that and sometimes they require a little dissecting to get to the truth, but they're a unique part of our family history and deserve to be preserved.

## Document the Story

The best thing to do when you hear a family story is to write it down--right there and then. Take notes, or if the storyteller isn't averse to the idea, record it. Stories tend to grow and change with each retelling, so try to get it down right away.

Since many of the stories we hear may have already been retold many times to different family members, ask different family members what they heard. Often, you'll find very different versions of the same story depending on who heard it. Look for the common threads in the story and work on proving or disproving discrepancies. What aspects might the person have "embellished" and why? Perhaps humble origins were exaggerated to elevate the ancestor's social status. Or maybe family members were confused. Looking at timeframes can sometimes help. Your eight year old ancestor in the 1860 census probably wasn't that Civil War hero as your aunt claimed, but maybe his father or uncle was.

## What's Provable?

Think about elements of the story where a record might have been created. Historical newspapers and local histories can sometimes be useful in corroborating family stories.

If your family story relates to military service, a search of military records for that conflict is definitely in order. Some census records also include information on military service. The 1840, 1910, and 1930 U.S. Censuses included questions about military service, and the 1890 Veterans' Schedule is available for states alphabetically beginning with Kentucky (partial) through Wyoming, and the District of Columbia. It lists the residence, unit, and years of service of Civil War soldiers or their surviving widows. And of course, where available, check state censuses to see if they include details on military service as well.

## Trace the Origins of the Story

Think about where the story originated. If the story is about someone who is no longer alive, ask the storyteller where he or she heard the story. Did they have direct information (perhaps a witness to it) or was the story relayed by a third party? How much time had elapsed since the event in question?

My grandmother told us the story about how her father arbitrarily changed his last name from Menkalski to Wagner in order to get a job in Cleveland. I was able to prove the story when I located the family using that name in the 1910 census in Cleveland, but by 1920 he had reverted to Menkalski, most likely to avoid anti-German sentiment during World War I.

I was unable to find any record of the family while they

were living Philadelphia, where I knew they lived prior to arriving in Cleveland. Thinking about Grandma's story, I realized that if they were enumerated with the name Wagner in 1910, the name change had to have happened prior to that. Since my grandmother was born in 1906, she would have been pretty young and it was likely she had been told the story in later years. Perhaps she misunderstood where the name change took place. Searching for a Polish John Wagner in Philadelphia found him in the 1900 census in that city. Thinking perhaps he traveled with that name as well, I also located several passenger arrivals for him under John Wagner, in some cases traveling with other family members.

## True Story, Wrong Person

If you find that the dates you have don't match up with the family story, consider the possibility that perhaps there is some truth in the story, but the wrong person is in the starring role. Perhaps the wrong generation was cited in the story. Investigate all possibilities before you rule out the story entirely.

Your family's stories are a unique part of your history, a legacy that sometimes can't be found anywhere else. Take the time to make sure that future generations will be able to enjoy them too.

*By Juliana Smith 16 December 2010*

### Be Careful What You Throw Away

When my ex-wife passed away, I had the task of helping my son to plow through the endless boxes of "stuff" in her house. I refused to just throw things away, opting for systematically going through the boxes to be sure nothing useful was lost. I was sitting on the floor, about 3/4ths through a 2' x 2' x 2' box when I saw a mouse (complete with nursing babies) fly through the detritus in the bottom of the box. I caught her and (I used to raise laboratory animals) found a safe home for her and her babies. Then I went through each thing in the box. There was a folded up, yellowed piece of paper that the mouse had been chewing on (folded three times in one direction and twice in the other with a paper clip on it). I could so easily have thrown it away. Notice the mouse's teeth marks. Inside were the names and birth dates of her great-grandfather and seven of his siblings. Be careful what you throw away. The tiniest thing may be the key to lost relatives.

Wayne Peterson  
Henderson, NC

## Who Do You Think You Are – Season 2

“Who Do You Think You Are?” Season 2 on NBC stars today’s most-beloved and iconic celebrities, including Ashley Judd, Gwyneth Paltrow, Kim Cattrall, Lionel Richie, Rosie O’Donnell, Steve Buscemi, Tim McGraw and Vanessa Williams, who will all give television viewers an intimate look as they embark on a journey of self-discovery to trace their family trees. Each episode of NBC’s “Who Do You Think You Are?” TV show will reveal surprising, inspiring and sometimes tragic stories that are often linked to events in American and international history.

Premieres February 4th 8/7c, check your local listings.

## Five Things to Know About the Port of New Orleans

By Juliana Smith 06 January 2011

### 1) Peak Years

An estimated 550,000 immigrants passed through the Port of New Orleans between 1820 and 1860 and in 1837, it was the second leading port of entry in the United States. Of those 550,000 immigrants around 350,000 of them arrived between 1847 and 1857. In fact throughout the antebellum period, New Orleans drew more immigrants than the ports of Boston, Philadelphia, or Baltimore.

### 2) Return Trip Immigration

The city of New Orleans quickly rose to prominence as a commercial center as exports like cotton and other agricultural products from the South left for trade centers in Europe. On the return trips captains offered a cheaper passage than some other routes. Although the trip was longer, the price was right for many Irish, German, and French immigrants.

In the early 1800s, steamboat travel enabled travel upstream from New Orleans through the lower Mississippi River system, and this provided a convenient route to the fertile lands of the Mississippi valley. The steamships brought produce from the interior to New Orleans for export and return trips northward brought many of the immigrants who had arrived through New Orleans into the American heartland on the next leg of their journey.

### 3) Immigration Slows

With the blockade of Confederate ports during the Civil War, immigration through New Orleans was halted and never regained its momentum due to the rapid expansion of railroads that made travel from Eastern ports more appealing. Also at this point, more and more shipping companies were turning to the larger steamships that couldn’t reliably get into the port of New Orleans because of sand bars that often blocked the port. In 1879 a set of

parallel dikes, or jetties, designed by James Buchanan Eads, narrowed the mouth of the river which cut a deeper trench that allowed for the passage of larger ships.

This helped the port regain its prominence as a world class trade center, but immigration never rebounded to its pre-Civil War levels. It did receive a small portion of the wave of eastern Europeans that began arriving in the U.S. in the 1880s, as well as a number of Italians (most notably from Sicily), and other Mediterranean immigrants. Due to its proximity to Cuban and Caribbean shipping lanes, New Orleans also drew a large number of Spanish and Latin American immigrants arriving in the U.S.

### 4) A Seasonal Route

Travel through New Orleans wasn’t without its risks; Yellow fever and malaria were recurring visitors between the months of May and November. Immigrants with little or no immunity to these tropical diseases were especially at risk so travel guides recommended that immigrants avoid arriving in the city during those months.

In 1853, the city was hit with an epidemic of yellow fever that sickened 40% per cent of the population and it’s estimated that around 8,000 people succumbed to the disease that year. Wealthier residents often fled the city during the summer months to avoid the disease.

### 5) Looser Restrictions

Because of the lucrative nature of the port, the business community wanted an open deregulated port. This made it an attractive port of entries for those who might be detained at stricter ports. For example, after the Chinese Exclusion Acts of the 1880s, some Asians still found their way into the U.S. through New Orleans due to the looser enforcement of immigration laws. The loose restrictions were also attractive to those with physical challenges that might jeopardize entry through other ports.

Resources:

Antebellum Louisiana: Disease, Death, and Mourning (Louisiana State Museum). M. Mark Stolarik, ed. *Forgotten Doors: The Other Ports of Entry to the United States*, Chapter 3, “Immigration through the Port of New Orleans,” by Joseph Logsdon (Philadelphia, Pa.: The Balch Institute Press, 1988.)







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*Celebrating 25 Years*

## **President's Message**

**By Ron Higgins**

**March 2011 Volume 23 Number 3**

Ten Issues Published Annually

ISSN 1083-8937

### **California African American Genealogical Society**

P.O. Box 8442

Los Angeles, CA 90008-0442

### **General Membership Meetings**

Third Saturday monthly at 10am (except July and August)

### **Mayme Clayton Library and Museum (MCLM)**

4130 Overland Ave., Culver City, CA 90230-3734

(Old Culver City Courthouse across from VA building)

### **2011 Board of Directors**

Ronald Higgins - President

Lloydine Outten – First Vice President

Carolyn Conway – Second Vice President /Membership

Lloydine Outten – Corresponding Secretary

Linda Rush – Recording Secretary

Marjorie Sholes – Treasurer

Ophelia Sanders – Parliamentarian

Gena Weaver – Webmaster (visit us at [www.caags.org](http://www.caags.org))

### **Committee Chairs**

Ruth Palmer – Book Sales and Acquisitions

Betty Smith – Public Relations

LaVerne Anderson – Librarian

DorothyLou Sands – Historian (Interim)

Monica Maurasse – Newsletter Editor

Colette DeVerge – FGS Delegate/Fundraising Chairman

Norma Bates – Volunteer Chairman

This month the California African Genealogical Society starts the celebration of our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary year. I give praise to CAAGS and all that has made the genealogical society what it is today. Just think, 25 years have passed, we've had our ups and downs but we have been able to stand tall. We have been blessed to have officers and members to make a difference. Some have been featured on TV shows for PBS and CBS and most recently the series "Who Do You Think You Are?" Many of you have written books and articles on various genealogical subjects for local, regional and national publications. Your president has been a leader in our community, the state and nation.

The speaker for March has been moved to February 2012. We will conclude our 25<sup>th</sup> year during Black History Month with an all day genealogical conference. We need your help to plan it, please be a volunteer.

To kick off our anniversary bring a guest with you to our next meeting and encourage them to join our society. In March we will have our "Show and Tell." Please contact me or a board member if you have something to present.

Lastly, remember that March 12<sup>th</sup> is the annual Discover Your Roots Conference. CAAGS has been a sponsor of the conference since the beginning nine years ago and I have been an active volunteer on the planning committee. CAAGS and the Church of the Latter Day Saints are the hosts.

*Neither the newsletter editor nor CAAGS guarantees publication of any submission. Submissions for the newsletter are due by the third Saturday of each month. Please email your submissions or inquiries to [CAAGS@hotmail.com](mailto:CAAGS@hotmail.com)*

## 2011 Calendar of Events

### March 12

9<sup>th</sup> Annual Discover Your Roots Conference, 1209 South Manhattan Place, Los Angeles, CA 90019  
Pre-Registration \$25 (by March 4<sup>th</sup>). At the door \$30. Guest speaker Charles Meigs. For more info [discoveryourroots.org](http://discoveryourroots.org)

### March 19

CAAGS general meeting 10am -2pm, Mayme Clayton Library and Museum. Show and Tell

### April 16

CAAGS general meeting 10am -2pm, Mayme Clayton Library and Museum.

### May 15 – 22

Research trip to Salt Lake City, UT

*\* Calendar is subject to change without notice*

Minnesota Genealogical Society-German genealogy  
[www.mtn.org/mgs/german](http://www.mtn.org/mgs/german)  
German genealogy  
[www.germanculture.com.ua/library/links/genealogy.htm](http://www.germanculture.com.ua/library/links/genealogy.htm)  
Swiss Federal Archives  
[www.bar.admin.ch/bar/engine/Home](http://www.bar.admin.ch/bar/engine/Home)  
Italian Family History [www.italiangen.org](http://www.italiangen.org)  
Austrian State Archives  
[www.oesta.gv.at/engdiv/geneal.htm](http://www.oesta.gv.at/engdiv/geneal.htm)  
Danish Demografisk Database  
[http://ddd.dda.dk/ddd\\_en.htm](http://ddd.dda.dk/ddd_en.htm)  
Norway National Archives  
<http://digitalarkivet.uib.no>  
Swedish records \$ [www.genline.com](http://www.genline.com)  
Institute of Migration \$  
[http://www.migrationinstitute.fi/index\\_e.php](http://www.migrationinstitute.fi/index_e.php)  
Cape Verde genealogy  
[www.umassd.edu/specialprograms/caboverde/jlopes.html](http://www.umassd.edu/specialprograms/caboverde/jlopes.html)  
Federation of Eastern European Family History Societies  
[www.feefhs.org](http://www.feefhs.org)

## Websites of Interest

CAAGS is now on Face Book, visit us at the California African American Genealogical Society

### Ethnic web sites:

#### European genealogy:

Family History in Europe [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)  
Acadians in France  
<http://pagesperso-orange.fr/froux/>  
Victims of the French Guillotine  
<http://les.guillotines.free.fr>  
Poitou Acadie Bretagne  
[http://pagesperso-orange.fr/froux/St\\_malo\\_arrivees/index\\_arrivee.htm](http://pagesperso-orange.fr/froux/St_malo_arrivees/index_arrivee.htm)  
French National Library [www.bnf.fr](http://www.bnf.fr)  
French National Archives  
[www.archivesnationales.culture.gouv.fr/chan/](http://www.archivesnationales.culture.gouv.fr/chan/)  
Access to Archives [www.a2a.org.uk](http://www.a2a.org.uk)  
United Kingdom genealogy  
[www.genuki.org.uk/](http://www.genuki.org.uk/)  
Origins Networks \$  
<http://www.originsnetwork.com/>  
Documents Online \$  
[www.documentsonline.nationalarchives.gov.uk](http://www.documentsonline.nationalarchives.gov.uk)  
Free BMD  
<http://freebmd.rootsweb.com/>  
Free Census  
[www.freecen.org.uk](http://www.freecen.org.uk)  
Free Registers [www.freereg.org.uk](http://www.freereg.org.uk)  
National Archives of Ireland  
[www.nationalarchives.ie/index.html](http://www.nationalarchives.ie/index.html)

**CAAGS is now on Facebook. Become a fan and follow us, California African American Genealogical Society**

### Los Angeles Central Library Upcoming Events

I wanted to let you know about some exciting local history and genealogy programs coming soon at Central Library. Please share this information with your family and friends. Hope to see you there!

#### The Hand in the Snow and the Crash of Northwest Flight 4422

Central Library, Mark Taper Auditorium  
Saturday, March 19, 2pm

Fifty years after Northwest Flight 4422 crashed in Alaska, a frozen human arm and hand was found in the wreckage. It would take another ten years and a world class team of forensic specialists to make a positive identification of the remains. Please join us for this amazing story, told by Colleen Fitzpatrick, PhD, a forensic genealogist who worked on the case. Presented by the LAPL History & Genealogy Department. Free and open to the public.

