

CHARLOTTE COUNTY
GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

1999

CHARLOTTE SUN HERALD
PUNTA GORDA HERALD

WEEKLY GENEALOGY ARTICLES

WRITTEN BY CCGS MEMBERS

CHARLOTTE COUNTY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

P.O. Box 2682

Port Charlotte, Florida 33949-2682



Taming the paper monster: Clean out those files

By MARY WILSON
Correspondent

Genealogy

a specific subject. And worst of all, my very patient husband is gently nudging me to "clean up the mess!"

I have decided to do something about it. And believe me, so far, it has been a rewarding exercise. First, I attacked my information files. I took out the little slips of paper without sources named on them. I couldn't bring myself to throw them away yet, so I typed up the ones I could read and flagged them for future research. The others I threw away.

I tore into the other items — periodicals and magazines, reading and clipping those of particular interest. As I read, I discovered some interesting information. For instance, did you know a genealogy work that begins with you and works back to a distant ancestor is not a genealogy at all? It is a family history. A genealogy is a work that begins with a specific ancestor and works down to you. (After I read that simple definition, I decided I had better take the advice of another article and go back to genealogy classes, which are taught by Bonny Stover at the Port Charlotte Cultural Center.)

After clipping the items I felt would further my own research, I filed them where I could refer to them easily when working with my family files. The rest of the material I discarded. The result: One empty file drawer and about three bags of trash.

I am not finished yet. I have to go through the family files, check each folder for overlooked clues

and coordinate my findings with information in the computer. If I find material that is no longer meaningful, it will be tossed out. There is still a lot of work ahead, but I am getting my paperwork organized. Is my husband happy yet? No, but I keep assuring him, the light is shining at the end of the tunnel. (He's not sure what that means.)

How about you? Are you ready for a file cleanup? Then get started. You may find it will clean up some of those knotty problems you've been having as well.

Reminder

The Charlotte County Genealogical Society will hold its monthly meeting today at 2 p.m. at the Port Charlotte United Methodist Church, located at Quesada and Viscaya. Ron Dupont, a local Internet guru, will speak to the society. His subject — the Internet.

Time is growing short to register for the Heritage Quest Road Show coming to Port Charlotte on Oct. 31. The seminar, sponsored by the Charlotte County Genealogical Society, will be from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Port Charlotte Elks Club, 2325 Tamiami Trail (between Midway and Forrest Nelson) and will feature Leland K. Meitzler, an expert in the field of genealogy. Mr. Meitzler is also editor of the prestigious genealogical magazine, "Heritage Quest." He is a well-known speaker with a gregarious approach that will keep you laughing. A hot lunch will be served with a choice of three entrees. There will be plenty of time for mingling and conversation as you browse through unique genealogical books and

computer programs. There will be interesting "freebie" handouts, and door prizes! And as if this were not enough, each participant will be allowed three free queries in the Heritage Quest magazine, as well as a year's free subscription to the magazine. If you already subscribe, your current subscription will be extended.

The fee for this bounty will be \$35 per person, with each additional family member paying only \$20. Seating is limited. If you are interested call Gene Dudley, (941) 637-6208, or (941)743-2769.

Mary Wilson is vice president of the Charlotte County Genealogical Society.

I bet at least some of you genealogists out there have files bulging at the seams with research data that you have not checked for a while. Maybe, like me, you have some little scraps of paper with scribbles on them that you notated years ago at some unknown library since you didn't indicate the source when you promptly filed it away in a file labeled "for future reference."

You probably have scads of old back issues of periodicals, such as The New England Historical and Genealogical Register or the National Genealogical Society Quarterly, awaiting study.

Maybe you have some back issues of Heritage Quest magazine. Those of you with computers, when was the last time you looked at your family files? Should you need to consult them, could you find what you were looking for easily?

Judging from my own experience, I believe the wonderful organizing skills the computer brings to genealogical research may also generate neglect of backup paper files. Genealogists know how important they are. But how are we keeping them? If we don't preserve them properly, they will not be around to consult in years to come. I am convinced I am a prime offender in this regard. I can tell by those three large folders sitting on the floor by my desk. They are there because I can't fit them into my four-drawer file cabinet. Also, I have noticed I have more papers filed under "General" than under

one when I found this in a very old will of a very old Chambliss grandfather — "I bequeath to my wife, Lucy, my HORSE, known as 'Bolling'."

Tomorrow, I am off to the Florida State Genealogical Society Convention in Melbourne, a 3-day meeting with the various genealogical societies in Florida in attendance. I hope to come back loaded with pictures and other information of interest. Stay tuned.

Mary Wilson is Vice President of the Charlotte County Genealogical Society which meets the 3rd Wednesday of each month at the Port

those of common sense and good luck. The following story is one of many tales of horror that happened in general everyday living in years past. Legends and users of genealogical data may have some similar stories on their family background. Some may reveal us by calling it a "true" life WAS, real and life WAS, earnest, and families suffered innumerable tragedies.

"An accident 'fraught with terror and deadly peril' was described in my hometown newspaper in Iowa in 1937

Please see QUEST, page 25, Punta Gorda Herald Page 25

Charlotte Methodist Church at Viscaya and Quesada at 2 p.m. Nonmembers are welcome. Come at 1:30 p.m. and reap the benefits of an instruction class.

Heritage Quest seminar scheduled for Nov. 21

By Mary Wilson
Correspondent

If you weren't at the Port Charlotte Elks Club this past Saturday, you missed a wonderfully informative day. Attendees included genealogists from Naples, Fort Myers, Sarasota, Manasota and an outpouring from our own Charlotte County. The Elks put on a lovely luncheon and there were many goodies to choose from in the way of genealogical materials courtesy of Leland Meitzler, editor of Heritage Quest Magazine. Gene Dudley, president of the Charlotte County Genealogical Society

Genealogy

was on hand to give out interesting door prizes from the society and from local merchants and Heritage Quest. All in all it was a grand affair and everybody (nearly 150 people in attendance) went home at 4:30 p.m., well satisfied with the day's accomplishments.

For those of you who were unable to attend, the Genealogical Society of Collier County will be hosting a similar seminar hosted by Leland Meitzler, Nov. 21. Subjects to be discussed are:

- 1) Social Security records and indexes
- 2) Locating your ancestor's family when all you know is the state
- 3) Advanced use of state and federal census records
- 4) The Internet as a genealogical tool.

The seminar will be held at St. John's Episcopal Church, 500 Park Shore Drive, Naples, Fla. While no dinner will be served, I am told there are restaurants in the area, or you are free to "brown-bag" it. The charge is \$25 which covers the seminar and a one-year subscription to Heritage Quest

magazine.

Additional family members pay \$10 each. Please call Helen Eckhardt for information at (941) 591-1537. But don't delay. Tickets are going fast.

As a genealogist, I am often struck with human-interest stories that are unearthed along with genealogical facts. The following story sent to me by my good friend and talented writer, Nita Groh, is a good example of "lore" often stumbled upon by family-history researchers. As Nita tells it:

"Life went hand in hand with hard work centuries ago and the laws of safety were

those of common sense and good luck. The following story is one of many tales of horror that happened in general everyday living in years past. Readers and users of genealogical data probably have some similar stories in their family background. Some may trivialize it by calling it lore, but life WAS real and life WAS earnest, and families suffered innumerable tragedies.

"An accident 'fraught with terror and deadly peril' was described in my hometown newspaper in Iowa in 1937

Please see QUEST, page 25

November 11, 1998

Sun Herald

Punta Gorda Herald Page 25

★ QUEST

From page 6

(commemorating an event that occurred in 1880 — 57 years previous). A lady of my family's acquaintance, living on a nearby farm, was hand-pumping water from a 40-foot well when the platform caved in, instantly dropping her and her 3-year-old daughter to the bottom. On rising to the 12-foot surface of the water this woman seized upon a board that was projecting from the wall of the well, and her presence of mind and strong desire to save her child allowed her to grasp the little girl as she surfaced. The motherly strength of this lady placed the child upon the board where mother and child relied completely on that one piece of wood to save their lives.

"The man of the family was in the fields working his land, so all the cries and screams from

the well-depth went unheard until two hours later when the man came to the house for his noon-day meal. Somehow, with the help of a hired man, he rescued his wife and daughter.

"What added to the horror of this experience was the fact that a 2-year-old son was playing around the broken platform above the desperate woman in the well. With a 2-year-old's curiosity, leaning over the vast open hole, the mother frantically verbally reasoned with him all during those two hours to keep him from the danger of joining them in the depths.

Fortunately, she was successful in this part of the endeavor, and he was the one to tell Papa where Mommy was "hiding," instead of being in her usual spot in the kitchen.

"The children were unharmed and it was thought the mother was in good condition also, until shortly thereafter she became paralyzed and remained in that condition until

On the lighter side, Nita wonders, "What's in a Name?":

"The ongoing search for my Chambliss ancestors in Virginia and the South has acquainted me with the fact that the very early settlers moved from one land opportunity to another in small, close colonies, quietly cementing friendships day by day. The families of Chambliss, Bolling, Littleton, Golightly, Addison, Ledbetter, Eldrige, Camp, and Stith were one such cluster. The

strength of their friendship could be measured through the passing generations as I found the surname of one family used as a GIVEN name for a child of another family. I found an Uncle Bolling Chambliss, as well as a Littleton and a Stith Chambliss. There was a Chambliss Bolling, an Eldrige Addison, etc. In the early 18th century these were all people of prominence and influence in America.

"But the real gauge of these loyalties brought a giggle from

me when I found this in a very old will of a very old Chambliss grandfather— 'I bequeath to my wife, Lucy, my HORSE, known as 'Bolling!'"

Tomorrow, I am off to the Florida State Genealogical Society Convention in Melbourne, a 3-day meeting with the various genealogical societies in Florida in attendance. I hope to come back loaded with pictures and other information of interest. Stay tuned.

Mary Wilson is Vice President of the Charlotte County Genealogical Society which meets the 3rd Wednesday of each month at the Port

Charlotte Methodist Church, at Viscaya and Quesada at 2 p.m. Nonmembers are welcome. Come at 1:30 p.m. and reap the benefits of an instruction class.

Volunteers sought to help update Indian Springs Cemetery book

By MARY WILSON
Correspondent

Tomorrow is Thanksgiving Day, one of our nicest family holidays. There will be lots of celebrating as we remember the beautiful story of the Pilgrim Thanksgiving with the Indians and the colonists joining together. Certainly there will be feasting on turkey and pumpkin pie, and visiting with family and neighbors. It's one of my favorite holidays.

Genealogy

But guess what! Maybe we should give at least a little thought to another small band of people who celebrated Thanksgiving before the Pilgrims came to Plymouth Rock. Charlotte County Genealogical Society member Bob Gatewood pointed out at the November meeting that, contrary to popular opinion, the

FIRST annually celebrated Thanksgiving Day in the English Colonies did not take place in New England, but in Virginia. It seems in 1619, some years after the 1607 settlement of Jamestown, Virginia, and before the Pilgrims reached Plymouth Rock, a group of 38 Englishmen landed in Virginia and established what would be

known as the Berkeley Hundred, about 30 miles from Jamestown. Their charter specifically stated the day of arrival should be spent offering Thanksgiving and the date, as ordained, "shall be yearly and perpetually kept holy as a day of thanksgiving to Almighty God." Apparently some form of Thanksgiving ceremonial took

place at the Berkeley Hundred for a period of time, probably similar in style to the old English custom of Harvest Home Day.

However, the custom probably did not outlast the 1622 massacre which decimated the ranks of the Virginia colonists,

★ BOOK

From page 7

and particularly the Berkeley Hundred.

This Thanksgiving, while we are giving thanks to God for all our blessings, let us as genealogists not forget our forbears. Do you have a villain or two? So do I. Don't let it get to you. If they didn't do anything else, they existed long enough for us to be here. They are responsible for our being alive in this time and place. I often think about fate's curious twists and turns in that regard. For instance, my second great-grandmother was the last child to be born in the family. She survived and had 13 children. Had she not been born, had she not survived, I would not be here. My seventh great-grandparents had one child. Had that one child not been born, where would I be now? It is interesting to contemplate. Be thankful that your ancestors were strong, hardy folk who were able to survive long enough to ensure YOUR arrival in this world!

