

California African-American Genealogical Society

HERITAGE NEWSLETTER

Post Office Box 8442 Los Angeles, California 90008-0442

Editors: F. Stubblefield and J. Thompson ISSN 1083-8937 Vol 14 No. 1-2 January-February, 2002

DISCLAIMER: The Editor nor CAAGS assumes any responsibility for articles submitted to the newsletter by its members. The deadline for all Newsletter articles is the 22nd of each month.

President's Letter

Welcome to the new year.

Initially, I would like to congratulate the newly elected officers---Gwendolyn Harris, Corresponding Secretary; Daisy Saffold, Second Vice President and Membership Chairman, and Barbara Thomas, Parliamentarian. I look forward to working with you.

I would also like to thank the outgoing officers--Marjorie Higgins-Sholes, Vice President; Dorothylou Sands, Secretary; and Carletha LeNoir-Mfume, Parliamentarian. Each has made a significant contribution to CAAGS and its growth and success in the last two years.

There are still openings on the CAAGS Board for Public Relations and Publications Chairman. Additionally, every committee always needs a new point of view. Remember, CAAGS is only as good as WE make it and it requires all of our efforts.

Next month, CAAGS will co-sponsor, along with the African-American Heritage Society (Long Beach) and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, a special Discover Your Roots conference. There are more details elsewhere in the newsletter. The special keynote speaker will be Chris Haley, nephew of Alex Haley, the author of ROOTS.

Don't forget to plan for the upcoming Jamboree, sponsored by the Southern California Genealogical Society (SCGS) and for the Second Annual West Coast African American Genealogical Summit. There are details on both elsewhere in the newsletter. These are great opportunities to expand and share your knowledge with other researchers.

With all that is planned for 2002, along with the release of the 1930 Census, let's take every opportunity to improve our research skills and to make CAAGS that much better.

CAAGS MEETINGS

Martin Luther King United Methodist Church
6625 4th Avenue
(East of Crenshaw Boulevard,
between Gage and Florence Avenues)
Los Angeles, California

19 January 2002

General Schedule
10:00-11:30
Beginning and Intermediate Class

11:30-12:00
Business Meeting

12:00-12:15
Break

12:30 -1:45
Death Records
Locating Womens' Names
Janice Cloud

Jan is a noted genealogical speaker and has presented her talks at regional and national conferences. This joint session will help us learn more about locating our female ancestors and will teach us what we can expect to uncover from death records.

2002

February Dr. Judith Carney
Dr. Carney has written extensively on the importance of the rice culture in this country and the records associated with the importation of slaves to the Carolinas and Louisiana.

March Barbara Thomas
How do you use your word processor and scanner to produce a quality family publication? Our new Parliamentarian will show us the tricks and techniques we need.

INFORMATION MAY BE VITAL, BUT USE WITH CAUTION

By Rhonda R. McClure

One of the most often used record types of genealogists is vital records. Vital records is the catch all term for birth records, marriage records and death records. Vital records are different from church records, which often deal with the same life events. Church records include the baptism instead of a birth record and the burial instead of the death record.

Vital records are the recording of births, marriages, and deaths by the civil jurisdiction whether it is town, county, or state. The states in the United States now require that the towns and counties submit a copy of the records, which are sent to the state vital statistics office. Often

Member News BIRTHDAY WISHES!

Maria Alequin-Sosa
Cecelia Alleyne
Darnell Bell
Bryant Dunlap
Corrine Bowden
Cartellia Bryant
Ronald Higgins
Harold Jackson, Jr.
George Jenkins
Michelle Ledoux
Clifton Lee
DeVaughn Lee
Monica Maurasse
Charles Meigs, Jr.
Margaret Pettigrew
Tamar Silva
Lydia Thomas
Andre' Vaughn
Edna Wilkerson

NEW MEMBERS - WELCOME!

ANNIE FISHER-HARGROVE is researching Gadson and Martin.
WILBERT H. "BILL" JOHNSON is researching Jackson and Johnson.
Gail Swan (Beasley) is researching Manns and Swan.

EMAIL CORRECTIONS AND ADDITIONS

Wilbert Johnson
Gail Swain

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times though you will find it easier to request copies from the local jurisdiction, rather than the state. Many states are bound by legislation when it comes to releasing copies.

As was mentioned, there are three types of vital records: births, marriages, and deaths. Each is a primary document for the event in question. For instance, the birth record is a primary document for the birth. That is the date of the birth, the place of the birth, the name of the child, and the name of the parents. The marriage record is a primary document for the name of the bride, the name of the groom, the date of the marriage, and the place of the marriage. The death record is a primary document for the name of the deceased, the date and the place of death.

You may be sitting there wondering what about all the other information found on these records. Why didn't I mention that? With the exception of the information mentioned above, any other information taken from the records is like taking information from any other secondary source.

A secondary source, remember, is any source that was created at a later date by someone who may or may not have been present. In the case of the marriage record, while the bride and groom may supply information about their age, date or birth, and place of birth, they were too young to remember this information. They are merely repeating what they were told when they were growing up.

A death record is an even better example. The information supplied about the age of the deceased at the time of death, date and place of birth, and names of parents comes from an informant. That informant may be someone close like a spouse, sibling or parent. That informant may also be a virtual stranger, such as a nurse or administrator at a home or hospital.

Vital records will always be a main source of information for genealogists. The trick is to remember that the record in question is not a primary document for everything written. Only the information pertinent to the life event in question is considered primary. Everything else is secondary and open to possible error.

Reprinted from **Family Tree Finders**.

Marriage Records Blend Family Information

An active part of discovering and preserving your family heritage centers around marriages. It is important information for all families: past, present, and future. This month's article will help you in discovering this knowledge.

When the custom of marriage first started is not clear. Most ancient societies needed stability in male and female relationships, not only for propagation of people, but for dealing with issues such as property rights. During the Roman Empire, lower classes had common law or "free" marriages. The father would deliver the bride and an agreement would be reached between the two parties. Wealthy Romans signed agreements listing property and letting others know that this was a legal union, rather than a common law one. This can be considered the first official recording of marriages.

Finding marriage information will be an important part of your heritage activity. Besides getting the obvious date information, your search could lead you to parent information, who married them, and where. Primary and alternate sources of information include:

Marriage certificate: This is the document that proves that the marriage actually took place. It is usually found in the vital records office for the marriage location, such as a county courthouse. An alternate source could be a religious archive. Many local genealogical groups have published marriage summaries in book form. Libraries. Remember these books would be secondary sources and are subject to error by the compiler.

Marriage license: This is an official document, usually issued by the state, authorizing a marriage to take place. It signifies that the couple has met the legal requirements for marriage. **It does not prove that the marriage occurred, however.** As a related item, consent affidavits are sometimes issued to give permission by a parent or legal guardian for the individual to be wed. This often occurs with an underage person. These documents can

provide valuable information in identifying parents or the age of the couple, for example. Sources are the same as with a certificate.

Marriage Bann: A public proclamation of a couple's intent to marry, a bann is an ecclesiastical custom several centuries old. It gives the public an opportunity to come forward with reasons for the marriage not to occur. Look to church archives for these records.

Marriage Bond: An agreement, with a financial amount usually paid by a male relative, where two parties agree to marry. Bonds were posted before a license would be issued. If a reason was discovered that would void the marriage, the bond would be forfeited, offsetting the cost of any legal action.

Marriage contract: Like a bond, this is an agreement between two parties that primarily deals with property of the individuals. These were common when the persons were "well-to-do" and were remarrying. Today, we would call this a pre-nuptial agreement. A contract would provide rich detail about the couple, but it does not prove they were married. Used in conjunction with probate records (like a will), however, would prove a that marriage occurred.

Newspapers: If no religious or civic records can be found, newspaper announcements would be a good secondary source. These articles could also provide added information about the couple's parents, guests at the event, social standing, and details about the wedding.

Divorce and annulments: Unfortunately, not all marriages are successful. Don't overlook these documents. We had great grandparents who were granted a divorce in 1910. The papers, obtained from the county courthouse, contained an insight into the couple and the family not found through other official records.

Lastly, make an effort to preserve the marriage records you now possess. Whether your own marriage license, for example, or grandma's certificate. De-acidify and store them in acid-free materials.

Reprinted from the LDSFHCCC newsletter.

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Timeline, Major Events: Atlantic Slave Trade

1502 First reported African slaves in the New World.

1640-1680 Beginning of large-scale introduction of African slave labor in the British Caribbean for sugar production.

1791 The Haitian Revolution begins as a slave uprising near Le Cap in the French West Indian colony of Santo Domingo and leads to establishment of black nation of Haiti in 1801.

1793 Waves of white refugees pour into U.S. ports, fleeing the insurrection in Santo Domingo.

1794 The French National Convention emancipates all slaves in the French colonies.

March 22: U.S. Congress passes legislation prohibiting the manufacture, fitting, equipping, loading or dispatching of any vessel to be employed in the slave trade.

1795 Pinckney's Treaty establishes commercial relations between U.S. and Spain.

1800 May 10: U.S. enacts stiff penalties for American citizens serving voluntarily on slavers trading between two foreign countries.

1804 January 1: The Republic of Haiti is proclaimed. The hemisphere's second Republic is declared on January 1, 1804 by General Jean-Jacques Dessalines. Haiti, or Ayiti in Creole, is the name given to the land by the former Taino-Arawak peoples, meaning "mountainous country."

1807 British Parliament bans the Atlantic slave trade. Great Britain converts Sierra Leone into a crown colony. U.S. passes legislation banning slave trade, to take effect 1808.

1810 British negotiate an agreement with Portugal calling for gradual abolition of slave trade in the South Atlantic.

1815 At the Congress of Vienna, the British pressure Spain, Portugal, France and the Netherlands to agree to abolish the slave trade (Spain and Portugal are permitted a few years of continued slaving to replenish supplies).

1817 September 23: Great Britain and Spain sign a treaty prohibiting the slave trade: Spain agrees to end the slave trade north of the equator immediately, and south of the equator in 1820. British naval vessels are given right to search suspected slavers. Still, loopholes in the treaty undercut its goals. Slave trade flows strongly.

1815-1830. Slave economies of Cuba and Brazil expand rapidly. In the Le Louis case, British courts establish the principal that British naval vessels cannot search foreign vessels suspected of slaving unless permitted by their respective countries -- a ruling that hampers British efforts to suppress the slave trade.

1819 U.S. and Spain renew commercial agreements in the Adams-Onis Treaty. U.S. Congress passes legislation stiffening provisions against American participation in the slave trade. Britain stations a naval squadron on the West African coast to patrol against illegal slavers.

1820 May 15: U.S. law makes slave trading piracy, punishable by the death penalty. The U.S. Navy dispatches four vessels to patrol the coast of West Africa for slavers. This campaign lasts four years before the Americans recall cruisers and break off cooperation with the British.

1824 Great Britain and the U.S. negotiate a treaty recognizing the slave trade as piracy and establishing procedures for joint suppression. The Senate undercuts the treaty's force and the British refuse to sign.

1825 The Antelope case: A U.S. Revenue Cutter seizes a slave ship, the Antelope, sailing under a Venezuelan flag with a cargo of 281 Africans. The U.S. Supreme Court hears the case and issues a unanimous opinion declaring the slave trade to be a violation of natural law, meaning it can be upheld only by positive law. But the ruling sets only some of the Africans free, holding that the U.S. could not prescribe law for other nations and noting that the slave trade was legal as far as Spain, Portugal, Venezuela were concerned. So the vessel is restored to its owners, along with those Africans designated by the court as Spanish property (numbering 39).

1831 A large-scale slave revolt breaks out in Jamaica -- brutally repressed.

1833 Great Britain passes the Abolition of Slavery Act, providing for emancipation in the British West Indies -- set to take effect August 1834. (Following emancipation, a 6 year period of apprenticeship is permitted.)

1835 June 28: The Anglo-Spanish agreement on the slave trade is renewed, and enforcement is tightened. British cruisers are authorized to arrest suspected Spanish slavers and bring them before mixed commissions established at Sierra Leone and Havana. Vessels carrying specified equipment, articles (extra mess gear, lumber, foodstuffs) are declared prima-facie to be slavers.

1837 Britain invites the U.S. and France to create an international patrol to interdict slaving. The U.S. declines to participate.

1838 In the British West Indies, most colonial assemblies have introduced legislation dismantling apprenticeships. Laws against vagrancy and squatting attempt to keep the social and labor system of the plantation economy intact, with varying results.

1839 January: Nicholas Trist, U.S. Consul in Havana, recommends that the administration dispatch a naval squadron to West Africa to patrol for slavers, warning that the British would police American vessels if the U.S. did not.

June 12: The British navy brig Buzzard escorts two American slavers, the brig Eagle and the schooner Clara, to New York City to be tried as pirates. Two more arrive several weeks later, and another pair later that Fall.

The Amistad is seized off Long Island and taken to New London.

(Fall) U.S. federal officers arrest several vessel owners in Baltimore implicated by the British as slave traders. Several schooners being built for the trade are seized as well.

Turner's *The Slave Ship* (also known as *Slavers Throwing Overboard the Dead and Dying -- Typhoon coming on*) goes on display at the Royal Academy in London.

1841 Nicholas Trist is dismissed as U.S. Consul in Havana, amid allegations he connived at, or at any rate took no effort to suppress, frequent illegal sales of U.S. vessels to Spanish slave traders.

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SAVING NEWSPAPERS REQUIRES CAREFUL PRESERVATION PLANNING

As today's events of war unfold, many of us will have the foresight to gather newspapers and periodicals that will one day tell the story of our plight against terrorism. It is crucial that these items are stored carefully if they are to be of value in the future.

Newspapers are generally printed on low-quality paper that isn't designed to withstand the test of time. Consider photocopying the pieces that you most want to preserve, include a full date of publication and consider copying the newspaper's "flag" to keep with the article.

Copy the article on to an acid-free paper with an off-color if you want to maintain the look of newspaper.

If you decide to laminate the article, try using the following popular solution to lower the acid content of the article (Acid will allow the paper to turn yellow even if it is sealed in plastic):

1. Dissolve one milk of magnesia tablet in one quart of club soda. Let the solution stand overnight.
2. Stir the solution and pour it into a shallow pan.
3. Lay the newspaper clippings flat in the pan and let them soak for 1 to 2 hours. Keep each sheet separate.
4. After two hours, carefully remove the clippings and place them on a soft towel. Allow them to dry thoroughly before handling.