#### Architects and Architecture of Los Angeles, from Adobe to High-rise

Central Library, Mark Taper Auditorium  
Saturday, April 16, 2pm

The second lecture in the 19th annual Marie Northrop Lectures series is presented by architectural historian, author, and UCLA professor Thomas S. Hines. Dr. Hines will discuss Los Angeles architecture from 1900 to 1950. Sponsored by the Los Angeles City Historical Society and the LAPL's History and Genealogy Department. Free and

open to the public.

**Overcoming Brick Walls in Your Genealogy Research**  
**Central Library, Meeting Room A**  
Saturday, April 30, 12pm

Find out what to do when you hit a brick wall in your genealogy research. Linda Serna, APG, GSG, will provide ideas about how to approach the challenge, uncover overlooked clues and sources, and achieve breakthroughs in your research. Sponsored by LAPL's History & Genealogy Department. Free and open to the public.

In addition to these, I encourage you to look at the Los Angeles Public Library's Events Calendar to learn about other upcoming cultural and educational programs, including the Culinary Historians of Southern California's popular lecture series, an afternoon of chamber music with members of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, and docent-led library tours (<http://events.lapl.org/>).

Validated parking is available at the Westlawn Garage at 524 S. Flower Street to Los Angeles Public Library cardholders. On Saturdays, parking is only \$1 between 10am and 5:30pm with validation.

**Yellow-Colored Glasses**

When you run across a record that is hard to read, light yellow sun glasses can be used to increase contrast.  
I first used them in hunting, and have since used them for other purposes.

Milt Cuppy  
Copyright 2010, Ancestry.com

**5 Problem-Solving Strategies**

By Juliana Smith

If the answers to your family history dilemmas can't be found in the descriptive materials for the collection, as we discussed in the previous article, here are some problem-solving strategies that can help.

1) Look at External Factors

For the past week, our local weatherman has been warning us of the storm that began yesterday, and since I'm in charge of snow removal for our house and several neighbors who are unable to do it, last week I made sure that the snow blower had gas, and I had my gloves, hat and scarf at the ready. With the sophisticated weather predictions that are available now, it's hard to imagine not knowing when bad weather might strike. Certainly, our ancestors learned to keep their eyes on the skies and noted certain weather indicators, but they couldn't just flip on the

Weather Channel and be informed as to when and where they should evacuate. The 1900 Galveston Hurricane is a tragic example of the catastrophic results that often came when unexpected weather events struck populated areas.

If your ancestors inexplicably picked up and moved, turn to local histories to see if you can determine the reason. Drought, floods, earthquakes, tornadoes, hurricanes, pestilence, a brutally cold and snowy winter, or an unusually hot summer may have convinced your ancestor that this was not the place he wanted to raise his family and he may have moved on to greener pastures.

Check local histories and familiarize yourself with major events in the areas in which they lived. You may find it helpful to create a local history timeline that you can compare against the timelines of your ancestors.

2) Widen Your Horizons

Just a decade ago, your chances of locating an ancestor with wanderlust were much slimmer than they are these days. With the ability to search the entire country--or even abroad--with the click of a mouse, it's much easier to find ancestors who turn up in unexpected places. Try a search without including a residence, but instead including other factors that will narrow the search to your ancestor--things like age, birthplace, race, and in some cases, even the names of other household members.

In researching our Tobin family of hatters, I was missing my ancestor's brother in 1870. The family had for the most part stayed in the New York City area, but George was eluding me that year. When I removed the residence of New York and searched for him using his name, age, and birthplace of Ireland, I was able to quickly locate him in Washington, D.C., where I had no inkling any of the family had lived. Without the nation-wide index to the census for 1870, I might not have thought to look for him there.

3) Explore What's Available

There are currently nearly 30,000 individual collections available on Ancestry.com, and some of them may hold the clues you need. But with so many options, it can be difficult to keep up. This past year, Ancestry.com created new place pages that give you a better look at what's available for the places where your ancestors lived. To access the state pages, just click on the Search tab, and then select a location from the map in the lower left corner of the pages.

Sometimes it pays to revisit collections as well. New data may have been added or search functionality may have been tweaked and your ancestors may surface where they hadn't before. You can see when a collection was last updated by locating it in the Card Catalog. Hover your mouse over the collection title and you'll see a box appear

a brief description along with the date the collection was originally published on Ancestry.com and the date it was last updated.

#### 4) Side-Step

Consider this--a spouse dies and in the next census you find that several young children are also missing. An epidemic, natural disaster, or perhaps some other family tragedy? Perhaps. But maybe they were sent to live with other family members because the single parent was unable to care for them while they were working to support the rest of the family. Check with other family members and see if you find them living with siblings, grandparents, or cousins. You may also find your ancestor's parents living with his or her sibling. Be sure to conduct "whole family" research, gathering census records for even extended family and keep track of the addresses you find on records. You may find that the address your ancestor gave on his marriage record was the same as that of his aunt and uncle.

#### 5) Finding Holes in Your Research

Too often I've found that my brick-wall problems are of my own making. Usually they are based around some assumption that I've sub-consciously made. I learned early in my career writing about family history that if I ever want to find a hole in an area of my research, I should plan an article around that very topic. Never fails. As soon as I start writing about how I made this amazing discovery, I'll find holes in my logic. But it's a good way to keep my research on track. Try it. Write up a brief summary of the research steps you've taken and keep it with your research log. Not only does putting it in writing help you to better analyze your research, but years from now when you're wondering how the heck you came to that conclusion, it will be right there for you.

*Weekly Discovery, 19 December 2010 Weekly Discovery*

#### **Grandma's Address Book**

Your grandma's old address book can be an invaluable genealogy resource. In addition to addresses and phone numbers, you may find entries for birthdays, anniversaries and names of children. The Christmas card section can be especially useful. Cards were usually sent to just about everyone known, and a study of who she sent cards to could reveal information for your extended family, too. A good thing is that these old address books were rarely discarded.

Susan Neff, Wabash, Indiana  
Copyright 2010, Ancestry.com

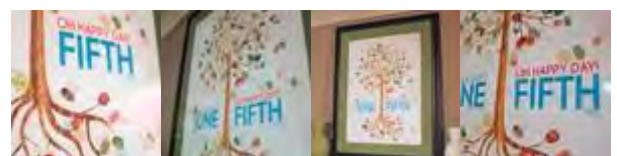
### **Fingerprint Tree Guest Book From LoveFromTheThumb**

This Fingerprint Tree is a fun and creative way to record all of your guests on a special day! After a wedding it becomes a great reminder of your day and a great heirloom to hang in your home. Tree comes blank with your names and date, ready for your friends and family to fill with their fingerprints and signatures.

Woodgrain tree with names and dates, 20x28 printed on 30#, double ply white, paper with Epson HDR Inks, large enough for approx 100-150 signatures.

The above pictures are actually of a tree used for a wedding. Everyone loved the idea and we couldn't have been happier with the end result! For more info go to:

[http://www.etsy.com/listing/66091404/fingerprint-tree-guest-book?ref=sr\\_gallery\\_10&ga\\_search\\_query=finger%2Bprint%2Btree&ga\\_search\\_type=handmade](http://www.etsy.com/listing/66091404/fingerprint-tree-guest-book?ref=sr_gallery_10&ga_search_query=finger%2Bprint%2Btree&ga_search_type=handmade)





# Heritage Newsletter

*California African American Genealogical Society*

*Celebrating 25 Years*

**April 2011 Volume 23 Number 4**

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ISSN 1083-8937

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(Old Culver City Courthouse across from VA building)

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Monica Maurasse – Newsletter Editor

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Norma Bates – Volunteer Chairman

## **President's Message**

**By Ron Higgins**

Have you bounced the ball in the right direction of your computer, or do you need to bounce it in another area to open up the court to go down a better lane to score a name? Remember the computer is not always a slam dunk. I hope you have been watching the genealogical series Friday nights on NBC. It shows that some days you have a straight line to the basket and on other days you can't seem to score. One of the most important things to remember is that some days you have to go to another court to score.

The more you hear at a genealogical conference, the better it sounds and it will give you food for thought. Pick what interests and search it out.

I hope those of you that attended the Discover Your Roots conference enjoyed yourself and got a breakthrough on your research. This conference was one of the best in years. The keynote speaker, Charles Meigs gave a very informative presentation. There were about 200 in attendance. Thank you for your attendance if you were there. It's never too late to learn something new about genealogy.

Thanks to all the members and friends of the California African American Genealogical Society that have made us who we are today. This is the beginning of our 25<sup>th</sup> year. It has been a wonderful journey.

CAAGS needs your help to be a presenter or help us find people to do genealogical presentations. Please contact me or a board member of you can help.

*Neither the newsletter editor nor CAAGS guarantees publication of any submission. Submissions for the newsletter are due by the third Saturday of each month. Please email your submissions or inquiries to [CAAGS@hotmail.com](mailto:CAAGS@hotmail.com)*

## 2011 Calendar of Events

### April 16

CAAGS general meeting 10am -2pm, Mayme Clayton Library and Museum.

### May 15 – 22

Research trip to Salt Lake City, UT

### May 21

No CAAGS general meeting.

### June 18

Annual Juneteenth Celebration, details to follow.

### July/August

No CAAGS Monthly Meeting

*\* Calendar is subject to change without notice*

## Websites of Interest

### Ethnic web sites:

#### *European genealogy*

Minnesota Genealogical Society-German genealogy

[www.mtn.org/mgs/german](http://www.mtn.org/mgs/german)

German genealogy

[www.germanculture.com.ua/library/links/genealogy.htm](http://www.germanculture.com.ua/library/links/genealogy.htm)

Swiss Federal Archives

[www.bar.admin.ch/bar/engine/Home](http://www.bar.admin.ch/bar/engine/Home)

Italian Family History [www.italiangen.org](http://www.italiangen.org)

Austrian State Archives

[www.oesta.gv.at/engdiv/geneal.htm](http://www.oesta.gv.at/engdiv/geneal.htm)

Danish Demografisk Database

[http://ddd.dda.dk/ddd\\_en.htm](http://ddd.dda.dk/ddd_en.htm)

Norway National Archives <http://digitalarkivet.uib.no>

Swedish records \$ [www.genline.com](http://www.genline.com)

Institute of Migration \$

[http://www.migrationinstitute.fi/index\\_e.php](http://www.migrationinstitute.fi/index_e.php)

Cape Verde genealogy

[www.umassd.edu/specialprograms/caboverde/jlopes.html](http://www.umassd.edu/specialprograms/caboverde/jlopes.html)

Federation of Eastern European Family History Societies

[www.feefhs.org](http://www.feefhs.org)

Google Web Page Translator [www.google.com](http://www.google.com)

click language tools

### Learn More About Black Indians:

<http://blackindians.com>

<http://www.cherokeebyblood.com/blackindians.htm>

\$ Fee based

## Family Stories: Separating Truth from Fiction

By Juliana Smith

The holidays always bring back memories of my grandma. She and Grandpa spent a lot of Christmases with us, and after dinner she would regale us with stories of her family. She was one of those relatives that a family historian dreams of—full of details and interesting stories about her parents and other family members. Most of the time she had her facts right, but some of the stories were more of a mixed bag—some with “embellishments,” others with honest mistakes. The tales our family members tell us are often like that and sometimes they require a little dissecting to get to the truth, but they’re a unique part of our family history and deserve to be preserved.

### Document the Story

The best thing to do when you hear a family story is to write it down—right there and then. Take notes, or if the storyteller isn’t averse to the idea, record it. Stories tend to grow and change with each retelling, so try to get it down right away.

Since many of the stories we hear may have already been retold many times to different family members, ask different family members what they heard. Often, you’ll find very different versions of the same story depending on who heard it. Look for the common threads in the story and work on proving or disproving discrepancies. What aspects might the person have “embellished” and why? Perhaps humble origins were exaggerated to elevate the ancestor’s social status. Or maybe family members were confused. Looking at timeframes can sometimes help. Your eight year old ancestor in the 1860 census probably wasn’t that Civil War hero as your aunt claimed, but maybe his father or uncle was.

### What’s Provable?

Think about elements of the story where a record might have been created. Historical newspapers and local histories can sometimes be useful in corroborating family stories.

If your family story relates to military service, a search of military records for that conflict is definitely in order. Some census records also include information on military service. The 1840, 1910, and 1930 U.S. Censuses included questions about military service, and the 1890 Veterans’ Schedule is available for states alphabetically beginning with Kentucky (partial) through Wyoming, and the District of Columbia. It lists the residence, unit, and years of service of Civil War soldiers or their surviving widows. And of course, where available, check state censuses to see if they include details on military service as well.

### **Trace the Origins of the Story**

Think about where the story originated. If the story is about someone who is no longer alive, ask the storyteller where he or she heard the story. Did they have direct information (perhaps a witness to it) or was the story relayed by a third party? How much time had elapsed since the event in question?

My grandmother told us the story about how her father arbitrarily changed his last name from Menkalski to Wagner in order to get a job in Cleveland. I was able to prove the story when I located the family using that name in the 1910 census in Cleveland, but by 1920 he had reverted to Menkalski, most likely to avoid anti-German sentiment during World War I.

I was unable to find any record of the family while they were living Philadelphia, where I knew they lived prior to arriving in Cleveland. Thinking about Grandma's story, I realized that if they were enumerated with the name Wagner in 1910, the name change had to have happened prior to that. Since my grandmother was born in 1906, she would have been pretty young and it was likely she had been told the story in later years. Perhaps she misunderstood where the name change took place. Searching for a Polish John Wagner in Philadelphia found him in the 1900 census in that city. Thinking perhaps he traveled with that name as well, I also located several passenger arrivals for him under John Wagner, in some cases traveling with other family members.

### **True Story, Wrong Person**

If you find that the dates you have don't match up with the family story, consider the possibility that perhaps there is some truth in the story, but the wrong person is in the starring role. Perhaps the wrong generation was cited in the story. Investigate all possibilities before you rule out the story entirely.

