

YVGS FAMILY FINDERS



Yucaipa Valley
Genealogical Society
Established 1982

YUCAIPA VALLEY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

www.yvgs.org

P.O. BOX 32, YUCAIPA, CA 92399-0032

Sponsored by The Yucaipa Branch Library

August 2010—VOLUME 28 NO. 8



President's Message:

We are well into summer and some of us had or have travel plans that have or will take us to different parts of the country. I just returned from vacation, and it seems a trip that started with no plans for genealogy turned into a gold mine of genealogy experience and information.

Remember that the August meeting is our Show and Tell meeting. Several people have already signed up to participate, but if you have something to share, it is not too late. Call me so we can plan to have table space, speaking time or something else, or bring what you wish to share and I will work you in. The ideas that have been turned so far look very interesting and I cannot wait to see and hear each presentation.

Many of you have already heard that we will no longer be able to use the Library meeting room after the September meeting. The Library has received a grant that will let them turn the room into a computer center, (we may be able to use it sometime for a class in Computer Research but that would be some time in the future.) For now, ideas are coming in for a new meeting site. If you have anything at all in mind, please send me or any board member a note, or give us a phone call, so that we may look at all possibilities. As a Society, we look forward to continuing to grow no matter where the meetings may be held.

Floyd K. Ferguson
President, YVGS

2010 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

ELECTED OFFICERS

President Floyd Ferguson
Vice President Donna Hunter
Secretary Bonnie Brown
Treasurer Arlene Allsopp

APPOINTED CHAIRS

Parliamentarian Jamie Daniel
Corresponding Secretary Bonnie Brown
Librarian Ruth Bishop
Editor Jamie Daniel
Hospitality Sue Wolfe
Welcome Terry Brown
Membership Marg Polich
Publicity VACANT
Sunshine Barbara Thomas
Historian Barbara Cogorno
Ways and Means VACANT
Website Earl Giddings

The Yucaipa Valley Genealogical Society, Inc. meets at 1:00 P.M. on the SECOND Saturday of each month at the Yucaipa Branch Library, 12040 Fifth Street, Yucaipa, California. YVGS annual membership fees are \$20.00 for individuals or \$25.00.00 for families. This amount includes the monthly newsletter and free query privileges. \$10.00 will have our newsletter mailed to another society or individual out of the area. The Editor and Society assume no responsibility for statements made by contributors. Misstatements of fact will be corrected upon receipt of proof of error.

What you missed!

Yucaipa Valley Genealogical Society
General Meeting Minutes
July 10, 2010

Workshop: 12:00 P.M. Continuing Calendar

Projects. Floyd handed out worksheets to those interested in starting to outline their calendar.

GENERAL MEETING

President Floyd K. Ferguson called the meeting to order at 1:10 P.M. Bonnie Jacobsen led the Pledge of Allegiance. Floyd sent around a sign up sheet for the August Show and Tell meeting.

Terry Brown welcomed all members and guests to the meeting.

The minutes of the last meeting were read by Jamie Daniel in the absence of Bonnie Brown, Secretary. They were approved as read.

The Treasurer's report was given by Marg Polich, in the absence of Arlene Allsopp. There is a balance of \$1,733.62 in the checking account. The report was approved for audit, and a copy of the financial report will be included with the minutes.

Committee Reports:

Jamie Daniel, Editor, reported the newsletter is being sent via 36 e-mails, 22 U.S. mail.

Sue Wolfe, Hospitality, asked for volunteers to fill the vacancy in November to bring snacks to the meetings.

Marg Polich, Membership, reported that we now have 40 members.

Earl Giddings, Website, reported on future changes to the website, namely, the addition of cemetery listings and obituaries, and asked for help in transcribing obituaries to get them ready to include on the website.

Jamie Daniel reported that the surveying of Sunnyslope Cemetery is finished and Earl Giddings is finishing the transcription to findagrave. The next project will be San Gorgonio Cemetery. Due to the hot weather, the society will start surveying the cemetery after the cool weather returns (hopefully the end of September or early October).

Floyd Ferguson will be calling the members who signed up for Show and Tell in August, to finalize any special arrangements that must be made.

After the break, the 50/50 drawing was won by Juanita Marshall.