The United States Library of Congress offers a lengthy explanation of the make-up of news print and its history, along with professional tips on how to rejuvenate and store these priceless pieces of Americana and their preservation

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A Few Simple Tips for Making Research Time Count

By **Michael John Neill**

I recently spent lead a research trip to the Allen County Public Library (ACPL) in Ft. Wayne. I was reminded of a few things when going a distance to a library to do research.

Open Your Mouth

I was fortunate enough to use the World War Draft Registration Cards for Chicago. There were eighty-some districts on eighty-some rolls of microfilm. I had the 1917 address for the individual in question but was unaware that the library had a copy of a map of the approximate boundaries of the selective service districts. After viewing ten rolls of film, I took a break. I mentioned to an acquaintance that I was not looking forward to going through all the films. She mentioned to me that the library had a book of maps to assist those using the cards. Armed with it and the 1917 address, I quickly located the card. I assumed the library had no finding aids for the materials I was using. I opened my mouth. It saved me a few hours.

Could You Be Wrong?

There were some who thought my great-grandfather's middle name was Johnson instead of John. There was just no document where that middle name had been signed and no "official" record provided that name. All records providing a middle name used the name John, and most only used the initial "J." Imagine my surprise when I located this his World War I draft registration card that included his signature signed with the middle name "Johnson."

Bring Something Else to Do

I did not bring any of my own problems with me. However, I came to the realization that the next time, I will bring multiple problems on which to work. The big reason is that I can begin work on a completely different problem to regain my focus, prevent burnout, and make better use my library time.

Use Varied Media

Some people can only read microfilm for so long. Some get a headache. Some get so tired of viewing microfilm that they are not as efficient as they could be. After reading film for eight hours, I find that my concentration is not as high as it originally was. I was more likely to stay "fresh" when I alternated between microfilm, books, and online databases.

Ask for Specific Help

If there is something you cannot find or figure out how to use, ask!!! The librarian will not have do actual research for you, but may be familiar enough

with the material to at least get you started. Do not expect them to read French, but individuals from the reference department should be able to help you make your way through popular finding aids and sources. The library does not already have a file with your completed genealogy in it and they likely are not going to read through fifty pages of family group charts and tell you what to do next. The library's purpose is to provide access to materials, not to provide hours of personalized research help.

Keep Papers Together

Some people paperclip copies that are made from the same book or source. Some people use staplers. An additional approach is to develop a short "code" for each book and write that on every page copied from that reference, including the title page. For the "Wills of Amherst County, Virginia," I wrote (in small letters in pencil) "WACV." This allows me to correctly re-group the pages should they become shuffled or separated. Upon returning home, more complete citations could be written on each page or the pages could be filed so that the source information is not lost.

Get Just a Few Hours

If possible, arrive at the facility the night before and spend at least a few hours there before the "big day." This will allow you to become more familiar with the facility, browse the stacks (if possible) and perhaps request some materials for the next day.

Get Out of the Library

It is extremely important to be able to concentrate and to focus. Staying in the library from 8:00 a.m. until 10:00 p.m. and only eating candy bars in the bathroom for lunch will hinder your ability to be effective. This is especially true when using un-indexed records or any records that require great attention to detail. It is important to be researching at your full mental capacity. An hour for lunch and an hour for dinner will help keep the brain going.

Save Time for Review

Allocate some time for review of the material that you have located. An analysis of the material located on Tuesday may give you new clues to pursue on Wednesday, perhaps things that were not originally on your list for Wednesday.

Published by **Ancestry Daily News**

Man lives, not only in the circle of his years, but also, by virtue of the subconscious, in the provinces of the generations from which he is descended.

Leo BAECK,
American author

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CALENDAR

January 26, 2002 Tucson, Arizona

The Tucson Chapter of the Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society (AAHGS) will hold its **11th Annual Meeting**. Featured speakers will be Dr. Harry Lawson, author of the two-volume history of Blacks in Tucson, and Janet Reilly, who will discuss the links between race and architecture. For more information, contact Gloria Smith at Trailstone@aol.com

February 9, 2002 Los Angeles

CAAGS, the African American Heritage Society, Long Beach, and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (LDS), are sponsoring

Discover Your Roots, a morning-long seminar featuring Chris HALEY, nephew of ROOTS author Alex HALEY, at 3115 S. Vermont. More than ten sessions are planned. For more information, call (310) 474-2202.

February 17, 2002 Whittier, California

The **Whittier Area Genealogical Society (WAGS)** will present a full day seminar, conducted by **Sharon Bartello Carmack**, author of several books, including "Guide to Discovering Your Female Ancestors."

April 13-14 Pasadena, California

The **Southern California Genealogical Society (SCGS)** will host **Jamboree 2002**, one of the nation's largest genealogical and family history meetings, at the Pasadena Convention Center. CAAGS will be among the exhibitors. For more information, contact SCGS at (818) 843-7262 or at scgs@earthlink.net.

June 14-16, 2002 Sacramento, California

The **Second West Coast African American Genealogical Summit** will feature Reginald Washington, African American Subject Area Specialist with NARA in Washington, DC. Reginald will speak on the Southern Claims Commission, The Freedman's Bureau Records, and other sources available from NARA. The Radisson Hotel has been selected as the location.

August 7-10, 2002 Ontario, California

The **Federation of Genealogical Societies (FGS)** and the **California State Genealogical Alliance (CSGA)** will present "...California: a Goldmine of Diversity." Full program details will be announced shortly.

Tell ye your children of it, and let your children tell
their children, and their children another generation.

Joel 1:3

Financial Records Yield Wealth of Information

By George G. Morgan

Understanding your ancestors and their family members can help you further your genealogical research. The type of lifestyle they led can suggest a variety of possible locations to seek different types of records. For example, a wealthy ancestor was more likely to own property and therefore you would begin searching land records. An African American ancestor who had perhaps been a slave might possibly have been a depositor in the Freedman's Bank and therefore left records there. An ancestor whose presence is determined to have been a rural resident would definitely have left different records behind than one who was a city dweller.

Among the records you may locate about your ancestor are those reflecting his or her financial assets. These records can tell you much about their lifestyle, as well as pointing to other potential record types that you may want to search.

Assets' Insights

Among the records left by our ancestors are those which may reveal their relationships with others, indicate their level of education, point to their profession, or show other life activities, signify their social status, and suggest their financial situation. As you discover these documents, it is important to look at them with an eye toward what they just might indicate. Unless you maintain an open mind to what you are examining, it is possible to overlook important clues. The following records are prime examples of records that might describe or reflect your ancestor's assets and therefore may provide a greater insight to their situation and, point toward additional records.

Wills and Probate Packets—Wills are wonderful documents. The bequests they contain certainly tell you about the extent of a person's assets and about the relationships with the recipients. A will often states the relationship between the testator and the beneficiary, and sometimes the reason why one beneficiary receives a greater share of the estate than another, or why one is purposefully excluded. Bear in mind that a will may not always be a true reflection of an estate's contents; it may have been made at a time when the testator's assets were greater or lesser.

Estate Inventories—The executor, executrix and/or administrator of an estate, as approved by the probate court, is responsible for performing an inventory of an estate for the purpose of determining its extent and content. Concentrate on the details you find here. The presence of books is indicative of education and, by extension, a higher earning potential, greater financial status, and possibly higher social status. Musical instruments such as pianos, violins, and other items also indicate higher education. A more modest inventory, consisting of beds and other furnishings, clothing, farm implements, tools, livestock, farm produce, and other materials, can indicate details of a lifestyle and a profession. For example, the inclusion of hammers, tongs, an anvil, iron, files, currying brushes, leather, awls, and heavy shears would point to a livery stable proprietor or blacksmith.

Beneficiaries List—The list of beneficiaries or heirs compiled by the executor/executrix or administrator is important in that it defines the names and locations of every person named in the will. If the person was deceased, he or she would be identified as such. By the same token, the final list of beneficiaries to which distribution was made may be different from the initial list, and you will want to determine the reasons for the difference. Did a beneficiary die? Did someone contest the bequest?

Estate Financial Reports—The administrator of an estate also is responsible for preparing periodic financial reports during the probate process. A report may be part of the probate packet or it may have been entered into the minutes of the probate court. The report is a more accurate reflection of the status of the estate at the time death.

Estate Auction Notices and Records—As part of the probate process, estate assets may have been sold to pay debts or to provide funds for survivors. Records of the auction may be part of the probate packet, the probate court minutes, and/or the sheriff's office. Notices of such auctions may also be found in local newspapers.

Deeds and Property Records—Property records can often yield surprises. An investigation of the index to land and property records may show that your ancestor was involved with one or more real estate transactions. One such search of my own revealed that my own great-grandfather was amazingly prolific in real estate transactions, having more than 35 pages of index entries in the county clerk's ledger.

Tax Rolls--Tax records can provide clues to your ancestor's wealth. Property tax rolls will point to land and property holdings. In some places after specific times, intangible taxes may have been levied. Poll taxes and head taxes are other examples of tax records you might investigate.

Business Records--It is possible that your ancestor was involved in operating a business, in which case there may be records pertaining to the venture. Incorporation records filed at the state level, employment tax records, insurance records, newspaper advertisements, business listings in city directories and telephone directories--all of these may provide evidence of your ancestor's activities and therefore his or her financial and social standing.

Cemetery Monuments--Last but not least in this short list are cemetery markers or monuments. While not always a true indicator of an ancestor's financial or social standing, the presence of a large and/or elaborate monument would be a good indication that your ancestor might have been well-to-do. The larger the monument, the greater the possibility that its inscriptions may provide important details. Titles, such as Dr. or Rev., or military rank are important leads. Elaborate markers, too, sometimes carry place of birth or death, names of parents, spouse or other relatives, cause of death, and other details. In addition, it may be possible to determine the religious affiliation of the person based on inscriptions on the monument and/or its placement within a specific area of a cemetery.

Where Do These Records Point?

Carefully examine these types of records and employ your critical thinking skills. Put yourself into the time and place at which the records were created, and imagine them in their historical context. Ask yourself WHEN the record was created, WHERE was it created, WHO created it, WHY was it created, and was there any reason for facts to have been FALSIFIED or OBSCURED. This final question may establish some bias, which may have a profound effect on the veracity of the information or cause you to seek other evidence to substantiate or invalidate the fact presented.

Where Can These Records Point?

Let's look at some samples based on the list above. **WILLS AND PROBATE PACKETS** can point you toward records of other people, particularly other family members. Beneficiary lists often provide residential addresses or locations of living persons. They sometimes provide additional evidence in the form of explicit statements or through omissions of the fact that a family member was already deceased.

Estate Administrators' Inventories and Financial Reports provide explicit details about your ancestor's possessions at the time of death. These, along with price and sales details of estate auctions, provide an excellent picture of the person's wealth or poverty. The presence of books among your ancestor's effects might cause you to look for evidence of education or of some other social standing. Tools of a trade or farm implements might cause you to investigate specific types of professions.

Land and Property Records may provide clues to previous or subsequent residence. They may also include the names of spouses, children, and in-laws. A gift of land, for instance, to a daughter in centuries past probably would have been made to the son-in-law, perhaps with a clause requiring that it not be sold without the permission of the daughter. A deed issuing a title to property to a son after the death of his father might include information confirming the father's demise on a specific date.

Tax Rolls may point to land and property records, and to other types of information. **BUSINESS RECORDS** might point to property records, tax lists, insurance company policies, advertisements, and a number of other records.

And **Cemetery Monuments** may point you to death records, religious institution records, funeral/mortuary records, obituaries, professional organizations, ships passenger lists, military records, and other data.

The Bottom Line

The importance of carefully examining records that relate to your ancestor's assets cannot be stressed too much. They provide a good picture of his or her lifestyle, level of education, financial or social standing, religious affiliation, military rank, and other situation. Through further research, you may learn whether your ancestor died wealthy or in debt. Most important, however, is that you read between the lines in order to get "inside" your ancestor and to start looking for those perhaps obscure alternative records that can provide the evidence you need to corroborate the facts.

Education Records: Insights to Ancestors

By **Loretto Dennis Scuzs**

*This article is reprinted from the January/February 1995 issue of **AncestryMagazine**

According to Plato, "The soul takes nothing with her to the other world but her education and culture." This may be true, but as family historians, we hope those souls leave behind at least some clues as to what kind of schooling or training they had in this world. Schools of every kind have much to do with carving out personalities and futures. Records created by and about educational institutions can provide incredible insights into individuals and into the part schooling has played in defining personalities and society as a whole.

From the bare essentials of a school history or a class list to more revealing report cards, student profiles, and otherwise unavailable photographs, school records can be most enlightening. Educational records have played a critical role in my personal research, and from my experience and research for other families I have drawn the following examples.

As an infant of twenty-two months, I was separated from my parents and brothers and sisters when my father became ill. I was sent from New York to live with relatives in Texas until he recovered, but he didn't recover. I remained in Texas and never knew my father or anything about his family. It is from his school records that I have some of my best insights into his personality. In his Fordham University yearbook (copies of pages obtained from the university), I found one of the few surviving pictures of him, and from the yearbook I learned that "Joey" graduated from Brooklyn Prep before advancing his studies at Fordham, where he played interclass football among other activities. More fascinating is his report card. Though he received his degree in law, I learned his highest marks were in history.

Typically, the types of records most valuable to the family historian are found in original school districts or in the archives of the

institutions that created the records. In many cases, records of long-closed schools have survived in local libraries, historical societies, and museums and in state, local, private, and even federal archives.

ABC's of School Records

--- **AFRICAN AMERICAN.** Predominantly black or special colleges, high schools, and grade schools are obvious research points. Do not overlook the Freedmen's Bureau Schools. These schools for black children were separately financed by taxes on property owned by blacks. According to Roseann Hogan's "Kentucky Ancestry: A Guide to Genealogical and Historical Research" (Salt Lake City: Ancestry, 1992), "At the end of the war, 54 schools for freedmen were established in Kentucky" alone.

--- **ALBUMS.** Report cards, essays, artwork, and photographs are common inclusions in albums and scrapbooks. Distant family members may have inherited personal collections. A surprising number have been salvaged by archives, libraries, and museums.