Your family's stories are a unique part of your history, a legacy that sometimes can't be found anywhere else. Take the time to make sure that future generations will be able to enjoy them too.

*Taken from Ancestry.com, December 2010*

**CAAGS is now on Facebook. Become a fan and follow us, California African American Genealogical Society**

### **Let Them Eat Cake Attitude Threatens to Destroy a Network of Public Assets**

While our economy seems to be slowly staggering back to its feet, state and municipal governments remain hard-hit as

the result of lost tax revenues, lost stimulus money and pension fund payments that have grown to monstrous size to make up for the market losses of 2007 and 2008. Those governments are cutting everywhere they can and public libraries nationwide have been one of the biggest and least deserved losers in the process.

Widespread public access to knowledge, like public education, is one of the pillars of our democracy, a guarantee that we can maintain a well-informed citizenry.

But libraries seem to be losing out in the funding battles, due, in part, to the mistaken belief that they are somehow anachronistic in an age when so many Americans have instant computer access to information through the Internet. This is, frankly, a let-them-eat-cake-attitude that threatens to destroy a network of public assets that remains critical in our country.

Millions of Americans simply cannot afford to replace what libraries have traditionally offered for free -- access to books, computers and research assistance. Ironically, the importance of these services is even greater in a time of economic uncertainty.

For Americans facing job losses, working to gain new skills and seeking assistance in an increasingly digital world, U.S. public libraries are first responders. Two-thirds of libraries report they provide the only free access to computers and the Internet in their communities. Libraries function as crucial technology hubs, not merely for free Web access, but those who need computer training and assistance. Library business centers help support entrepreneurship and retraining

For thousands and thousands of American kids, libraries are the only safe place they can find to study, a haven free from the dangers of street or the numbing temptations of television. As schools cutback services, the library looms even more important to countless children. And libraries often offer young parents the only chance they can provide to inculcate their children in a culture of books, one of the most essential building blocks for success in school.

For the elderly, libraries are often important community centers that help them escape the loneliness of old age.

Most important of all, perhaps, a library within a community stands as a testimonial to its values, its belief in universal access to literature and knowledge.

The value of all of these services has been widely accepted in our nation for at least a century. But we have now entered an era of unprecedented budget cuts.

For example, in California, Governor Brown's new

proposed budget decreases General Fund assistance for public libraries by \$30.4 million, eliminating the California Library Services Act, Public Library Foundation and the California Library Literacy and English Acquisition Services -- that is, access, resource sharing and adult literacy. In Texas, the cuts are even more stark, with the new budget proposing complete elimination of several programs that have either provided direct aid to libraries or irreplaceable programs, like those that created shared databases. Even in my own community, a small city on the northern edge of Chicago where a major university sits, my neighbors and I have been struggling to save a small branch library that was pivotal to the education of many neighborhood kids.

Librarians know that shrinking budgets demand hard choices, and they do not expect to be exempt as local and state governments endure the hardest times they have faced since the Depression. But it is wrong to cut library budgets disproportionately compared to other reductions, and that is what is happening around the country.

I count myself as one of millions of Americans whose life simply would not be the same without the libraries that supported my learning. We cannot take that opportunity away from so many Americans who need that help urgently now.

*Scott Turow, President, Authors Guild, Posted: February 15, 2011 03:26 PM Scott Turow is the author most-recently of "Innocent," a sequel to "Presumed Innocent," and president of the Authors Guild.*

### **About South Carolina, Clemson University (Agricultural College) Directory of Graduates, 1896-1940**

This directory contains all graduates of the Clemson Agricultural College from 1896 until 1940. The graduates are listed alphabetically and their month and year of graduation are included, as well as their course of study. The graduates' residence in 1940 and occupation are also listed. Over the 45 years this directory covers, there were 5,474 graduates and addresses were known for 5,124 of them.

This list contains early graduates from Clemson, where the first classes started in 1893 and run to a decade before the school became a civilian school. From 1893 until this directory's printing and up to 1955, Clemson was an all-male military institution that taught agricultural and mechanical disciplines.

The record contains:

- Name
- Major course of study
- Date of graduation

- Place of residence and date it was known to be correct
- Occupation

#### **Family History in Tax Returns**

My mother went into a nursing home and we had to clean her house in preparation for selling it. I found many years of IRS tax returns and there was interesting information outlining where they lived, where my father worked and how much he made. It was a gold mine of information. So scan those old records before you shred them. If you wish to post them on your ancestry page, black out the social security number and any sensitive information before you do so.

*Madelyn C. Farmer*

#### ***The Seminoles--***

***A fierce, proud tribe of Florida, let neither three wars  
with the United States Army or the harsh Everglade  
swamps defeat them***

The **Florida Seminole Nation** is one of the Five Civilized Nations. They also accepted runaway slaves into their tribe. The Seminole Nation fought slavers, Indians and the U.S. government to keep their ancestral lands and farms, which delayed the annexation of Florida. The United States government invited their leaders Chief Coacoochee (Wild Cat) and **Chief Osceola**, the great medicine man, to take part in peace talks under a flag of truce. When the Seminole leaders arrived at the site of the negotiations they were promptly arrested. The Seminole Nation was marched to Indian Territory on what is now known as the "Trail of Tears," where hundreds of men, women and children were marched to their deaths.



Because of attacks from slavers and Creek Indians, the majority of the Seminoles and Seminole Negroes moved into Mexico. At the death of **Chief Wild Cat**, the Seminoles left Mexico for United States. Under the leadership of their **black Seminole Chief John Horse**, the Seminole Negroes

stayed in Mexico away from slavery. Other Seminole, Creek and Cherokee Negroes joined them.

The Seminoles occupied the Southeastern United States for 12,000 years. They were finally granted U.S. citizenship in 1934.





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4130 Overland Ave., Culver City, CA 90230-3734

(Old Culver City Courthouse across from VA building)

### **2011 Board of Directors**

Ronald Higgins - President

Lloydine Outten – First Vice President

Carolyn Conway – Second Vice President /Membership

Lloydine Outten – Corresponding Secretary

Linda Rush – Recording Secretary

Marjorie Sholes – Treasurer

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Gena Weaver – Webmaster (visit us at [www.caags.org](http://www.caags.org))

### **Committee Chairs**

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Colette DeVerge – FGS Delegate/Fundraising Chairman

Norma Bates – Volunteer Chairman

### **President's Message**

**By Ron Higgins**

Are you looking for someone? What's stopping you? Hand over hand you can make your wishes come true in your research. Have you crafted the characters in your research. Are your relatives waiting to talk to you? Are you in concert with your family? How do you rate your research, is it a Mercedes Benz or a junk vehicle? Are you a caregiver of your family history or a shop steward? Remember that genealogists are great people and are valuable to their family. Don't keep your research in a private reserve, spread it around to your family. Have you had your daily dose of genealogy? Don't pass it over, it should be like a best friend to you and should be shared. I relish the times I find something in my research.

### **Finding Your Ancestors' Religious Records**

**By Juliana Smith**

For many of our ancestors, a religious community played an important role in their lives, and as family historians, the records they left with that community can play an important role in our research. In many areas, these records predate civil records and in addition to the important event dates provided by religious records, sponsors and witnesses listed in these records often turn out to be immediate or collateral family members.

While the types of records available vary from religion to religion and even from church to church, the baptismal or christening, confirmation, marriage, death registers, membership, and other records of the church are often among the most valuable to be found in family history research.

*Neither the newsletter editor nor CAAGS guarantees publication of any submission. Submissions for the newsletter are due by the third Saturday of each month. Please email your submissions or inquiries to [CAAGS@hotmail.com](mailto:CAAGS@hotmail.com)*

It's great to see more and more religious records become available online, but many of these records have yet to be digitized and will require some offline research.

Determining Denomination and Church Affiliation  
You'll need to determine your ancestor's religious denomination and church affiliation to begin your search.

If your ancestor lived in a rural area or if you know his or her denomination, a geographic approach can be helpful. Learn what churches were in existence in the area at the time your ancestor lived there. City directories for the years in question will typically include sections with listings of churches. Below is an example from Connorton's Evanston (Illinois) Directory, 1882-83.

*The Weekly Discovery*, (Copyright 2011, Ancestry.com)

### 2011 Calendar of Events

#### May 15 – 22

CAAGS Research trip to Salt Lake City, UT

#### May 21

CAAGS general meeting 10am -2pm, Mayme Clayton Library and Museum.

#### June 10 – 12

Jamboree, Los Angeles, Mariott Burbank Hotel. Check out the Jamboree website, [www.genealogyjamboree.com](http://www.genealogyjamboree.com).

#### June 11

Join the **Los Angeles County African American Employees Association** on their 2nd bus trip excursion to Allensworth, an historical black town, in celebration of **Juneteenth** on Saturday, June 11<sup>th</sup>. If you have any questions, please call Pauline Oghenekohwo (Cephus) at (213) 974-2397. Payment/registration deadline is Tuesday, May 31. The cost is \$25 for members and \$30 for non members. pickup location will be the MTA Lot on 120<sup>th</sup> & Crenshaw. The bus departs at 8am and will return at 6pm.

#### June 18

**CAAGS Annual Juneteenth Celebration**, Rawley Park, 11am-5pm. Contact Gwendolyn Foster, if you would like to volunteer.

#### July/August

No CAAGS Monthly Meeting

#### September

Welcome Back, CAAGS general meeting 10am -2pm, Mayme Clayton Library and Museum, Show & Tell

*\* Calendar is subject to change without notice*

## Washington: the 'blackest name' in America

- By Jesse Washington, AP National Writer

George Washington's name is inseparable from America, and not only from the nation's history. It identifies countless streets, buildings, mountains, bridges, monuments, cities—and people.

In a puzzling twist, most of these people are black. The 2000 U.S. Census counted 163,036 people with the surname Washington. Ninety percent of them were African-American, a far higher black percentage than for any other common name.

The story of how Washington became the “blackest name” begins with slavery and takes a sharp turn after the Civil War, when all blacks were allowed the dignity of a surname.

Even before Emancipation, many enslaved black people chose their own surnames to establish their identities. Afterward, some historians theorize, large numbers of blacks chose the name Washington in the process of asserting their freedom.

Today there are black Washingtons, like this writer, who are often identified as African-American by people they have never met. There are white Washingtons who are sometimes misidentified and have felt discrimination. There are Washingtons of both races who view the name as a special—if complicated—gift.

And there remains the presence of George, born 279 years ago on Feb. 22, whose complex relationship with slavery echoes in the blackness of his name today.

George Washington's great-grandfather, John, arrived in Virginia from England in 1656. John married the daughter of a wealthy man and eventually owned more than 5,000 acres, according to the new biography “Washington: A Life,” by Ron Chernow.

Along with land, George inherited 10 human beings from his father. He gained more through his marriage to a wealthy widow, and purchased still more enslaved blacks to work the lands he aggressively amassed. But over the decades, as he recognized slavery's contradiction with the freedoms of the new nation, Washington grew opposed to human bondage.

Yet “slaves were the basis of his fortune,” and he would not part with them, Chernow said in an interview.

Washington was not a harsh slaveowner by the standards of the time. He provided good food and medical care. He recognized marriages and refused to sell off individual family members. Later in life he resolved not to purchase

any more black people.

But he also worked his slaves quite hard, and under difficult conditions. As president, he shuttled them between his Philadelphia residence and Virginia estate to evade a law that freed any slave residing in Pennsylvania for six months.

While in Philadelphia, Oney Judge, Martha Washington's maid, moved about the city and met many free blacks. Upon learning Martha was planning one day to give her to an ill-tempered granddaughter, Judge disappeared.

According to Chernow's book, Washington abused his presidential powers and asked the Treasury Department to kidnap Judge from her new life in New Hampshire. The plot was unsuccessful.

"Washington was leading this schizoid life," Chernow said in the interview. "In theory and on paper he was opposed to slavery, but he was still zealously tracking and seeking to recover his slaves who escaped."

In his final years on his Mount Vernon plantation, Washington said that "nothing but the rooting out of slavery can perpetuate the existence of our union."

This led to extraordinary instructions in his will that all 124 of his slaves should be freed after the death of his wife. The only exception was the slave who was at his side for the entire Revolutionary War, who was freed immediately. Washington also ordered that the younger black people be educated or taught a trade, and he provided a fund to care for the sick or aged.

"This is a man who travels an immense distance," Chernow said.

In contrast with other Founding Fathers, Chernow said, Washington's will indicates "that he did have a vision of a future biracial society."

Twelve American presidents were slaveowners. Of the eight presidents who owned slaves while in office, Washington is the only one who set all of them free.

It's a myth that most enslaved blacks bore the last name of their owner. Only a handful of George Washington's hundreds of slaves did, for example, and he recorded most as having just a first name, says Mary Thompson, the historian at Mount Vernon.

Still, historian Henry Wiencek says many enslaved blacks had surnames that went unrecorded or were kept secret. Some chose names as a mark of community identity, he says, and that community could be the plantation of a current or recent owner.

"Keep in mind that after the Civil War, many of the big planters continued to be extremely powerful figures in their regions, so there was an advantage for a freed person to keep a link to a leading white family," says Wiencek, author of "An Imperfect God: George Washington, His Slaves, and the Creation of America."

Sometimes blacks used the surname of the owner of their oldest known ancestor as a way to maintain their identity. Melvin Patrick Ely, a College of William and Mary professor who studies the history of blacks in the South, says some West African cultures placed high value on ancestral villages, and the American equivalent was the plantation where one's ancestors had toiled.

Last names also could have been plucked out of thin air. Booker T. Washington, one of the most famous blacks of the post-slavery period, apparently had two of those.

He was a boy when Emancipation freed him from a Virginia plantation. After enrolling in school, he noticed other children had last names, while the only thing he had ever been called was Booker.

"So, when the teacher asked me what my full name was, I calmly told him, 'Booker Washington,'" he wrote in his autobiography, "Up from Slavery." Later in life, he found out that his mother had named him "Booker Taliaferro" at birth, so he added a middle name.

He gives no indication why the name Washington popped into his head. But George Washington, dead for only 60-odd years, had immense fame and respect at the time. His will had been widely published in pamphlet form, and it was well known that he had freed his slaves, Thompson says.