Brenda Danielson gave an informative presentation "Up Close and Personal: On Site Research." She included a handout listing the preparation for travel and arrangements in order to get the most out of genealogy research.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jamie Daniel,
in the absence of Bonnie Brown, Secretary

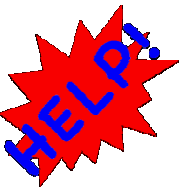
COMING EVENTS

1. Saturday, August 14, 2010 at 12:00 P.M.
Yucaipa Valley Genealogical Society at the
Yucaipa Branch Library.
Workshop at 12:00 Calendar Projects
Meeting at 1:00 P.M. Show and Tell by our
members. Come join us!

2. Sunday, August 22, 2010 at 7:00 P.M.
Genealogy Research Class of 2009 at Family
History Center 5th and Wabash in Redlands.
Topic: "Advanced PAF"
Speaker: Diana Rounds



Our Society needs
your help! The
Yucaipa Branch
Library has received a
grant to turn the meeting
room into a computer lab. Great for them! But
it means we will have to find a new meeting
place by the October meeting. If you have
ideas, please share them



with the society. We
will be discussing this
at the upcoming
meeting.



Family History Center

Located at 5th and Wabash in Redlands

Hours:

Tuesday - Saturday

9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Tuesday and Wednesday

6:00p.m. to 9:00p.m.

FHC Telephone Number: 909.794.3844

Editor's note: Here is the eighth in the series of resolutions for the New Year. It continues along the same vein as last month—joining a society and sharing with others.



Top 5 Ways to Share Your Discoveries

By Kimberly Powell



As I painstakingly trace my way back through the generations of my family, I can't help but wonder if someone has previously traced these steps before me. Is there a relative who has already found and assembled some of my family history? One who placed their research in a drawer, where it remains hidden and unavailable?

Like any treasure, family history doesn't deserve to remain buried. Try these simple suggestions for sharing your discoveries so others can benefit from what you have found.

1. Reach Out to Others

The easiest way to make sure other people know about your family history research is to give it to them. It doesn't have to be anything fancy - just make copies of your research in progress and send it to them via email or postal mail. Copying your family files to CD is an easy and inexpensive way to send large amounts of data, including photos, document images and even videos. Reach out to parents, grandparents, even distant cousins, and include your name and contact information on your work!

2. Submit Your Family Tree to Databases

Even if you send out copies of your family history research to every relative you know, there are probably others who would also be interested in it. One of the most public ways to distribute your information is by submitting it to one or more online genealogy databases. This guarantees that the information will be easily accessible to anyone who may be searching for the same family. Be sure that your contact information is up-to-date, so others can easily reach you when they find your data.

Top Picks

3. Create a Family Web Page

If you'd prefer not to submit your family history to someone else's database, then you can still make it available online by creating a genealogy Web page. Alternatively, you can write about your family history research experience in a genealogy blog. If you want to restrict access to your genealogy data to family members only, then you can publish your information online at a password-protected genealogy site.

4. Print Beautiful Family Trees

If you've got the time, you can share your family tree in a beautiful or creative manner. A number of

fancy family tree charts can be purchased or printed. Full-size genealogy wall charts make more room for big families, and great conversation starters at family reunions. You can also design and create your own family tree. Alternatively, you can put together a family history scrapbook or even a cookbook. The point is to have fun and be creative when sharing your family's heritage.

Top Picks

5. Publish Short Family Histories

Many of your relatives really aren't going to be interested in family tree printouts from your genealogy software program. Instead, you may want to try something that will draw them into the story. While writing a family history may seem too daunting to be fun, it really doesn't have to be. Keep it simple, with short family histories. Pick a family and write a few pages, including the facts as well as entertaining details. Include your name and contact information, of course!

Kimberly Powell is a professional genealogist, Web developer, and proud mother of three children. Kimberly's interest in genealogy began over 20 years ago with a school project and has developed into a passion. She is a proud member of the Association of Professional Genealogists, the National Genealogical Society, the International Society of Family History Writers and Editors, and several local genealogical societies. She has been writing about genealogy for About.com since 2000, and her work has also appeared in several genealogy magazines. She is the author of "Everything Family Tree, 2nd Edition" by Adams Media (2006), and currently serves as Webmaster for the Western Pennsylvania Genealogical Society. Kimberly maintains ongoing professional genealogy training through online classes, seminars, self-study, and genealogical conferences.

Editor's note: The following article was found online by Marg Polich about Stater Bros. It is indeed another reason to buy the Stater Bros. scrip cards at the next meeting!