--- **ALUMNI DIRECTORIES.** Most colleges and universities and some high schools have kept tabs on a large number of their alumni. Typically, directories indicate year of graduation and provide current addresses. Sometimes, previous residences, subsequent education and careers, and maiden and children's names are noted. Divisions or colleges within a school frequently have separate directories. Call schools to find out where directories can be found.

--- **A.M.A.** The American Medical Association's Deceased Physician Masterfile contains information, including educational background, on more than 350,000 U.S. physicians from 1878 to 1969. The database can be searched for a fee. Direct inquiries to the AMA Library and Archives, P.O. Box 10623, Chicago, IL 60610.

Loretto D. Scuzs, vice president of Publishing at Ancestry.com, co-edited *The Source: A Guidebook of American Genealogy* with Sandra H. Luebking.

Part Two will appear in the next newsletter.

California African-American Genealogical Society

HERITAGE NEWSLETTER

Post Office Box 8442 Los Angeles, California 90008-0442

Editors: F. Stubblefield and J. Thompson ISSN 1083-8937 Vol 14 No. 3-4 March-April, 2002
DISCLAIMER: The Editor nor CAAGS assumes any responsibility for articles submitted to the newsletter by its members.
The deadline for all Newsletter articles is the 22nd of each month.

President's Letter

On 1 April, the long-awaited 1930 United States Census will be released. Because of the increasing urban movement of the country and the migrations caused by the impact of the Great Depression, it will be harder to locate our ancestors and relatives. This issue of the newsletter carries several articles on making your research time effective and on the use of some tools to make the task easier.

Librarian Evelyn Ross has completed the listing of the CAAGS Library holdings. This chore required a great deal of attention and effort. Her compilation is well done and she should be proud of and congratulated for a job well done.

Don't forget to plan for the upcoming Jamboree, sponsored by the Southern California Genealogical Society (SCGS) to be held at the Pasadena Convention Center 13-14 April. CAAGS will be an exhibitor and your participation at our booth is encouraged. This is one of the area's largest gatherings of family historians and genealogists. CAAGS Vice President Charlotte Bocage will present her talk on getting organized.

Charlotte will also speak at the Second Annual West Coast African American Genealogical Summit in Sacramento 15 June. These are great opportunities to expand and share your knowledge with other researchers.

CAAGS has traditionally not met during June or August, a period when many families hold their reunions. Consequently, September has been the "Show and Tell" meeting. Come back with lots of new treasures, finds, sources and connections to brag about and share.

CAAGS MEETINGS

Martin Luther King United Methodist Church
6625 4th Avenue
(East of Crenshaw Boulevard,
between Gage and Florence Avenues)
Los Angeles, California

16 March 2002

General Schedule

10:00-11:30

Beginning and Intermediate Class

11:30-12:00

Business Meeting

12:00-12:15

Break

12:30 -1:45

March Barbara Thomas

How do you use your word processor and scanner to produce a quality family publication. Our new Parliamentarian will show us the tricks and techniques we need.

20 April

An open forum for solving all of the research questions you might have. Bring a book or directory to share.

18 May To be announced

A representative from the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) will discuss methods and techniques for preserving those family treasures we locate.

CAAGS 16TH Birthday Founded 23 March 1986

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CALENDAR

April 13-14 Pasadena, California

The Southern California Genealogical Society (SCGS) will host **Jamboree 2002**, one of the nation's largest genealogical and family history meetings, at the Pasadena Convention Center. CAAGS will be among the exhibitors. For more information, contact SCGS at (818) 843-7262 or at scgs@earthlink.net.

June 14-16, 2002 Sacramento, California

The **Second West Coast African American Genealogical Summit** will feature Reginald Washington, African American Subject Area Specialist with NARA in Washington, DC. Reginald will speak on the Southern Claims Commission, The Freedman's Bureau Records, and other sources available from NARA.

August 7-10, 2002 Ontario, California

The **Federation of Genealogical Societies (FGS)** and the **California State Genealogical Alliance (CSGA)** will present "...California: a Goldmine of Diversity." Full program details are available and opportunities for volunteer service exist.

September 25-28 Washington, D.C.

The **Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society** Annual meeting, held on the campus of Gallaudet College. The full program will be announced in May.

NEW MEMBERS - WELCOME!

MARIETTA COUNTEE is researching Arrow and Countee from Texas.

FRED WILSON is researching Caesar from Guyana (Essiquibo, Pleasance), Surinam from Guyana and Wilson from England.

JEAN WRIGHT-CALHOUN is researching Calhoun and Pamilton from Natchitoches Parish, Louisiana; Holman from Cleveland County, Arkansas; and Wright from Bradley County, Arkansas.

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Power of Charts Lies in Clarity, New Revelations

by Juliana Smith

Once upon a time, many moons ago, I worked in banking. I was in the Trust Department and had just been promoted to a new job in Securities Lending. This area processed some rather complicated transactions and balancing them out was sometimes tricky. Fortunately, I was trained by a friend, and she gave me some good advice that I use to this day in a variety of situations. She told me to arrange the various transaction pieces in front of me, and organize the debits and credits until I figured out where the money was going and how I would have to process it.

We are often faced with complicated relationships in our research and trying to match our ancestors with the names, dates, and ages in records can also sometimes be tricky. I often find myself going back to my stock loan days and arranging the information I have in various ways to see if I can't figure out a research problem.

Commonly Used Charts & Forms: There are a number of charts available that give us a basic understanding of relationships and family group structures, as well as providing nice visual aids for when we are able to corner family members and are attempting to initiate them into the joys of family history! Here are a few of the most common:

Pedigree Chart or Ancestral Chart

Family Group Sheet

Descendants Chart

There are also a number of charts that are important for tracking what you've done, like correspondence logs, research logs, records extraction forms, and much more. Since most of us are already familiar with these more traditional charts and forms, let's get to some other fun stuff we can do to help sort out the facts we have gathered.

Chart of Ages: It's really simple to make and use. I just make a column listing census years and along the top row I list the names of all of the immediate family members. Then, I just fill in the ages of the individuals in each census year. This allows me to see easily who should appear in what censuses and about how old they should be (providing they didn't lie to the census taker every year like some of my ancestors were prone to do!). I use a simple spreadsheet to create the charts, but they could just as easily be drawn. A copy of this sheet is filed in the beginning of the family binder and it comes in handy when I am searching the census.

Timelines: If you haven't created a timeline for your ancestor, please do. These have proven to be among the most helpful tools for me in helping to sort out problems and note holes in my research.

Address Charts: A great way to trace your ancestor's movements and help locate other locality-based records is by creating a spreadsheet with the addresses at which they lived. Addresses can be found on census records, in city directories, vital records, court records, and in many other places that may not be so obvious. It's another simple spreadsheet with just three columns -- the year, the address, and the record on which it was found. This makes it easy to pinpoint where that ancestor lived and that information can be used to determine what local government agency, religious jurisdiction, or even newspaper will likely have other records I am seeking.

Witnesses and Sponsors: Many records include the names of witnesses or sponsors, including marriage records, baptisms, probate records, land records, and more. Since witnesses and sponsors often turn up more than once and may be related, it is also helpful to keep a listing of those that appear on our ancestors' records. By creating a list to your ancestors' life events, you can determine which branch of the family they are more likely to be affiliated.

Medical Charts: Since we know that many diseases are hereditary, and the records we collect often tell us about the diseases of our ancestors, family historians are in a position to help our families know what we need to look out for, possibly saving lives. You can plot your ancestors' diseases using your own charts and forms, or there is even software available that can help you.

Summing Up: While this may seem like an awful lot of charts and forms to deal with, just the act of creating these forms has often led me to breakthroughs in my research. As I reorganize the facts in various ways, things seem to jump out at me.

Juliana Smith is the editor of the **Ancestry Daily News** and author of **The Ancestry Family Historian's Address Book**. She has written for **Ancestry Magazine** and **Genealogical Computing**.

Education Records: Insights to Souls

by **Loretto Dennis Scuzs**

(This article is reprinted from the January/February 1995 issue of *Ancestry Magazine*. The first part appeared in the January-February 2002 issue.)

--- BOARD OF EDUCATION. Typical board of education records include proceedings of the board; annual reports of superintendents, including faculty names and salaries; textbooks used in schools; statistical charts; and names of graduates. Employment records of teachers, including addresses and credentials, are often preserved. In city situations, having an exact address for a student is important.

--- EMPLOYMENT RECORDS. When they are extant, employment records often point to educational backgrounds. See "The Source: A Guidebook of American Genealogy" (Salt Lake City: Ancestry, 1983-
<http://shops.ancestry.com/product.asp?productid=1026>).

--- FRATERNITIES AND SORORITIES. An example is "The Sigma Chi Fraternity Manual and Directory," (Nate, 1922). The "Province Roll" on the first page identifies chapters on other campuses. A chronological list of members follows, identified by their years of graduation, occupations, and current addresses. A geographical and an alphabetical index for the publication is included.

--- GENEALOGICAL SOCIETIES. For years genealogical societies have been preserving and publishing school lists, photographs, teacher lists, and other genealogically important information from or about schools. See Library Sources, "Periodical Sources" by David Thackery in *Ancestry*, March/April 1994 at
<http://www.ancestry.com/library/view/ancmag/2647.asp>.

--- LOCAL HISTORIES. These publications can be found in every part of the country. Typically, they contain names of founders and physical descriptions and locations of the schools.

--- LOCAL HISTORICAL SOCIETIES. Look in ancestors' hometowns and counties for collections of albums, newspaper clippings, yearbooks, student registers, and photographs. Ridge Historical Society

(Chicago), for example, has 10 volumes of "Annual School Register of Pupils-Elementary Schools." A typical entry for Sutherland School, 1928-29, lists names of pupils, exact dates of birth, addresses, other schools attended, dates of entrance to school years of vaccination, grade levels, whether promoted, and names of parents or guardian and place of residence.

--- NATIVE AMERICAN. If your ancestor attended a school operated by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, either on the reservation or one of the non-reservation boarding schools, records maintained by the school often contain genealogical information. See "The Archives: A Guide to the Field Branches of the National Archives" (Salt Lake City: Ancestry, 1988- [out of print]).

--- NEWSPAPERS. Local newspapers often carry lengthy stories and unique photographs of school graduates, honor students, and sports participants and events.

--- REUNIONS. Class reunions are increasingly popular, and frequently, reunion booklets can be gold mines of genealogical information. Some of these booklets have been donated to local libraries, archives, and genealogical, and historical societies.

--- USED BOOKS, ANTIQUE, AND MEMORABILIA STORES. While shopping in South Bend, Indiana, I found my husband's picture in an antique store, in old Notre Dame yearbooks. Yearbooks, school books, reunion books, and other memorabilia are often purchased by these stores.

--- VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS. The same kinds of individual pupil records, photographs, yearbooks, reunion books, and more are available for institutions in most U.S. counties.

--- YEARBOOKS. Yearbooks are often available at the school where they originated. Most colleges, universities, high schools, and even some grade schools have produced yearbooks. They show club memberships, sports and music participation, and general interests. Some include address lists.

Loretto D. Scuzs, vice president of Publishing at Ancestry.com, co-edited *The Source: A Guidebook of American Genealogy* with Sandra H. Luebking. Among Lou's other publications, are *They Became Americans: Finding Naturalization Records and Ethnic Origins*, *Family History Made Easy*, and *Chicago and Cook County: A Guide to Research*.

City Directories Provide Insight Into Ancestors Lives

By Rhonda R. McClure

City directories can be a major resource when working with ancestors in a large city. They can help us to pin point the exact locality of our ancestor and his profession. There are times that tracing an ancestor through the city directory can help to fill in the other years between the census.

Even those of us who have used city directories may not have been aware of all the benefits of this resource.

Many of us overlook the other valuable information included in those yearly city directories. Once you have determined the addresses of your ancestors, you should look further through the city directory to see what else it offers.

More recent city directories may be located in local public libraries. In fact, if you visit any public library you will find at least the most recent city directory for that town. However, what do you do when looking for older city directories?

One of the first places to begin your search is the Family History Library. Through an ongoing project, city directories have been microfilmed for many years. These microfilms are available through the Family History Library.

Another valuable archive for city directories is the state library or the state archives. Often these repositories have established collections of newspapers and similar resources such as city directories. The best way to find out what they have is to visit their web site. For most states, the state archive and state library have put up a web site.

Usually, city directories will have maps showing the divisions of the city, such as precincts or wards. This information can be very important to you. By determining what ward or precinct your ancestor's residence falls in, you can

narrow searches in the unindexed census records.

The maps also offer you a visual approach to the actual locations of your ancestors in regards to each other. While you may have a vague concept from where they appear in the census, the map will show you definitively how close to each other they are.

However, some city directories have another section where the streets are listed alphabetically and thereunder the house numbers and then the name of the residence. These can be useful in trying to determine who lived in a given home prior to when your ancestor moved in. You never know when that name may become important in your research.

Another use of the city directories that few people consider is in regard to the addresses of business and churches. When seeing where the family lived in retrospect to the church, sometimes you can get an idea of the best church to contact for records. After all, we've all experienced the frustration of contacting a religious archive only to be told that we need to know the name of the church. Turning to the city directory, you might be able to determine the name of the church your ancestors were most likely to attend.

As you begin working with the city directories, take a moment to see what else the directory offers. One of my favorite aspects to the city directories is in the ads. There have been a few times that I discovered ads for services offered by my ancestors. There are many ways in which city directories can be of help, above and beyond searching the alphabetical listing of names.

Reprinted from *Family Tree Finders*

A scattered nation that remembers its past and connects it with the present will undoubtedly have a future as a people and probably even a more glorious life than the one in the past.

Lev Levanda
20th Century writer

A Step-By Step Guide to Using 1930 Census

1930 Census Research - "A Whole New Ball Game"

Welcome to this discussion of search procedures for the 1930 Federal Census. For the purpose of this discussion, we will assume that everyone has experience in working with previously released census records, both population schedules and Soundex or Miracode index films.

Today we will deal with the 1930 census (to be released April 1st), and the new and mostly different (and mostly more difficult) procedures that will be required to conduct a successful search.