Betsey Lambert of the Charlotte County Genealogical society is calling for volunteers. She is updating the Society's Indian Springs Cemetery book, now in its third printing. This book was published a few years ago and, as its name implies, contains information about people who are interred in Indian Springs Cemetery in Punta Gorda. The book was researched by society members in several ways. A walking survey of the cemetery was done. Interviews were held with some family members and county employees. And abstracts of probate records and obituaries were also made.

Adds Betsey: "We have tried to include the birth dates, parents' names, and death dates for each person buried at Indian Springs. Perhaps some of your readers who have relatives at Indian Springs could help us update this information. We would like to add the PLACES of birth and death, and the person's occupation. We would also like to include information concerning their military service, if any. And of course even

simple hints such as correct spelling of names, etc. would be appreciated."

If interested, you can find the original book at your local library. How about it Charlotte County residents? This book will be around a long time to help present-day and future genealogists. If you think you can help, call Betsey at 637-1158 for information.

Correction

A big Thank you on Thanksgiving Day to Mr. Edwin Rehill for pointing out an error in last week's story: The 104th Division did not land on D-Day in France. It landed September 7, 1944, three months later. It was the first American division to go directly from the United States to France.

Thank you Mr. Rehill.

Mary Wilson is vice president of the Charlotte County Genealogical Society.

Homestead research leads to unexpected rewards

By LEE LOOMIS
Correspondent

Where do you start when you want to write a history about your birthplace? I was faced with this dilemma a while back when my brother and I sold part of the family land in Michigan and the buyers were interested in knowing more about its history.

I started digging. I began my research by consulting county histories and land records. I had no idea that I would be rewarded with so much information, not only about the land but also about my family. I also learned something about the the land history of this country, which, I can now say, is a tangle of confusing jurisdictions and dotted with change. Indeed, after struggling with this exercise, I have come to the conclusion the big problem is the Indians should have had some strong immigration laws.

I found that early land grants to the colonies were sometimes vague and certainly overreaching. I am sure others who have embarked on this adventure have found this to be true for their states, as it is true for my area of search, Michigan. Both the British and French had a hand in ruling the early territory that would become Michigan.

To complicate matters, in 1778-1779, Virginia claimed all of the southern part of the Northwest Territory which extended into southern Wisconsin and Michigan. As you can imagine, there were many disputes over land ownership during the late 1700s and early 1800s.

With the Ordinance of 1787, protection was granted to farmers and they were allowed to retain control of their land. In 1796, Wayne County was formed out of the Northwest Territory. A part of Wayne County was destined to

Genealogy

become my part of Michigan. The county included pieces of northern Ohio, Indiana and the lower peninsula of Michigan.

When Congress approved the establishment of the Michigan Territory in 1805, Wayne County was in the package. Between 1822 and 1857 one county and five townships were formed from the original Wayne County. One of these townships was Liberty Township where my

great-grandfather, Ambrose S. Crouch, settled in 1836. But Ambrose was not the first Crouch to come to America.

The first Crouch (William) came to New England from London about 1632 and settled in Charlestown, Mass., leaving a brother, Richard, and a sister, Elizabeth Crouch Ayers, in Middlesex, London. William had 11 children. One of his great-grandchildren became a Connecticut Yankee, moving to Hebron, Conn., and

Please see REWARDS, page 19

★ REWARDS

From page 7

Crouch, was born there.

The family later moved to Cohocton, N.Y., and from there in 1836, Ambrose, 35, moved to Michigan, settling on the 150 acres of land he had purchased from the government. His brother, Richard Crouch, purchased 40 acres of land on the north side of what is now Crouch Road. Ambrose constructed Crouch Road from Hague Road to Waite Road to avoid the necessity of uphill hauling to Jackson, which would have been necessary had he not built the road.

Ambrose built his cabin about a half-mile south of Crouch Road. Careful examination about 15 feet east of the road will show evidence of the old foundation of this cabin. Later, he built a frame house about one-half mile west of the old block house on the south side of Crouch Road. There is still a well casing there to mark the location.

Several generations later, my father George, mother Nina, and brothers Calvin and Cecil lived in that house. It burned down in 1905, but not before Calvin and Cecil were born there. Cecil was less than a year old at the time of the fire. The family wintered in a corn crib. To keep Cecil warm, he was kept in a cardboard box on the oven door of the cook stove. This is why I called him "my half-baked brother" (but only to him). The cement block house was built in 1906.

One of the boons of my county land history search was the discovery of "The 1881 Jackson County History". This county history contained personal information regarding my great-grandfather, Ambrose Crouch, and grandfather, James H. Loomis. The stories included the names of their parents, wives, children, birth, death and marriage dates, and even their church and political affiliations.

Of my great-grandfather Ambrose it states "Mr. Crouch raised himself to be one of the influential citizens of Jackson County. He came to

this county with very little means and acquired a large property consisting of 416 acres of land". Of my grandfather James H. Loomis, it also gives insight: "He remained with his father (Benjamin Franklyn Loomis) until he was 21....Mr. Loomis made his way in life receiving from his father \$5 to be applied in the purchase of a watch....In 1867 (he) rented the place which he purchased in 1868. He owned 150 acres valued at \$9,000... he has held the office of school inspector and Justice of the Peace"...

My father, George Henry Loomis, had two brothers after the Jackson County history was written, Byron Ebenezer and Halbert Jay. Byron had a fantastic memory and an ability for figuring mathematical calculations in his head. Uncle Jay lived in the house and ran the

farm. At present there are two Loomis/Crouch descendants living on the property.

I started my search to satisfy the requests of the buyers of our property. I found, in addition, much information of great value to me. When you are researching, don't overlook the county histories you find in the libraries or the land records that are on file in courthouses. You may find something of genealogical value there.

Lee Loomis is a past president of the Charlotte County Genealogical Society, which will be holding its Annual Christmas Luncheon and December meeting today, at the Port Charlotte Elks Club, Tamiami Trail between Forrest Nelson and Midway boulevards. Installation of officers and entertainment is on the program. The luncheon will cost \$10.

Chance meetings may lead you to ancestors

By Mary Wilson
Correspondent

Do you shudder at the thought of attending a regional genealogical conference? Think it might be too overwhelming for you? Horrors! All those people that you don't know! Perhaps you think you wouldn't get much benefit out of such a huge meeting with a group of strangers. Not to mention the fact that you would have to travel many miles to get there and maybe spend a night or two. Well, you may change your mind after I tell you of my recent happy experience at the annual

Genealogy

conference of the Florida State Genealogical Society (FSGS). I attended with Deva Gene Dudley, president of the genealogical society. We were representing our own local society. The FSGS annually presents a fall conference in different cities around the state. This year the conference was held in Melbourne on the east coast of Florida and believe me, we enjoyed every minute of it.

Please see LEAD, page 22

★ LEAD

From page 7

We are looking forward to next year's meeting in Sarasota. Besides having a good time meeting people and discovering "could-be" cousins, we enjoyed the grand experience of learning new techniques and acquiring new ideas.

The program was impressive, boasting such informed speakers as Paul Milner, a professional genealogist and lecturer who specializes in British Isles genealogical research, and Michael Boonstra, a certified genealogist whose specialty is New England research. He spoke to us about using the Internet in genealogy research.

There were other excellent speakers. One discussed the holdings in the Florida archives. A computer systems engineer, Chuck Corbett, gave an excellent speech on how to organize research findings. (I am going to try one of his suggestions and I'll let you know how it worked for me.) And yet another — a postcard dealer — explained how old postcards could help in researching genealogy.

Not all our time was spent in lectures, however. There were other things to do. Some attendees found time to take the hotel shuttle to local libraries to

do research work. I didn't. My free time was pretty much devoted to the on-site activities such as computer demonstrations and other visual presentations, and, of course, the vendors.

And there were vendors galore with just about everything any genealogist could dream of in the way of books, CDs, forms and "cutesy" items. (Yes, I broke down and bought a "family tree" T-shirt which came equipped with pen, so I could fill in the blanks.) Several book dealers had set up shop in the rooms adjoining the conference halls. One photography expert copied old photos that were brought to him. And there was even a dealer in very old postcards on hand. I must confess, "old postcards" have never interested me unless I found them stashed away in my attic. But after listening earlier to the speaker on the subject, I began to wonder if I had been missing something, perhaps not as a collector — I only collect ancestors — but as a genealogist.

Her collection contained postcards from all over the world filed by postmark and easily accessible. I began poring over the cards — postmarked Washington D.C. (my hometown), enjoying the exciting

Punta Gorda Herald Page 22



Sun Herald photo provided

Vice president Mary Wilson, left, and president Gene Dudley, right, get together recently with Joan Dancy and Chuck Thornton of the Lee County Genealogical Society at the annual state conference.

idea that I might see a familiar name. Alas, in the short time between lectures, I did not discover any, but I will never pass a postcard dealer again without having a look at their collection.

A most interesting development occurred at the evening Awards Banquet which honored Florida Pioneer Descendants. Gene and I were seated with a family receiving one of the awards and the conversation naturally drifted to the interesting stories they had to tell about their early ancestors. One of the stories concerned a member of the family who had traveled to Kansas in a covered wagon.

As the story progressed, I thought I recognized names and circumstances similar to those on Gene's family tree. Gene got into a conversation with the family historian, Shirley Hurst. Notes were compared. Before the dinner was over Gene and her new friends had come to the conclusion that they might indeed have a common ancestor in that Kansas settler. They exchanged addresses and the correspondence has already begun, along with the effort to find the link. What a great ending to an informative and productive meeting!

The next time you are tempted by an invitation to attend a genealogy meeting, whether

Organize family records for the

By Mary Wilson
Correspondent

This is my favorite season of the year. Beautiful decorations, lovely music, friendly crowds (at least, I haven't met any Scrooges this year), and parties. Everybody is having or has had a Christmas party, including the **Charlotte County Genealogical Society**.

The society held its annual Christmas party and installation of officers on Dec. 9 at the **Charlotte County Elks Club** in Port Charlotte. The crowd was lively, and the hall looked "Christmas-y" with its decorations of garlands and lights. Of course, the high spirits were helped along by the **Port Charlotte High School Women's Choir**.

The voices blended beautifully as they sang the "Carol of the Bells" a capella, and the other routines were performed in perfect sync and rhythm. Perhaps it helped that they had memorized their music so their eyes were on their director, **Michelle Mancini**, not on

sheet music. Congratulations **Michelle** and thank you and the **Women's Choir** for a great afternoon. We hope you all will investigate the information packets handed out to you after the performance, and begin to make genealogy one of your interests.

Sharon Martin, assistant librarian of the **Port Charlotte Cultural Center** library, spoke at the luncheon, thanking the society for its service in supplying volunteer workers and research materials to the genealogy section. She mentioned the large numbers of tourists and residents who come to the library looking for genealogical information and, because of the society's efforts, the library can offer answers to their questions. In turn, the society offers many thanks to the library for giving us a "home" for these many years.

The officers for 1999 were installed in a candlelight service and then presented to the membership by **President Deva Gene Dudley**.

Dudley, VP **Mary Wilson**, **Treasurer Bob Tedford** and **Recording Secretary Carol Brown** will hold their positions for a second year. Newly installed: **Corresponding Secretary Helen Volpe**; **Membership Chairman Karleen Cogswell**; **Program Chairman Jan Masteryani**; **Historian Margaret Parker**; **Genealogist Betsy Lambert**; **Directors Betsy Lambert, Ellen VanNieuwenhuyzen and Nita Groh**; and **Web guru Robert Pettit**.

An extra delight was **Nancy Sims**, who was a big hit when she unwrapped two family history quilts that she made over a three-year period, each square embroidered with a picture depicting the stories of a particular family on her tree. Insignias of the lineage societies of which she is a member were embroidered around the edges of one quilt.

You say you are not so good with a needle? Neither am I.

Please see **RECORDS**, page 10

Punta Gorda Herald Page 9

new year

Punta Gorda Herald Page 20

★ RECORDS

From page 10

Broderbund, folks!)