Charity begins in the heartland



John Plessel, Staff Writer

Posted: 08/05/2010

Things that we try to promote at our Dine 909 blog (www.insidesocal.com/dine909) are food-related charitable events.

We also like to give credit where credit is due.

On July 21, San Bernardino-based grocer **Stater Bros.** presented a check for \$20,000 to the Community Action Partnership of San Bernardino County Food Bank at a meeting of CAPSBC's board of directors.

In addition to its monetary contributions, Stater Bros. is the largest private industry food donor for CAPSBC Food Bank. It has given almost 20 million pounds of food to the food bank since 1988. Stater

Bros. is currently averaging 119,000 pounds of food per month in donations.

Every week, Stater Bros. gives bread, yogurt, milk, meats and other items which are then distributed through CAPSBC's food network.

The food network serves more than 16,000 households (more than 50,000 people) each month.

That's a lot of good for a lot of people.



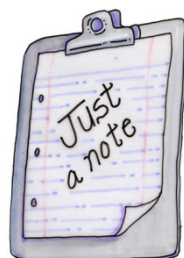
Don't forget!

We're selling Stater Bros. Gift cards at the meeting.

The Society receives a percentage back from Stater's...and everyone needs groceries! The money we make from the cards is paying our bills for the society: speakers, printing, coffee, etc.



From member Ruth Jarmusz:



I finally broke down and subscribed to **Ancestry.com** because I was tired of the one at Smiley Library not working well and also did not figure I had enough time to use it since I work full time. It is interesting to anyone who is not yet subscribing that the Library

edition has ONLY 7,287 database titles, where the home edition has 29,868 database titles—a HUGE difference! So if anyone out there is only using the Library edition, it is a very watered down version.



If you know of anyone who needs a little sunshine, or someone who would benefit from a card, please contact Barbara Thomas, our Sunshine Chair. She cannot do her job without our help!





Meeting

August 14, 2010

Well, it's not really like "Show and Tell" from elementary school...but our August meeting will be a time of sharing for everyone.

We would like to have *everyone* participate in our Show and Tell (and we'd like to make it an annual event!). Floyd has quite a list of members who will either speak or have a display of some kind...

If you missed the July meeting and would still like to share, please contact Floyd Ferguson at 909 824-9114 by **Thursday, August 12**. He needs to make arrangements.

Think about it...we all have interesting stories passed down. Wouldn't you like to SHARE?



Thank you, Terry Brown and Barbara Thomas for the goodies you brought to the May meeting.

In August, the refreshments will be provided by Donna Hughes and Jean Smith.

Sue Wolfe, Hospitality



The September meeting of the Yucaipa Valley Genealogy Society is the third Saturday of the month, September 18, 2010



Surveying Cemeteries in the Summit Cemetery District

Would you like to help survey, take photographs and transcribe the local cemeteries? The Society is now in the process of trying to survey the Summit Cemetery District in Riverside County. We could use your help! Please read the following article to clarify the process.

The Board of Directors approved a society project of surveying the cemeteries in the Summit Cemetery District at the June board meeting. The Summit Cemetery District includes three cemeteries; Mountain View and Sunnyslope in Beaumont and San Geronio in Banning. This will be an ongoing project for our society in the same manner that Desert Lawn Memorial Park has been for the last three years.

The survey of Sunnyslope has been completed and posted on Find A Grave (FAG).

The process of surveying and recording data is broken into 5 steps to allow more than one person to participate. However the preferred method would be for all 5 steps to be performed by one person. When someone takes pictures, step 1, and cannot complete the other 4 steps they should help find volunteers to finish the process.

The five steps and procedures:

1. Take a picture of each headstone in the section assigned to you. Digital cameras only and it is best to take at least two shots of each headstone. Might save a trip back to the cemetery.

2. Check the person(s), deceased only, on each headstone against FAG. Three possibilities exist: A. The person(s) is on FAG w/headstone picture. B. The person(s) is on FAG w/out a headstone picture, rename the picture as shown below. C. The person(s) is not on FAG, rename the picture as shown below.

Examples:

For on FAG w/out a picture:

Adam,Hermann_and_Victoria(P).jpg Had there been middle names it would be enter as

Adam,HermannA_and_VictoriaV(P).jpg.

For not on FAG:

Adam,Hermann_and_Victoria(F).jpg.