As in past years, before going to the census itself it will be necessary to determine the correct ED (Enumeration District) number.

It is true that in earlier census years it was occasionally possible to have success without knowing the ED number, by conducting a "fishing expedition" through an entire town, township, or county, but for 1930 the chances of success with such a strategy are so remote as to be virtually impossible. Determining the ED number will be a more difficult and time-consuming process for 1930 than almost anyone might have imagined. This statement is true for most of us, but not for a fortunate few searching in the 10 states of the deep South (Louisiana, Arkansas, Tennessee, Virginia, and everything south of them to the Gulf) and in a handful of counties in Kentucky and West Virginia.

These locations ARE Soundexed for 1930, and they can be searched in exactly the same manner as in 1920. These Soundex films were released April 1st and made available at all NARA (National Archives and Records Administration) branches on that date. There is no name index of any kind available for the remainder of the nation.

For most of our searches, we must find the ED number in another way. This will require that we know the exact location of our target people. In very rural areas it may be sufficient to simply know the right township or approximate location of our target, but in any city or town (of any size) you will need a street address in order to determine the ED. In 1930 a much higher percentage of our population was urban than ever before, and towns were much larger than in previous years. It is true that large parts of the nation were not indexed for 1910, and that no place was Soundexed prior to 1880, and yet these difficulties were usually overcome without great effort.

This will not be the case for 1930, one can accurately say that it is a whole new ball game. A street address must now be considered a virtual necessity in order to find the ED. What if you don't have a street address? Go find it! Family sources are often best for this, talk to the older generations in your family, read old obits and announcements, examine old letters and envelopes, voter registration, & ship manifests.

Check Social Security applications (if they did not move during the 30's), previous census records (more on this later), telephone and other directories, birth, death, & marriage records, court cases, scrapbooks, school, church and employment records, naturalizations, et cetera. Among the best and easiest to use sources are old city directories.

City Directories can be found in many libraries around the country. NARA has purchased an extensive set of city directories for the years close to 1930. These city directories, which are not government records, are available at all the NARA branches.

A complete list of the cities and years for which city directories are available at NARA can be found at the NARA website at

<http://www.nara.gov/genealogy/citydirs.html>

Be sure to check the alphabetical listings for your target people in several years (e.g. 1928, 1929, 1930, 1931) if available. Record all street addresses found.

I HAVE THE STREET ADDRESS, NOW WHAT?

You need to determine the correct ED, using one of several available methods. The best of these methods, available for over 50 cities and some counties, is microfilm series M1931 (7 rolls). This is a cross index to city streets and ED's for the 1930 census.

See the following NARA webpage:

http://www.nara.gov/genealogy/1930census_city_streets.html

With M1931 you can quickly and accurately determine the ED your street address is in. Only about 30 of the 100 largest cities in 1930 are found cross indexed in M1931.

A group of census experts (and NARA volunteers) from California has extended the indexing effort to all the top 100 cities. This effort, known as ITWIT (no, not nitwit), has created an outstanding and extremely useful website at

<http://home.pacbell.net/spmorse/census/>

I urge all of you to visit this site, and be sure to click on the frequently asked questions button. This site has been operational for less than ten days, but is already considered indispensable for 1930 census work. This site is available online (not at NARA except those NARA branches that offer internet access) and will help you to quickly and accurately determine the ED by inputting the street address.

A few notes about using ITWIT. The directional designator must be properly used for the right result. For example, my grandfather in 1930 lived in Seattle on Alder Street. In Seattle then and now locations are usually given by the street name, omitting the E, W, etc. The official address of his house was on E. Alder, half a block from where it is simply Alder St. Inputting Alder St. (the common usage) into ITWIT yields several ED's, none of which was his correct one. Only when E. Alder St. was input did the correct ED come up.

Another thing to bear in mind with ITWIT is that it is brand new, essentially a very good

rough draft, and minor errors will show up. For example, my grandfather's old house in Los Angeles now in 1930 belonged to his brother. It was on W. 93rd St. between Broadway and Figueroa.

M1931, T1224, and M1930 (see below for the latter two) all clearly show that this street was a boundary between two ED's, meaning that houses on different sides of the street were in different ED's. ITWIT however only shows one ED for this street, so if that house were across the street its correct ED would not show up. These minor errors are being corrected constantly as soon as they are found. If your location is not covered by either M1931 or ITWIT, we have several more finding aids available. Even if you think you have the right ED using either of the above methods, it is a good idea to use these next methods to double check.

The next best method available is microfilm series T1224 (30 rolls for 1930), Geographic Descriptions of census ED's. This aid gives a complete description, sometimes block by block in cities, of every one of the over 120,000 ED's used in 1930 for the whole nation. It can be extremely helpful in rural areas or small towns, but in large cities the previously mentioned methods are usually the best first choice.

Many people had very high hopes when it was announced that the complete series of ED maps for 1930 for the whole nation would be filmed and available through NARA. This film series is M1930 (36 rolls), containing over 8300 maps.

Unfortunately, the quality of the maps vary, and in most cases this series is of less use than the aids previously mentioned, although useful as a cross check. NARA branches also have available larger and easier to read hard copies of many of these maps, but it can still be nearly impossible in large cities to determine the ED using this method. If you have located your target in the 1920 census, and are certain that they have not moved for 1930, you can use the 1920 ED and the street address to find the 1930 ED in T1224. T1224 cross references the 1930 ED numbers to those used for the same location in 1920.

Care must be taken in this however, since most 1920 ED's comprise from 2 to as many as 8

different ED's in 1930. Combining this with use of the street address while searching T1224 will give the best results.

The final step is to search the census itself. You go to the correct state, county, and ED. For rural areas you will have to perform a line by line search of the entire ED, but for towns and cities you will probably be able to search the left hand margin of the census sheets looking for the street name and ultimately the house number, then checking for the desired name.

To sum up, here are the seven different finding aids I have listed above:

Soundex name indexing films (deep South only)
City Directories films (for finding street address)
M1931 films (use street address to find ED)
ITWIT (use street address to find ED) (not available at NARA, only online)
T1224 films (use street address or 1920 ED to find 1930 ED)
M1930 films (use street address to find ED)
Hard copies of ED maps (use street address to find ED)

Of all the aids I have mentioned, everything but the Soundex and the census itself is available for use right now. These finding aids are in heavy use at present, and are expected to be in high demand after April 1st. Use of the online ITWIT site can also be expected to soar after April.

NARA expects that usage of its research rooms will skyrocket and usage of microfilm reading machines will be strictly limited to two hours when there is a waiting list situation. It is anticipated that this will be the case at essentially all times from April 1st until about August 1st. Some NARA branches handle the rush differently, often by a reservation system. Check with the branch you are interested in visiting.

The average successful 1920 census search takes about 20 minutes. We believe that the average successful 1930 search will take about 3-4 hours. This is roughly ten times as long, and many of our patrons will find this frustrating. To make matters worse, the 2 hour limit when others are waiting for a machine will mean that most people will have to be interrupted before completing a successful search.

Since most of the necessary resources are available right now when they are under utilized, and since the facilities will be so overtaxed very soon, it makes sense to do as much of the work now as possible. I urge everyone to get to work on their 1930 searches as soon as they can.

WHAT SHOULD I BRING WITH ME WHEN I COME TO NARA?

As with most research, the more information you bring with you, the more you can learn and the more successful your research. Try whenever possible to bring the following information and items with you when you come to NARA to do 1930 census research:

Complete names and ages of everyone you expect to find in the family.
Street address for 1930. City or town if street address is unknown.
Census information for the family in 1920, including street address and ED number. Bring change for the copy machines and donation jar.

In addition, I strongly recommend that you print out and bring two maps for each street address or location you are searching. I use one close up map showing the exact address and covering only a few city blocks, and a second map zoomed out to show major streets and arterials for a couple miles in each direction. These are available at several locations online, as well as several street mapping programs on CD-ROM.

The best webpage for general information on the 1930 census and the search processes available for it is NARA's 1930 webpage at

<http://www.nara.gov/genealogy/1930cen.html>

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Our past is not behind us; it is in our very being.

David Ben-Gurion
"Call of the Spirit"

Solving Conflict Requires Thorough Documentation

By George G. Morgan

Most of us have played the game of "telephone." You know the game. One person whispers a piece of information into another person's ear and that person whispers it to a third person. The chain continues until the information has made its way to the end to the last person, and that person then states aloud what he or she heard. Frequently, what comes out at the end of the line is very unlike the original piece of information.

While the outcome of a game of 'telephone' is usually hilarious, the same situation when applied to our family history can be frustratingly problematic. The family traditions passed from one relative to another can often get scrambled in the telling and retelling, until they may at some point bear little resemblance to the real truth. Let's examine the differences that occur when you encounter conflicting stories in your family research.

When Stories Don't Agree

Sometimes you find that family stories don't agree. Perhaps you have encountered small differences that were easily understood or resolved, with a little research. In other cases, though, you may have found that there were huge discrepancies, some so vast that the conflicting accounts bore little resemblance to one another. How does this happen?

It is natural that the telling and retelling of a family story will change the content over time. Different people hear things differently, interpret what they hear a little differently, and maybe have varying levels of storytelling skills. In other cases, of course, the passage of time dims the memory and recollections become less clear.

At other times, however, a family member may have purposely altered the facts for some reason. His or her agenda may have been an attempt to protect a reputation, to spare someone embarrassment or pain, or to simply contradict the facts for all time. Two examples in my own family come to mind. The first is my Grandmother Morgan's intentional falsification of her age in the 1900, 1910, and 1920 Federal censuses. (I can't wait to see the 1930 census!) Born in 1873, she claimed in 1900 to be twenty-five, in 1910 to be twenty-nine, and in 1920 to be thirty-two. The second example occurred when a great uncle married in 1887, and

less than eight months later he and his wife welcomed a baby girl. Short pregnancy or great scandal? The story was that, "The doctor made the baby come early." Some of your family stories may be more significant than that, including the changes in name, reports of marriages that never occurred, fathers that were 'lost,' and other such fiction.

Not only are these discrepancies challenging to resolve, but they may cause a family rift when identified or exposed. Sometimes what is presumed to be 'fact' travels down parallel paths of different family lines and, over time, gathers completely different details. There may be a single kernel of truth or fact there. However, when two family members from different lines come together to compare notes, both believing their account to be 'the' right one, the confrontation can be cataclysmic. This is especially true if family tradition holds the individual or the event described in the story to be illustrious, famous, pious, or imminently noteworthy in some other way. Whole generations may have been raised to venerate the memory of "our illustrious forebear." An intimation that the family idol may have been other than he or she was portrayed may cause tension, to say the least, and outright family revolution at its worst.

So what can you, as a genealogist or family historian, do?

A Thoughtful Research Approach

Whenever you encounter conflicting information, it is essential to look for the truth. My Grandmother Morgan's age was a matter of conjecture for some years, until she turned ninety and admitted her real date of birth and her age. (Apparently she suddenly became proud of having lived that long and survived two husbands and all of her friends.) As I began researching the facts of her date of birth, the conflicting information in the three censuses came to light.

It is essential that you understand the difference between primary and secondary sources. Primary sources are those records created at or near the time of the event. Secondary sources are those records and other materials created some significant period of time after the original event occurred. Primary sources, because of their chronological proximity to the event, are more likely to be correct.

Be open-minded when you encounter conflicting data. Don't automatically assume that one fact is correct and another is erroneous. Maintain a healthy perspective and remain open to the possibility that what you once thought was correct may really be incorrect.

ca. 1876 - ca. 1886 H. A. lived in Cook County, Illinois, but not in his current precinct.

Start your research by reviewing what you already have in evidence. Look at the documents you have, and the sources of all the information. That includes both written and oral data and accounts. Try to determine the source of each piece of evidence. (Was it published somewhere? Was it a family story and, if so, passed from which person to which other person? Are there any official documents, family documents, or both that you can personally review? Is there any reason for someone to have falsified a piece of information? If so, can you determine what motivation(s) he or she may have had?) All of these questions should be evaluated as you try to weigh the evidence.

Consider that primary sources are probably more accurate and stronger than secondary sources. If you cannot locate a primary source, look for multiple secondary sources. Do two secondary sources equal a primary source? Some researchers think so, but there can be strong arguments against that. In fact, there is sometimes a major fallacy in that approach. Occasionally, when a fact is transcribed or abstracted, an error is made. A date is transposed, a spelling error is made, or the transcriber makes an assumption and inserts his/her own opinion, as in 'correcting an obvious spelling error.' And as if that incorrect assumption/error isn't enough, another researcher will accept the erroneous data as fact without personally reviewing and verifying it. This new researcher may publish or pass along the information, promoting it as fact himself/herself, thus perpetuating the error. I have seen many, many examples of these errors, and you too, no doubt, have come across inconsistencies you know that you can conclusively disprove with other documentation.

Now, what happens when you come up with multiple primary and/or secondary sources, all of which conflict? In those cases, document all of them! If there is one or more that you believe is/are the best, document and notate each one to indicate why you feel one is better than another, based on your research and/or personal knowledge. And keep looking for more evidence to prove or disprove what you have found to date. Don't give up until you are satisfied you have the facts right.

Documenting the Truth

Regardless of the circumstances, you will always want to document the correct (or most correct) information. If you and your relatives are in disagreement about the veracity of a story or fact, do your best to obtain factual primary source evidence and document your findings. Tact and diplomacy are always the best tools for disclosing your findings. I once approached an argumentative cousin whose

version of a family tradition and mine varied. I decided to search for the truth, no matter which way it turned out. Ultimately, my version was more correct than hers, and so I prepared copies of everything I'd found. I made contact by mail, sending a complete set of the materials, and included a cover letter. In it, I said something to the effect of, "We've both been given variations of the story of our Great-uncle Scott's situation. The enclosed documents were obtained from . . ." I then went on to state what I felt to be the correct hypothesis, and asked for my cousin's input. Presented with the evidence I had collected, she agreed that I had really uncovered the facts. We now both tell the same story.

At other times, however, your discovery of the truth may be hurtful or embarrassing to someone living or to their descendants. You must always record the truth for your files. However, you should be sensitive to others and perhaps refrain from making the truth public until such time as the facts are no longer hurtful. Be kind.