Don't have a computer? Don't want one? Just remember that books were written before there were computers. Your job will be harder, and it will take longer, but you can do it. And if you want to get some ideas as to how to get started, come to the genealogical society meetings on the third Wednesday of each month. You will meet people like **Helen Volpe** who has completed such a book and will be glad to give you some pointers.

Think about it. Has the time come for you to temporarily stop your research and begin to organize what you have already done; to go back and check your work, and get it in shape for future generations to read? It has for me and that's what I am going to do in the coming year.

Mary Wilson is vice president of the Charlotte County Genealogical Society.



Sun Herald photo provided

CCGS member **Nancy Sims**, left, and Vice President **Mary Wilson** show off one of **Sims** history quilts recently.

Lineage societies help find 'missing link'

By Mary Wilson
Correspondent

How many readers are aware that Charlotte County has its very own **Sons and Daughters of the American Revolution** chapters that you may be eligible to join? Would you be interested if you could become a member? What would you get out of it?

Such patriotic lineage societies have been closely associated with family history research. But are they a good investment of time and money for the genealogist? What advantage would a membership actually carry?

Speaking as both a member of our local genealogical society and DAR chapter, I can think of at least one very important advantage: validation of research. Patriotic lineage societies, for the most part, insist on proof of claim. Their standards are strict. Tradition must be reinforced by fact. Thus, once your papers have been approved, you know that your research has been validated. And that is a wonderful feeling — to know that someone reviewed your work against certain standards and found it to be factual.

These groups also provide a service to the genealogist in that they maintain scores of family histories in their libraries. For example, the DAR library in Washington, D.C., has a collection of over 105,000 titles and several thousand manuscript items. Nonmembers pay a nominal fee for using the library. The SAR library in Louisville, Ky., is a major depository of colonial records with much accu-

Genealogy

mulation of genealogical information and pedigree charts. Nonmembers are also charged a fee to research its shelves. In both societies, lineage papers of members are available to researchers — a real advantage when you are trying to find that "missing link."

Aside from genealogical undertakings, you may find these societies supporting in whole or in part institutions such as schools and colleges. The DAR supports two schools in the Appalachian area, both fully accredited, and contributes clothing, gifts and scholarships to four other schools.

Each society, of course, has its own regulations when it comes to admitting new members. The DAR chapter regent, for example, may invite a prospective member to join in meetings before being approved as a member. This prospective member is given a year to apply for membership and be accepted. During the year, the member will be working toward this goal with the chapter registrar, and may even contact the society genealogist in Washington, D.C., for assistance. This works well if you have most of your information in hand. **Leila Brooks**, regent of our local DAR chapter, will be glad to discuss membership as will **Avis Turcott**, chapter registrar. If you would like additional information on this subject, call Leila at (941) 624-3298, or Avis at (941) 764-7920.

If you are just starting on your research journey, however,

it would probably be a good idea to think about taking a course in genealogy such as the one **Bonny Stover** teaches at the Port Charlotte Cultural Center. It is always a good idea to join your local genealogical society. There you will find members with your same interests who will be able to help you on your way, such as **Bonny and Darvin Stover**. (She is a member of the **Mayflower Society** while he is active in the SAR.)

Why not make this one of your New Year's resolutions — to complete that application that you have been eyeing for the past year? This time next year you can pat yourself on the back for a job well done.

Mary Wilson is vice president of the Charlotte County Genealogical Society; and a member of the Charlotte chapter of the NSDAR and of the Jamestown Society.

The hunt for Helen B.

By Robert H. Tedford
Correspondent

The search for my great-grandmother began when I sent for my grandparents' marriage certificate in September 1992. The certified marriage certificate that I received from the town clerk of Salem, Mass., gave my grandfather's mother's maiden name as "Helen B." My great-grandfather was William H. Tedford.

I'm not sure of the exact order of events that followed but my search took me through most of the recommended procedures for problem-solving as suggested by George Chapman in his beginner's genealogy class, which I took in the fall of 1992. Since my grandparents were born in Nova Scotia, I talked to Evelyn Piper, a member of the Charlotte County Genealogical Society, who volunteered her help to anyone in our club who was researching in that area. She loaned me some books that she had on Nova Scotia and from them I learned about the Genealogical Association of Nova Scotia (GANS). So, I wrote for more information and eventually joined that association.

One of the publications available from GANS was "A Catalogue of Published Genealogies of Nova Scotia Families," with a surname index. From that publication, I learned about a collection of articles published by George S. Brown entitled "Yarmouth Nova Scotia Genealogies," which contained information on the Tedford surname. A trip to the Port Charlotte Family History Center of the Church of Latter Day Saints, on Forrest



Sun Herald photo provided

From left, Ada Tedford Porter, Edward Arthur, Phronie Wilmore, Ina Arthur, Jack Arthur and Helen Marshall. The photograph was marked September 30, 1938.

Nelson Boulevard, gave me some additional leads. There, I found that the IGA file for Nova Scotia contained several listings for William H. Tedford, but none were married to a Helen B. However, Brown's book was available from Salt Lake City on microfilm, so I immediately put in a loan request for that film. I believe the information from the book has been transcribed to the IGA microfiche file, but it is much easier to comprehend when you see the family groupings than when you are looking at single lines of data in alphabetical order.

Still no Helen B., but I did locate a W.H. Tedford who was married twice. The first wife was Barbara Oldbright and the second was Hanna Porter. The book did not list any children from the first marriage, but Hannah bore four children: Susan, Sophronia, Ada and William. The date of the first marriage would be appropriate

for when I believed my grandfather, John, was born. Also, my ancestors had a habit of using middle names for call names, so I began to approach the problem with the idea that the "B" in "Helen B." stood for Barbara.

In the class on problem-solving, George suggested re-reading your notes. I decided to re-read a letter from my Aunt

Please see HUNT, page 7

★ HUNT

From page 5

Mary, in which she wrote, "Did you know Grandpa had four sisters, Susan, Phronie, Ada and Inez?" Could it be that Susan, Sophronia and Ada were half-sisters? In the GANS newsletter, there was a list of people who would be willing to help fellow members researching within their respective counties. So, I wrote to the representative for Yarmouth County and explained my problem. She wrote back that in the

1871 census, she found a William H. Tedford family with wife Barbara and children: John, 10, Etta, 6, and Inez, 1. In the 1881 census for the same district, she found William H. Tedford, wife Hannah, John, 20, Etta, 16, Inez, 11, Susan, 6, Sophronia, 5, and Ada, 6 months.

I am now in communication with another researcher in Digby County, Nova Scotia, where Barbara Oldbright was from, and he located an obituary for Barbara Tedford in 1872. So, I now have her date of death, date of marriage, and

approximate date of birth. But there is still some confusion about the spelling of her surname. It now appears that it is Albright or Albrite, which may be a derivation of Albrecht.

To summarize, in this one problem, drawing on my genealogical study with George Chapman, I made use of contacts in two societies: the Charlotte County Genealogical Society and the Genealogical Association of Nova Scotia and their publications; and I com-

municated with relatives, censuses, the Family History Center of the Mormon Church and the town clerk where my grandparents were married. These methods worked for me. Maybe they will work for you.

Robert H. Tedford is treasurer

of the Charlotte County Genealogical Society which meets at 2 p.m. on the third Wednesday of each month at the United Methodist Church on Viscaya and Quesada, Port Charlotte. Nonmembers are always welcome.

Building bridges over time

Genealogy

By Mary Wilson
Correspondent

Did you get a happy surprise under the Christmas tree this year? I know at least one person in our area that got a most welcome surprise. Dorothy Jean Muhn was the lucky winner of a beautiful dollhouse raffled off by the Charlotte County Genealogical Society. The dollhouse, donated by a past member of the society and built by Patricia LeBeau, also a society member, was a true work of art. Pat is an expert at building dollhouses, this being one of her many hobbies, and the combination of her talent and the fine details provided with the kit (such as window sashes that raised and lowered, a fireplace and other fine points) have made it a treasure.

When she heard she was the winner, Dorothy said "I have always wanted a dollhouse and now I have one. I am just so excited about it. I can't believe it." Dorothy has been a member of the society for over three years. She has traced her family back to the 1700s. She said that this was the first raffle she has ever won and she is genuinely thrilled to have the dollhouse. Everyone is happy about the outcome, including the Port Charlotte Cultural Center Library whose genealogical section will benefit, since the raffle proceeds will go toward the purchase of genealogical computer CDs.

With two weeks of the new year gone, how are you doing with your New Year's resolutions? Started your family history book yet? Stymied by your attempt to write your own life story? Sometimes that story can be intimidating because it could be a book in itself. I pondered this and have decided to make my autobiography a series of short anecdotes: humorous happenings, impor-



Sun Herald photo provided

CCGS president Deva Gene Dudley, center, and Pat LeBeau, right, recently presented Dorothy Jean Muhn with the dollhouse she won in a raffle.

tant occasions and opinions on current events. (I certainly don't want my descendants to be deprived of my wonderful insights as to what is going on in my world of today.)

And if it takes a book, so be it. But perhaps you have a different viewpoint, a different style. The important thing is to get started. Do it your way and don't be shy. If you have a talent, tell the world (which is what you'll be doing when you write your story.) Five generations down the road, a descendant with your special talents may be interested in reading about their predecessor with the same traits.

Do you have ancestors with only dates and names and not much to put in the biographical part of the book? The stories do not have to be long to give a glimpse of that special person. They can be short and funny, or whimsical, or sad. Maybe you have a keepsake such as a picture-personal article. Lee Loomis, a member of our local society, has such a keepsake that, while it doesn't contain dates, places and happenings, it

still tells something about its writer. It is a copy of a letter his grandmother, Viola Vining, wrote to a very good friend, Carrie Wesch Kelly. It is copied below exactly as she wrote it:

"Now Carrie dear when you get this letter.
I hope it will find you very much better
And do not think I am wicked or bad,
It is simply done to make you feel glad.
You know I always did like to rhyme.
And I can do it most any old time.
Our walking days are nearly done
And we'er too darn old to have much fun.
But we can still sit in a chair and rock,
And talk the face right off the clock.
And wonder how long 'fore we'el cross the river,
Whether we'el go by boat or a flivver.
And when we reach the other shore

Please see TIME, page 21
Mary C. Wilson is vice-president of the Charlotte County Genealogical Society which meets at 2 p.m. the third Wednesday of the month at the Port Charlotte United Methodist Church at Quesada and Viscaya. Guests are welcome.

Saint Peter will meet us at the door
And make us go below for awhile,
I don't believe I could crack a smile.
I never did like to shovel coal
But I s'pose I could to save my soul
And when we have paid for our sins on earth
Will he let us in for a heavenly berth?

Will he open the gate and make us happy
And say hop in, but make it snappy?
Will we meet the ones who have gone before us?
And can we join in the heavenly chorus?
You know we always did like to sing
And wouldn't we make the Heavens ring?
Would Tom and John be there to meet us?
And other dear ones come forth to greet us?
The older I get the more I think about it

But I'm not like some who always doubt it.
I'm living in hope and I know you are too,
So cheer up Carrie and don't feel blue,
We'el fare as well as the rest of them there,
And I hope they'l give us an easy chair.
This is not very wise, and not very witty
And maybe you think I deserve some pity
For writing such stuff to a friend of mine
And so right now my name I'll sign

And that you know is Viola A.
And now as I'm sleepy I'll hit the hay
May God bless and keep you my very dear Friend
And good-bye for this time, this is the end."

Is there anything else that can be said about the lovely lady who wrote this verse that doesn't show in the verse

itself? I don't think so. And I like her! How about you?

Arthur's Egyptian adventure

By Nita Groh
Correspondent

My son is a top-notch dentist in Coral Gables. He has become well-known in the Miami area recently by way of some community service he has performed for the Metro Zoo — such as a root canal on a Bengal tiger, a tusk trim on an elephant, and an extraction for an injured Australian wild dog. Media coverage of these events sparked his human patients to brag, "He's MY dentist."

In my research of one of my families I have recently learned about a distant cousin, Arthur Leuty, who was also a well-known dentist of his day. He was a young man with a Yorkshire ancestry. He graduated from the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor in 1893, with a DDS degree. From Ann Arbor, he moved to Chicago for a year of practice, as well as a time of stockpiling equipment and supplies. He had a dream! He acquired a passport and set sail for Beirut, Syria (now Lebanon).