Note the use of an underscore between names. The (P) and (F) are necessary for use in the following steps:

Recommended format for renaming all pictures, use Surname, Given name, Middle Initial. When there is more than one given name on the headstone use

underscore and the given name and middle initial. When there is more than one surname on the headstone make two (or more) copies of the same picture using all the surnames. Establish two folders, one for the original picture and another for the edited picture (step 5) both with the same file name.

Save all of the pictures you will need them later.

3. Extract all of the data from the headstone pictures with the suffix (F) and enter the data on the FAG Data Submission Form, <http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=excel>.

4. Obtain the plot information for each person listed on your FAG Data Submission Form, from <http://www.summitcemeterydistrict.com/> (Burials on the Web) for the cemetery involved and enter on the FAG Data Submission Form in the format of Section, Block, Lot, Space as for example 1-A-3-5. The form is now complete. Save a backup copy and send the completed form to Jamie Daniel using the filename she will establish.

The minimum number of names for submission is 25 and there is a limit on the size of the file submitted but don't worry unless you have over 400 names.

5. Edit the pictures (with suffix P and F) for use on FAG.

Find A Grave general photo guidelines:

- ✓ Only post photos for which you hold the copyright (meaning photos you took)!
- ✓ JPEG format preferred (.jpg or .jpeg).
- ✓ 350 KB maximum file size. (349KB will be accepted but not 350)
- ✓ 300-1200 pixel width.
- ✓ Cropped with no surrounding white space.
- ✓ No post-mortem photos.
- ✓ No photos taken from other web sites!!!

Keep a backup copy of each original and edited picture. Send all of the pictures to Jamie. The edited pictures will be added after the people (memorials) are on FAG.

The memorials and pictures will be submitted as from YVGS. For this a username and password has been established. This information will be known and used only by Jamie Daniel who is the coordinator.

All questions relating to this survey will be directed to Jamie Daniel, 909-792-2962 or jamiedaniel33@gmail.com.

**Deadline for articles for the newsletter:
Thursday**

Before the first Saturday of the month.

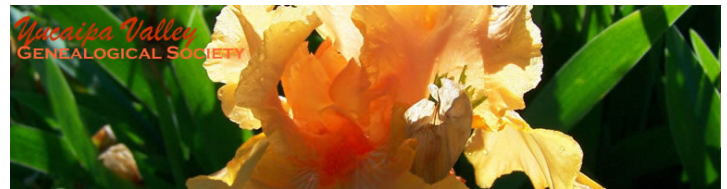
**This next month (September),
I need to have your articles
by Thursday, September 2nd.**

*If you have articles, pictures
or essays you would like to
contribute to the newsletter,
please contact the
editor, Jamie Daniel, at:
jamiedaniel33@gmail.com*

or
909 792-2962

or
P.O. Box 32

Yucaipa, CA 92399-0032



REPORT on WEBSITE

Our website <http://www.yvgs.org/> will have its semiannual update in August. The main area updated will be Our Projects section that covers [Yucaipa Valley Genealogical Society Cemetery Surname Index](#), [Yucaipa Valley Genealogical Society Obituary Index](#) and [Families of Interest](#).

The cemetery surname index includes Desert Lawn Memorial Park, Mountain View Cemetery, Stewart Sunnyslope Cemetery, San Gorgonio Memorial Park, Palo Verde Cemetery and St. Alban's Episcopal Church Gardens. There are over 16,000 names in the index.

We could have 32,000 names in the index if there were more members willing to dig in and help. At the present time three members are doing all of the work.

Our obituary index has over 6,000 people listed. The number of members working on this project has doubled now that Marg Polich agreed to help. Thank you Marg.

Remember the obit project Gena Ortega started? Well it died due to lack of interest. It has been started again in a different format and with different procedures.

Surnames of interest—don't know what this is about? Talk to our Membership Chair Marg and she will explain the purpose of the list. Betty Marcum

compiles the list for the website, but first you need to talk to Marg.

Find A Grave, <http://www.findagrave.com/> is a new project the society has started. While not on our website it dovetails into [Yucaipa Valley Genealogical Society Cemetery Surname Index](#). You will find more information about this project in this newsletter.

Any member interested in helping in any area above contact Earl 909-486-0378 or clemgds@gmail.com and he will design a position just for you.



Thank you, Terry Brown and Barbara Thomas for the goodies you brought to the May meeting.

In August, the refreshments will be provided by Donna Hughes and Jean Smith.