Summing Up

When considering conflicting family stories, family traditions, and any type of contradictory evidence, maintain an open mind and then seek to locate all the available information to help elucidate the truth. Then, perhaps, you can clear up those "he said - she said" situations to bring the real story to light.

George G. Morgan is a proud member of the International Society of Family History Writers and Editors, Inc. (ISFHWE).

Reprinted from Ancestry Daily News

CAAGS
Ad Hoc Committee
Nominating and Election of Officers
Procedural Recommendations

DATE: September 9, 2002

Dear CAAGS Membership,

For purposes of the CAAGS Membership, 'nominations' are defined as...a vehicle by which CAAGS Members choose (an) individual(s) as a candidate(s), one(s) who will seek or is/are proposed for an Officer in the Organization. 'Elections' are defined as the vehicle by which the Membership selects, by vote of the Membership, an individual for the office he/she is vying for.

Our current CAAGS Bylaws do not include specific guidelines or procedures by which to nominate or elect Officers and Conference Delegates, hereinafter referred to as an Officer, for the Organization. When approved by you, the General Membership, these procedures will, immediately amend, by addendum, CAAGS Bylaws and thereafter, until again amended, serve as mandated procedures to be followed by CAAGS when nominating and electing an Officer(s).

CAAGS Bylaws do, however, provide for a Nominating Committee, (see ARTICLE III, Section 1) Chaired by the Second Vice President, (see ARTICLE V Section 5 - (f). It will be mandated, upon approval of these proposed procedures or a reasonable facsimile thereof, that the Nominating Committee follow these procedures for nominating and electing Officers of the Organization.

CAAGS

Ad Hoc Committee

Nominations Procedure

Proposal

1. **Qualifications for Office**

1. A Nominee must be in good financial standing in the Organization.
2. Have a sincere desire to work within the infrastructure of CAAGS while exercising all our objectives and what is in the best interest of the Organization.
3. No mandatory length of membership in the Organization is required for any office with the exception of President and First Vice-President.
 - a. The length of membership in the Organization for President and First Vice-President must have been at least two consecutive calendar years immediately prior to his/her nomination. Members must have actively participated in the Organization during that period and have attended at least seven General meetings within the last 12 months prior to nomination.
 - b. Candidates for President must not have served in that office for the previous 4 years, (Two full allowable terms of the Presidential Office).
4. Members may run for an open Office while holding another. Members must vacate incumbent office December 31, assuming newly elected office January 1.
5. A Member may not run for more than one Office per election.
6. A Member of the Nominating Committee may run for any Office that is being filled.

Procedures for Nominations

1. See Article III, Section 1; Section 2; Section 3.
2. No Member may nominate more than one individual per available office unless that office requires more than one individual.
3. A Member may nominate one Member for each Office to be filled, including nomination of one's self as a Candidate for an Office..
4. Nominations must be in writing.
5. An incumbent Officer, if not nominated, must file their intent to run, again, for their Office, following these nominating procedures.
6. Nominations from the floor are allowed. The same procedure, as in #3, under 'qualifications' must be followed to assure write-in candidates have proper qualifications for the position.
7. Member making a nomination must secure consent from the Nominee for their nomination. Nominee should be prepared to make the statement that he/she meets the requirements for that office and is willing to accept the nomination.
8. The Nomination Committee Chair is responsible for providing the form for 'Nomination for Office'. Forms must be available prior to the nomination meeting and available at the nomination meeting for floor nominations. Forms must include Nominee's qualifications for the position he/she is nominated for.
9. Nominations shall be received by the Nominating Committee ten (10) calendar days prior to the nominating-general meeting.

10. A nomination must be solicited by the Nominating Committee if at least one individual is not nominated for an Office or Delegate. The solicitation should continue until there is at least one Nominee for each position. They may, however, solicit more than one nominee for all positions.
11. Copies of all nominations with qualifications must be mailed and received by the General Membership within 7 days from the nominating General meeting.
12. It is the duty of the Nominating Committee to contact all Members who have been tentatively nominated to verify their permission to be placed on the ballot; verify their qualifications; and may secure a short thumb-nail sketch if the Nominee desires. The Nominee, at this time, should be reminded of the duties of the position for which they are being considered.
13. It is the duty of the Nominating Committee to decline a nominee who lacks qualifications for the position he/she is being nominated for. This must be done in writing, stating why the nomination was declined.

III Elected Officers

1. See Current Bylaws - Article IV (a) and (b) for list of Officers; See Article V for duties of the Offices.
2. Conference Delegates (Federation of Genealogical Societies (FGS), National Genealogical Societies (NGS)) and any future Conference Delegates must be elected by the Membership for a two year term. Delegates will have no limit to the number of number of terms they may serve. They must follow the same procedure for nomination as all Nominees for Office. Delegates will be elected each odd year. Delegate must be available for travel to 'conferences' and willing to make a full report of Conference activities to the Membership within 60 days of attendance.
3. All vacated Offices, must be filled, using election procedures, within 90 days after Office has been vacated, with the exception of President. The First Vice-President automatically ascends to the President should that office be vacated for any reason.
4. Should the office of First Vice-President become vacant, or Officer ascends to the Presidency, or should both the offices of President and Vice-President become vacant at the approximately same time, a special election must be held within 90 days, following the same procedures as followed for the regular elections. In the interim, Roberts Rules of Order, Current Edition will dictate ascension to the Office(s).

IV Non Elected -Appointed Officers and Chairpersons.

1. See Article IV - (c).
2. The President elect shall appoint committee chairpersons in January.
3. The President-elect shall have the right to appoint new non-elected Officers in January at the beginning of his/her term. He/she may also elect to keep the incumbent of any Office and change others. These appointments are subject to confirmation by the Membership. (These Officers and Chairpersons will remain in office for their full two year term should the office of President be vacated and a new President ascend to the office or should a new President be elected.)
4. It is the responsibility of the President to fill a vacated position of an appointed Officers when vacated for any reason, with all do speed.

**CAAGS
Ad Hoc Committee
Election Procedure
Proposal**

I Ballots/Balloting

1. The Nominating Committee (See ARTICLE III, Section 1) is responsible for developing/devising a system wherein each 'voting' CAAGS member, (See Membership Classification - Article II, Section 1) in attendance at the 'Election Meeting' be given one ballot containing all vacant offices; all nominees and space for 'write in' candidate.
2. Each ballott must be returned whether or not Member chooses to exercise his/her right to vote. ALL BALLOTS MUST BE ACCOUNTED FOR. (See # 4, Voting)
3. To qualify as a voting Member, one must be a paid member of CAAGS for at least 60 days prior to the election date.

II. Voting

1. On Election Day, all Nominees present must be introduced to the Membership and allowed to briefly state their qualifications, platform and interest if they so desire.
2. The Nominating Committe must state the names of all Nominees and briefly reference qualifications of those Nominees not in attendance. No inference shall be made because of a Nominee's inability to attend, unless Nominee delivers one.
3. Members are to be given ample time and privacy to cast their votes.
4. All ballots are to be returned and accounted for prior to tabulation.
5. No ballot may leave balloting room until all ballots are accounted for and votes have been tabulated. Should a ballot leave the ballot room for any reason, ballot must be voided. A new ballot may be given that Member once old ballot has been depredated.

III. Tabulation of Votes

1. At least three Members of the Nominating Committee (General Members if Nominating Committee Members are unavailable) are responsible for the tabulation of ballots.
2. No results can be given or posted until all ballots are accounted for and all tallies coincide/agree.
3. Ballots must be tabulated and results posted and announced, verbally, to the Membership on Election day.
4. All ballots, including any voids, must be retained by the Committee for one-year after each elections.

California African-American Genealogical Society

HERITAGE NEWSLETTER

Post Office Box 8442 Los Angeles, California 90008-0442

Editor-at-Fault: R. Batiste ISSN 1083-8937 Vol 14 No. 9-10 September-October, 2002
DISCLAIMER: The Editor nor CAAGS assumes any responsibility for articles submitted to the newsletter by its members.
The deadline for all Newsletter articles is the 22nd of each month.

President's Letter

Welcome back from the Summer break.

CAAGS has an active schedule planned to finish off the the year and start 2003. This month, we will present our annual Show and Tell, one of our most popular metings. Come prepared to present all your finds and treasures. Speakers for the next few months include Norma Keating and , Peter Carr. Additionally, we will be nominating and electing new officers for the positions of First Vice President, Recording Secretary, and Treasurer. Please consider serving in one of these capacities. CAAGS is our organization and canonly be as strong as we make it.

CAAGS has also committed to hosting the Third Annual West Coast African Ameican Genalogical Summit and we will need all of our efforts to make it a success. Help will be needed on all aspects to put on a successful conference.

The Newsletter is seeking an editor and there are openings on the CAAGS Board for Fundraising, Public Relations and Publications Chairman. Additionally, every committee always needs a new point of view. Remember, CAAGS is only as good as WE make it and it requires all of our efforts.

Several CAAGS members will be making important regional and national presentations during the next few months. If you can, try to attend the meetings and conferences and offer your support.

Contributions to our Library have been continuing and are appreciated. Vera Merritt, who served as Treasurer and Fund Raising chairman, has relocated to the Washington, D.C., area. She oversaw our successful Stay at Home Tea last spring and her contributions and dedication will be missed.

In Memoriam

We regret reporting the death of longtime CAAGS member Barbara King. In addition to CAAGS, she was active in the African-American Quilters Guild and had served as that group's president. Barbara died while attending the FGS conference, meeting with friends and discussing genealogy. We extend our condolences to her friends and family.

CAAGS MEETINGS

Martin Luther King United Methodist Church
6625 4th Avenue
(East of Crenshaw Boulevard,
between Gage and Florence Avenues)
Los Angeles, California

21 September 2002

General Schedule

10:00-11:30

Beginning and Intermediate Class

11:30-12:00

Business Meeting

12:00-12:15

Break

12:30 -1:45

Show and Tell

This is out opportunity to reveal all those finds and treasures uncovered over the past year .

October: Norma Keating

November: Peter Carr

December: Installation of new Officers and Annual Christmas Potluck Luncheon

October is Family History Month

Computerized Records Still Pose Research Hazards

by Rhonda R. McClure

For some reason when it comes to computers and digitized records, genealogists forget that the digitization does nothing to make the records better than it was before. Depending on the method of digitization there is the potential for additional errors, but generally speaking, with the exception of making it easier to search, the now computerized version of the record is no better.

When I give a lecture on online sources, I point out to those attending that it is up to them to know the limitations of the source that has been digitized. This means understanding the pros and cons of the resources before it was digitized.

Dee Parmer Woodtor

Telling The Family Story

Dee Parmer Woodtor says:

"Too few African American families tell their stories. Once you really get into the research, you will discover amazing stories and lives that your ancestors have led just from finding and interpreting the records. You will not ever put your research aside for that reason and many more. Then there are friends and a community of researchers out here to discover and with whom you can form strong bonds. Welcome to a growing community of committed people, all volunteers, who are retelling our story in the first voice!"

Dr. Woodtor is the author of *Finding A Place Called Home: A Guide to African American Genealogy and Historical Identity*. She was the keynotespeaker at the first West Coast African American Genealogical Summit held in Oakland in 2001.

Dr. Woodtor died in August, 2002.

For instance, census records that have been digitized are no more accurate or better than the microfilmed equivalent. There is still the potential for not knowing who answered the enumerators questions. In the case of a published family history or a compiled genealogy, it is important to know who compiled it and if there are any major issues in accuracy.

It is up to me, as the researcher, to know what the potential errors are if I am using Pope's "Pioneers of Massachusetts" online through my subscription at Genealogy.com. It is up to me to recognize that the book has some mistakes. It is also up to me to understand how it was digitized. In this example, the pages available online were digitized as images, rather than having the book run through an Optical Character Recognition program where misreads of the text can add to the errors.

One source that has always been computerized, but is misunderstood is the Social Security Death Index. So often I hear people bemoaning how their ancestors aren't in it. First, it is not an all encompassing index to deaths in the United States. In fact while Social Security began in the late 1930s, the index that we know as the SSDI was not begun until 1962. Those who died before 1962, who were receiving social security, are likely to not be in there. This does not mean that the company offering the SSDI, whether it be RootsWeb, Ancestry.com, or Genealogy.com should be questioned for their accuracy. Instead we should be aware of this limitation and accept it when we use this database.

Computers have made research much easier. In some instances though, they have made things harder because we somehow think that the computer should fix the problems of the original source. This is seldom the case. Save yourself some frustration by understanding the original source that is now available by computerized means. In the end it will save you time.

Reprinted from *Family Tree Finders*

Child's Name Can Link History, Generations

By Karen Frisch

Long before children's names were chosen for their beauty or popularity, parents had other criteria for selecting names. Names were chosen not for their originality but often to honor relatives, either dead or living. Consequently the same names tended to be repeated through successive generations in European countries as well as in Jewish and Chinese tradition.

For centuries naming children after family members has been commonplace. If a name cuts across several generations, including cousins, it usually indicates a family connection.

The desire to perpetuate names is so strong that parents in the late 1700s and early 1800s took steps to ensure that a name did not die out even if the child did. Early American records contain listings of a child being given the same name as a sibling who had died previously. The result is the appearance of a "Kent Wheeler 2d" who appears in birth records for 1777, named after his brother by the same name who was born in 1771 but died prematurely. Kent was their maternal grandmother's surname.

On occasion a child will be given the complete name of a family elder, as in the case of Israel Whitaker Drowne, born in 1810, when his father named him after his own grandfather who was born one hundred years earlier in 1710. Such a custom is evidence of considerable respect or affection within families.

Surnames arose in the Middle Ages out of necessity to differentiate individuals with the same first name. They were also a way to acknowledge the occupation of the person--Miller or Cartwright, for example.

Both first and last names often became Anglicized once a family came to America. The original name Margarethe in Germany was often changed to Margaret two generations later when her namesake was born in America.

Daughters were named after their mothers just as sons were for their fathers. One family found eleven family members over seven decades who were given some combination of the names Henrietta, Ernestine, and Augusta to honor the family matriarch and her daughters, who were born in the 1860s.