He practiced dentistry for a short time there and also acquired a Syrian wife.

Next, I learned about this cousin's departure from Syria, across the Mediterranean, to Alexandria, Egypt, where he hoped to make a difference by dispensing superior dental care to a part of the world where it was sorely needed. His four children were all born in Alexandria.

The Nile was the great highway of the country and most traveling was done by boat, although there were railways in some parts of the country. The chief industry here was agriculture and grain, cotton and sugar were important products. Oil and tobacco were greatly exploited and building stones, clay, gypsum, gold, manganese ores, phosphate of lime, salt, alum and magnesia were developed commercially.

The year wore on and Abbas II, who was governing as a viceroy of the Sultan of Turkey, died in 1918. Four years later, Britain recognized the "Kingdom of Egypt" under Sultan Ahmed Faud Pasha I, making it an independent foreign state.

The following revelation came in my later research: Cousin Arthur became the caretaker of the teeth of King Faud, as well as tending to the harem members' dental needs!

My son is embroidering this ancestral story into a business brochure for his clientele. Hopefully, his research will reveal details of tools, techniques and medications that were available to patients a century ago. I also hope my



DR. ARTHUR LEUTY

further research will reveal why adventure in Syria and Egypt called to this man in those early days.

A sad point ends this story. Arthur's Syrian wife committed suicide by drowning in the Mediterranean. Was the harem

responsible?

...

The Charlotte County Genealogical Society will meet at 2 p.m. today at the Port Charlotte United Methodist Church at Quesada and Viscaya. Visitors are welcome. Come early and join in the learning class before the meeting.

Speakers at the meeting will be Peter Banks and Jeanne Frakes, from the Charlotte Memorial Home and Memorial Gardens, who will speak on researching funeral home and cemetery records. Nancy Simms will also display her family history quilts and will be available to advise those who would be interested in pursuing such an artistic endeavor.

Nita Groh is a longtime member of the Charlotte County Genealogical Society.

Family ties through the ages

By CAROL ANN BROWN
Correspondent

My great-grandfather Konrad Meseth was my great-grandmother's first husband. They had two sons before my great-grandfather was killed in an accident in Germany. The sons were named Johann Konrad (my grandfather) and Johann.

My great-grandmother later married Johann Hager who had one son from his first marriage named Johann Wilhelm. Together they had two more sons, Wolfgang and Emil. (Thank goodness, no more Johanns. These made for some confusion with research.)

The start of my research came from Nancy Okabe and her brother, Steve Hager, descendants of my great-grandmother's second husband, Johann Hager. They had included my family in their research and this told me where in Germany to look.

Early in 1995, I spoke to Nancy about our mutual family and told her of our plans to visit the small town of Stammbach in Bavaria where my great-grandfather was born. She suggested that I write to a relative of hers, Monika Ehrler. At the same time, Nancy also wrote to Monika to ask if we could visit her. Monika wrote back and invited us to stay with them for as long as we wanted. We gladly accepted and stayed in their ancestral home for three nights.

While we were there,

Genealogy

Monika took us to a Protestant church, where she and the church secretary looked into old record books for my family name of Meseth. They gave me information back to my fifth great-grandfather, which was very exciting. I asked Monika and Max, her husband, if the town of Rorhig was close by, as that was where my great-grandfather was born.

They asked if I was sure of his birthplace and I showed them the information I had on it. They laughed and said they would take me there. The reason for their laughter soon became apparent. There was only one house in the town and it wasn't the one we were hoping to find!

One day, Monika and Max took us to another small town, Weickenreuth, where my third great-grandmother and fourth great-grandfather were born. While asking one of the town residents about the Meseth name, we were told that the oldest house remaining in the town had the Meseth name on it. We walked up the street and there it was — above the door carved in stone was "Johann Conrad Meseth." Also carved in the stone was the name of

the builder, Andreas Ehrler. This was our host Max Ehrler's ancestor! Although Max is still carrying on the family business as a building contractor, he had no prior knowledge of the existence of this house. What a wonderful surprise for both Max and myself.

My husband and I also traveled to the nearby city of Kilmbach, where we visited with Roswitha Meseth Instifl. Roswitha had been an



Sun Herald photo provided

The stone over this door reads, "Built in 1780 for Johann Conrad Meseth by Johann Nicolaus Abraham Andreas Ehrler."

Family reunion



Sun Herald photo provided

Max and Monika Ehrler of Germany. Max is a direct descendant of Andreas Ehrler, who built the oldest remaining house in Weickenreuth, Germany, for Johann Conrad Meseth, who is an ancestor of CCGS recording secretary Carol Ann Brown.

exchange student years ago and had lived with the family of a co-worker of my cousin. Since the name "Meseth" is not common either in Germany or the United States, we feel sure that we are related, but have not found the link at this time. Information comes from the least expected places.

Correction

In a previous article concerning lineage societies, the local chapter of the NSDAR was incorrectly named "Charlotte Chapter." The correct name is the "Charlotte Bay Chapter of the NSDAR." We regret the error. Anyone interested in joining the chapter may get in touch with Chapter Regent Leila Brooks, 624-3298, or Chapter Registrar Avis Turcotte, 764-7920.

Carol Ann Brown is recording secretary of the Charlotte County Genealogical Society.

Dig deep: Don't let obstacles stop you

By MARY WILSON
Correspondent

Sometimes, we are tempted to give up our research even before we begin, because we know of some obstacle that might prevent going very far into our family history. My husband, Ralph, had no hopes of success when I first suggested researching his family tree. His mother had been orphaned when she was very young and as far as he knew, no one had any information on her background. Well, I started the hunt anyway. I gathered enough information from his parents' birth and death certificates to place the geographical area where she lived. I also talked to Ralph's first cousin who gave me some names to contact and she made a few contacts of her own. From these contacts, I learned Ralph's mother had lived with her cousin's family, the Johnsons, as a child in Massachusetts. Armed with that small amount of information, Ralph and I began our search in earnest while on a visit to West Springfield, Mass., to attend a family wedding.

I'll have to admit all the signs were against success in the venture. It was pouring rain the day we made the hour or so trip from West Springfield to

Genealogy

Granville, Mass. (My research had placed members of Ralph's family at one time or another in that area.) Also, in my desire to get started, I had neglected to call ahead to determine if the library was open for business. (Not the brightest thing I ever did!)

It turned out that it was closed. There wasn't much else in the area open that day, either. Apparently I had chosen a local holiday for my visit. However, we did find a general store/post office that was just closing and I ran in there to ask directions to the local cemetery. After hearing my story, the postmistress not only gave me great directions to several cemeteries, but also insisted on calling the librarian at home to tell her of my plight. She was sure, she said, that the librarian would come down and open the library. And sure enough, she did just that!

A half-hour later, we were comfortably ensconced in the inviting research room with marvelous old books and research materials and a very agreeable librarian. When she understood that we were researching the names of Spellman and Johnson, she

picked a book off the shelf, "The Spelman Genealogy" by Fannie Cooley Williams Barbour, and what a find it was. That book provided us not only with Ralph's maternal grandfather's direct line back to England in the 12th century, but also the date and place of birth (Saybrook Point, Conn.) of Ralph's mother. It gave her maiden name as Johnson, named her parents and indicated a Swedish connection.

The book had certainly pointed the way. We now had to gather the proof. On our way home, we stopped in Saybrook, Conn., and began our search in the old cemetery. Ralph went one way, I went the other. I hadn't gone very far when I came upon the grave, easily identified with a large headstone. It bore the birth and death information of Carolina Frederica and Bela Spelman and two of their children, who had died young. According to the tombstone, Carolina and Bela died three days apart. Carolina was 36 and Bela was 40.

Saddened by what was an apparent tragedy, we next paid a visit to the courthouse where we arranged to get the death certificates of Ralph's grandfather and grandmother. I also wanted to find out, if I could, where they had lived in Saybrook.

Among the land records, I found what we were looking for — a complete description of the property. After checking with the town clerk as to its location, we started off on our mission. We were amazed when we saw the area. Unfortunately, no house had survived, but the neighborhood was obviously prime property. It bordered the North Cove not far from the mouth of the Connecticut River and was surrounded by substantial homes, many of them historical. The placement of the property seems particularly appropriate to me now because I have

since discovered that Bela was a seaman. Bela and his "Lena," as she was called, would be surprised to know that their property for which they paid \$650 with buildings on it would probably bring over \$100,000 just for the land today.

Refusal to be swayed by a few stumbling blocks has certainly paid off for us. Ralph's tree is growing by leaps and bounds and now covers two continents and several Revolutionary War veterans. If we hadn't tried, we would never have known of these family members of the past.

Mary Wilson is vice-president of the Charlotte County Genealogical Society, which meets at 2 p.m. the third Wednesday of each month at the Port Charlotte United Methodist Church, at Viscaya and Quesada in Port Charlotte. Guests are welcome.

Self discovery: Tracing the roots of your black ancestry

By MARY WILSON
Correspondent

Today, we salute Black History Month and all black genealogists out there who have worked diligently to discover and honor their ancestors. There is certainly a growing interest among African Americans in gathering family histories. Maybe you have caught the bug yourself. If you have, then you know how exciting a trip this can be. (Actually, it might be more than one trip since you are probably going to courthouses and libraries all over the country for information.) But what about those of you who have not yet ventured into this fascinating hobby? Is it possible that you may be missing something? Think about the excitement of tracking down your own personal story of "being."

"Oh," you say, "My ancestors were slaves — end of story." Not so. Not so at all. In the first place, not all blacks were slaves and there are records to prove it. Just the other day, while reading the periodical "Tidewater Virginia Families," I noted an article that listed male "free persons of color" living in Richmond County, Va., in 1850. This list

Genealogy

was taken from the Personal Property Tax List for Richmond County in 1850. And note the date is pre-Civil War.

But what if your ancestors were slaves? Is that truly the end of the story? It wasn't for the black couple who traveled to Scotland last year, searching for their Scottish roots. (They found them too, I understand.) I'm not saying it is easy. It isn't, but it is possible. If a man lived, chances are there is a piece of paper out there someplace identifying him. All you have to do is find it.

Easier said than done? Of course. It is true that some will experience varying degrees of success, but unless you try, it's a cinch your story will not be told. How to get started in black genealogy? I admit, I am not an expert in black genealogy but surely all genealogists start the same way, with facts and names that you know from personal experience. Pick up a pedigree chart and a family group sheet from your genealogical library at the Port Charlotte Cultural Center, or from your local genealogical

society. And start filling in the blanks, beginning with yourself as No. 1, and moving back in time. Talk to the older members of your family. You will be surprised and fascinated by their traditional tales. You may find yourself wondering at the courage of some of your ancestors. Of course, you will also have to authenticate these stories with proofs, because traditions have a way of getting twisted over time. (I know several of my own family traditions did.)

And remember to record the sources of all your information, even if the source is purely tradition. Sometime, someone in the future may decide to take up where you left off and they will need to know the source of the material on which they are building.

arrived at this point, and are wondering how to push on through the unknown. As mentioned earlier, today's African Americans are taking advantage of the opportunities offered in seminars and formal classes. Large meetings and seminars such as the one recently held in Melbourne by the Florida State Genealogical Society are especially helpful because there are so many experts in attendance as well as vendors galore selling every imaginable type of resource material.

Keeping yourself up to date by reading genealogical magazines, such as the prestigious Heritage Quest Magazine, which frequently carries black genealogy articles and can be consulted at the genealogy section of the Port Charlotte Cultural Center Library, will also give you helpful hints. I know the Orlando Public Library has a large number of books on black genealogy.

Individual genealogical societies are helping by compiling cemetery and other records as well. The local Charlotte County Genealogical Society has compiled several such books among which is a listing of people buried in the Carl Bailey Cemetery, a black cemetery in Cleveland, Fla. Is your ancestor buried in this old cemetery? You can find their name by scanning this book in the genealogical section of the Port Charlotte Cultural Center Library on Aaron Street.

As you gather your proofs, you can be a do-it-yourselfer and read the how-to books (again in the library) or take a short course at the Port Charlotte Cultural Center. (Bonny Stover teaches an excellent course.) And as I mentioned before, don't neglect to check out the genealogical magazines and other research periodicals. Your ancestor's name may be in one of them. You may find them listed as a "free man of color," or even as a slave. If your ancestor was a slave, you may find them listed in the will of a slave owner.