Sue Wolfe, Hospitality



Website Queries

*****email requests from YVGS web site*****

From time to time, we receive queries on our website from people who are looking for relatives or ancestors in our area. Earl Giddings has been handling most of these, with very little help from any other members. He has responded to the following correspondence, but he needs help to find further information. Please look over the following emails. See if you can help.



The first group of emails concerns the **George** family. Apparently, they originally settled in Fontana. If you can identify this family, let Earl know.

First Email: Sun, Aug 1, 2010 at 12:03 AM

Request for help. comments: I am trying to track the family of Leslie and Cyril George who died in the mid eighties, they were my grandfather's twin brothers; they emigrated to America in 1929. They lived in the Bronx and then moved to California. The last known address is below.

92335 Fontana, San Bernardino

Regards,

Hywel.

Earl's reply:

Sent information from Social Security Death Index and California Death Index with note. I will look for obituaries in San Bernardino next time I'm there. Might learn the names of their children.

Second email:

Hi Earl,

You are correct in the details that have:

Theophilus George b 1879 Wales.

Occupation: Painter (construction).

Leah George b: 1885 Wales.

Leslie George b: 1911 Wales.

Cyril George b: 1911 Wales.

Residence: The Bronx, New York.

Marriage Dec quarter 1901

Theophilus GEORGE Leah LAWRENCE Cardiff

Leslie George b 2 Jul 1911 d Dec 1985

Last Residence: 92335 Fontana, San Bernardino, California, United States of America SSI number issued in New York.

Cyril George b 2 Jul 1911 d 9 Feb 1989

Last Residence: 92335 Fontana, San Bernardino, California, United States of America SSI number issued in New York.

Emigrated: Port of Departure - Southampton aboard the Mauretania to New York, NY

Arrived 18 July 1929

Thanks for the interest for tracing my distant cousins in America.

Regards,

Hywel

Earl's second reply:

Hello Hywel,

Found an obit for Cyril, attached, at our local library. I'll try to get to San Bernardino next week and look for an obit for Leslie.

Earl

Third Email:

Hi Earl,

Thanks for the email regarding my family in America it would be great if you could see if Cyril and Leslie families are still alive I would be great to contact them.

Yesterday I went to Morganstown outside Cardiff

taking photographs of my families gravestones, with Theophilus is just buried in a mound with no gravestone, my uncle Dilwyn said that some of the came from America where his wife Leah had died.

I have enclosed a picture of her father's and mother tomb which is in Ty Rhiw Cemetery. Able Laurence was the railway owner of the railway line at Pentyrch Blast Furnaces.

Best regards,
Hywel

The second email concerns **Eleanor Senff**. If you can help, please step up!



First email:

To whom it may concern:

I have been trying to find an obituary for my cousin, Eleanor SENFF, since I noticed in the SSDI that she passed away in March of this year. Knowing that she was an avid genealogist, I feel pretty sure that she was involved in your local genealogical society. If it is possible and someone in your society is willing to assist me, I would appreciate an obituary for Eleanor (her first name was Esther, but she did not go by that). Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Catherine Pless

Earl's reply:

Hi Catherine,

I checked the local, weekly, News Mirror from MAR 2 through 30 APR and did not find an obit. Also checked the San Bernardino Sun and Riverside Press Enterprise online for the last six months again no results.

I will look some more and let you know what I find.
Earl

Second email:

Thanks for looking, Earl.

I suppose since she was the last of her siblings and had no family of her own by marriage, she may not have had an obituary prepared by anyone. I appreciate your help. She is greatly missed.

Sincerely,
Catherine

If you can help with either one of these inquiries, please contact Earl R. Giddings at clemgds@gmail.com

Editor's note: Every year on the Family Tree Magazine website, there is a listed published called Genealogy 101 Best Websites. I have found list for this year (actually, some are from 2009), and compiled it for you. However, as I found when researching, 100 is a lot of websites to think about at once. Fortunately, they were broken down to lists of ten. I will include 10 to 20 in the next few newsletters as room permits.

**101 Best
Web Sites
2009-
2010**

By David A. Fryxell

Count on us to point you to genealogy's top digital destinations: 10 standouts in 10 areas (plus one!) add up to the 10th edition of our 101 Best Web Sites.

If our ancestors had swung down from the trees with six fingers on each hand, we'd probably be counting by dozens. But thanks to humanity's development of 10 fingers and 10 toes, we count things in 10s, group the years in decades and celebrate anniversaries ending in 0—such as this 10th annual installment of *Family Tree Magazine's* 101 Best Web Sites.