With the tradition of reversing or varying names through different generations, family relationships become easier to spot in the record books. It gets confusing, however, when the desire to bestow an honored name upon someone results in cousins who were born in the same town being given the same name--especially when they both marry women named Mary two years apart. In such a situation genealogists are forced to depend on other records to determine Mary's correct surname. Children named after maternal relatives can also help to distinguish the two lines.

During America's colonial period families also favored names based on virtues. Patience, Mercy, Benevolence, Thankful, Deliverance, and even Experience are on record. They were usually given to women, but not exclusively. Such names were often paired with a short last name, as in the case of Experience White.

Military leaders under whom soldiers served frequently appear as children's names following the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812. The names Bertha and Betsey are repeated over generations in the Drowne family until in 1817 the name Tower begins to appear as a middle name. Betsey's grandfather fought in the Revolution under Captain Levi Tower.

A George Washington Smith who appears in birth records from 1809 reflects two things: a patriotism at the turn of the new century and a distinctive first name giving emphasis to the most common surname. If you find yourself playing the name game, knowledge of family names can offer helpful clues.

Born and raised in Rhode Island, Karen Frisch has been an avid reader since childhood when she also developed an interest in writing and drawing. She has traced her lineage back thirty generations to the year 1100 through England, Scotland, Germany, and Wales. Karen is the author of *Unlocking the Secrets in Old Photographs*.

Reprinted from Ancestry Daily News

Indexes to Deed Books Save Time, Add New Data

By **Sandra K. Gorin**

You are at the county court house and want to find a deed. Where do you look first? In most county clerk offices, you will find index books for the deeds and it surely saves a lot of hauling of those 500 pound books off the shelf! Well, perhaps I exaggerate a tad, but as most of you know, they are heavy and get heavier all the time. If the deed books are indexed, you will likely find two separate set of indexes - grantor and grantee. The grantor is the person granting the land (selling) and the grantee is he who is receiving the land. The index book will show a shorthand version with the grantor's name, the grantees name, the date, where the land was located, and a reference to the deed book where the actual deed is to be found.

Different types of transactions were recorded in the deed books including the following:

Deed of Sale: This is also called an indenture, the form used to transfer property (normally land). They could also be transferring live stock, slaves, and household goods.

Deeds of Gift: Easy to spot, they normally were very flowery and started with the expression - "for the love and affection". This is a signal that possibly the grantor is related to the grantee - a married daughter, a close relative. The "consideration" which is the money that was paid will be very minimal, normally \$1.00.

Mortgage Sales: These are recognized if the words "Deed of Mortgage" is used. But, they might not have included those words and you have to read the deed closely to see if it is in fact. Look for wording such As: "if John Smith (party A) pays John Jones (party B) a stated amount of money by a specific date, then it is null and void." It is not a permanent sale, but a mortgage and the land is collateral.

Strawman Sales: These are identified easily when they occur on the same day - Smith sells to Jones and Jones sells to Adams - all on the same day. It is simply a way for the parties to

eliminate a legal restriction that might have been in the original instrument. Here's the way it works: Smith sells to Jones, Jones sells to Adams or back to Smith. Jones here is the middleman - normally a trusted relative or friend. This was used in several instances, one being when two people owned the land together and one wanted to sell his portion to the other.

Estate settlements: These are sales from heirs of a deceased family member to other family members or an outside individual. Sometimes you will find estate settlements in the wills themselves, or in the probate records and they are not recorded in the deed books.

I have given definitions to some of the terms used in the land transactions. Here are some additional ones, as provided by my friend and expert, Bill Utterback:

Call: the feature, measurement or landmark noted as the starting part or a leg of the land. In Kentucky, items such as trees, stones, slashes on a tree, etc. were used to mark the boundaries.

Corner: Where the line changed direction.

POB: Point of beginning ... where the surveyors start measuring off the land.

Dower: As you know, the widow received her dower in the land, 1/3rd.

Escheat: this is land that reverted to the government or to the estate due to the fact that the man left no heirs.

Grant: Transfer of the title of the property by the governing body to the very first owner of the land. Also known as the Patent.

Quitclaim deed: Gives up any claim on the property but does not guarantee that the title is clear from any other claim.

Warrant: An order by a government body authorizing the action. Normally this is an order allowing a land survey for an individual in preparation for the issuance of a grant.

Reprinted from Rootsweb's KYRESEARCH (Kentucky Research List)

Old Newspapers Enhance Research

As we work on locating ancestors and try to put a face and personality to the bare bones details of our research, a wonderful source can be discovered in the pages of newspapers.

Obituaries are an incredible source of information about family relationships and the social relationships that were significant to the deceased. While earlier obituaries vary somewhat from those of today, they still provide a window into the past. The earliest obituaries were very minimal in the amount of information they supplied on the deceased as well as his/her family. Unless the person were noteworthy, it often consists of the person's name and date and place of death. While that is not much by today's standards, in the years before death certificates that can be a jackpot. Victorian era obituaries tend to be more verbose and elaborate on either the details of the deceased's life or personality. That carried over, to a degree, into the early twentieth century.

An important fact to keep in mind while searching for an ancestor's obituary is that not everyone had an obituary in the paper. Typically people who were prominent in the community, people who had money, a death that was unusual or a person/family that had been in the community for several generations were more apt to have an obituary. Poor people or the average person were not likely to be in earlier obituaries unless they met a violent end. In those cases, it is more likely that they would be in a newspaper story as opposed to an obituary. Even today there are some areas of the country (usually the larger cities) where a family must pay to have an obituary put into the newspaper. Death notices are slightly different from obituaries. A death notice resembles the very earliest obituaries in that it usually gives just the name and death date of the deceased and the funeral home who was handling the arrangements. Marriage notices were put in newspapers as early as the late 1700's. The typical marriage notice was short and stated such things as the names of the parties getting married, the minister's name, the date of the marriage and, sometimes, the parent of the bride or groom. As with obituaries, not every marriage was put into the paper, although

there were more marriage notices for the average person than obituaries.

Advertisements are an often overlooked but enriching source of details of our ancestors. Hat makers, doctors, book sellers, music teachers and dry goods merchants are just a sample of who might place a newspaper advertisement.

You can also find ads for run away slaves and apprentices, houses for sale or rent, property foreclosures and very entertaining ads for cures. Classified ads included some of the items mentioned above as well as requests for job applicants, notices of non-responsibility for debts and household goods for sale.

News stories, the heart of a newspaper, include stories about the people who lived and worked in the area as well as stories of national interest. A wonderful way to learn how the people in a community felt about a war, a new law or an event of local interest, is to read the local coverage of the event and observe the tone of the article as well as related articles in later issues. While a newspaper will not reflect 100% of the views of the local people, it should reflect a general attitude that can help put the event into the perspective of time and place.

The Dead Letter files from local newspapers are a wonderful way to zero in on a death date or a date of immigration. A letter was an important link to family. It would not be left unclaimed unless the recipient was not able to pick it up. Scanning the lists of dead letters can often give clues about when an ancestor left the area either in a wagon or a coffin.

Personal ads were also a part of 19th century newspapers. The better known ads in the Boston newspapers of Irish family and friends trying to locate either new immigrants or family members in the area are not the only personal ads in news papers. Some of the best ones, however, are in ethnic newspapers, such as German community newspapers. Unfortunately, those newspapers are frequently in the native tongue of its readers.

As you can see, a trip to the Library of Congress, the state archives or a good local college library can be well worth the time spent in locating fascinating details and information about our ancestors.

This article was contributed by: Therese Fisher, A.G., of Genealogy Researchers, and reprinted from Heritageneews, Heritage Books.

GRAVESTONES REVEAL HIDDEN FAMILY SECRETS

By **Karen Frisch**

No matter what secrets our ancestors took to their graves, they often leave others behind in unlikely places. The cemeteries where your ancestors were laid to rest are often filled with clues to their lives, long after their deaths.

If you're visiting the cemetery early in your research, you can learn a great deal of value. Gravestones can confirm relationships of family members whose names are listed together in granite. You'll know relatives' names before you spend time searching in public records offices.

Not only can a headstone tell you who is buried in a plot, but it can contain the dates of birth and death for those interred there. The cemetery records office has more extensive details regarding the deceased. Information varies by cemetery, but you might learn the cause of death and other facts for which vital statistics offices generally charge a fee.

It's common to find stillborn babies or infants buried in family plots. The cemetery office will know for certain who, if anyone, has paid for perpetual care for a gravesite. It might surprise you if the person turns out to be someone other than a family member.

The office can also tell you who is not buried in a certain plot. Occasionally families will inscribe relatives' names on a tombstone with the assumption those family members will be buried there. If the office has no record of someone whose name is engraved on a stone, it might be an indication the deceased died in another state or, in the case of a widow, remarried.

The reverse is also true. Sometimes graves contain individuals whose names do not appear on the stone. One family was surprised to discover that a complete stranger had been buried in a family grave, and they were sure the cemetery record keeper had made an error. An elderly uncle remembered the great-great-aunt buried there and was able to tell younger family

members that the woman had never divorced her wayward husband because of a fear of scandal. In her later years she had developed a close attachment to another man. Although they were never able to marry, they found a way to spend eternity together.

Don't assume simply because a name is carved in stone that the person is buried beneath it. Always ask at the records office or by telephone the names of all people buried in a plot.

Inaccuracies can still occur even on headstones. In one instance a family found that the year of birth for the deceased was incorrect by a year. The mistake had never been corrected, presumably due to the family's grief.

Other carvings can reveal insights into the family. Witticisms on a headstone might indicate a sense of humor while sentimental verses hint at great affection. In some cases a large monument might indicate wealth while the absence can be a sign of poverty.

A family who learned that eleven ancestors were buried in a family plot expected to find names and dates carved on a sizable headstone. Instead, they were disappointed to find a bare plot of land with no stone at all. The deceased father had been an unskilled French-Canadian immigrant laborer with twelve children. While he had lived to be one hundred and four years old, ten of his children died before him, either from disease or accident. With so many funerals in so short a period of time, headstones were simply too costly.

Other searchers have better luck. A grave marker can tell you the presence of an ancestor who fought in the Civil or Revolutionary War. Whatever you uncover, it's inspiring to know even the grave doesn't silence our ancestors.

Born and raised in Rhode Island, Karen Frisch has been an avid reader since childhood when she also developed an interest in writing and drawing. She has traced her lineage back thirty generations to the year 1100. A former teacher, she received a Master of Arts in Victorian literature from the University of Rhode Island, with courses at the University of London, and holds undergraduate degrees in English and art from Rhode Island College. Karen is also the author of *Unlocking the Secrets in Old Photographs*

Reprinted from **Ancestry Daily News.**

Real Work Starts After Finding That Document

By Juliana Smith

Whenever I find a record of one of my ancestors, my first instinct is to jump around screaming like a banshee, scaring all living creatures in a six-mile radius. Actually, my theory about banshees is that they're not predicting a death, but more likely that they are ancient genealogist fairies. What they're screaming is that they found a death record --- "No, I didn't say, 'Grandpa, you will die.' I said, 'I now know when Grandpa Euell died!'"

But I digress. Next, if I'm at home, I share my find with my husband and daughter. They are truly the best family a genealogist could ask for. Besides putting up with the constant state of disarray in the dining room and my odd hours, they both know that the appropriate response when Mommy is ranting about a find is, "Interesting -- great job!" Even our golden retriever gets excited and wags her tail for me. (The cats don't do anything, but their job is to stay cool at all times and I know deep down they're happy for me.)

Next, I get on the phone with Mom or Dad (depending on which branch of the family the find falls in) or another relative and share the good news with them. After all the festivities have died down, the document gets filed and that's it, right? What a let down! After all that hard work searching for this record, just to be filed away? No, now it's time to spend some quality time with our dear record.

To Transcribe or Not To Transcribe

Some records are a little tougher to get to know than others and may take a little effort. Legal documents in particular need close attention.

"The Petition of William J. Dennis respectfully . . . blah, blah, blah . . . That he is an Executor, named in the Will and Testament of Emma R. Dennis, late of the County of Kings . . . blah, blah, blah. When I read through them I tend to skip over the "blah, blah, blah" parts a little too much and find that I don't really understand all I'm reading.

For me, one of the best ways to familiarize myself with a document is to transcribe it. Reading through it just doesn't do it for me. Transcribing makes me focus on each word and seems to embed it in my memory a bit better. Then, when I run across things like, "That the deceased left her surviving husband [George W. Dennis] who resides at 850 Main St., Boise, Idaho . . ." I sit up and take notice. Boise, Idaho? What was the husband of Emma Dennis of Kings County, New York doing in Boise, Idaho? There's a family mystery that needs to be explored!

Transcribing has led me to a number of discoveries that had totally escaped me when I first read through the document. In addition, the transcriptions saved electronically can be pulled up easily, with key pieces highlighted and formatted to stand out, and serve as an electronic backup of the original. When I want to just check a quick fact, I can easily pull up the documents which are saved to surname folders and then by individual (ex: c:\genealogy\Dennis\Emma). Having the document available at the click of a mouse saves me from having to lug binders out of the cabinet.

Additional Steps

Once transcribed, the transcription is also copy/pasted into my genealogy software. This prompts me to enter in all the new information I found, including the transcription as part of my source documentation -- a good way to make sure sources are included for all entries. Now the document can come with me on any future research trips snugly tucked away on my laptop. (If I didn't have a laptop, I could use the Online Family Tree or my MyFamily.com site which, would allow me to access it anywhere that had Internet access.) While I'm getting acquainted with the document, I also include it in my timelines. This gives me a clear picture of how this record fits into the big picture. The timeline entry typically includes the date and a

(Continued on Next Page)

Quality Time, Quality Finds

(Continued from Previous Page)

brief description of the event, along with the source information and location of the record in my files. I also often include an extract of the record in the timeline, particularly with census and directory records.

Often the records will reference more than one person in the family. In these cases, I like to make copies for each family member and include it in their section of the appropriate notebook. Then, I don't have to bounce back and forth between sections to view all the records that they are mentioned in. I have a chronological record at my fingertips by just leafing through their section. True, it's more paper, but as long as I keep the pages securely in their section, I don't run the risk of the pages growing into those dreaded piles.

What To Do With All Those "FNAs"

Then, there are those "other folks" mentioned in documents --- the non-family members (so far as we know). Friends, neighbors, and associates were often an important part of our ancestors' lives, and often these relationships can hold clues that lead to more breakthroughs.