And by all means, talk to other genealogists, especially black genealogists. They know what you are up against.

Belonging to a genealogical society is a good way to learn what is going on in the way of seminars, etc., and you can get inspiration from hearing of someone else's successes and failures. Is there an organization in your area specifically dedicated to researching black genealogy? If there is, ally yourself with that group as well. But whatever you do, attend genealogical functions, get around and talk to people about your interests. And put your findings in writing for future generations. And if you have had success in this fascinating hobby, drop me a line and tell me about it.

This is Black History Month. Wouldn't it be a good time to discover your own family history? I guarantee — once you get started you will be hooked.

Mary Wilson is vice president of the Charlotte County Genealogical Society which meets at 2 p.m. every third Wednesday at the United Methodist Church, located at Quesada and Viscaya, Port Charlotte. A class in basic genealogy is held before the meeting at 1 p.m. Guests are always welcome.

How to find documentation sources

By MARY WILSON
Correspondent

Two questions seem to be uppermost in the minds of budding genealogists. What are sources and how do you find them? So let's talk about sources.

When we first begin family history research, we rely mainly on our own memories and those of other people. We do a lot of digging around in our basements and attics looking for family treasures and records, and if we are lucky, we find them: the family Bible, old letters, photographs, diaries or journals, scrapbooks or anything that may contain information pertinent to our search for pertinent information.

We contact relatives, some of whom we haven't seen for years, people we think might be relatives, or people in key cities with the same surnames. And we tape or write down every word they have to tell us. Sometimes these sources will add to our traditional knowledge, but sometimes they provide us with more substantial proof, perhaps even primary proof that we are on the right track. In genealogy lingo, "primary proof" is a piece of paper that dates back to the original event, such as the original birth certificate, marriage certificate or land record. Sometimes, we have to settle for secondary proofs such as Bible records, copies of certificates and other records. And because such records are usually copied after the fact, genealogists are constantly on the lookout for additional proofs.

Genealogy

This subject is a bit complicated but it is thoroughly covered in genealogy classes such as the one Bonny Stover teaches at the Port Charlotte Cultural Center. It is a good idea for any beginning genealogist to take advantage of such a course. If you are a do-it-yourselfer, you will need to educate yourself in the art of gathering information and documenting your work. Find a good genealogy collection, usually in your public library. The Port Charlotte Library has a very good genealogy section that is constantly being furnished with new books and computer CDs by the Charlotte County Genealogical Society. Look for "how-to" books, family genealogies, county and state histories, and biographical volumes for various localities. If you find something on your family in the latter volumes, write it down and don't forget to include the information as to where you found it.

Churches in the areas where your ancestors lived are another great source. You will probably find recorded baptisms, marriages and deaths. Again, write down your information and the source of that information. Visit churches and local cemeteries. Examine the tombstones and check out their interment records. Look into the records of funeral parlors.

You may even come upon a little personal anecdote or bit of whimsy to add to your collection. My grandfather died before I was born. In talking with the founder of the funeral home that handled my grandfather's service, it developed he knew my grandfather personally.

They had lived next door to each other. He remembered the Washington, D.C., postmaster

(apparently no great friend of my grandfather) came to the funeral, and when the funeral director thanked him for coming, the postmaster's reply was: "I just wanted to make sure the (blankety blank) was really dead."

Newspapers are another good source. Obituaries usually give family names, birth dates and addresses, but the other pages are also valuable to the genealogist. Be sure to read them. The older newspapers took great interest in the "doings" of the local townspeople. And take in the ads. Family names crop up in the strangest places.

Get acquainted with the courthouses in the areas where your ancestor lived. Their records include probate records, filled with valuable information, not just about the person's death but also other details of his life. Land records may also be found in courthouses, which can lead to addresses and even family relationships. Land records can also provide food for thought such as in the case of one of my husband's ancestors. We discovered the history of a property sale to his ancestor.

The next record showed the property was sold to a man for \$1, (at night no less). Still another document showed that 20 minutes later the man sold it to the wife of the original owner, again for \$1. (My husband said his ancestor probably lost it in a poker game, but did his wife win it back? We'll most likely never know.)

Vital records and registrations of military discharges are also sometimes found in a county courthouse. And speaking of military records, don't neglect these if your ancestor served in any of the wars in which this country fought. The National

Archives has pension records on the American Revolution, Indian wars, War of 1812, Mexican War, Civil War, Spanish American War and the Pancho Villa campaign. Perhaps you can find your ancestor in one of these records.

Vital records such as birth, marriage, death and divorce records are kept at a state level. At one time many were kept in the counties or cities, and, as noted above, you may still be able to find some in the county or city where your ancestor lived or died. Up-to-date addresses of the proper offices can be found in your public library. It is very important all of your sources be documented so you will always know (and anyone who picks up your research after you will always know) where you got your information. And sources should be documented at the time you use them. Otherwise, you may forget where you got the information and it will have to be researched all over again.

If you would like to know more about this subject, join us at 2 p.m. today at the Port Charlotte United Methodist Church on Quesada at Viscaya. There will be a panel discussion about sources, how to find them and what to do with them.

Mary Wilson is vice president of the Charlotte County Genealogical Society which meets the third Wednesday of each month at the Port Charlotte United Methodist Church at Viscaya and Quesada.

State archives rich with information

By MARY WILSON
Correspondent

Did you know that Florida played an active part in the War between the States? Florida seceded from the Union in January 1861, just 15 short years after it was admitted as a state. Though the smallest of any state in the Confederacy (it was called the "smallest tadpole in the dirty pool of secession"), Florida supplied about 15,000 troops for the Confederate armies as well as several thousand black and white Union volunteers. And the expanse of Florida coastline provided safe harbor for blockade runners enabling Florida beef, pork, molasses and salt to feed the Confederacy. A number of battles were fought here as well, the most important being the battle of Olustee on February 20, 1864, which proved to be an overwhelming Confederate victory.

The above bit of history came by way of Miriam Gan-Spalding, reference staff archivist at the Florida State Archives, during the recent Florida State Genealogical Societies convention in Melbourne. According to the archives' promotional material, you may find information among the archival records regarding enlistment and discharge dates, location during service, description of wounds, orders, and maybe even pieces of correspondence, vouchers,

Genealogy

etc. And not only for Florida veterans either.

While the Florida State Archives collections include indexes to compiled service records of Florida Confederate soldiers (Series 1504 and 982) and compiled military service records of general and staff officers from Florida (Series 989), you may even find Confederate veterans from other states, such as in the "Consolidated Index to Compiled Service Records of Confederate Soldiers" (Series 1313). These records list the name, rank and unit of all soldiers who served in regularly enrolled Confederate units regardless of state.

Other records of interest include "Compiled Service Records of Confederate General and Staff Officers and Non-Regimental Enlisted Men" (Series 1563); "Compiled Service Records of Confederate Soldiers Who Served in Organizations from the State of Alabama" (Series 1633); "Compiled Service Records of Confederate Soldiers Who Served in Organizations from the State of Georgia" (Series 2660); and "Records Relating to Confederate Naval and Marine Personnel" (Series 981).

Some Union records are also available from this local trea-

sure trove. They include the "Compiled Service Records of Volunteer Union Soldiers Who Served in Organizations from the State of Florida" (Series 978) and "Index to Compiled Service Records of Volunteer Union Soldiers Who Served in Organizations from the State of Florida" (Series 977). Records

of black Floridians who enlisted in the U.S. Army during the Civil War can be found in the National Archives in Washington, D.C.

The southern states provided pensions for their Confederate veterans, and Florida not only awarded pensions to Florida veterans and widows but also offered pensions to soldiers who served in Confederate units from other states but subsequently moved to Florida after the war. Particularly helpful to genealogists are the "approved and denied pension applications" located in Series 587. These applications were made by veterans and widows and contain birth and marriage dates, military service information and related correspondence. The date of death of a veteran will probably not be found in their file, but the widow's applications often list this information.

Confederate pension records for Georgia (Series 1565), Alabama (Series 1634), North Carolina (Series 1675) and South Carolina (Series 1674) have recently been added to the collection. But if your ancestor hails from a state other than these, you will have to search the archives of the state where they lived to get the information.

Generally speaking, Union pension records are available through the National Archives in Washington, D. C. However, the Florida State Archives hold an "Organizational Index to Pension Files of Veterans who served between 1861 and 1900" (Series 1303), which lists Floridians from the first and second Florida Union Cavalry Regiments who applied for or received pensions from the federal government after the Civil War.

You will find other records in Tallahassee such as the election returns for 1824-1926, or the Supreme Court case files. There is a file of veterans grave registration cards, prepared by the WPA, which lists burial locations of many Union and Confederate veterans interred in Florida. You will find an interest-

ing history of Fort Clinch, a 19th-century fort, built on Amelia Island near Fernandina along with its muster rolls, correspondence and other documents. Fort Clinch was occupied by both Union and Confederate troops at various times during the Civil War.

The archives also house a significant number of manuscript collections, many of them relating to the Civil War. And the genealogical collection, housed in the archives research room, maintains published rosters or indexes for a number of Union and Confederate states. Other volumes available are the "Compendium of the Confederate Armies," the "U.S. Quartermaster's Department

Roll of Honor" (Union burial lists), and "The Roster of Confederate Soldiers, 1861-1865."

If you are researching a Confederate or Union soldier from Florida or any of the states mentioned above, you might want to visit the Florida State Archives located on the first floor of the R.A. Gray Bldg., 500 South Bronough Street, Tallahassee, FL 32399-0250. Their research facilities are open Monday through Saturday. Some simple research can be done by telephone. For more information, call the Archives at (904) 487-2073.

Mary Wilson is vice president of the Charlotte County Genealogical Society.

Articles inspire love of learning

By MARGARET PARKER
Correspondent

My grandmother, Mary Allison Thompson Whipple, (1849-1928), died when I was six years old so I have very sketchy memories of her. My most vivid recollections are those of her reading Thornton Burgess animal stories to me as she lay in her bed, a heart invalid. I don't think she was formally educated beyond the public schools, but her only sister was a teacher of Bible studies at The Masters' School in Dobbs Ferry, N.Y.

Mary instilled her high value of education in her children, especially for her oldest son, Howard. He had dropped out of school for a few years to help support the family. He studied law, became an attorney and helped his younger brother to attend medical school. Edward was a practicing physician in Rochester, N.Y., for more than 50 years. A third son, Charles, studied engineering. The youngest daughter went to Simmons College for two years. Each must have worked to pay their own expenses, for the family was of very modest means. My mother, Frances, stayed home to care for her ailing parents, as the eldest daughter was apt to do at that time. She always regretted not going to college, but she was self-educated by endless reading and worked as a librarian in the town library before she was married at 28.

My grandmother, Mary A.T. Whipple, served as the librarian in our town of Malone, N.Y. My grandfather was clerk and treasurer of the Board of Education, as well as truant officer, and the library fell under his domain. I suspect my grandmother worked as an unpaid volunteer to help fulfill

Genealogy

his duties. I was fortunate enough to come across two articles she had written, probably around 1890, and as I read them I was struck with their relevance to our lives today.

The first article is entitled, "The Influence of the School in the Home." She seemed to be addressing a group of teachers, and although a century has passed since she wrote the article, her ideas are as valid today as they were then. She stressed the five hours the children were in school could not have as much influence upon them as the time spent with their parents. She urged parents and teachers to work together to provide the proper discipline and love of learning. She suggested teachers could help parents understand the new educational methods and why they were being used, and could encourage parents to look carefully through the children's textbooks.

In 1987, William Raspberry wrote a column published in the Sarasota Herald-Tribune describing a conference on "Methods of Achieving Parent Partnerships." He wrote, "Successful educators have always known and sensitive analysis again confirms: the crucial issue in successful learning is not home or school-teacher or student, but the relationship between them." When will we learn?

The second article is entitled "Literature in the Home" and my grandmother had very high standards as to what was acceptable. She strongly recommended missionary magazines as well as temperance papers.