We're marking the occasion by honoring 10 categories of 10 noteworthy sites each (plus one to make 101, of course). With this 10th roundup of meritorious sites, we've also sought to break the mold a bit and encompass more of the "Web 2.0" sites that are paving the way for changes in online genealogy over the next 10 years. Something had to give, however, to keep our count at a manageable 101, so we've omitted some old favorites—still worth bookmarking, nonetheless—and several excellent foreign research sites of interest to genealogists with that particular ancestry.

Sites that are mostly free but where you might still wind up pulling out your credit card for some purchase or other are marked with a \$. Subscription-only sites and those where you have to pay for any meaningful results are indicated with \$\$.

What's the one Web resource in a class by itself? Ancestry.com \$\$, of course.

<http://www.ancestry.com/>

What can we say? With its ever-expanding collection of databases and globe-spanning country-specific sites, Ancestry.com comes the closest to realizing the dream of doing real

genealogy online—not just finding a few clues, but tracing your ancestors in primary sources. The complete [US census](#), indexed, searchable and linked to images, is only the beginning here. An annual membership is \$155.40 for US collections only, or \$299.40 for the World Deluxe membership.

10 Best Web Sites to See Dead People

Use these sites to find obituaries, cemeteries and other traces of your departed ancestors.

1. *American Battle Monuments Commission*

<http://www.abmc.gov/home.php>

If you have military ancestors buried in US cemeteries abroad, this is the place to find them. The site covers 24 overseas military cemeteries with almost 125,000 American war dead, plus Tablets of the Missing that memorialize more than 94,000 US servicemen and -women.

2. *AncientFaces* \$

<http://www.ancientfaces.com/>

This collection of nearly 50,000 old family photos also offers family stories and recipes, plus Family Spaces Web pages on which to share them (starting at \$29.95 a year).

3. *Cemetery Surveys*

<http://cemeterysurveysinc.org/>

View nearly 240,000 burial records, many with photos of the actual headstones; the site is richest in coverage for the southeastern United States. You can even import your finds into Google Earth.

4. *DeadFred* \$ <http://www.deadfred.com/>

A longtime favorite, this genealogy photo archive has helped more than 1,400 people reunite with pictures of their ancestors. It's free to search the archive of more than 92,000 records representing more than 16,000 surnames. Paying members (\$19.95 a year) get customization options and enhanced photo posting.

5. *Find a Grave* <http://www.findagrave.com/>

This simple-yet-powerful cemetery database has grown to more than 31 million grave transcriptions. You can search by name (with options for maiden names and partial surnames), birth date, death date or cemetery location, or browse a cemetery for people you think might be your ancestors. There's also a surname index and the Social Security Death Index.

6. *Interment.net* <http://www.interment.net/>

Though smaller than Find a Grave, Interment.net is likewise worth a look—its user-submitted gravestone records cover cemeteries that no longer exist, along with graveyards beyond the United States. Special collections cover veterans'

cemeteries, flooded cemeteries, California mission graveyards and Woodmen of the World burials.

7. *Kentucky Historical Society*

<http://history.ky.gov/>

In addition to a searchable catalog and digital collections, this handsome site serves up the Kentucky Cemetery Records Database—hundreds of thousands of names transcribed from gravestones across Kentucky, from urban cemeteries to rural plots.

8. *MortalitySchedules.com*

<http://mortalityschedules.com/>

Don't you just hate it when you find an inconsiderate ancestor who died right before the next census? Now you can track him or her with the help of this site: It provides free transcriptions of the 1850, 1860, 1870 and 1880 census mortality schedules, in which enumerators recorded information on all people who perished within the 12 months preceding the census.

9. *Names in Stone* \$

<http://www.namesinstone.com/>

Not nearly as data-rich—yet—as more established cemetery sites, this newcomer nonetheless has a great concept: You can search for a grave and get a map showing where it is in the cemetery and whose plots are nearby. Searching is free, and you get not only the information on a tombstone but also the grave's location, the cemetery name, a cemetery map, the address, GPS coordinates and driving directions. Paying members (\$7.95 per month, \$39.99 per year) can save searches and a "cemeteries of interest" list, get automated-search notifications and receive discounts on "virtual gravestone décor." Only about a dozen states are represented to date, but this one's worth watching.