The hard part is keeping track of all of these people. I really don't want to make a whole section for each name that I run across in conjunction with our ancestors, but I still want to keep an eye on them. Instead of making extra copies for each individual, I am going to start an index to these people, filed by surname, and then given name. I haven't decided on a format yet, but am leaning towards a word processing document.

Hopefully this has inspired you to spend some time taking a good look at the records of your ancestors. After all, you worked hard to find them --- don't you deserve some quality time together?

Juliana Smith is the editor of the Ancestry Daily News and author of The Ancestry Family Historian's Address Book. She has written for Ancestry Magazine and Genealogical Computing.

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Tell ye your children of it, and let your children tell their children, and their children another generation.

Joel 1:3

WW2 Draft Registrations Limited but Valued Source

by Michael John Neill

Many genealogists are familiar with the World War I draft cards. However, there are also draft cards from World War II. Some of these cards are available to the public.

The cards that are publicly available are from the fourth registration done in 1942. This registration included men born between 28 April 1877 and 16 February 1897. (These registrants would have been between 45 and 65 years old at the time of filing.) These cards are organized by state and are filed with the appropriate regional branch of the National Archives.

The only way to access these cards is on-site at the appropriate regional branch of the National Archives. They are not on microfilm. A few cards for Ohio have been digitized. The major drawback to these records is that they are not available on microfilm and must be accessed either in person or via a researcher. One significant advantage of these cards is that they generally are organized alphabetically for an entire state. When using the World War I draft cards, one must know the draft registration board to locate a card for an urban resident. This is generally not the case with the cards from World War II. In my case, I decided this organizational feature of the records was a significant advantage for one of my problems.

The cards I obtained were from: National Archives Record Group 147, Records of the Selective Service System, Illinois State Office Registration Cards, World War II, 4th Draft Registration, April 1942. Since the cards I needed were from Illinois, they were obtained at the NARA regional branch facility in Chicago.

Unfortunately, the card I really wanted was not in the collection. My wife's great-grandfather "disappeared" from Chicago, Illinois, ca. 1921 and all trace of him has been lost. I had hoped that he would still be living somewhere in Illinois and that his name would appear on one of the registration cards. The

birth year I had was approximate (ca. 1888) but it was in the middle of the range of years for the draft registration. I felt relatively confident the approximate age was not a problem. He did not appear in the Illinois cards, and my "brick wall" still stands tall. He had either moved or died before the 1942 registration. I too, am not always successful in solving my problems immediately.

However, I did obtain cards for three of my children's ancestors whose age required them to register for the draft. These three ancestors are already fairly well-documented, but I did learn:

--- That my great-grandfather weighed two-hundred-and-ten pounds at age sixty.

--- That my wife's great-grandfather worked for the Iowa-Illinois Gas & Electric Company.

Some places of birth listed on the cards were as specific as a city and a state, others listed only a county and state. In some cases, the village of foreign birth was given as well, but many foreign places of birth listed were only as specific as the country. One must keep in mind that the country was at war and creating massive amounts of genealogical data was not a part of the war effort. We are fortunate to have the records that we do. Had I any "difficult" immigrants who would have been required to register, I would have made certain to obtain their card as it may potentially contain a specific place of birth.

What Do The Cards Contain?

The cards asked the following questions:

- 1) Name
- 2) Place of residence
- 3) Mailing address
- 4) Telephone
- 5) Age and date of birth
- 6) Place of birth town/county and state/country
- 7) Name and address of person who will always know your address
- 8) Employer's Name and Address
- 9) Place of Employment or Business

A signature was also required.

Continued on Next Page

WW 2 Draft Registrations

Continued from Previous Page

The reverse side of the card asks questions regarding the registrant's physical description, including:

- Race (White, Negro, Oriental)
- Height
- Eyes
- Hair
- Complexion
- Other physical characteristics that will aid in identification

All the cards were the "same;" however, there were slight variations on the amount of detail provided and occasionally additional "comments" were written on the card.

Who Always Knows Your Address?

The "person who will always know your address" was particularly helpful. Based upon the address and the name (e.g., Mrs. John Smith) many such persons were the spouse of the registrant. In some cases, I did see the word "wife" specifically written in parenthesis after the person's name, but not always. Other familial relationships were occasionally noted for the person who would always know the registrant's address, but there was no space to specifically record the relationship.

Why Use the Cards?

The cards will not solve every genealogical problem, but there are situations where they can be helpful:

- If you know the male ancestor was the "right age" and was living in 1942, but are not certain of the exact location (you'll need the state).
- Your male ancestor's birthplace listed on death certificates and other records is very unspecific.
- You have "lost" a male relative of the appropriate age during the World War II era.

What you will have to know to use the cards:

- The individual's name
- The state of residence

Of course, one will need other details to assist in distinguishing individuals of the same name. These details include:

- Approximate date of birth
- Potential cities/towns of residence
- Occupation
- Names of likely next of kin
- Physical characteristics

You just can't grab the first John Smith you see and assume he is yours! As mentioned the cards do provide other information about the registrant and this information should be compared and contrasted with information already known about the individual in order to determine if the individual on the card is likely the desired individual.

Try All Locations

My great-grandfather's brother was working St. Louis, Missouri, at the time of the draft registration. His registration took place in Hancock County, Illinois, where he was born and raised. While this is atypical of the registrations I located (most were working in the county where they registered), it does bear witness to the fact that one should leave no location unconsidered.

Need Their Job?

If research requires you learn your ancestor's occupation or employer, the draft card may help you to do that. There are other sources on your ancestor that may provide occupational information, but the information on the draft card may help to fill in blanks and potentially lead to occupational records. My ancestors, unlike those of my wife, were largely self-employed farmers and occupational records are non-existent.

In Summary

If you are stuck with a male ancestral problem during the early 1940s, these cards may help you. Your female ancestors might also have had a problem with your male ancestor during that same time, but these records aren't likely to help with that!

Michael John Neill is the Course I Coordinator at the Genealogical Institute of Mid America (GIMA) held annually in Springfield, Illinois, and is also on the faculty of Carl Sandburg College in Galesburg, Illinois. Michael is the Web columnist for the FGS FORUM.

Reprinted from Ancestry Daily News



CALIFORNIA AFRICAN-AMERICAN GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

P.O. Box 8442 • Los Angeles, CA 90008

October 2, 2002

Dear CAAGS Members:

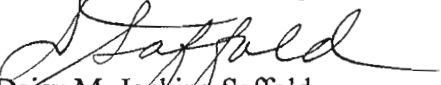
It's election time again. The offices of First Vice President, Recording Secretary and Treasurer are open for election.

We, the Nominating Committee are seeking qualified individuals for these positions. If you are interested in running or nominating an individual from our 'body', please fill out the attached form and return it to me ASAP, as time is of the essence.

Return your nominating form via CAAGS, P.O. Box 8442, Los Angeles, CA 90008, or e-mail them to Hvenlyrest@aol.com. We do ask that you forward them as soon as possible as the slate of nominees will be presented at the October 19, 2002 general meeting.

Should you have any questions, please contact me by phone 310-674-5516 or e-mail.

Thank you for your cooperation.


Daisy M. Jenkins-Saffold
Second Vice-President, Membership
Chairperson, Nominating Committee

dms

CALIFORNIA AFRICAN AMERICAN GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

CAAGS

Nominations for Officers – 2002

Nominee's Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ E-Mail _____

Office being nominated for _____

Nominee's qualifications for this office _____

Has nominee been notified of their pending nomination _____

Nominee gave their consent for this nomination _____

Nominator _____

Address _____

Phone _____ E-Mail _____

Signature _____ Date _____



November 2, 2002

Dear CAAGS Members:

Based on the nominations made by you, the membership, listed below are the final nominees of officers to be elected for the year 2003 and a brief bio of each candidate.

1st VICE PRESIDENT

Charlotte Bocage - incumbent.

Charlotte, an active member of the California African-American Genealogical Society since 1995, has served as 1st Vice President for the past two years. She attends board and general meetings and fills in for our President, Ron Batiste if necessary. She is Chairperson of the Education Outreach Committee, responsible for scheduling instructors for beginning and intermediate classes at CAAGS general meetings; Chairperson for the CAAGS Handbook for New Members; and our Delegate to the National Genealogical Society (NGS).

Charlotte assisted the organization at the annual Southern California Genealogical Society Jamboree in Pasadena. She taught the class "So You Thought You Were Organized". She can be found on Thursdays at the Family History Library assisting people with their research.

Charlotte promotes CAAGS in many ways and feels being First Vice President enhances her opportunities to do so. She's looking forward to serving CAAGS in this position for another term.

RECORDING SECRETARY

June Coggins

June is a retired Court Reporter. As a Court Reporter she worked for the Beverly Hills Municipal Court, Torrance Municipal Court and Burbank Municipal Court. She is also a retired Deposition Reporter and Hearing Reporter for the State of California.

June is currently a Real Estate Broker for Enterprise Properties. She has been a member of the Board of Directors for the Los Angeles Multiple Listing Board; a member of the Board of Directors for the Southwest Los Angeles Board of Realtors and President of Women's Council of Realtors.

June with her vast amount of experience looks forward to the opportunity to serve in the capacity of Recording Secretary.

CAAGS letter

November 2, 2002

Page 2

TREASURER

Colette DeVerge – incumbent.

Colette has been an active member of the California African-American Genealogical Society since 1991 and FGS (Federation of Genealogical Societies) Delegate since 1993. She has served two terms as Second Vice President, Membership and Chairperson of the Nominating Committee and currently is completing her first term as Treasurer.

Colette states she's looking forward to serving as CAAGS Treasurer for another term, especially since this will afford her the opportunity to work directly with the Summit Committee on next years Summit, hosted by CAAGS.

Should you have any questions, please contact me by phone 310-674-5516 or e-mail Hvenlyrest@aol.com.

Sincerely,



Daisy M. Jenkins-Saffold

Second Vice-President, Membership
Chairperson, Nominating Committee

dms

The California African American Genealogical Society

Tour to

Rideau Vineyards

in

Solvang, CA

October 5, 2002

In 1997 Rideau Vineyard, the only **BLACK** female owned winery in California, opened for business. Located in the center of the Santa Ynez Valley close to the village of Solvang. Rideau Vineyard is known for its fine wine and tranquil natural setting. Nestled among ancient oaks and vineyards the tasting room is housed in the Alamo Pintado Adobe. Built in 1884, it has been restored to its original Early California and European heritage. It is one of the few, two-story adobes in California and it is listed as a County Historical Monument.

TOUR INCLUDES:

- Round trip bus transportation from South Central Los Angeles
- Tour and Wine Tasting at Rideau Vineyard
- Lunch - Ottavio's Restaurant - Camarillo, CA
- Excursion to Camarillo Premium Outlet Mall

\$60.00 Payment due September 5, 2002

Departure Time - 8:00 AM

Return Time - 7:30 PM

All individuals must be over 21 years of age

For information call Colette DeVerge (323) 933-8381.

**The California African American Genealogical Society
Rideau Vineyards Wine Tour**

Name _____

Address _____

Phone (____) _____

Make checks payable & mail to:

**CAAGS
c/o Colette DeVerge
Box 8442
Los Angeles, Ca 90008**

California African-American Genealogical Society

HERITAGE NEWSLETTER

Post Office Box 8442 Los Angeles, California 90008-0442

Editor-at-Fault: R. Batiste ISSN 1083-8937 Vol 14 No. 11-12 November-December, 2002
DISCLAIMER: The Editor nor CAAGS assumes any responsibility for articles submitted to the newsletter by its members.
The deadline for all Newsletter articles is the 22nd of each month.

President's Letter

CALL FOR PAPERS

The California African American Genealogical Society (CAAGS) and the African-American Heritage Society of Long Beach are soliciting proposals for papers for the Third Annual West Coast African American Genealogical Summit to be held in October, 2003 in Los Angeles.

Topics must be oriented towards African American research and can include:

- Methodology and problem solving, including case histories
- Records and record access
- Overlooked or underutilized sources
- Military research
- Local history
- Native- and African-American research
- Writing, presenting and preservation
- Slave and slave-owner research
- Migration
- Computer and Internet research
- Land and property records
- Probate, wills and other court records

Please submit a 200- to 500-word synopsis of your proposed presentation. If accepted, an outline and bibliography will be required before 15 July for inclusion in the syllabus.

Submit your proposal to:

WCAAGS3 Program
PO Box 8442
Los Angeles, California
90008-0442

All submissions will receive an acknowledgement and response.

CAAGS MEETINGS

Martin Luther King United Methodist Church
6625 4th Avenue
(East of Crenshaw Boulevard,
between Gage and Florence Avenues)
Los Angeles, California

16 November 2002

General Schedule

10:00-11:30

Beginning and Intermediate Class

11:30-12:00

Business Meeting

12:00-12:15

Break

12:30 -1:45

November: Peter Carr,

Noted researcher and speaker, will discuss new sources and methods for researching your Caribbean ancestors.

December

Installation of new Officers and Annual Christmas Potluck Luncheon

January, 2003

Marjorie Higgins Sholes

February

Special Black History Month speaker and program

Happy holiday season and Congratulations to Our New Officers

NATIONAL SOCIETY SUGGESTS STEPS FOR IMPROVEMENT, GROWTH

Faced with ever-growing expectations for genealogical accuracy and reliability, family historians concerned with improving their abilities will on a regular basis--

- study comprehensive texts and narrower-focus articles and recordings covering genealogical methods in general and the historical background and sources available for areas of particular research interest, or to which their research findings have led them.
- interact with other genealogists and historians in person or electronically, mentoring or learning as appropriate to their relative experience levels, and through the shared experience contributing to the genealogical growth of all concerned.
- subscribe to and read regularly at least two genealogical journals that list a number of contributing or consulting editors, or editorial board or committee members, and that require their authors to respond to a critical review of each article before it is published.
- participate in workshops, discussion groups, institutes, conferences and other structured learning opportunities whenever possible.
- recognize their limitations, undertaking research in new areas or using new technology only after they master any additional knowledge and skill needed and understand how to apply it to the new subject matter or technology.
- analyze critically at least quarterly the reported research findings of another family historian, for whatever lessons may be gleaned through the process.
- join and participate actively in genealogical societies covering countries, localities and topics where they have research interests, as well as the localities where they reside, increasing the resources available both to themselves and to future researchers.
- review recently published basic texts to renew their understanding of genealogical fundamentals as currently expressed and applied.
- examine and revise their own earlier research in the light of what they have learned through self-improvement activities, as a means for applying their new-found knowledge and for improving the quality of their work-product.