Did enslaved people feel inspired by Washington and take his name in tribute, or were they seeking some benefits from the association? Did newly freed people take the name as a mark of devotion to their country?

"We just don't know," Wiencek says.

But the connection is too strong for some to ignore. "There was a lot more consciousness and pride in American history among African-Americans and enslaved African-Americans than a lot of people give them credit for. They had a very strong sense of politics and history," says Adam Goodheart, a professor at Washington College and author of the forthcoming "1861: Civil War Awakening."

"They were thinking about how they could be Americans," Goodheart says. "That they would embrace the name of this person who was an imperfect hero shows there was a certain understanding of this country as an imperfect place,

an imperfect experiment, and a willingness to embrace that tradition of liberty with all its contradictions.”

Many black people took new names after the Revolutionary War, the Civil War, and the black power movement, says Ira Berlin, a University of Maryland history professor who has written books on the history of African-Americans.

“Names are this central way we think about ourselves,” Berlin says. “Whenever we have these kinds of emancipatory moments, suddenly people can reinvent themselves, rethink themselves new, distinguish themselves from a past where they were denigrated and abused. New names are one of the ways they do it.”

But for black people who chose the name Washington, it’s rarely certain precisely why.

“It’s an assumption that the surname is tied to George,” says Tony Burroughs, an expert on black genealogy, who says 82 to 94 percent of all Washingtons listed in the 1880 to 1930 censuses were black.

“There is no direct evidence,” he says. As far as I’m concerned it’s a coincidence.”

For the complete article, Jesse Washington covers race and ethnicity for The Associated Press. He is reachable at [jwashington\(at\)ap.org](mailto:jwashington(at)ap.org) or <http://www.twitter.com/jessewashington>.

**CAAGS is now on Facebook. Become a fan and follow us, California African American Genealogical Society**

### **Ohio Genealogical Society 2012 Conference Call for Lecture Proposals**

History and Genealogy: Finding Clues to Ancestral Lives  
The Ohio Genealogical Society is accepting lecture proposals for their 2012 Annual Conference at the Intercontinental Hotel, Cleveland, Ohio, 12-14 April, 2012. **Deadline for submissions is June 30, 2011.** Lectures will be one hour long, including a ten-minute question-and-answer period.

Submissions for workshops, especially for Thursday, will be considered. A major new factor in 2012 is that the Conference will be expanding to 3 full days instead of our usual 2½ days.

In 2012, OGS will be celebrating the War of 1812 and Civil War Anniversaries. Therefore we are specifically looking for topics relating to these conflicts and connected genealogical research. In addition, proposals are being sought in a variety of areas regarding using history to find

clues about our ancestors but also to write family histories. Other topics of interest are beginning genealogy, Ohio-specific topics, states associated with Ohio (especially New England, New York and Pennsylvania for northeast Ohio), methodology, technology, ethnic topics (especially Eastern European/20th Century), writing/publishing, immigration, preservation, etc. In addition, we are seeking proposals on military resources, business/industrial records, fraternal and service organizations, and proof standards. Previous speakers are encouraged to submit new or new to the Ohio conference proposals.

Proposals should include the following information:

- Lecture title and concise outline of content
- Short summary (50 words or less) for the program brochure
- Audience level (beginning, intermediate, advanced, all)
- Audio-visual requirements
- Speaker’s full name and contact information, including postal address, e-mail address, telephone and fax numbers
- Speaker’s brief biographical data
- Speaker’s resume of recent lecture experience

Speakers who have not lectured at a state, regional, or national conference are encouraged to submit an audio or videotape of a recent lecture. Speakers will receive an honorarium, travel expenses, hotel, per diem, and complimentary conference registration. Please note that OGS does not provide computers or LCD projectors to speakers for presentations at the conference. Speakers will be required to submit syllabus material in appropriate format and length and by the stated deadline.

Interested individuals may submit up to 10 proposals. They can be submitted electronically to [2012Program@ogs.org](mailto:2012Program@ogs.org). Subject line: 2012 Conference Proposal. Those speakers using the postal service need to send two copies of each proposal to: 2012 OGS Conference Program Chairs, The Ohio Genealogical Society, 611 SR 97W, Bellville, OH 44813. Email: Diane VanSkiver Gagel ([dv Gagel@aol.com](mailto:dv Gagel@aol.com)) and Jana Sloan Broglin ([jana@janabroglin.com](mailto:jana@janabroglin.com)), Program Co-chairs, 2012 OGS Conference.

### **Jamboree Update - Revised Schedule Available**

The updated schedule is available online at our new Jamboree website, [www.genealogyjamboree.com](http://www.genealogyjamboree.com). The summary of the schedule is posted on the web page, and you can click to download\* each day’s schedule, complete with session descriptions, geographic areas and records included in the presentation, and the experience level best suited for each class.



# Heritage Newsletter

*California African American Genealogical Society*

*Celebrating 25 Years*

**June/July 2011 Volume 23 Number 6**

Ten Issues Published Annually

ISSN 1083-8937

**California African American Genealogical Society**

P.O. Box 8442

Los Angeles, CA 90008-0442

### **General Membership Meetings**

Third Saturday monthly at 10am (except July and August)

### **Mayme Clayton Library and Museum (MCLM)**

4130 Overland Ave., Culver City, CA 90230-3734

(Old Culver City Courthouse across from VA building)

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Betty Smith – Public Relations

LaVerne Anderson – Librarian

DorothyLou Sands – Historian (Interim)

Monica Maurasse – Newsletter Editor

Colette DeVerge – FGS Delegate/Fundraising Chairman

Norma Bates – Volunteer Chairman

### **President's Message**

**By Ron Higgins**

The time is here again, class reunions and most of all family reunions will take place, an opportunity for getting more information on your family. Most times when you meet a family member for the first time you often learn that person doesn't live far from you. I wish you luck and happy hunting.

There are a number of events going on this month. Jamboree in Burbank, CA June 9-11<sup>th</sup>. The CAAGS annual Juneteenth celebration and picnic June 18<sup>th</sup>, at Rawley Park, in Gardena, CA, come one come all for socializing and fun. Also, the Leimert Park's Village Book Fair Saturday, June 25<sup>th</sup> from 10am-6pm CAAGS will have a booth there. Come out and support your community with CAAGS at 4300 Degnan Blvd., Los Angeles, CA. 90008. CAAGS budget committee will meet in July please contact Marjorie Sholes if you are willing to work on the committee.

Remember September is "Show and Tell," we're looking forward to your presentations and updates on your research. Thanks to all volunteers for your help and support.

The April speaker was S. Pearl Sharp, she spoke on letters she received from an aunt and how the letters helped her in her research. We also viewed a short film she produced. The May speaker was Donna B. Campbell, she was born in Trinidad Tobago (T&T) and immigrated with her family to the United States as a child. She gave our members a detailed history of the country which was very interesting.

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## First Vice President Message Lloydine Outten

To all members who attended the May 21<sup>st</sup> general meeting. The story I used in the intermediate class cannot be used by any private or third party or in any publication without my sole permission

### 2011 Calendar of Events

#### June 10-12, California, Burbank, Southern California Genealogical Society

The Southern California Genealogy Jamboree will be held at the Los Angeles Marriott Burbank Airport Hotel. Three full days of top-tier genealogists, exhibits, networking opportunities, tours, meals. Join us at one of the nation's largest genealogical events. Bios of our speakers are posted on the speakers page

#### June 17-18, Nevada, Las Vegas, Gottscheer Heritage & Genealogy Association

The Gottscheer Heritage and Genealogy Association will hold its annual meeting at the Tropicana Resort and Casino, 3801 Las Vegas Blvd. The annual meeting agenda will include presentations on Gottscheer history and a Genealogy Workshop. The region of Gottschee was a Germanic linguistic island in Slovenia that was first settled in the 1300's and was dissolved in 1941. Gottscheers have emigrated to the United States and Canada since in the 1880's. For more information contact Elfriede Stonitsch at stonitsel@aol.com

#### June 11

Join the **Los Angeles County African American Employees Association** on their 2nd bus trip excursion to Allensworth, an historical black town, in celebration of **Juneteenth** on Saturday, June 11<sup>th</sup>. If you have any questions, please call Pauline Oghenekohwo (Cephus) at (213) 974-2397. The bus departs at 8am and returns at 6pm.

#### June 18

**CAAGS Annual Juneteenth Celebration**, Rawley Park, 10am-5pm., 132nd St. & Van Ness in Gardena, CA. Contact Gwendolyn Foster, if you would like to volunteer or to bring a dish to share.

#### July/August

No CAAGS Monthly Meeting

#### September

Welcome Back, CAAGS general meeting 10am -2pm, Mayme Clayton Library and Museum, join us for Show & Tell and come prepared to be a presenter.

*\* Calendar is subject to change without notice*

## New At the Central Library

A new program to be offered monthly at Central Library for individuals or groups - great for those who are new to genealogy, or new to the Central Library!

Genealogy Research at Central Library: Where Do I Start?

Get the most out of your visit to Central Library with this brief orientation to the genealogy collection. Includes a department tour, catalog and database searching tips, and assistance from a librarian to help plan your research strategy (30 minutes total).

No reservations needed for individuals or groups of less than 6. For larger groups, please call (213) 228-7400 to schedule an appointment.

Upcoming Dates: June 18, July 16, August 20

Meet at the reference desk in the History & Genealogy Department at 11am.

Directions to Central Library and parking info is available at <http://www.lapl.org/central/>.

### FGS Conference

The conference, "Pathways to the Heartland," offers something for everyone interested in genealogy and family history. With over 160 educational sessions, networking opportunities, and the FGS 35th Anniversary Celebration this year's incredible event is not to be missed. Make your plans to join FGS, September 7-10, 2011 now!

Interested in learning more about the conference? Visit the FGS/ISGS 2011 conference website for more information.

### Six Places to Uncover Ancestral Origins

By Juliana Smith

Before we take our research overseas to research families in the "old country" our chances of success increase greatly if we learn as much about the family and gather as many details as possible here in the U.S. Among the most important pieces of information to have is the town, or at least a county, of origin. Here are six places where you might find your immigrant ancestor's birthplace.

#### 1. Family Correspondence and Memorabilia

As with many aspects of family history research, often the best place to start is at home (or Aunt Maggie's home, or Grandpa Joe's home, etc.). A clue to your ethnic origins may lie in an obvious place like a family Bible, or something more obscure like a piece of clothing or a piece of lace with a pattern that is native to a particular region. Photographs can hold surprising clues, perhaps in some

elements of the photograph like clothing, a sign in the background, the type of housing, or a photographer's imprint. Sometimes it's as obvious as a name on the back, as was the case when I identified my great-grandfather's hometown in Poland.

## 2. Immigration and Naturalization Records

In the U.S., you may find clues to ancestral origins in naturalization records created post-1906 when the former Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), now the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), took over and standardized the forms used in the naturalization process, requiring more personal information. Prior to that time you may find the occasional record with a detailed place of origin, but often only the country is listed. Ancestry has several large databases of naturalization records available which can be searched through the Immigration Collection.

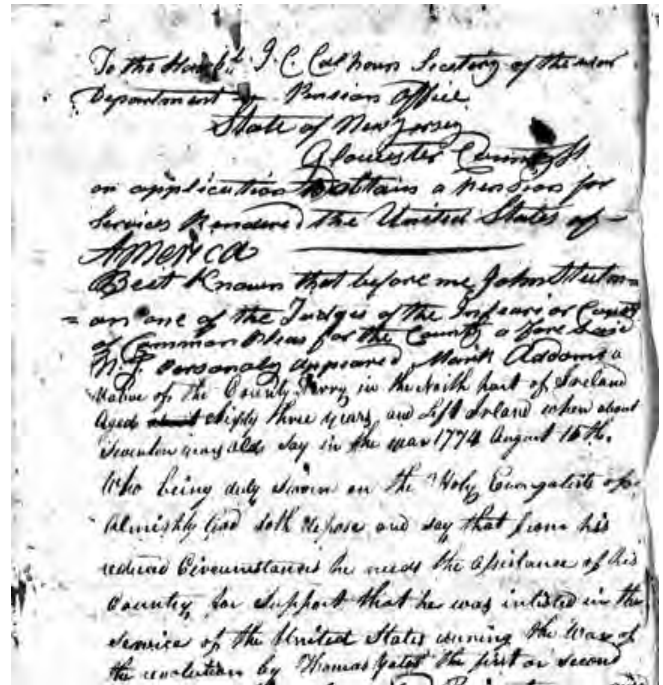
If an ancestor had to travel back home to settle a family estate or visit relatives, he might have requested a passport which could also bear the name of his hometown. Ancestry has a database with images of U.S. passports available to members here. This collection was recently updated, adding roughly 800,000 applications, so if you previously were unable to locate an ancestor in this collection, it might be worth a second look.

## 3. Military Records

Military records can be a source for town of origin and in the case of the World War I Draft Registrations even if your ancestor didn't necessarily serve in the military, this military record might give you that important piece of information. There were three draft cards used in the registration and two of the three included the city/town, state and nation of birth. So if your immigrant ancestor was born between 6 June 1886 and 24 August 1897 and living in the U.S. in 1917-18, you should be able to find that information in this collection.

Pension records can also include the place of origin for immigrants who served. This sample from the Revolutionary War Pension and Bounty-Land Warrant Application Files, 1800-1900 on Ancestry.com reveals that Mark Adams was a "native of the County Derry in the North part of Ireland, aged sixty three years and left Ireland when about seventeen."

The Civil War Pension Index: General Index to Pension Files, 1861-1934 will include the information you need to request the case file from the National Archives. More details on ordering can be found on the National Archives website. (Click "Order Reproductions" and then "Military Service and Pension Records.")



## 4. Death Records

Death certificates of immigrants will often include the name of the town in which they were born in the "Old World," and depending on the time and place, some marriage and birth records will give you the exact birthplaces of their parents. Tombstones can also reveal the town of origin for immigrant ancestors.

## 5. Newspapers

Newspapers often list the town of origin for the individual mentioned, particularly in obituaries. An obituary in the "Brooklyn Eagle" listed Balbriggan as the town of origin in Ireland for my third great-grandmother.