10. *Nationwide Gravesite Locator*

http://gravelocator.cem.va.gov/j2ee/servlet/NG_L_v1

This Department of Veterans Affairs Web site—a domestic counterpart to the aforementioned American Battle Monuments Commission site—searches burial locations of veterans and their family members in VA National Cemeteries, state veterans cemeteries and various other military and Department of Interior cemeteries. It also includes veterans buried in private cemeteries where the grave is marked with a government grave marker.

10 Best Web Sites for Vital Records

These are the best searchable databases of vital records from health departments, historical societies and state archives.

1. Arizona Genealogy Birth and Death Certificates <http://genealogy.az.gov/>

Fortunate are those whose ancestors were born or died in Arizona. Not only can you search here for birth records (1855 to 1933) and death records (1844 to 1958), but once you've found your family members, a single click brings up a PDF of the original document.

2. Cook County, Illinois, Vital Records \$ <http://www.cookcountygenealogy.com/>

This new Web site makes finding your Chicago-area ancestors a snap: Searching the more than 8 million birth (75-plus years old), marriage (50-plus years old) and death (20-plus years old) records is free. Results show name, record date and file number, with an option to download a copy for \$15. Stumped by sound-alike names here? Use the search tool created by genealogy-tech guru Steve Morse at stevemorse.org/vital/cook.html.

3. Maine State Archives http://www.maine.gov/portal/facts_history/genealogy.htm

In addition to how-to's on Maine genealogy, this archives site serves up a searchable marriage index (1892 to 1996, with a gap from 1967 to 1976) and death index (1960 to 1996).

4. Massachusetts Archives <http://www.sec.state.ma.us/arc/arcidx.htm>

A searchable database lets you scour indexes of Massachusetts birth, marriage and death records from 1841 to 1910. You can search by first and last names, year and location. Bookmark this site, too, for its ongoing project to index more than 1 million immigrants through the port of Boston (1848 to 1891).

5. Minnesota Historical Society <http://www.mnhs.org/genealogy/>

Make a splash finding your ancestors in the Land of 10,000 Lakes with the indexes to birth records (1900 to 1934, plus selected pre-1900 records) and records from death cards (1904 to 1907) and death certificates (1908 to 2001).

6. Nova Scotia Historical Vital Statistics \$ <https://www.novascotiagenealogy.com/>

Why couldn't Great-grandpa have been born in Nova Scotia? This enviable site covers 111,386 births (1864 to 1877), 94,933 delayed birth records (1836 to 1907), 12,043 marriage bonds

(1763 to 1864), 211,617 marriage registrations (1864 to 1932), 53,835 deaths from 1864 to 1877, and 392,787 deaths from 1908 to 1957. Every name is linked to the original digitized record. Searching and viewing is free, and you can order e-copies (\$9.95) or paper copies (\$19.95).

7. Seeking Michigan <http://seekingmichigan.org/>

This handsome new site stands out for its Library of Michigan collection of nearly 1 million Michigan death certificates, 1897 to 1920—particularly notable because a readily available statewide index for the years 1915 to 1920 didn't exist previously. But these digitized records go far beyond a mere index, giving you the decedent's birth date and place, parents' names and birthplace, cemetery name and location, and more.

8. South Dakota Department of Health <http://apps.sd.gov/applications/PH14Over100BirthRec/index.asp>

Even though South Dakota didn't begin statewide birth records until 1905, people born before that date were allowed to file for delayed birth certificates. So don't be put off by the apparent four-year span of the database, which covers births from 100 years ago and earlier—more than 180,000 South Dakota births in all.

9. Utah Death Certificate Index <http://archives.utah.gov/research/indexes/20842.htm>

If only your ancestors had died in Utah, you could find them in this searchable database of more than 250,000 death certificates, from 1904 to 1956, linked to images of the originals.

10. Western States Historical Marriage Records Index <http://abish.byui.edu/specialcollections/westernstates/search.cfm>

This ever-growing database now numbers more than 686,000 marriages, including most pre-1900 nuptials plus many later ones for Arizona, Idaho and Nevada. Also worth a look for marriages in California, western Colorado, Montana, Oregon, Utah, eastern Washington and Wyoming. New Mexico marriages from the 1700s are being added.

(more next month!)

A follow-up article to our speaker in July: taking a trip to do research.