She wrote, "We want to

have poetry in our homes. Life, at best, is very prosaic. We need to have our minds enlarged by the sweetness and beauty of the highest poetry. I think many would be surprised at the age of the children who read portions of Lowell, Whittier, Longfellow or Bryant understandingly. Our schools are doing so much in educating the children's ideas on this subject, but they need the home culture also."

It is harder to relate this article to the TV, tabloids, comic books, etc., that many children are exposed to today. I am delighted to have these two handwritten articles which give me a glimpse into my grandmother's mind a century ago.

Margaret Parker is historian/archivist of the Charlotte County Genealogical Society.

Census links foreign ancestry

By MARY WILSON
Correspondent

A couple of weeks ago, I met with a group of people who were very interested in researching their family histories. Since they were "new to the game," I explained the basic rules of genealogy and passed out pedigree charts and family group sheets. We had a lot of fun filling out the forms. But at Q-and-A time, it seemed my audience had one question. "How do I trace my family back to Europe?" A complete answer would have taken another session (and perhaps another speaker).

But certainly, that is a question we all must answer sooner or later. Sometimes, the answer will come easily. If your immigrant ancestor is a historical figure who is well documented, it will be no trick to tie him back to his roots. But often, it is not that simple.

The man on my family tree who is giving me some trouble is my grandfather, an Irishman named John Francis Brennan. John Francis, according to my mother, could trace his history back to Brennan-On-The-Moor, a highwayman who robbed from the rich (English) and gave to the poor (Irish) — "the first Robin Hood," my mother assured me. He was a hero to the Irish, but to the English, not so much! And I know of an Irish ballad, popular at one time in Irish pubs, that tells the story of his escapades and violent end. But I am not yet ready to connect my grandfather to this folk hero. I am pretty sure my grandfather was born in County Clare. I know he came from Ireland, but trying to trace him back to County Clare from Keokuk, Iowa, where he met and married my grandmother

Genealogy

has proved challenging, indeed.

In the beginning I knew almost nothing about the man. Oh yes, my mother told me stories when I was a child and some of them stuck with me through the years. However, the important things — names of his brothers, whether his family accompanied him to the United States, even the name of his mother — went through my childish mind like I had a proverbial "hole in the head." Maybe you have a similar brick wall. If so, you may be interested in knowing what I have learned through "digging," most particularly from the census, and what I hope to gain through the naturalization records.

The conventional genealogical wisdom that says, "Don't try to leap the ocean until you have all the essential facts you can get on this side," seemed pretty sound to me when I started out. So, I have tried to assemble every piece of paper I can find that proves John Francis' existence in this country. That includes his marriage and death certificates, property deeds, even a Keokuk city directory dated 1879-80 that gave his full name, address and occupation (a carpenter). His marriage certificate gave the date of his marriage and his death certificate filled in some other blanks. But I still needed more.

I tried the passenger lists, but soon discovered I didn't have enough information to even get started on that resource. Too many questions had to be answered before he could be identified. What was his point of embarkation? How old was he when he immigrat-

ed? Did he come alone or did he travel with his parents? To find the answers to these questions, I sought the 1900 census and I got some answers. From the census I found both his birthdate and his age at the time of the census. It also gave the year of his immigration as 1876. This told me that he was 16 years old when he immigrated. But I still had no information regarding his naturalization. And I wanted those naturalization papers because sometimes they will list the ship on which an ancestor traveled or ports of entry or departure. And often when minors traveled, the names of their sponsors were also listed.

A trip to Keokuk and a title search revealed that John Francis and his family moved to Omaha, Nebraska, shortly after 1900, so I went after the 1920 census. According to that census, my grandfather became a naturalized citizen in 1884, three years after he was married. So I surmised he was living in Keokuk, Iowa. I am now ready to plumb the depths of his naturalization papers. Hopefully, it shouldn't take me too long to locate the proper court jurisdiction, armed with this new information.

Also, hopefully these papers may take me one step closer to bringing my grandfather home to his roots in Ireland. Certainly, the more specific information I have the more easily I will be able to distinguish my John Brennan from the hundreds of other John Brennans that left Ireland at the time of the Great Potato Famine.

Researching your family tree in Canada?

We just received a note from

Please see LINKS, page 24

★ LINKS

From page 11

one of our Canadian friends (and a member of the Charlotte County Genealogical Society) that a Canadian census law is causing some consternation among genealogists and historians. Information obtained in census records has always been made available to historians and genealogists, but as I understand it, that access is about to be cut off by a law that was introduced in the early 1900's prohibiting public access to census records collected after 1901. Thus, valuable information about the

thousands who died in World War I, which would have been released in 2003, will not be available unless there is a legislative change. The legislation passed after 1901 stated Canadians who agreed to participate in the 1906 census, and others since, did so with the understanding their information would be protected even after they died.

MP offices are being besieged with letters from genealogists and historians. At the time the story was released, 1,000 e-mails and letters had arrived at Statistics Canada demanding that a retroactive amendment be applied to the legislation. Mary Ledoux of Statistics Canada replied, "That

would in effect put us in a position of reneging on the promise of confidentiality that has been given to Canadians since that time."

If you would like to comment, write to Hon. Sheila Copps, Heritage Minister, Queenston Rd., Hamilton, Ontario, L8K 1G9, or e-mail min_copps@pch.gc.ca

Mary Wilson is vice president of the Charlotte County Genealogical Society which meets at 2 p.m. the third Wednesday of each month at the Port Charlotte United Methodist Church on Quesada at Viscaya. A basic genealogy class is held before the meeting at 1:30 p.m. Guests are always welcome.

Leprechaun ancestry: my green

By MARY WILSON
Correspondent

"Long, long ago beyond the misty space of twice a thousand years,

In Erin old there dwelt a mighty race

Taller than Roman spears
Like oaks and towers they had a giant grace

Were fleet as deers
With winds and waves they made their 'biding place

These western shepherd seers"

(D'Arcy McGee - "The Celts")

Today we celebrate things Irish; the Irish beauty of soul: their poetry, songs and the beautiful voices that sing them, their stories and plays and the brilliant minds that write them. And we also celebrate their humour and fun-loving spirit.

The Irish people came to America under the very worst of circumstances. They came happily, thinking in America, the land of the free, they would escape the poverty, famine and disease of their motherland. They came in ships that were filthy, unbelievably overcrowded, and without enough food or water to last the journey. So many died on these ships, they were called "coffin ships."

Most were not prepared to live and work in this new land. They couldn't even speak English, only their native Gaelic. They kept coming, though, and despite the hardships that awaited them, they put down roots. Today the Irish descendants of these immigrants are notable in just about every professional field in the United States. And we celebrate St. Patrick's Day!

Can you tell I'm Irish? I'm pure Irish on my mother's side and half Irish on my father's side. I am very proud to be descended from this strong-willed and yet dreamy, artistic group of people. I am just beginning to research my Irish roots. My great-grandfather, Thomas D. Ryan, came to America before 1850. He traveled through Kentucky, Virginia and Illinois to Keokuk, Iowa, where he established residence in 1856. He was a stonecutter, according to the Keokuk city directory. I recall my

Genealogy

mother saying he carved tombstones. His daughter, my grandmother Anastasia, (or Anna as she was called), was born in Illinois, probably on their way west, as her older sister, Mary, was born in Virginia. I always thought my grandmother's name sounded anything but Irish, but later found that Anastasia is the name of an Irish heroine. My grandfather, John Francis Brennan, was born in Ireland and arrived in America in 1876 at the age of 16. By 1881, he had met and

married Anastasia. They inherited the Ryan property in Keokuk. John Francis is listed in the 1900 Keokuk city directory as a carpenter. So we have (1) a stonecutter and (2) a carpenter — so much for the theory the Irish lacked marketable skills.

I learned from my mother of the beauty of Ireland. She had never been there but her parents had instilled a love of the lore, history and scenery of Ireland. She talked about Tralee, and remembered her mother singing "The Rose of Tralee." And, of course, that was one of the first songs I learned as a child. My mother bragged her heritage included descendancy from Brennan-on-the-Moor, a folk hero/robber during the days of English oppression. And I heard about county fairs and the local skirmishes of the young bucks about.

But there were sad stories to tell as well: about families being forced off their productive lands and placed in the bogs where nothing would grow, of families dying in the city streets from hunger or disease or both, and of parents forced to divide their meagre half-acre of allotted farmland with their grown children and grandchildren rather than force them out to starve.

My grandfather was born in County Clare, and recent research tells me that during the Cromwellian resettlement period, one of the areas deemed appropriate for resettlement (because it was so barren) was

the Barony of Burren in County Clare. It was said in this place, "there was not enough wood on which to hang a man, water enough to drown him, nor earth enough to bury him." Will my search for John Francis lead me to this spot? That is yet to be learned. But I have come to believe there was a charismatic figure named Brennan-On-The-Moor who may very well be on my family tree. Tucked away in "One Thousand Years of Irish Poetry," edited by Kathleen Hoaglund, is a poem that gives me hope I may one day claim him as my own. Excerpts of the ballad appear below:

"Brennan on the Moor,
Brennan on the Moor

A brave undaunted robber
was Brennan on the Moor
'Tis of a famous highway-
man a story I will tell

His name was Willie
Brennan and in Ireland he did dwell

And on the Kilworth
Mountains he commenced his
wild career

Where many a wealthy gen-
tlemen before him shook with
fear.

"A brace of loaded pistols he
carried night and day.

He never robbed a poor man
upon the king's highway.

But what he'd taken from
the rich, like Turpin and Black
Bess.

He always did divide it with
the widow in distress.

"One night he robbed a
packman by name of Pedler
Bawn.

They traveled on together
'till the day began to dawn.

The pedlar seeing his money
gone, likewise his watch and
chain

He at once encountered
Brennan and he robbed him
back again.

"One day upon the highway
as Willie he went down

He met the Mayor of Cashel
a mile outside the town.

The Mayor he knew his fea-
tures: "I think, young man,"
said he,

"Your name is Willie
Brennan: You must come along
with me."

"As Brennan's wife had
gone to town, provisions for to
buy.

And when she saw her
Willie, she began to weep and
cry;

He says, "Give me that ten-
penny," as soon as Willie spoke

She handed him a blunder-
buss from underneath her
cloak.

"Then with his loaded blun-
derbuss, the truth I will unload.

He made the Mayor to trem-
ble and robbed him of his gold;

One hundred pounds was
offered for his apprehension
there

So he with horse and saddle
to the mountains did repair.

"Then Brennan being an
outlaw upon the mountains
high

When cavalry and infantry
to take him they did try;

He laughed at them with
scorn, until at length 'tis said

By a false-hearted young
man he basely was ensnared.

"In the county of Tipperary,
in a place they call Clonmore,

Willie Brennan and his com-
rade that day did suffer sore.

He lay amongst the fern,
which was thick upon the field

And nine deep wounds he
did receive before that he did
yield.

"So they were taken prison-
ers, in irons they were bound.

And both conveyed to
Clonmel jail, strong walls did
they surround

They were tried and there
found guilty, the judge made
this reply:

"For robbing on the King's
highway you're both con-
demned to die."

"Farewell unto my dear wife
and to my children three

Likewise my aged father, he
may shed tears for me

And to my loving mother
who tore her locks and cried.

Saying, "I wish, my Willie
Brennan, in your cradle you
had died."

Brennan on the Moor,
Brennan on the Moor

A brave undaunted robber
was bold Brennan on the
Moor."

Perhaps next St. Patrick's
day, I will have found the con-
nection to this folk hero of
Ireland.

Mary Wilson is vice presi-
dent of the Charlotte County
Genealogical Society which

Take to the high seas to hunt for Irish immigrants

By **MARY WILSON**
Correspondent

We all know of the Irish potato famine — how a million Irishmen died from starvation and attendant illness. Yet another million Irish emigrated to America. They came in cycles during the famine years from 1846 to 1851. Plans had to be made. Money for the trip had to come from the harvest of the previous year. It generally took another two years before remittances and prepaid fares arranged by the first family emigrant could make it back to the family in Ireland. It is said that from one-fourth to three-quarters of the Irish came to America on pre-paid fares or family remittances.