But don't overlook other sections of the Newspaper. An ancestor's "misdeeds" may have earned him a spot in the paper and anti-immigrant newspapers may have been all too eager to point out where he or she was from.

Notices like the following from the "New York Times" were also common:

PERSONAL.--Thomas Talbot, formerly of Kilkenny, Ireland, wishes to find his sisters, who are believed to be in this City. Mary, Judy and Margaret were their names, and the first was married to a Mr. Prim of Kilkenny

## 6. The Records of Others

Records pertaining to your ancestor's relatives and even close friends may point to their mutual hometown or birthplace. Family members and friends who emigrated from the same place usually settled close to one another in

their new homeland.

- (Copyright 2011, Ancestry.com), and *The Weekly Discovery*

### Three steps to tracking down your family's trailblazers

Step 1: Decide what "trailblazer" means to you. Is it a soldier who fought to end slavery and won? An immigrant mother who made sure all her children finished high school? Start identifying ancestors who made an impact by creating timelines of life events. Search U.S. Censuses for help filling in birth dates, marriage details, residence changes, occupations and more.

Step 2: Compare notes with history. Add key dates, events and locations in history to your timeline. Make note of wars, movements like women's suffrage and the struggle for civil rights, plus local events such as the opening of an integrated school. Do your ancestors seem likely to have joined in? Ask family members to share photos, diplomas, announcements and other keepsakes and inspect those for clues too.

Step 3: Keep following that trail. Search historical newspapers for military announcements or articles about happenings in an ancestor's hometown. You could find a family member mentioned by name or even hidden in a published photo.

Revisit previous census finds too, as the 1910 U.S. Census mentions Civil War military service, the 1930 U.S. Census includes service in other conflicts and every U.S. Census since 1850 includes occupations. Finally, listen to family stories, which are not only fascinating, but can also help you understand how your ancestors changed history.

### African Origins Project Hopes to Identify Origins of Africans Transported in the Transatlantic Slave Trade

African Origins contains information about the migration histories of Africans forcibly carried on slave ships into the Atlantic. Using detailed information on 9,453 Africans liberated by Courts of Mixed Commission, this resource presents geographic, ethnic, and linguistic data on peoples captured in Africa and pulled into the slave trade. Through contributions to the website by Africans, members of the African Diaspora, and others, the hope is to realize the history of the millions of Africans captured and sold into slavery during suppression of transatlantic slave trading in the 19th century.

Historical information in the African-Origins database comes from Havana, Cuba, and Freetown, Sierra Leone, Courts of Mixed Commission registers, created between 1819 and 1845. The data describes individual Africans who

were liberated from slaving vessels in the era of the suppression of the transatlantic slave trade. Such information as name, age, and in some cases place of origin was provided by the Africans themselves, with the help of a translator, to a Spanish- or English-speaking Court registrar who recorded these descriptions as a way of helping to prevent these Africans from being re-enslaved.

The African Origins Project invites members of the public to assist in identifying the historical origins of Africans transported in the transatlantic slave trade. The project organizers seek assistance from those with knowledge of African languages, cultural naming practices, and ethnic groups. Perhaps you can assist in identifying these Africans' origins by drawing on your own expertise to identify the likely ethno-linguistic origin of an individual's name.

You can learn more at the African Origins web site at <http://www.african-origins.org/>

- Taken from *Eastman's Online Genealogy Newsletter*

Ancestry has added 250,000 new historical records to its extensive African American holdings. The new records come from five collections: US colored troop service records 1861-1867 (Civil War records comprising enlistment papers, casualty sheets, death reports and correspondence); Savannah, Georgia slave ship manifests 1789-1859; New Orleans slave ship manifests 1807-1860; Freedman's Bureau records 1865-1878 (formed after the Civil War to aid reconstruction efforts for former slaves); slave narratives 1936-1938 (a small collection of life stories of former slaves). Access is by subscription. [Civil War Colored Troop Service Records].

### Jamboree Update - Revised Schedule Available

The updated schedule is available online at our new Jamboree website, [www.genealogyjamboree.com](http://www.genealogyjamboree.com). The summary of the schedule is posted on the web page, and you can click to download each day's schedule, complete with session descriptions, geographic areas and records included in the presentation, and the experience level best suited for each class.

### Quilt Challenge

"High touch" certainly describes one of our special activities -- a quilt challenge to all who are interested in recording a piece of their own family history.

The online group Genea-Quilters has picked up the challenge and have carried the word across the Internet. You can read all the details on the Jamboree blog.





# Heritage Newsletter

*California African American Genealogical Society*

*Celebrating 25 Years*

## **President's Message**

**By Ron Higgins**

How many of you have worked on their family tree? I know some of you had a chance this summer to work on your genealogy. It makes you feel good to stay plugged in to your search. It inspires you when you locate someone, don't give up your search, sometimes with help you can find family, don't be to shamed to ask for help with your search. Others may have a different path that you're not aware of, also there is always something new on the genealogy websites that can be very helpful.

June and July were exciting and busy months. CAAGS was all over the Los Angeles scene starting on June 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>. The society had a booth at the Jamboree hosted by the Southern California Genealogical Society, at the Marriott Hotel in Burbank, CA. The Jamboree was well attended this year. I was glad to see a large number of our CAAGS members who attended Jamboree for the first time. I also saw members that I hadn't seen in a long time come out, which was a welcomed sight. I also had a chance to speak with some of the presenters including Curt B. Witcher from Fort Wayne, Senior Manager of Special Collections at the Allen County Public Library and Tony Burroughs an honorary member of CAAGS and a professional genealogist and who taught genealogy at Chicago State University for 15 years. We consulted with each other about the direction of genealogy today. I want to thank all the members who shared their time in working the booth, especially, Marjorie Sholes for her table display which she changed each day.

The CAAGS annual Juneteenth picnic was held on June 18<sup>th</sup> at Rawley Park in Gardena, CA. I give hats off to Gwen Foster for all the work she put into making this one of the best so far. She made sure the food was catered

**August/September 2011    Volume 23    Number 7**  
Ten Issues Published Annually  
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**California African American Genealogical Society**  
P.O. Box 8442  
Los Angeles, CA 90008-0442

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*Neither the newsletter editor nor CAAGS guarantees publication of any submission. Submissions for the newsletter are due by the third Saturday of each month. Please email your submissions or inquiries to [CAAGS@hotmail.com](mailto:CAAGS@hotmail.com)*

and plentiful. Thanks to all the members and friends that donated food to this pot luck, all the food was very tasty. Gwen put together a booklet about the history of Juneteenth. She also had door prizes for everyone. May I say as president and master of ceremony I enjoyed it to the fullest. Thanks to Monika Hall for being my right hand all day, thanks to Ron Fairley for helping in setting up, thanks to all the young people for their assistance.

Saturday, June 25<sup>th</sup>, we shared a booth with the Church of Latter- Day Saints at the 5<sup>th</sup> annual Leimert Park Village Book Fair. The theme was "I Read, Therefore, I Am" the day was well worth it, we spoke to hundreds of people about genealogy on how to get started and where to find information on your family. Thanks to all the members that came out to work the booth. We had members working the booth for the first time and found it very interesting (Joselyn Caruthers & Esther Bohannon) we need more of you to share with us in the community. You will get some benefit from knowing you helped someone. Lastly, on Saturday July 23<sup>rd</sup> we had a booth at The Powerful Black Family Celebration, American Heart Association Health Fair, in Los Angeles, CA.

Remember you are the heartbeat of the California African America Genealogical Society. It's time to do something for yourself and CAAGS. Unleash your talent and become an officer with the upcoming election in November. The next upcoming event, is the 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Leimert Park Village African Arts & Music Festival which will be Labor Day weekend, September 3-5 from 10am to 6pm daily, CAAGS will have a booth on one of those days, admission is free. Summertime is great and the living is good in Los Angeles, California.

Thanks to all members and friends whom have helped CAAGS this year. Remember September is Show & Tell. Come ready to tell what you have found, everyone and every family has a story.

*Our condolences to Marilyn White who lost her sister  
Donnis Drumgole on June 11, 2011.*

### **Genealogy At The Central Library**

We are pleased to welcome Donie Nelson of the Genealogical Society of Hispanic America to the Central Library to give a genealogy presentation in September. Donie is also the coordinator for Hispanic Saturdays, a genealogy research group that meets the third Saturday of every month in the History & Genealogy Department at Central Library.

Using a Timeline: Tracking One Family Across the Old Spanish Trail Central Library, Meeting Room A, September 17<sup>th</sup> at 1 pm

In this presentation you will learn how to create a timeline to organize facts, observe patterns, and achieve breakthroughs in your genealogy research. Donie Nelson of the Genealogical Society of Hispanic America will walk you through the process as you study the family of Jose Joaquin Young and Ma. Josefa Moya, who were born in New Mexico and died in California, but traveled back and forth over the Old Spanish Trail, leaving bewildering traces for their descendants to ponder. You will discover how to create a basic timeline and how records other than baptismal, marriage and death can assist your search, adding nuance and depth to your family's history.

Effective July 16<sup>th</sup>, there is no genealogy contact person in the in the History & Genealogy department. However, any questions you may have can be directed to the History & Genealogy Senior Librarian, Cindy McNaughton at (213) 228-7402 or [cmcnaug@lapl.org](mailto:cmcnaug@lapl.org). Department tours for groups will still be offered by appointment only.

### **2011 Calendar of Events**

#### **September 17**

Welcome Back, CAAGS general meeting 10am -2pm, Mayme Clayton Library and Museum, join us for Show & Tell and come prepared to be a presenter.

#### **October 15**

CAAGS general meeting 10am -2pm, Mayme Clayton Library and Museum

#### **October 20 -22**

The National Black Genealogy Summit will take place in Fort Wayne, Indiana, October 20-22, 2011, at the Allen County Public Library and the Grand Wayne Convention Center. An information-rich website, continually being updated with the very latest information about the event, can be found at [www.BlackGenealogyConference.Info](http://www.BlackGenealogyConference.Info)

#### **November 19**

CAAGS general meeting and 2012 Elections 10am -2pm, Mayme Clayton Library and Museum

*\* Calendar is subject to change without notice*

### **25<sup>th</sup> Year Celebration in Salt Lake City**

By Ophelia Sanders

We, Marie Bryant, Lulla Denson and I arrived in Salt Lake City on Sunday late afternoon by car. Ruth Palmer came by Amtrak and the other five arrived by airplane. The weather was nice some of us went to dinner at P.F. Changs and then on to Wal-Mart to stock up on water and fruit and maybe an item or two of something we left behind. Monday morning looking at the news, the weather had

changed and was expected to be in the high 50's... good thing the library is only next door. A few of us went to the orientation because we had not been to the library in a while, some their first time there. After the presentation we all went in our separate directions to find our missing folks. I was looking to connect two families in Mississippi as kin so I was off to the microfilms marriage section. I did find some other relatives marriage records but not the ones I wanted.

It has been raining for the last two days, but it has not stopped us from doing our research. Everyone scatters in the mornings and sometimes we don't even see each other at the library. Olivia Cross is finding many of her relatives. Ruth Palmer has found someone in the military.

Thursday was a day off for me and Marie, we took a tour of the Temple Square in the rain. We also went to the Conference Center where the seating capacity is 27,000 concert style. The whole area is beautifully landscaped. I also saw the Church History Museum which shows the history of travel of Mormons to Utah.

Back to research on Friday and Saturday to get the last few hours to find those missing ancestors. I finally did find marriage records of a family member that I a working on getting all his vital records. I think all in all everyone did find something on this trip, some of us more than others. Can't wait for September for our "Show and Tell" session. The rain has stopped and Sunday we will be on our way back home.

Oh, the Family history center has Missionaries who wear Gold Badges at the desk on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> floors who will help you in your research. We ask you all the prepare information and tell you where the best place is to look for the information.

*This is a recap of the CAAGS research trip taken in March.*

### CAAGS Logo Apparel

T – shirts \$10

Sweatshirts \$15

Hooded Sweat Jackets \$30

See Marjorie Sholes if you would like to place an order.

If you placed an order back in May please come prepared to pay for your item(s).

### Origin of Surnames

by Kathi Reid

A surname, also known as a last name or family name, is a fixed name shared in common with the members of a family and is passed down from generation to generation.

The use of a surname is relatively new in history and was adopted in order to legally distinguish two individuals with the same first name.

At first, these last names were not passed down to the next generation.

The Chinese were among the very first cultures to adopt the use of hereditary surnames about 5000 years ago. In Europe, surnames weren't used until the 10th or 11th centuries AD in Venice. Gradually throughout Europe, all nobility and gentry adopted surnames until eventually surnames were used by all Europeans of all classes.

What does my last name mean? If you have ever wondered about the meaning of your last name, where your family lived, what they did, or how they looked, you may find your surname may answer some of these questions about your ancestors from many hundreds of years ago.

Surnames were generally derived from one of four sources:

#### 1) Patronymic (from the first name of father)

Examples:

Peters - son of Peter (English, German)

Peterson - son of Peter (Swedish)

Petersen - son of Peter (Danish)

O'Reilly - grandson of Reilly (Ireland)

Mc- /Mac- - son of (Scottish)

d' - / di- - son of (Italian)

-ez / -es - son of (Spanish / Portuguese)

-wicz - son of (Poland)

Fitz- - son of (Old English - sometimes incorrectly associated with being an illegitimate)

#### 2) Lives near locality or place

Examples:

KirkPatrick - Church (kirk) of St. Patrick

Cliff - steep hill

Fairholm - the fair island

Ashley - field surrounded by ash trees

#### 3) Occupation or social status

Examples:

Cooper - barrel maker

Wagner or Waggoner - wagon maker

Knight - knighthood conferred by the king

Smith - blacksmith

Powers - poor or taken a vow of poverty

4) Nicknames describing person or personality.

Examples:

Reid - red, ruddy complexion or red hair

Stout - Body size

Small - Body size

Armstrong - strong arms

Sharpe - sharp, smart

Surname spelling has evolved over centuries and until the 20th century, the spelling of a surname was not fixed. Before then, it was not unusual to see the same person's surname spelled in different ways from record to record. In the 1800's and before, when many people were illiterate, names were written by clerks, officials, and priests as they heard the name pronounced. This led to different spellings for the same name. Spelling continued to evolve until this century. So as you are looking for your surname history, it is important to check out spelling variations.