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"To be ignorant of what occurred before you were born is to remain always a child. For what is the worth of human life, unless it is woven into the life of our ancestors by the records of history?"

--- Marcus Tullius Cicero, 106 B.C.-43 B.C.

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All Vacant

Tell ye your children of it, and let your children tell their children, and their children another generation.

Joel 1:3

Searching for Substance

Finding More Than Names on the Internet

By Patricia Law Hatcher

Before a recent lecture, I interviewed a number of colleagues on how they use the Internet.

They rarely use the Internet to search for names, although some occasionally search to track down migrating collateral lines. Almost all use it for e-mail, of course. Most use it to access library catalogues. Many of them use it as part of their business-booking travel arrangements and preparing for research trips and for lectures.

There is one aspect of research that many traditional genealogists do pursue regularly, however. The Internet is very useful for finding information about local history and lifestyle. This is something from which family historians can benefit greatly. Let's look at some examples and search techniques.

Many early, out-of-copyright town and county histories have been converted to text form on the Internet. They are on commercial sites, on free sites, on institutional sites ranging from local governments to universities, and on personal websites.

How would you find such a history? Enter the name of the town and state in a search engine. If the choices are too widespread and overwhelming, consider searching within the results for a more localized word, such as the name of the local river.

Look at the events in which your ancestors participated. Did your family live in Essex County, Massachusetts, during the witchcraft trials? Was your grandmother one of the children on the orphan trains? Think of a reasonably narrow search term. "Revolutionary War" is way too broad. Do you know the name of any battle in which your ancestor participated or the Regiment in which he served or the name of his colonel?

Websites focusing on social history and occupations offer rich possibilities. Many of these have been created for use by students. A search for terms such as "cordwainer," "coal mining," "indentured servant," "soddy," "midwife," "preemption claim," "homestead act," "musket," "steamship," or "wagon train" can open up a rich learning experience. The photographs, maps, and document images on these sites are designed to catch and hold your attention while the text informs.

Internet searching for history and context requires two things - first, that you forget your ancestor's name, and second, that you use creativity. When you see the search results listed in the search engine, you will have to determine if you need to broaden, narrow, or shift your focus. If you find a well-developed site, it will have numerous links to other sites that provide additional information or information on related topics.

As an example, I tried searching for information about the very different lives of my grandfathers. My paternal grandfather was born in 1870 in Illinois. As a young man he went to work for the western railroads, served in France as a railway engineer in World War I, and was the engineer for part of the route of President Warren Harding's funeral train.

My maternal grandfather was born in 1888 in a soddy (sod house) on the Nebraska prairie in the midst of a blizzard. They placed him in a boot box padded with cotton wool and put the box on the warming side of the oven, never expecting him to live.

Continued on Next Page

Search Internet for Substance, Not Specifics

Continued from Previous Page

What could I learn about my grandfathers' environments from the Internet? I had a list of several railroads for which my grandfather had worked, so I searched for each of them. Unfortunately, I only found material on one of them. I searched for "western railroads" + history. There are many railroad history enthusiasts, but I scanned the hits and found several sites with organized links to other sites. Many included photographs of the trains and depots.

I was not successful in learning about the Army Engineers in France, but a search for Harding + "funeral train" was most interesting. Notice that in my search I left out terms such as President and Warren, since I could not be sure how any writer would phrase their sentences, but was quite specific about finding the words funeral and train together.

One of my first hits was most astounding. I discovered that President Warren Harding had died not from a digestive ailment complicated by pneumonia and a heart problem, but from vampire bite, somehow connected to agents of Al Capone. What? My first thought was that there were more nut cases out there on the Internet than I had realized, but further exploration disclosed that the entire website was an elaborate and well-done spoof.

Having been distracted from my search, I returned to my hit list. It listed the archives for Scouting magazine. The article told of connections between various presidents and the Boy Scouts. I found this one to be an interesting coincidence. My father was a Boy Scout executive, and I even have a picture of myself as one-year-old "reading" Scouting magazine. The story said that in Kearney, Nebraska, the train passed through without stopping, and that 100 Scouts helped control the crowd of 10,000 people who lined the track. This is quite possibly the stretch on which my grandfather was the engineer.

My search for background information related to my maternal grandfather focused on the sod house. As a child I had pictured an igloo-style dwelling, but as an adult, I had seen photographs of sod houses complete with double-hung sash windows and wooden floors with Turkish carpets.

I searched for both "soddy" and "sod house." The first thing I learned is that there are modern sod-house enthusiasts, several with their own websites. In several places, I found instructions on exactly how to cut the sod and construct the house. PBS often creates auxiliary information about its shows. My search found a link to the new series "The Frontier House." I found interesting photographs at the PBS website for the series "Prairie Settlement: A Visual Essay." Especially interesting to me were those showing children's clothing from the time period of my grandfather. They looked most uncomfortable.

The Library of Congress's American Memory website adds new material frequently. This is a richly visual site, with many photographs and documents, including the collection that was the source for the PBS "Prairie Settlement" program mentioned above. I found it efficient to use their word-search feature, and then take advantage of the links to related topics on individual pages.

The most personal view I found was at the website of the Women of the West Museum, which offers profiles of several frontier women, including extensive extracts from letters and diaries. I read the entries about life in sod houses with special interest. By turning your focus away from names and searching for elements of your ancestors' lives, you may learn much about them.

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ANCESTRAL CHRONOLOGIES, TIMELINES SOLVES PROBLEMS

By Michael John Neill

I have long been aware of the importance of developing a chronology in working on the life of a specific ancestor. A simple ordering of the events in an ancestor's life from their birth to their death helps the researcher to see unaccounted for time periods, gaps in research, and records that have not been accessed. A chronology can also be an excellent synopsis of an ancestor's life, albeit a limited one. It provides a different perspective on an ancestor than does a family group or pedigree chart and can even be the framework for creating an ancestral biography.

A chronology usually focuses on the life of one individual. These limited chronologies do serve a purpose. However, there are times when a more extended type of chronology is helpful. Our ancestors did not live in a vacuum (they might have lived near them, especially if they were Hoovers, but living in the vacuum was not an option).

There were other people and events that shaped the lives of our ancestors. Some of these people were related by birth or marriage -- some were not. Even unrelated neighbors or acquaintances might have had some direct impact on our ancestor's life.

Historical events are also relevant, but it is important to keep these events in perspective and find a logical connection between the historical event and our ancestor's life. The start of World War II had an impact on the lives of many throughout the world. The election of American president Warren Harding probably did not. Thinking before including something in an ancestral chronology is a good thing. The thought process may lead to new and uncharted research territories.

An Extended Chronology

I have written in the past of my continuing attempts to locate information on the parents of my wife's grandmother, born ca. 1913 most likely in the Chicago, Illinois, area. A chronology has been developed that goes beyond the grandmother, beyond her suspected parents and step-fathers, to include virtually every extended family member known to have lived in the Chicagoland area. And even a few family members who did not.

The chronology does not begin at the suspected time of the grandmother's birth in Illinois. Instead it begins forty years earlier in upstate New York when the supposed maternal grandparents married. The problem involves more than just the woman born in 1913. To have any hope of solving a problem of this type, the extended family must also be included in the study. In my chronology, the following people are included as they have some relationship to either my grandmother or the grandmother's likely parents:

- The grandmother
- Her "mother"
- Her "father"
- Her step-fathers
- Her "mother"'s parents
- Her "mother"'s step-mother
- Her "mother"'s biological siblings
- Her "mother"'s step-brother
- Her sisters
- Her brother
- Her sister's daughter

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All of these people are not the parents of the grandmother born ca. 1913. However, the chronology is helpful to get an understanding of how events in the family unfolded. One important event is the death of the likely maternal grandmother in 1895 when the likely mother is a year old. This death might have had a profound impact on the children. Even when you've known a family forever, chronologies may clear up misconceptions.

What About the Suspected Father?

The chronology includes little about the likely father. However, there is a reason for this. The father seems to have been dropped by a UFO in Chicago around 1908. He appears to have been picked up by another UFO shortly after he registered for the World War I draft. His sole ten years of "known existence" compounds the problem significantly.

The chronology ends in 1987, the year the grandmother died. On the chronology, I have included the date of virtually every event I could locate, including such items as:

- Births and Deaths
- Marriages and Divorces
- Moves and immigrations
- And anything else for which I could at least approximate an year.

The chronology is long and some events are more pivotal than others. Each event did not impact every family member equally and certain events might not have impacted some family members at all. Separate chronologies for each individual, helpful in some cases, were not as useful here. I wanted to get the whole picture. I did not create the chronology for my own entertainment. As I compiled the listing of events in chronological order, I began to see potential motives for actions, interesting coincidences, and research clues. I also began to develop a significantly better understanding of the entire family. And that is always a good thing.

Do I Always Do This?

While extended family chronologies are a good idea, I am not always able to create them for every family. Chronologies are more helpful when the research problem is not completely straightforward.

Maps. Between ca. 1900 and 1920, most members of this family moved to Chicago, Illinois, and the problem (at least on the maternal side) moves to an urban setting from its origins in rural upstate New York. I was able to map many addresses of family members using various records and city directories. This is not something easily done in rural areas, especially if people are not landowners as directories are not as regular or as common. This mapping of addresses was particularly helpful in studying and determining in what neighborhoods the family lived. The maps were helpful for locating any kind of record organized by location, particularly census records. Records from a local Catholic church may also be helpful in this case and a map will help determine churches likely attended by the family. In some cases, there was more than one individual with the same name living in the Chicagoland area. The residential addresses from the directories were helpful in trying to keep the distinct individuals separate. Urban research sans a map is not a wise move.

Relationship Charts. Viewing the information with a chronology and with a map was an excellent organizational strategy. Several people were married more than once and the number of step-relatives added to the confusion. I created a relationship chart including all the family members in the study.

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Reprinted from Ancestry Daily News

The Touch of History Expands Family Research

History and genealogy are intertwined and we do both a disservice when we ignore the history.

By Rhonda R. McClure

I have often talked about how important it is to be conscious of the history of our ancestors. After all, those whose homes were destroyed because of the Civil War or who felt strongly for or against slavery or abolition might have migrated to remove themselves from the disagreements that were brewing or to get a fresh start after the devastation.

Recently I was looking into the life of the 26th President of the United States, Theodore Roosevelt, Jr. Better known to most as Teddy Roosevelt, leader of the Rough Riders and the namesake of the plush cuddly toy so many of us have hugged at least once - the Teddy Bear, this man's 61 years of life find him living through some major historical events, many of which he was directly involved in. Still other historical events would directly touch his family and the more I investigated the more fascinated I became.

He was directly involved in the Spanish-American War. His son, Archibald Bulloch Roosevelt, would be a commander in both World

Wars, earning the Croix de Guerre and Silver Star with Oak Leaf Cluster. Interestingly enough, son Archibald was named for Teddy's second great-grandfather Archibald Bulloch, who himself was involved in the American Revolution.

While we may have thought that Teddy's only contribution to the world of marking was the Teddy Bear, in fact he is also supposedly responsible for the Maxwell House coffee commercial's slogan "Good to the last drop." He made this comment after drinking coffee while visiting Andrew Jackson at his home, Hermitage, in Nashville, Tennessee. The coffee had come from the Maxwell House, a hotel, in Nashville.

Our ancestors are not islands unto themselves. While we may not all find a famous ancestor in our family tree, our ancestors were living their lives, and were touched by history themselves as were their ancestors and descendants.

Branch out a little to see what your ancestor, and his or her siblings, and parents or grandparents may have been involved in. I think you will find that history comes alive for you as you discover how history and your family tree are intertwined.

While I have always been interested in history, since becoming involved in genealogy, I have found that history has taken on a new look. I marvel at the hardships endured by those ancestors who have gone before and thank my stars that they were strong enough to do what they did, or I may not be here right now.

History and genealogy are irrevocably connected. You do your own research a disservice if you don't take a little time to find out how that history challenged or helped your ancestors. More importantly you do history a disservice by not honoring it as it should be.

Reprinted from *Family Tree Finders*

No man is an island.

John Donne, poet

Capture History Now By Talking to Children

Mention oral history and everyone thinks of talking to grandparents. Sometimes the best history comes from the children.

By Rhonda McClure

As genealogists we are always thinking of history. We look to the past in almost everything we do, even though we rely on the technology of today and tomorrow in our pursuit of the past. In our zeal to find the past though, there is a past that is being overlooked, the past of tomorrow.

Keeping a history of everyone who is alive today is a wonderful project, especially when you include the children. I know that I look fondly at the video we have of my children, even if the kids themselves are not thrilled to see those come out, especially now that they are old enough to be horribly embarrassed. However, when it comes to recording a history of a child, the questions need to be different.

While a child may not have lived as long as a grandparent, they have many thoughts they want to share. A project such as the recording of their history gives them that opportunity. Some of the questions you might want to include, beyond the basics, in your video interview of a child could be-- How much they weigh at the time of the interview, and perhaps if they know what they weighed at birth they can say how big they have become.

- What their favorite color is and why.
- The name of their best friend and what they like to do with him or her.
- The names of their pets and what each one is.
- What they think is special or unique about their pets.
- Questions about what they like and don't like in school.
- Questions about their favorite singers or actors or television shows.
- Questions about favorites, such as candy, ice cream and cake.
- Questions about sports activities or other things they do for fun.

These are just a few ideas of questions to ask them. You might want to look into the various genealogy books geared toward kids. They often have special sections of questions for the children to fill out that are tailored to the age of the children. Such questions would work well in your video history.

Sometimes you might want to ask them about the death of family members, but such topics need to be handled carefully, especially with smaller children. A lot depends on the age of the child and the closeness of the relationship to the family member who died. The insight you can get from a child though is often astounding.

In your quest for your history, don't forsake the present. It too will be history soon. If no one records it now then it will be destined to be forgotten and as genealogists we know the frustration of dealing with history that has been forgotten.

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