Who were these people? Where did they come from? Well, they came mostly from northwest and north central Ireland. Northeast Ireland was quite prosperous thus there were no mass evacuations and southern Ireland was destitute. How did they hope to earn a living in the new world? If you look at the ship manifest lists, you will see a lot of "laborers." There is no doubt that many were just that. But there were those with marketable skills, as well. My grandfather was a carpenter. He built his house in the late 1800s and it is still used today as a private home. My

Genealogy

great-grandfather from Kilkenny was a stone mason. And I noted another Irishman amongst the records who had signed in as a "clerk."

Many immigrants died aboard ship or soon after reaching the United States, but those who made it add up to a lot of prospective ancestors. So, how do you find your ancestors among those hundreds of thousands? From my experience, I think you will need all the information you can find relative to your ancestor's life in the U.S., before you get into the business of looking for them on the high seas. I thought I had collected enough data on my grandfather from U.S. records such as his marriage license and several census reports. I knew his age, occupation, nationality, date of entry into this country and the date he was naturalized. I had even learned that his native tongue was Gaelic.

Confidently armed with this information, I began searching passenger lists as published in various reference books. Do you know how many John Brennans or Thomas Ryans there were who emigrated in 1846? Without an exact date of departure or arrival, or the

name of his ship, I think it will be well nigh impossible to find one or the other of them in these lists.

But there are records! Some are on microfilm, copied from the original customs passenger lists. Others are in publications, copied from the same source. The lists reveal the ancestor's name, age, sex, occupation, nationality, port of embarkation, name of ship, name of ship master, and date and port of entry.

Let's start with the published references. The Port Charlotte Library at the Cultural Center has a number of references containing copies of the customs passenger lists. You will find them in the genealogy section there.

One particular work is a seven-volume tome entitled "The Famine Immigrants," compiled by Temple University National Immigration Archives and edited by Ira Glazier and Michael Tepper. It offers an enumeration of all those Irish arriving between 1846 and 1851 at the port of New York, by name, ship and date of arrival. About 70 percent of the famine immigrants came through the port of New York; therefore, your Irish ancestor may be among those listed.

Another interesting reference is Eilish Ellis' "Emigrants

from Ireland — State Aided Emigration from Crown Estates in Ireland." Though narrow in scope, it is interesting because it contains the names of the home estates of the emigrants. And there are other publications in the library that are not restricted to the port of New York.

Now as to the customs passenger lists on microfilm: These records encompass U.S. passenger lists from 1820 to just before the World War I. The microfilm rolls can be ordered from the National Archives in Washington, D.C., on NATF Form 81. You are asked to supply the full name of the passenger, port of entry and approximate date of arrival. If you have a computer, the microfilm can be ordered via the Internet.

Major indices of immigration records for other ports also are available from the National Archives. They relate to the ports of (1) Baltimore, from 1820-1952; (2) Boston, 1848-91, 1902-20; (3) New Orleans, 1853-1952; (4) New York City, 1820-46, 1897-1943; (5) Philadelphia, 1800-1948; and (6) minor ports, 1820-74 and 1890-1924.

You say you don't want to buy an entire roll of film for a single name? Fine. The National Archives will send,

for a fee, copies of single pages of passenger lists. If the list is unindexed, however, you must provide either the exact date of arrival or the name of the ship on which your ancestor traveled. Also, do not expect the archives to have records of every single ship and passenger. Some have said they lack up to 10 percent of the total. Others say the figure is closer to 40 percent.

An alternative source for this material is The Family History Library of the Church of Latter Day Saints, which has virtually all of the National Archives microfilmed passenger lists.

Whether finding my grandfather in these lists will actually help me find his little spot of land in Ireland is questionable, but finding the ship that carried him would be exciting. It would neatly tie up all questions of his immigration and would, incidentally, make a nice picture in my family history book. Perhaps you feel the same way.

Mary Wilson is vice president of the Charlotte County Genealogical Society which meets at 2 p.m. the third Wednesday of each month at the United Methodist Church at Viscaya and Quesada. Guests are welcome.

Every family needs a storyteller

By NITA GROH
Correspondent

Every family should have at least one storyteller. That person can be a college professor, a loving grandmother or aunt or a down-home mountain person. It really doesn't matter as long as their memories touch the cord of family unity, love, customs, humor and honesty.

My most recent compilation of clan history dealt with a family of my husband, who settled in Eastern New York around 1848. There were 11 lines of this family to follow and I had a long, exciting period of detective joy, searching out facts on these interesting people about whom I knew so little. Eventually, the book was printed and distributed to grateful family members.

All were interested in their heritage and were most cooperative with my requests for information, but probably none would have reached the point of creating a tangible printed object.

A few months after receipt of the book, one of the fourth-generation descendants of the immigrants began writing his own book about his branch of the family, how he grew up, and how he related to the other members of this group and the

Genealogy

community. He put into good perspective the ages and feelings of family members in relation to important occasions in their lives. He drew intricate maps of not only the general township area of his family, but those of his special neighborhood settlement as well, showing locations of a church, a school, a swimming hole, a swamp, a special barn, a sawmill, so-and-so's sheep farm etc. He covered the whole spectrum of these people's lives in this small village area, so we all can know exactly whereof this man speaks as his stories were told. He does a marvelous job with the "lay of the land," which as late as 1890 was considered to be pioneer living.

The weather of those years is accounted for — such as being snowed in for 30 days. He spins tales of family members' hunting, trapping and fishing activities. The variety of trees in the local woods is described with care, and the first generation of males were all expert woodsmen and timbermen.

The corduroy roads of the day were made by paving the road with poles laid crossways to keep wagons from sinking into the mud — a rough and bumpy ride, methinks!

Agricultural pursuits for the summer months were not neglected by this family writer. The family will even know the names of the horses belonging to this farm effort. He told the story of a young boy in the family who rode a pony to school each day (over five miles). The pony returned to the farm on his own, but was back at school waiting to return his friend home at the end of the day.

An account of the family home was given with great clarity from the cellar to the top floor, interior and exterior, along with the furnishings. Even the delicious food put on the table was described with zest.

Halloween escapades and sibling pranks were abundant, and with this storyteller's writings, the family can enjoy the memories. There are personal stories of bobsleds, sleighs, a stagecoach, square dances and an exciting tale of finding gold coins as weights in the hem of a velvet dress.

This fellow's "how-to" details of living in those days and the intricate measurements and descriptions of tools used is beyond belief. This man was a participant in life and a superb listener at family get-togethers. Now he shares these treasures!

The grandparents, aunts and uncles of this writer are made familiar to us by personalizing the manners, sensitivities, appearances and talents of each one. How many of us are so

fortunate to have such meaningful information about our ancestors?

If you have a talkative Uncle Jebb who loves to remember the old days, don't discourage him. Don't make him feel he is annoying the family group. Open your ears and hearts — and quietly get out a tape recorder for these events.

What I have received is a piece of historical work and a labor of love and reminiscence. When I feel this man's fountain of memory has runs dry, I will, of course, print and distribute the narrations he has committed to paper with such love to family members — and hundreds of cousins will be the richer for it. We genealogists

speak of "putting flesh on the bones" of our ancestors, and what better way to do this than pass along factual memories of the personalities and lifestyles of the people in the community involved?

Nita Groh is a member of the Charlotte County Genealogical Society where she is a member of the Board of Directors. She served as editor of the Society Newsletter, "The Geneagram," for over seven years and still contributes articles to that bulletin. The CCGS meets at 2 p.m. the third Wednesday of each month except July and August at the United Methodist Church, Quesada and Viscaya, Port Charlotte. Guests are welcome.

Pages can possess portions of life

By NITA GROH
Correspondent

I recently submitted an article extolling the joys of having a storyteller in one's family. I spoke of the impact of tales and writings of the everyday rise and fall of our ancestors' lives, and how important it is to pass along these treasures. The following review is somewhat of a jewel among my husband's people, mundane as it may seem. It's a little piece of 17th-century elegance and the uplifting tempo of life in those days. The recital was given over and over with great pride and enthusiasm among the aunts and uncles in the family. One day I decided it deserved a page of its own, rather than the chance-taking of our "forgetteries" over the years.

A great aunt married an entrepreneurial spouse and together they operated several interesting businesses from the 1860s to the 1890s in Wilmington, Del. The story today's generation found most engaging was of the couple's operation of a fancy seafood restaurant on Market Street (the main thoroughfare in Wilmington) for several years. This dining spot was THE spot to be seen in, especially on a Saturday night. There was an article in the Daily Republican of Wilmington on July 2, 1883, describing the re-opening of the establishment following a grand renovation. It read:

"The re-opening was held by invitation only and the place was crowded from 8 o'clock until midnight. Those who were accustomed to calling at the former eatery would scarcely know it now, so many changes have been made. The old bar has been removed and replaced with one composed of ash and walnut that is highly ornamental. It was made to order in Philadelphia.

"The walls are handsomely decorated with fine gold-embossed paper, and the ceilings hand-painted in a most beautiful and artistic manner and they alone are worthy of a visit. The gas fixtures are equal to any in the city. There are three magnificent burnished chandeliers with cut-glass pendants, and seven large wall

Genealogy

brackets. All these fixtures are supplied with cut-glass globes and when lighted, present a brilliant appearance. The rear part of the room has been widened by some 8 feet and a dividing wall was removed. In a recess is a handsome marble washstand, for the accommodation of the guests. Portions of the large room are divided by arches, and along the walls are a number of small walnut tables, each supplied with French cane seat chairs.

"The whole establishment is fitted up second to none in this city, and rivals the first-class restaurants in Philadelphia and New York City. The culinary department will continue to equal, if not excel, the high standard it has attained in the past, and the visitors on Saturday night had an opportunity of testing the delicious viands for themselves.

"Delicious oysters, so large that a person wondered where they came from, were served in half a dozen different ways; while the richest kind of clam and turtle soup, with crab salad and a dozen other different dishes, were supplied the visitors in unstinted quantities, and everyone was made to feel perfectly at home."

What makes this reporting especially meaningful to my immediate family is we possess nine of the showy seafood forks that were used in the fine restaurant at the time. (Imagine putting out valuable silver in restaurants today!) The forks are about seven inches long with three prongs, and the handles were decorated with flowers and birds of paradise complete with long, flowing tails. We plan to have these forks resilvered and pass them on to still another generation (the sixth) of the original owners.

The recipe for the restaurant's crabcakes was kept a closely guarded secret by the owners. However, little clues

slipped here and there through relatives of the times make me believe that I presently use a close facsimile of the century-old recipe. In the past, many of my husband's elderly aunts expressed the opinion that my crabcakes "taste exactly like Uncle Joe's." How flattering!

This is hardly an earth-shaking tale of adventure, but what a joy to find one's self somehow connected to people with such careers behind them, and to be able to read true documentation of the lifestyle of those who preceded us by a century or more. And what comfort to know that our grandchildren, because of caring generations before them, will become the possessors of a portion of life and family values previously unknown to them. When these grandchildren discover the seafood forks at the end of our days, they will also find these written words of explanation tucked into the silver pouch.

Nita Groh is a member of the Charlotte County Genealogical Society. She is a member of the society's Board of Directors, has served for more than seven years as editor of the society's monthly newsletter, "The Geneagram," and still contributes articles to it. The CCGS meets at 2 p.m. on the third Wednesday of each month, except July and August, at the Port Charlotte United Methodist Church at Viscaya and Quesada. Guests are always welcome.

Looking for dead relatives may unearth live ones

By JUDY GAMBREL

Correspondent

In the fall of 1995 I attended a convention in Stevens Point, Wis. One of the speakers talked for an hour on how to do genealogy and my life changed! Shortly thereafter I visited my sister in Kansas and told her I wanted to do our family history. She went to her basement and got out a box of our mother's papers. Mom died in 1974 and for almost 20 years part of her life lived in an unopened cardboard box. My sister and I were shocked when we opened the box and found letters from relatives we didn't know we had.

My mother was the youngest of seven children. Her mother was born in Athens, Greece, in 1890 and in 1907 her father brought her to Massachusetts and found a husband for her. She refused to marry the first stranger presented. Her brother beat her and told her she had to obey the men in her family. She married the second stranger and had six children with him. He was a drinker, gambler and carouser. One time he sold all the furniture they owned to pay gambling debts. She was very unhappy!