Research Trip

Summertime—many family historians are planning their research trips to libraries, conferences, or their ancestral homeland. It is very exciting to get out into the “field” and explore genealogy in a hands-on way but it is also important to do a little preparation to make the trip efficient and fun. Below are some of my tips for taking a research trip:

Learn the Procedures

If you are traveling to a library, learn about any rules or procedures that are in place. What hours are they open? Does it cost to go in? How much are photocopies? Can you bring your laptop? Is there wireless internet? All of these things are important to consider and be aware of before you get there.

If you are going to a genealogy conference, you should familiarize yourself with the conference program. Begin studying a map of the conference hall or hotel where the classes and registration will be held. When and where will registration be? Any special requirements for classes? What types of restaurants and fast food places are nearby? Will there be wireless internet?

No matter where you are going, it is important to understand how you will get there. Book any flights, hotels, and rental cars early. Make sure you have a map and directions if you are driving.

What Will You Research?

It is very important to have a research plan so that you stay focused. Write down exactly what ancestors or family lines you will be focusing on. Check the library’s catalog so that you understand what books and other resources are available. Make a list of resources that you want to check while you are at the library and check those books once you are there. Make a list of questions that you want to ask.

If you are going to a conference, then make a list of classes or presentations that you want to attend. Create a shopping list of items to buy from the vendors since discounts are generally offered at conferences. Create a list of questions to ask vendors or presenters.

Pack Your Bags

When on a research trip, it is important to pack your bags with the right stuff. While what you bring will vary by where you are going and the purpose of your trip, I want to give you a list of what I love to bring:

- Digital Camera with extra memory card and battery
- Clothing to dress in layers
- Light nonperishable snacks like protein bars, granola, dried fruit, or trail mix
- Any medications that you must take plus something for allergies (if you are allergic to dust or pollen) and

Advil or Tylenol (for headaches – staring at old handwriting can make your head hurt)

- Your family tree – I like to bring a flash drive with RootsMagic 4 on it so that I can easily access my tree from any computer without downloading the program to that computer.
- Laptop
- Pens, Paper, and Highlighters

Bring Your Family Tree

While on your trip, it is important to be able to access your own family tree. Some people prefer to do this by bringing copies pages of pedigree charts, family group sheets, and notes. Personally, I find all of this to be a bit on the bulky side and prefer to put my family tree on a small flash drive. But then you are reliant upon the computer that you are using having a family tree program on it. Unless...

As I stated before, I use RootsMagic 4 because of a very handy feature: I can run RootsMagic from the flash drive without having to download anything to the computer that I am using. I can easily use Aunt Mary’s or Cousin Sally’s computer without downloading it. I can also view my tree on a library computer. (Just to be clear, this isn’t the only reason I use RootsMagic 4, but it is about the coolest feature).

However you decide to take your family tree information with you, be sure that you do.

Stay Organized

Sometimes before a research trip, it is helpful to make lots of lists to help you keep track of everything. I like to bring along some file folders (or a binder) that has all of my paperwork in it – Maps, directions, questions list, packing list, contact information, business cards, etc. That way, everything I need to find is in one central place.

I also like to bring Ziploc bags to store pens, pencils, small notebooks, or coins. This method keeps like items together and easier to find.

Talk To People

In my honest opinion, what makes a research trip truly amazing are the conversations that you have. While it is a little intimidating to start a conversation with a complete stranger or genealogy “celebrity”, it is important to do so.

There is so much you can learn just by talking to people. I had so much fun last year at the Southern California Genealogy Society Jamboree mostly because of the people I met! I loved talking to the people sitting next to me, going to eat meals with them, and talking to the presenters and exhibit hall people. Truly, the wonderful people I met made the Jamboree a wonderful experience.

With a little preparation, your trip has more of a chance of running smoothly and efficiently. What genealogy research trips will you be taking this year?

Ancestors

The Smiths were proud of their family tradition. Their ancestors had come to America on the Mayflower. They had included Senators and Wall Street wizards.

They decided to compile a family history, a legacy for their children and grandchildren. They hired a fine author. Only one problem arose -- how to handle that great-uncle George, who was executed in the electric chair.

The author said he could handle the story tactfully.

The book appeared. It said "Great-uncle George occupied a chair of applied electronics at an important government institution, was attached to his position by the strongest of ties, and his death came as a great shock."

Author Unknown

*Yucaipa Valley Genealogical Society
Floyd K. Ferguson, President
P.O. Box 32
Yucaipa, CA 92399-0032*

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