Don't assume your surname was always spelled the way it is spelled today. If you can't find your surname origin on this website, look for a sound-alike surname. You can check for alternate spellings of a surname at the **soundex (sound-alike) machine**.

This free online Last Name Dictionary includes the etymology of British, Cornish British, French, German, Hispanic, Anglo-Saxon, Dutch, Latin, Celtic, Gaelic, Italian, Chinese and Danish Names.

<http://www.searchforancestors.com/surnames/origin/>

### **Five Clues to Pursue in the 1910 U.S. Census**

By Juliana Smith

Locating your family in this census is just the beginning. Like other censuses, this enumeration is full of clues to pursue in other records. Here are five to get you started.

#### **Men of a Certain Age**

If your family in the 1910 U.S. Census included males between the ages of ten and thirty-eight (i.e., born between ca., 1872 and 1900), follow up with a search for them in the World War I Draft Registration Cards, 1917-1918.

More than 24 million men registered for the World War I draft, including immigrants and native-born citizens. There were three registrations, each using a slightly different version of the draft registration card. Because different cards were used, the information included in each varies, but in general, the registration cards included the following:

- Full name
- Home address
- Date and place of birth (typically includes town names)
- Age, race, and country of citizenship
- Occupation and employer
- Physical description (hair and eye color, height, disabilities)
- Additional information such as address of nearest relative, dependent relatives, marital status, father's birthplace, or previous exemption from service
- Signature

### **Immigration and Naturalization**

The 1910 census asked for the date of immigration for immigrants, which can be useful in narrowing your search in passenger lists, and border crossings from Canada (1895-1956) or Mexico (1895-1957). If you're not sure how your ancestor entered the country, try searching the entire immigration collection here.

The 1910 census also asked for naturalization status. If you can find your naturalized ancestor in the 1920 census, that enumeration also provides the year of naturalization, which is a huge help in pinning down naturalization records. Ancestry.com has a growing collection of naturalization indexes and naturalization records online.

### **Number of Years of Present Marriage**

Use the number of years of present marriage to estimate a couple's marriage date and then seek out both civil and religious marriage records, wherever they're available. Another clue can be found in the marital status column. The enumerators were instructed that "if this is the first marriage, write "M1," but if this is the second or subsequent marriage, write "M2" (meaning married more than once)." Bear in mind that M2 could conceivably be a third, fourth or any other number of marriages.

### **Mother of How Many Children**

Women were asked how many children they had given birth to, as well as how many were living. Compare this with the family structure and see if this matches up with what you know. One or more children may have been born and died between census years, and this should alert you to look for their birth and death records. Look for gaps in the ages of other children. This could possibly be when any missing children were born.

### **Civil War Service**

Column 30 of the 1910 census asked, "whether a survivor of the Union or Confederate Army or Navy" (UA=Union Army; UN=Union Navy; CA=Confederate Army; CN=Confederate Navy). If your ancestor was a veteran, search for them in Civil War records.

Among the Civil War record on Ancestry.com you'll find a Civil War Pension Index, which includes details that will help you request a pension file from the National Archives. These files can be very extensive, filled with family details.

The 1890 Veterans' Schedules include names of surviving Union (and some Confederate) soldiers, sailors, and marines, and widows; rank; name of regiment or vessel; date of enlistment; date of discharge, length of service; post office address; disability incurred; and remarks.



# Heritage Newsletter

*California African American Genealogical Society*

*Celebrating 25 Years*

**November 2011    Volume 23    Number 9**

Ten Issues Published Annually  
ISSN 1083-8937

**California African American Genealogical Society**  
P.O. Box 8442  
Los Angeles, CA 90008-0442

#### **General Membership Meetings**

Third Saturday monthly at 10am (except July and August)

**Mayme Clayton Library and Museum (MCLM)**  
4130 Overland Ave., Culver City, CA 90230-3734  
(Old Culver City Courthouse across from VA building)

#### **2011 Board of Directors**

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Monica Maurasse – Newsletter Editor  
Colette DeVerge – FGS Delegate/Fundraising Chairman  
Norma Bates – Volunteer Chairman

#### **President's Message**

Ron Higgins

Do you have the determination to take action and become an officer on the CAAGS board?

November is the month for the election of new officers, we need someone to direct our society and make a difference. Come ready and make a stand. Nominations are needed for President, 2nd Vice President, and Corresponding Secretary. Contact Carolyn Conway if you are interested.

We want you to be a part of the valuable and historical things that are to come in the future of CAAGS, remember the society is what you make of it.

Our speaker for October was Kerry Bartel from the National Archives located in Riverside. He gave us an eye opening insight of the archives holdings such as, finding information on personal participation in the civil war, World War II, black family research records of post Civil War, and records from the Bureau of Refugees, Freedman and Abandoned Lands 1865-1875.

Find time to take a trip to the National Archives in Perris, CA of Riverside County. It's important to know where to look for your ancestors.

Helen Woods is our speaker for November. She will be discussing the new reality of genealogy is DNA, "Without a family a man is out in the cold." I want to thank all the members for lending a hand with setting up the tables, donuts, and drinks.

I pray that you all have a safe and wonderful Thanksgiving.

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## 2011 Calendar of Events

### November 19

CAAGS general meeting and 2012 Elections 10am - 2pm, Mayme Clayton Library and Museum, 2011 Elections. Guest speaker Helen Woods

### December 9,

#### Arizona, Parker, Bouse Genealogical Society

The "Genies in the Desert" annual conference, the focus of this event will be improving your use of Family Search, working with digital images, blogging and sharing genealogy electronically. For more information contact BouseGenies@gmail.com.

### December 17

Annual Holiday Party, details to come.

### February 18

CAAGS 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Genealogical Conference

*\* Calendar is subject to change without notice*

## 50 Most Popular Genealogy Websites for 2011 (Pt. 2) by Kory L. Meyerink, MLS, AG, FUGA

These rankings were determined in January 2011. They are based on the popularity of websites as measured by four major ranking companies, and is explained in an article published in the July/August 2008 issue of the Digital Genealogist, edited by Elizabeth Kelley Kerstens. The 2010, 2009 and 2008 rankings are given, in that order, in parenthesis after the website description. Sites new to the list for 2011 are so identified.

Rank	Website	Coverage/Content
26.	GenealogyTrails.com	- Five year old site with free U.S. data contributed by volunteers. (25>35>NR)
27.	GenealogyBuff.com	- A free genealogy search site with hundreds of data sources. (27>134>NR)
28.	FamilyTreeMaker.com	- Homepage for Ancestry.com's genealogical software. (28>21>20)
29.	USGennet.org	- Historical and genealogical web hosting service. (18>15>17)
30.	WorldVitalRecords.com	\$ - The data collection provided by Family Link, with over a billion records, as well as instruction and reference help. (17>13>10)
31.	FamilyTreeDNA.com	- DNA testing service focused upon family history test types. (20>26>27)
32.	Footnote.com	\$ - In conjunction with the U.S. National Archives, Footnote offers data, original records images, and more. (37>9>8)
33.	KindredConnections.com	\$ - Grassroots created data site with compiled family trees, and some extracted records. (29>22>19)
34.	CensusFinder.com	- Links to free census records.

(22>29>40)

35. Archives.com \$ - A major new subscription data site, launched in July 2009 and already with more than a billion names. (41>New)

36. DistantCousin.com - An online archive of genealogy records and images of historical documents. (34>23>22)

37. FamilyHistory101.com - Less than four years old and full of instruction and guidance for genealogists.

(38>47>107)

38. ThePeerage.com - A genealogical survey of the peerage of Britain as well as the royal families of Europe. (44>53>58)

39. TribalPages.com - Family trees hosting with 300,000 members and 80 million names. (35>28>25)

40. RootsChat.com - (New) Free family history messaging forum with almost 3 million mostly UK messages.

(57>54>NR)

41. HeritageQuestOnline.com \$ - Census, PERSI (the periodical index), books, all free to you at many libraries.

(32>39>39)

42. NewspaperObituaries.net - (New) A directory of obituary databases and archives on the web. (91>84>126)

43. AncientFaces.com - Share genealogy research, community pages, family photos & records more for free.

(46>48>38)

44. JewishGen.org - Jewish, reference, instruction, coordination, and databases. (26>32>28)

45. PoliticalGraveyard.com - Comprehensive source of U.S. political biography that tells where many dead politicians are buried. (36>33>34)

46. CousinConnect.com - A large free queries website.

(39>27>23)

47. DAR.org - Site of the largest lineage society; includes their library catalog and 32 million name index.

(43>49>67)

48. FamilyTreeMagazine.com - (New) Website for popular magazine that includes shopping, links, and research tools.

(55>67>47)

49. AmericanAncestors.org \$ - (New) The new name for the NEHGS website and their 3,000 databases.

(73>89>87)

50. GenealogyLinks.net - 50,000 links to free sites, arranged by state and county. (53>50>43)

Dropping out of the top 50 (with their new ranking):

54. GenWed.com - Online marriage records, where to order, some indexes, and more. (42>43>42)

57. ObitLinksPage.com - State-by-state directory of obituaries and obituary resources. (47>not ranked)

58. Genuki.org.uk - Large collection of genealogical information pages for England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales, the Channel Islands, and the Isle of Man. (50>34>32)

60. GenoPro.com - Genealogy software that produces genograms (40>37>53)

65. US-Census.org - Census abstracts (U.S. GenWeb Census Project) (49>45>37)

87. Genealogy.org - (New) A listing of 400+ registered

websites, ranked weekly by hits. (45>69>56)  
135. FamilyTiez.com– (New) A site where families can establish their own pages to share news, photos, events and genealogy with each other. (30>not ranked)

Our condolences to CAAGS member, Evenlyn Ross on the loss her father, Ollie Lawson

***Records of the Board of Commissioners for the Emancipation of Slaves in the District of Columbia, 1862–1863. NARA Microfilm Publication M520, 6 rolls. Records of the United States General Accounting, Record Group 217. National Archives, Washington, D.C.***

About Washington, D.C., Slave Owner Petitions, 1862-1863

In April of 1862 the U.S. government passed an act abolishing slavery in the District of Columbia. Petitions for compensation offered to slave owners whose slaves were emancipated by the act are contained in this database. These descriptions range from meeting minutes to petitions submitted and compensations awarded as well as additional administrative documents. The particular section titled “Petitions Filed under the Act of July 12, 1862” will be searchable only by viewing the actual images of the records as certain aspects of the document made keying the information difficult.

**Specific records accessible in this database:**

- Meeting minutes of the Board of Commissioners arranged chronologically April 28, 1862 through January 14, 1863
- Petitions filed under the act of April 16, 1862 dated from April 29, 1862 through July 15, 1862; arranged chronologically then by petition number showing the date the petition was filed, petition number, petitioner name, slave name and value
- Docket book kept by the Board from April 1862 through December 1862 of petitions filed under the Emancipation Act; arranged by petition number showing claimant name and a summary of action taken
- List of amounts awarded to claimants who filed petitions under the April 16, 1862 Emancipation Act; arranged by petition number showing claimant name, number of servants, amount awarded by the Board, and claimant signature
- Final report by the Board of Commissioners to the Secretary of the Treasury in three statements: list of

petitions presented under the act of April 16, 1862; list of petitions received under the act of July 12, 1862; and an alphabetical list of claimants who would have eligible for awards if their petitions had been filed before the deadline

- Petitions filed with the Board under the act of April 16, 1862 and July 12, 1862

***Please Note:*** When searching this database, you will be taken to the beginning of a case file. In order to view all records which may pertain to your ancestor, be sure to scroll through the images surrounding the image you are taken to initially.

**About slavery in the nation’s capital**

The slave trade was actively practiced in Washington D.C. from its founding in 1790. Because the federal district was between Virginia and Maryland, both active slave states, it provided a central location for slave trade. Abolitionists in the nation became increasingly agitated by this traffic in the nation’s capital and called for it to be dissolved. The Compromise of 1850 abolished slave trading within the boundaries of the District; however, slavery remained legal in the area until the D.C. Emancipation Act of April 16, 1862. This new act permitted slave owners to file petitions for compensation promising loyal Unionist masters up to \$300 for each slave as well as voluntary colonization for former slaves outside the United States. An initial 966 petitioners filed claims for 3,100 slaves and another 161 persons submitted claims after the July 12 supplementary act including former slaves whose owners had not filed petitions. These are the records contained in this database. Some of the above information was taken from:

- Davis, Damani. “Slavery and Emancipation in the Nation’s Capital: Using Federal Records to Explore the Lives of African American Ancestors.” *Prologue*, Spring 2010, Vol. 42, No. 1 (Washington D.C.: The National Archives, 2010).

**Information in this database:**

- Petition date
- Petitioner
- Slave names
- Case number

**Information that *may* be in this database:**

- Physical description of slave
- Monetary value claimed

**Related Website:**

The National Archives, Slavery

### CAAGS - Request for Nominations

We need volunteers for the nominations committee to coordinate the 2012 elections. The positions open for election are 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President, Corresponding Secretary and President. Each is for a two year term and you can refer to your copy of the by-laws to see the duties involved for each office. Please contact Carolyn Conway or any board member if you are interested in running for an office.

### West Point U.S. Military Cadet Application Papers, Including Those Of ‘Stonewall’ Jackson, Colonel Custer And General Sherman, Released By Ancestry.com

Ancestry.com, which has the largest online collection of historical military records, added more than 115,000 U.S. Military Academy Cadet Application Papers from West Point to its online collection of military records.

“Handwritten cadet application papers are true gems in family history research, as they provide such depth and personal insight into the military veterans that came before us,” said Quinton Atkinson, director of content acquisition for Ancestry.com. “It is a treasure when we can see personal letters and records intersect with our shared history as a country. This Veterans Day, we hope this new collection will allow millions of Americans to explore their military ancestry, while inspiring them to discover the rich history of our nation’s past military leaders.”

The West Point Application Papers include letters from applicants from 1805-1866 requesting appointment, letters of recommendation and notification from the War Department if the candidate was accepted and letters of acceptance from the candidate. Over 115,000 candidates are listed and include well known graduates of West Point, including:

- **William Tecumseh Sherman (1835)** – known for his outstanding military strategy as a Union Army General during the Civil War, this collection contains several letters of recommendation for Sherman from his guardian, Thomas Ewing. Ewing’s letter praises 16-year-old Sherman as a “stout athletic lad, and very well prepared for entrance, a good Latin, Greek & French scholar... His father died insolvent... [and] it was his father’s wish... that he should receive an education which would fit him for the public service in the Army or Navy.”
- **Thomas J (Stonewall) Jackson (1842)** – one of the most well-known Confederate commanders, eighteen-year-old Stonewall Jackson was the subject of a nomination letter for West Point from South Carolina Governor F. W. Pickens. In his letter, Pickens asks if there are any

vacancies at West Point for the state of South Carolina, and requests a copy of the department rules and qualifications for admission. Jackson went on to graduate 17<sup>th</sup> out of 59 students in the Class of 1846.

- **George Pickett (1842)** – an acceptance letter now available on Ancestry.com shows that Pickett, known for leading the appropriately named “Pickett’s Charge” at the Battle of Gettysburg, was accepted as a cadet at West Point in 1842. Also included in the collection is Pickett’s resignation letter from the US Army’s 9<sup>th</sup> Infantry in 1861 to join the Confederate army, which also shows that upon resignation from the Union army he owed \$96.38 in “expenses recruiting.”

- **George A Custer (1856)** – most remembered for a disastrous military engagement at the Battle of the Little Bighorn, Custer’s nomination letter describes him as “17, 5’ 9¾”, good health, no deformity, reads well, spells correctly, writes a fair and legible hand, able to perform with facility and accuracy the ground rules of arithmetic, fully possesses all the qualifications physical, mental, and moral required.” This nomination letter sent to Jefferson Davis was written and signed by Congressman John A. Bingham, the judge advocate in the trial of Abraham Lincoln’s assassination and a principle framer of the 14<sup>th</sup> amendment. Custer went on to graduate last in his class at West Point.

The collection includes many other records and letters relating to artist James Whistler, Dupont dynasty heir and Civil War veteran Henry Dupont, and Union Army Major General George B. McClellan.

The West Point Cadet Application Papers are part of Ancestry.com’s U.S. Military Collection, which includes 100 million names that span more than three centuries of American military service.

### Changing African-American Names

I have found that some African-American ancestors changed their surnames several times after 1870. As a result I find it necessary to track each known family member carefully by given name to better follow the whereabouts of some of my ancestors. For example, Elias Tison is found in the 1870 census of Worth County, Georgia, but in the 1880 census he is Elias Washington, having shed the surname of the man who owned him while he was in bondage. Of course tracking African-American family members in the South around 1870 requires examining records other than the census, but it makes for challenging and rewarding research.

by William Cox





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#### **President's Message**

Ron Higgins

October is family history month

The month of October is the time for CAAGS Stay at Home Tea throughout the month of October; remember to invite your family and friends to have tea and make it a social gathering. This is a fundraiser for our society.

In the months past CAAGS had a booth at True Way Missionary Baptist Church, located on 92<sup>nd</sup> and San Pedro Street. The event was on Saturday August 25, 2011, Rev. D.L Wilson, pastor "Taking It To The Streets" a Community Outreach event. They had music, give aways, health screenings, free food and face painting for the kids. Over all it was fun for the entire family. Carolyn Conway, Asilah S. El-Amin and Ron Higgins shared the booth.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Leimert Park Village African Arts & Music Festival was held Labor Day weekend on Degnan and 43<sup>rd</sup> Street in Los Angeles. It was hosted by the Leimert Park group and admission was free. CAAGS had a booth; Ophelia Sanders, Esther Bohannon, Cartelia Byrant, and your president Ron Higgins worked the booth. I met a young man name Stephen Taylor, I ask him where he was from, he stated Cape Giredura, Mo. As we talked longer we found out we are cousins on my maternal side, our common name is Walker. Mr. Taylor's great grandmother's mother is one of my great great grandmother's children.

Our Show & Tell was very informational; we had a guest for show & tell. Richard Diggs showed the group and told us how he was able to put his hands on a one hundred year family old bible, which belong to his great grandfather. It had information on some of his relatives

*Neither the newsletter editor nor CAAGS guarantees publication of any submission. Submissions for the newsletter are due by the third Saturday of each month. Please email your submissions or inquiries to [CAAGS@hotmail.com](mailto:CAAGS@hotmail.com)*

and he stated that he's going to give the bible to the Smithsonian Institution. Thanks to all that shared.

Have you put a taste of your soul into your family history? How much have you spiced up your history on your family. I hope you can make your family story entertaining, and put some real life to it. Thanks to those who have joined CAAGS 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary conference committee. Remember "Good planning and hard work lead to prosperity."

CAAGS needs an election committee, please contact Carolyn Conway if you are interested. The open offices are: President, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President, Corresponding Secretary and Parliamentarian.

I truly want to thank all the members who have helped me with projects when I ask of you, you know who you are. Thank you all so very much.

### 2011 Calendar of Events

#### October 8

Salt Lake City, UT – American Society of Genealogists, Giving Back: A Look at 10 Years of Genealogy Grants.

#### October 15

CAAGS general meeting, 10am -2pm, Mayme Clayton Library and Museum.

#### October 20 -22

The National Black Genealogy Summit will take place in Fort Wayne, Indiana, October 20-22, 2011, at the Allen County Public Library and the Grand Wayne Convention Center. An information-rich website, continually being updated with the very latest information about the event, can be found at [www.BlackGenealogyConference.Info](http://www.BlackGenealogyConference.Info)

#### November 19

CAAGS general meeting and 2012 Elections 10am -2pm, Mayme Clayton Library and Museum, 2011 Elections.

#### December 17

Annual Holiday Party, details to come.

*\* Calendar is subject to change without notice*

### 50 Most Popular Genealogy Websites for 2011 (Pt. 1) by Kory L. Meyerink, MLS, AG, FUGA

These rankings were determined in January 2011. They are based on the popularity of websites as measured by four major ranking companies, and is explained in an article published in the July/August 2008 issue of the Digital Genealogist, edited by Elizabeth Kelley Kerstens. The

2010, 2009 and 2008 rankings are given, in that order, in parenthesis after the website description. Sites new to the list for 2011 are so identified.

Rank	Website	Coverage/Content
1.	Ancestry.com \$	- Ancestry.com is the leading genealogical data site, and includes articles, instruction, and reference help. (1>1>1)
2.	MyHeritage.com	- Focuses on genealogy community building and networking. (3>3>3)
3.	FindAGrave.com	- This database of 57 million cemetery inscriptions adds about a million per month and often includes tombstone photos. (7>7>7)
4.	FamilySearch.org	- This major data website sponsored by the LDS Church includes the IGI, census records, the library's catalog and a growing collection of historical records from throughout the world, along with instruction and reference help. (4>5>5)
5.	Genealogy.com \$	- A major data site, includes family trees, instruction and reference help. (5>2>4)
6.	Geni.com	- Free, with the world's largest collaborative family. (31>8>18)
7.	MyFamily.com	- Hosts family websites for sharing photos, genealogy, and more. (33>5>5)
8.	FamilyLink.com \$	- One of the most popular FaceBook applications helps people identify and network with their family and search billions of records. (2>80>72)
9.	RootsWeb.com	- One of the largest, free, user-contributed data sites, includes 575 million names in family trees, also instruction and reference help. (6>4>2)
10.	AncestorHunt.com	- Free genealogy search engine linking to free data. (11>11>12)
11.	AccessGenealogy.com	- Millions of names in 250,000 pages, along with links to free data; especially useful for Native American information, and some data. (13>14>13)
12.	SearchForAncestors.com	- Interactive directory of free genealogy websites and data. (12>19>21)
13.	GenealogyBank.com \$	- 1 billion exclusive records from 4500 newspapers and historical books. (19>31>41)
14.	USGWAarchives.net	- A large collection of free data, arranged by state and searchable across the entire collection. (8>not ranked)
15.	CyndisList.com	- The best subject catalog of genealogy webpage links. (14>17>15)
16.	Interment.net	- Transcribed and indexed cemetery inscriptions. (16>16>16)
17.	OneGreatFamily.com \$	- A family tree sharing and collaboration website. (9>11>9)
18.	GenealogyToday.com	- Includes instruction, reference articles, and some unique data collections. (10>12>11)
19.	SurnameWeb.org	- A collection of surname website links; online since 1996. (48>62>26)
20.	FindMyPast.co.uk \$	- (Back in) 650 million British records of many types [formerly FindMyPast.com]. (57>46>50)
21.	Geneanet.org	- (Back in) A European collection of 400 million names in family trees, community, and submitted

records. (58>42>36)

22. DeathIndexes.com - Lists of links to United States death records, by state. (23>25>31)

23. Linkpendium.com – Nine million genealogy links organized by state/county and surname. (24>24>35)

24. EllisIsland.org - Database of 24 million New York passenger arrivals that is free to search. Actual passenger list images can be printed or purchased. (15>20>14)

25. GeneBase.com - A DNA ancestry cataloging project with 675,000 users. (21>24>24)

### **CAAGS - Request for Nominations**

We need volunteers for the nominations committee to coordinate the 2012 elections. The positions open for election are 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President, Corresponding Secretary, President. Each is for a two year term and you can refer to your copy of the by-laws to see the duties involved for each office. Please contact us if you are interested in running for office.

### **SCGS Call For Papers**

The Southern California Genealogical Society announces a Call for Proposals for the 43rd Annual Southern California Genealogy Jamboree, to be held at the Los Angeles Marriott Burbank Airport Hotel, Burbank, California, Friday through Sunday, June 8 through 10, 2012. Thursday, June 7 will be a day of hands-on workshops, including the very popular Family History Writers Conference.

**Proposals for the 2012 Jamboree Extension Series webinars are also covered by this Call for Papers.** The very successful webinars are held on the first Saturday and the third Wednesday of each month.

Theme: The theme of the 2012 Jamboree is “Spotlight on Family History: Lights, Camera, Ancestors!”

The deadline for submission of proposals is October 15, 2011. Selected speakers will be notified by November 30, 2011, and contracts will be issued on January 1. What a great way to start the year!

Submission of proposals is done virtually, through the Speaker Portal. Speakers are encouraged to download the submission guide to prepare the information in advance.

Please contact Vicki Hilb, Program Chair, at SCGSJamboree@gmail.com if you have questions. We look forward to hearing from you!

### **Finding Your Ancestors’ Religious Records**

For many of our ancestors, a religious community played an important role in their lives, and as family historians, the

records they left with that community can play an important role in our research. In many areas, these records predate civil records and in addition to the important event dates provided by religious records, sponsors and witnesses listed in these records often turn out to be immediate or collateral family members.

While the types of records available vary from religion to religion and even from church to church, the baptismal or christening, confirmation, marriage, death registers, membership, and other records of the church are often among the most valuable to be found in family history research.

It’s great to see more and more religious records become available online, but many of these records have yet to be digitized and will require some offline research.

### **Determining Denomination and Church Affiliation**

You’ll need to determine your ancestor’s religious denomination and church affiliation to begin your search. While some families stayed within a particular denomination for generations, sometimes you’ll find families converting to a different denomination for a variety of reasons, such as marriage, perhaps to escape religious persecution, or even as a matter of convenience. Your ancestors may have attended a church that was not of their denomination simply because there were no churches with their particular religious affiliation available in the area.

If your ancestor lived in a rural area or if you know his or her denomination, a geographic approach can be helpful. Learn what churches were in existence in the area at the time your ancestor lived there. City directories for the years in question will typically include sections with listings of churches. Below is an example from Connorton's Evanston (Illinois) Directory, 1882-83.

*By Juliana Smith The Weekly Discovery (Copyright 2011, Ancestry.com)*

### **Correspondence by Mail To Foreign Countries**

When writing to individuals, send the currency of the country. The postage for them might be 3 times the cost of U.S. postage. Obtain the foreign currency at an exchange business. Try to use a form letter in the language of the country. Use the Pedigree Charts and Family Group Sheets printed in the foreign language. To order certificates from England, visit [www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/certificates/](http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/certificates/) Don’t ask for too much the first time.

*Photo Corner*  
*Contributed by Lucy Shepherd-Porter*



These are my grandparents, William Joseph Shepherd, I., and Mary Louise Martin Shepherd, and my father Alfred Franklin Shepherd, in Buxton, Iowa. My grandfather is holding my father, who was born August 24, 1908. Standing in the rear is my grandmother's younger brother Joseph Martin, who is twelve years old. This photo is among several from the collection held by my father Alfred Franklin Shepherd, Jr.

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**Family History Tip: Naming Patterns**

Even though my Italian grandfather lived with us when I was a child, I never knew the names of his parents. When I started researching family history, I remembered the custom of Italians naming their first son and daughter after the husband's parents, and the second son and daughter after the wife's parents.

Since my mother, Lucia, was the oldest daughter and her brother, Vincent, was the oldest son, I searched for a couple with the names of Vincent and Lucia and lo and behold, I found them! It also worked for some of my other relatives.

*Joan Walsh, Baton Rouge, LA*  
*Copyright © 2011 Ancestry.com*

**Julia Roberts Isn't a Roberts**  
By Megan Smolenyak

Earlier this week, at the US-Ireland Alliance's "Oscar Wilde: Honoring the Irish in Film" event, Julia Roberts presented Paul Rudd with an "Honorary Irishman" award. Showing a touch of Irish-envy, she remarked, "Maybe I can become Irish. My middle name is Fiona, which is a step closer to being Irish than Paul Rudd was five minutes ago." That's essentially an engraved invitation to a genealogist like myself (a half-Irish one at that) to go digging.

Ms. Roberts, it turns out, is a classic American mutt. Her father's side is mostly Southern of British Isles stock. Her roots on this half of her family tree extend back deeply enough that it would take extensive research to nail down the specifics, but the surnames suggest a mix of Irish, English, Scottish and Welsh. By contrast, her mother's side crosses the pond more quickly back to Germany and Scandinavia.

Though I began my quest seeking evidence of Irish heritage, much like the child who's captivated by a shiny object, I found myself distracted by an unexpected discovery. Ms. Roberts apparently isn't really a Roberts, though it's highly unlikely she would be aware of this.

If you trace her Roberts line back in time, you'll find that her great-grandfather, John Pendleton Roberts, was supposedly the son of Willis R. and Rhoda "Rodie" (Suttles) Roberts. Rhoda's tombstone makes the relationship of this couple clear, as does their 1857 marriage and her 1891 application for a pension as the widow of a Confederate soldier. But it was this same pension record that caught my attention. Both this file and his service records indicate that Willis R. Roberts died on March 25, 1864 (of pneumonia and fever, if you're curious).

And that leads to a little problem: John was born in 1878, roughly 14 years after his father's death. In both the 1870 and 1880 census, the widow Roberts shows up with her well-spaced children -- two presumably the soldier's born around the 1858-1861 time-frame, another pair born around the turn of the next decade, and then John born as yet another decade approached. The obvious question, then, is who was really John's father?

I have a theory, but the only way to convincingly prove or disprove it would be DNA testing. In fact, this is a classic genealogical conundrum that cries out for genetic investigation, but I'll leave it to Ms. Roberts to decide if she wants to learn what her surname would have been.

*For more and other stories visit*  
*[www.honoringourancestors.com](http://www.honoringourancestors.com)*



# Heritage Newsletter

*California African American Genealogical Society*

*Celebrating 25 Years*

**December 2011    Volume 23    Number 10**

Ten Issues Published Annually  
ISSN 1083-8937

**California African American Genealogical Society**  
P.O. Box 8442  
Los Angeles, CA 90008-0442

**General Membership Meetings**  
Third Saturday monthly at 10am (except July and August)

**Mayme Clayton Library and Museum (MCLM)**  
4130 Overland Ave., Culver City, CA 90230-3734  
(Old Culver City Courthouse across from VA building)

**2011 Board of Directors**  
Ronald Higgins - President  
Lloydine Outten – First Vice President  
Carolyn Conway – Second Vice President /Membership  
Lloydine Outten – Corresponding Secretary  
Linda Rush – Recording Secretary  
Marjorie Sholes – Treasurer  
Ophelia Sanders – Parliamentarian  
Gena Weaver – Webmaster (visit us at [www.caags.org](http://www.caags.org))

**Committee Chairs**  
Ruth Palmer – Book Sales and Acquisitions  
Betty Smith – Public Relations  
LaVerne Anderson – Librarian  
Dorothy Lou Sands – Historian (Interim)  
Monica Maurasse – Newsletter Editor  
Colette DeVerge – FGS Delegate/Fundraising Chairman  
Norma Bates – Volunteer Chairman

## **YOU KNOW YOU'RE AN ADDICTED GENEALOGIST**

- ...when you brake for libraries.
- ...if you get locked in a library overnight and you never even notice.
- ...when you hyperventilate at the sight of an old cemetery.
- ...if you'd rather browse in a cemetery than a shopping mall.
- ...when you think every home should have a microfilm reader.
- ...if you'd rather read census schedules than a good book.
- ...when you know every town clerk in your state by name.
- ...if town clerks lock the doors when they see you coming.
- ...when you're more interested in what happened in 1697 than 1997.
- ...if you store your clothes under the bed and your closet is carefully stacked with notebooks and journals.
- ...if you can pinpoint Harrietsham, Hawkhurst, and Kent on a map of England, but can't locate Topeka, Kansas.
- ...when all your correspondence begins, "Dear Cousin,"
- ...if you've traced every one of your ancestral lines back to Adam and Eve, have it all fully documented, and still don't want to quit.

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"There are two lasting gifts we can give our children.  
One is roots, the other wings."  
(author unknown)

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## 2011 – 2012 Calendar of Events

### December 9

#### Arizona, Parker, Bouse Genealogical Society

The “Genies in the Desert” annual conference, the focus of this event will be improving your use of Family Search, working with digital images, blogging & sharing genealogy electronically. For info, BouseGenies@gmail.com.

### December 17

Annual holiday party

### December 25 – January 1, 2012

Happy Holidays

### January 21, 2012

CAAGS general meeting 10am -2pm, Mayme Clayton Library and Museum,

### January 21

Genealogy Garage will be held on the third Saturday of each month (except December), from 11am-noon. Join Donie Nelson who will help you get organized and stay organized. Where: Los Angeles Public Library, 630 W. 5th St., Los Angeles, CA History and Genealogy Department on Lower Level 4, Ph: 213-228-7000

### February 18

CAAGS 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Genealogical Conference.

*\* Calendar is subject to change without notice*

## Websites of Interest

This is a must have site lots of free research sites.

<http://www.stumbleupon.com/su/1MuDdO/domesticfix.wordpress.com/2011/02/22/101-ways-to-research-your-family-tree-for-free/>

## Oklahoma State Tourism Web Site Launches New Genealogy Tool

Genealogists spend millions of dollars every year traveling to the areas where their ancestors lived. They spend money on hotels, restaurants, gasoline purchases, and, oh yes, photocopying fees. However, many state tourism organizations seem to ignore this potential source of wealth. Now, Oklahoma appears to understand the economic impact.

The Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department has launched a new feature on the agency’s website, [www.TravelOK.com/genealogy](http://www.TravelOK.com/genealogy), which assists visitors seeking to connect with their familial ancestry. Home to 39 Federally recognized Indian tribes, countless waves of

pioneer settlers and the genesis of the great Okie migration during the Dust Bowl days, Oklahoma holds the keys to unlocking many family histories. The new genealogy section is a user-friendly tool that guides visitors through a wealth of ancestral research destinations and resources throughout Oklahoma.

Searches on the site are broken down by county with quick links and information available on research libraries that contain copies of the Dawes Rolls, as well as county courthouses that house original land patents dating back to the land run. It also directs visitors to genealogical and historical societies, cemeteries, ghost towns and historical school houses, as well as tourism destinations in each county.

You can find the Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department’s new genealogy web site at <http://www.TravelOK.com/genealogy>.

### CAAGS Logo Apparel

T – shirts \$10

Sweatshirts \$15

Hooded Sweat Jackets \$30

See Marjorie Sholes at the holiday party if you would like to place an order. Please come prepared to prepay for your order.

## Five Ten-Minute Projects

By Juliana Smith

Sometimes it’s tough to find time for a full-out research session, but here are some quick ten-minute projects that will give you a quick family history fix and re-energize your research.

### Document Your Travels

Some of us may find evidence of our ancestors’ travels in passports, passenger arrival records, and border crossings. Have you taken the time to document the places you’ve visited and the significance of your trips? Did you travel to visit a family member or perhaps an ancestral home? Or maybe you just have a favorite retreat? Whether you’re a world traveler or just enjoy a jaunt to the country, record the memories from these trips and include them as part of your family history.

### Share a Family History Find

Have you located a record that might interest another family member? Why not take a couple of minutes to share it with them? You can share images from Ancestry.com by clicking the Share link in the image viewer and share your finds on Facebook, Twitter, or via email.

Recipients of your message will be able to view and enjoy

the image for thirty days, whether they are Ancestry.com members or not. By keeping the lines of communication open, you are staying connected with family members who may be able to help you out with your research down the road. And who knows, they may respond with an important memory that the record prompted. Try it!

### **Create a Military Page**

While we're celebrating Memorial Day next weekend, it's appropriate that we take a few minutes to honor the veterans in our family tree. You can create a page in less than ten minutes through your Ancestry.com online tree. Here are the steps.

- >> Go to that person in your online tree.
- >> Click on the link for that person to "View Profile." (If you hover over that person, you should see a box pop up with that link.)
- >> Click on the link for "More Options." That will open a menu that includes a link to "Create military page."
- >> Add photos, stories, audio, and edit details you've learned about their military service.
- >> Share the page with your family easily by using the links to Facebook, Twitter, or e-mail.

### **Clean Out Your Inbox**

Email plays a vital role in staying connected with family and exchanging information. While folders can help organize genealogical correspondence in your email client, we can run into problems when it comes time to archive older items. Older archived items become separated from newer emails, and both are isolated from other electronic family history files. Saving email messages with important information as text files or html in surname folders where you keep other family history information will save you a lot of time searching for that one piece of information you need. To save an email, just open the message, select "Save as" from the File menu, change the file type to your preferred format, and click "Save." Modify the name of the document, including the date so you can quickly identify the most current correspondence.

### **Search a Database--Again!**

Try re-searching collections where you have previously been unable to locate an ancestor. Ancestry is continually updating databases and enhancing search functionality. Also, if you've found new information on that ancestor since your last search, you may be able to better refine your search or browse and get better results.

*Copyright 2011, Ancestry.com, The Weekly Discovery*

### **A Variety of Resources for Finding Maiden Names**

By Paula Stuart-Warren, CG, FUGA

For decades, genealogy pretty much ignored the female ancestral lines. Older genealogies published in the

nineteenth and well into the twentieth century definitely demonstrate this. A maiden name or two may be given, but usually the genealogies do not tell much about the woman's ancestry. Some say only that John Smith married Mrs. Smith, or that he and his wife Magda were married on such and such a date--but does not give the maiden name.

Today, we want to know everything about her side of the family too. The key depends upon discovering her maiden name, without which we don't know what family we're researching. I am so glad that I am living in a time where family history does not ignore the women who are such vital parts of our history.

You may have an ancestor who kindly left many family clues as to the origins of the females in the family. Your grandmother may have shared the important tidbit that her grandmother's family was from Fulton County, New York. Maybe she said that her other grandmother was from "THE" Griffins of Greene County, New York. Then there are those great-grandmothers or other females that don't have an obvious maiden name. Don't despair; there are a variety of records to search. I should let you know that the names and localities used in this column are not those of any of my ancestors. Here are some ideas for seeking out maiden names:

### **Middle Names**

Did your grandfather have a middle name that seems more like a surname? How about William Porter Griffin or Howard Baldwin Jones? Those middle names might be clues to some female lines. Of course, some of those names might be given to honor some local important person, perhaps the Reverend John Porter. Investigate so that you can rule them in or out.

### **Church Records**

You may have found your grandmother's christening record that nicely states she was the daughter of Joseph G. Hamilton and Rebecca Ann Smithton. If you are not that fortunate, be sure to check the christening records of all your grandmother's siblings. If there were six children and you have checked only three, it might be time to look for the others. Child number four's record may produce that maiden name while those of the other five siblings do not. Who are the sponsors? Might one of them be the wife's brother with his surname likely the maiden name of the baby's mother?

If an ancestor was married in a church usually known for a connection to a specific ethnic group, there may be additional clues to maiden names and origins in the records.

### **Birth and Death Records**

As with the church records, doesn't it make sense to look for the birth and death records of all the siblings? Without

seeing the record how can we say it doesn't give the mother's maiden name? Perhaps the records created in 1875-1900 did not give such detail, but the record for the sibling who didn't die until 1923 at age 92 might give a maiden name.

### **Obituaries and Funeral Stories**

Which sibling's death resulted in the obituary that gave a maiden name of either the deceased or her mother? The news item that tells who came from out of town to attend the funeral service might list some surnames that you don't immediately recognize. Might one of these be a brother to your great-grandmother? Maybe it is Great-Grandaunt Sally's obituary that tells she was the wife of John G. Smith and that her parents were Michael K. Anderson and Maria Elizabeth Coates.

### **Marriage Records**

Check for civil marriage records for all. The last one found may be the one that gives the full names, including maiden names, of the couple's parents. Marriage bonds for anyone in the family could list other family surnames that need to be researched. In the case of a divorce between John and Anna Stockton, the divorce record may list her maiden name.

### **Census Records**

Are you sure you obtained copies of all state and federal census records for the siblings of all of your ancestors? If you have not looked for Great-Grandaunt Betsy and her husband Samuel in the 1850 U.S. census in Cincinnati, you might miss that other woman in the household with a different surname. Sure, the 1850 census does not list the relationships, but that different surname begs to be researched. It might be Betsy's, and your great-grandmother's mother.

### **Ethnic and Religious Newspapers**

Check these newspapers for notices of births, deaths, and marriages. The Swedish newspaper published in the U.S. might be one that often lists names of women. It might be an obituary for the husband, John K. Larson, but it nicely says he was married to the former Helena Christina Pettersdotter who emigrated to the U.S. in 1872 and tells where she had lived in Sweden.

### **A Few Other Sources:**

Check at home (and relatives' homes) for scrapbooks, funeral cards, death dates for siblings, photos that are labeled, and other home sources that might list other family surnames.

Has someone in the family saved older wedding and baby books (or a newspaper article on the wedding) that list who gave presents? Maybe one of them was from Great-

Grandma's family.

Check for a published family history for the husband of your great-grandmother's sister. That might give a few sentences on the wife's family, complete with a maiden name.

A county history biographical section for the husband of your great grandmother's sister could be the one that gives a few extra family details. Someone must descend from all those biographies that list names, dates, and places. Even a clue in that entry for a distant cousin's name could be helpful.

Military pension records may give the wife's maiden name or maybe a previous married name.

Might the land on which your ancestors lived have come down through her family? Or the land of another family member might have a clue to the sought-after maiden name.

### **Online**

If you haven't searched online for all parts of the family, you may be missing some clues to maiden names. Place searches using a given name are often beneficial. For example, you know your Abigail once lived in Polk County, but did not know her maiden name. Maybe no one seems to be working on your Abigail but someone is researching Abraham H. Green who has a sibling, Abigail, born in the correct year who moved to Polk County, Iowa. Being creative and using the information you have in your online searches can pay off with good leads like this that should be followed up on.

### **Go Beyond Online**

Back in 1982, Anna Hewson put a query in a genealogical society quarterly. She wanted to find others who were researching John and Abigail (Worthington) Griffin. Today Anna is no longer researching her family or has passed away. None of her family history information is online. That genealogical society only has a printed index to the back issues, not an online version. If you are only searching online for clues, just think about what you have missed in that older publication. While the amount of information found online continues to grow, don't overlook society publications and local collections.

You can't find the maiden names you need? I hope this column gives you additional ideas and reminders to lead you to those important names.

**About the Author - Paula Stuart-Warren, is a professional genealogist, consultant, writer, and lecturer. She has lectured all across the U.S. and will be the guest lecturer in February 2012 at CAAGS 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Conference.**