One day, she saw a man working on the street in front of her house. She flirted with him from the bay window of her apartment (which my sister and I found on a 1997 trip). Shortly after, he was in the hall, then he was in the apartment and then my mother was born. My grandmother was still married to the Greek man but she later married my mother's

Genealogy

father (my grandfather), James O'Connor.

The "shameful" secret of my mother's parentage was kept until the 1970s when my sister and I were adults. As a result, we didn't know we were part Irish, and we knew nothing about my grandfather except his name. He died when my mother was a senior in high school.

In the box, we found probate records from an O'Connor aunt who left money to my mother, "her niece." We also found letters from several O'Connor relatives. A special find was a job application from the 1930s when my grandfather applied for a WPA job (he was a construction foreman). But the real prize was an O'Connor family photo album which, thankfully, had names, places and dates with the photos. There was a photo of a "Lindsay Ann" born in 1948. My sister and I were born in 1944 and 1947 and I was on a mission to find the O'Connor cousin who was close to us in age.

Through the Social Security Death Index, I found the death records of Lindsay's mother and aunt. They both were born in Massachusetts but died in California. Only the zip code was shown so I called the post office and found out the town was St. Helena. Then I went to the atlas and rejoiced when I learned the population was only 4,400. This gave me a better chance of finding them. I

called the newspaper to get obituaries but they didn't have enough staff, so they referred me to the library.

I asked for information about the funeral home and called. The owner remembered my cousins but didn't know where they lived. A few weeks later he sent me death certificates and obituaries for my mother's two first cousins, Clair and Dorothy (who was Lindsay's mother). I learned Clair had four children. Excited, I called my sister and told her we had five O'Connor cousins our age.

I decided to try to find the boys since the information was 10 to 15 years old. The obituary showed Justin Green lived in San Francisco. I called Directory Assistance and then talked to a "Justin," but it was the wrong one. He was very friendly and said he and my cousin got lots of each other's mail and phone calls. He told me Justin had moved to Chicago to be near his brother, Keith.

I live 80 miles northwest of Chicago! I was really on a mission then! Directory Assistance was no help so I went to the library (now we can do it on the Internet) and printed out all the Justin and Keith Greens in the United States. There were lots of Keiths but only 27 Justins. There were addresses for 26 and the No. 27 was just West Sacramento, Calif., so I called that number first — and it was him! Phone calls flew across the country as the cousins got acquainted.

The next month I took a trip

to Montana and other western states and happened to be in Sand Point, Idaho, the same day Lindsay was vacationing there. We were thrilled to meet. She had photos and letters from my mother but had no idea who she was. Lindsay identified the wonderful photo album my sister had as our Great Aunt Gertrude's (who left my mom money). Since then I have found many more O'Connor cousins in Massachusetts who have helped complete the miss-

ing part of our family history. I went looking for dead relatives and found live ones who have enriched my life. What fun!

Judy Gambrel is a member of the Charlotte County Genealogical Society and serves as publicity chairman. The society meets at 2 p.m. every third Wednesday of the month at the Port Charlotte United Methodist Church on Viscaya at Quesada. Nonmembers are welcome to attend as guests.

Tracing roots: Get your feet wet on

By MARY WILSON
Correspondent

"I am the fruit of a million years,

The son of ten thousand sires.

There is blood in me that has felt the flames

Of a caveman's altar fires.

I rode with Attila the Hun

Who reddened the gallic loam

I climbed the Alps with Hannibal's men

And fought at the rape of Rome.

They stoned me once to a martyr's death

On a Babylonian plain.

I once was crowned King of Britain's Isle

And hung as a thief in Spain.

Poet and beggar, priest and king,

Warrior and craven's kin.

Born of their sorrow and hope and fear.

Folly and faith and sin.

The world looks on me as one alone,

But the eyes of the world are blind.

For thousands move in my surging blood

And millions walk behind."

— "Ancestry" by Charles C. McWhorter, 1967

How stirringly this poem reflects the feelings of genealogists as they pursue their research and discover those people who have gone before. Those of us who have made the effort to acquaint ourselves with our ancestors, their times, even their beliefs, will attest to the sense of continuity it gives us in our own lives. And with each new discovery, our curiosity is aroused as to what else is around the corner. Perhaps that is why I shudder when someone tells me their genealogy was done by "Aunt Matilda" and it is "all finished," "nothing else to do." There are two things wrong with this statement.

First, if you have a genealogy done by a member of your

Genealogy

family, you will need to check the information. Is it factual; that is, is it verified by records or is it family tradition? Are the sources listed on your copy of the work? They should be. Information without solid source material is a good starting place, but it does not constitute a valid genealogy. If you do not want to follow up yourself, save the document. It will be valuable to some future generation interested in doing the job.

Second, what about a genealogy being "all finished?" Such an assumption saddens me. I can't imagine an instance when that can be true. Come on, folks! You go back to the first human. So you have traced a line back to A.D. 400 (legendary times). Maybe you have reached the end of factual evidence for that line. Your family history has many lines.

What about your grandfather who immigrated in the 1800s?

Maybe you are under the impression the leap across the ocean is downright impossible. I know of a couple who visited the Ellis Island monument, adding their immigrant ancestors' names. A few weeks later, the office at Ellis Island called to say they had an inquiry from someone who thought they might be related. The couple responded and wound up with more family documentation than they ever thought possible.

So remember, the discovery of your personal history, of who and why you are, is a work in progress. Of course you will "get stuck" on occasion. Put that line aside for awhile and try again later. Today brings new tools and new answers. Tomorrow will bring even more.

One of today's popular tools is the Internet. I have received a great deal of material from our readers telling me of their experiences as they research genealogy on the Internet.

Merle Kincade, for instance, (a member of the Charlotte

County Genealogical Society) has this story to tell about an adventure on the Internet:

"About 68 years ago, my mother and father separated, then later divorced. I was about 6 years old at the time and seldom saw my father and none of his family after that. Some 55 years later, I started wondering where I came from and became interested in genealogy. My father was deceased, but I did locate a younger brother who gave me enough information to start tracing this family.

"After about 10 years of research I had accumulated quite a stack of papers and began to write the family history for the benefit of my children and their descendants only — or so I thought.

"Just for fun about two years ago, I put my surname (which is German and one seldom heard) on a search engine on the Internet. It came up with about four answers. But to my very great surprise, it included the name and middle initial of my father's youngest brother.

the Internet

Attached was an e-mail address in Alabama, so being very curious, I wrote explaining who I was and saying this had to be more than a coincidence. By return mail, this man explained his father was my father's brother and that he lived in Sarasota. This is about one hour from my winter home; impossible to believe but true. From first contact, I've acquired a new family. This 90-year-old gentleman was very welcoming and generous with family information and pictures to enrich my genealogy and my life.

"The family history, which I intended for my children only, has also given happiness to a long-lost uncle and his descendants. All thanks to the Internet."

The Internet offers many opportunities for research — myriads of home pages, some of which are looking for your

surname. Sites such as that offered by Family Treemaker are burgeoning with information. Lineage and genealogical societies from all over the world are just waiting for you to sign on. Perhaps the link to that dead end you gave up on a few years ago will turn up on this modern tool. If you haven't

gotten your feet wet yet, maybe it is time. Type in "genealogy" or that special surname on your search engine and see what you get!

Mary Wilson is vice president of the Charlotte County Genealogical Society, which meets at 2 p.m. the third Wednesday of each month except July and August. Meetings are held at the Port Charlotte United Methodist Church, Quesada at Viscaya. Guests are welcome.

Organize your filing system, rejuvenate your research

By MARY WILSON
Correspondent

So, you are "up a blind alley?" Don't seem to be anywhere near unraveling the mysteries of great-grandpa's home turf? The answer to your problem may be hiding in a filing system badly in need of rejuvenating. Maybe this is as good a time as any to re-evaluate "old faithful." Does it take just a minute or two to retrieve a piece of paper from your file, or are you swimming in paperwork for a much longer period of time? Don't feel bad if you belong to the latter group.

This genealogy business can really generate the paper just by the nature of our work, because we seldom throw anything out. After all, "it may prove to be important some day." So we keep scraps of paper on hand forever, sometimes forgetting where they came from.

How do you rectify this situation? First of all, systematically go through your files. I began this exercise some time ago. I found I had a lot of specific geographical data filed in a "general" file, which I seldom searched. There was data on Virginia, Iowa, North Carolina, and just about every state in the Union. Determined to make things more manageable — I think the phrase is "user-friendly" — I set about dividing the scraps into piles. Next, I set up separate folders for them, keeping the "general" files for just those pieces of information that

Genealogy

were general. Specific information concerning a family such as a map, of course, was put in the folder of that family. I tossed scraps of paper with no identification and no seeming connection to anything.

Family folders were "neatened up" — old forms were discarded after making sure they were no longer needed. New copies of old information were made and filed.

Having done that, it was time to take a look at my recording and filing system to see how it answered my needs. Things have changed over the years, but my files are basically the same as when I began researching 20 years ago: family folders filed alphabetically, with general files holding information such as geographical areas, immigration, government holdings, etc., along with a file for correspondence. That system works pretty well as long as I keep it organized. But how to do that?

When I first became interested in genealogy, my two favorite forms were the pedigree chart and family group sheet. They still are. But I have come to realize other types of forms can be important organizers as well.

As my pedigree charts grew from five to 35 generations, I

found I needed a system that would show me at a glance the information in my folders. And I needed indices to do that.

Luckily, genealogical forms to accommodate this need abound. Not all will work for me. Not all will work for you. But the next time you attend a vendors' share fair or a local genealogical meeting, check out the forms in use by your fellow genealogists. You will get some new ideas on organizing, I promise you.

Some of the forms I have found helpful include those that list:

1. Research successes. As genealogists, we need to know just what data we have on each individual in our family files. And we don't want to have to pored over all that material in the folders each time we need to know, nor do we want to have to lug it along with us every time we go to the library or on a trip. A form that lists research successes will make life much easier for the researcher in the long run.

2. Research failures. Knowing the data we need to acquire for each family file will prove to be a shortcut when we are doing our research either at home or abroad.

3. Correspondence logs. Correspondence logs will keep you apprised of the individuals you have contacted to obtain information as well as the fruits

of that correspondence. The letters themselves can then be tossed, thereby saving room in your file for more important papers.

4. Resources used. It is good to keep a checklist of the resources you have used and the results achieved. This includes all the informational items you picked up at seminars, from magazines, even the books and other materials you have researched in libraries. After a few years, people have been known to begin to rework the same ground. It helps to have a handy document that says, "Hey, you've been down this road before."

There are loads of forms out there, and as you become more involved in revamping your files, you may decide to take

advantage of those as well. The Internet offers several sites that will be helpful to you in this regard. One of my favorites is Family Tree Maker's genealogy Web site. It has a wealth of information on this subject as well as other genealogical issues.

Before you give up on a line — thinking you have reached a dead end — take an in-depth look at your filing system. It's a lot of work but you may discover hidden gold.

Mary Wilson is vice president of the Charlotte County Genealogical Society, which meets at 2 p.m. the third Wednesday of each month (except July and August) at the Port Charlotte United Methodist Church, Viscaya at Quesada. Visitors are welcome.

Robert King: an American legend in the making

By NITA GROH
Correspondent

Genealogy

About halfway through the 18th century, at the tender age of six, Robert King left his home in Donegal, Ulster, with his father, Thomas (and probably other family members), sailed the ocean blue and began the odyssey that made him an American legend.

His ancestry was Scottish-Irish and Presbyterian from the Lowlands of Scotland. He could read and write, and records of him began to appear in Bald Eagle Valley in central Pennsylvania when he was in his mid-20s. He followed the calling of hunter, which occupation became an adjunct to the surveyor in those early days of uninhabited and uncultivated territory teeming with wild game.

Robert was a true frontiersman, hunter and settler, clad in a costume that was part Indian, part European. His hunting shirt was a loose frock reaching halfway down his thighs and so wide as to lap over a foot or more behind. Its cape was fringed with cloth of a color different from the shirt. Its bosom served as a wallet where food or tow for wiping his rifle might be kept. The belt, always tied behind, held the bullet bag, and from the right a tomahawk was suspended, from the left, a scalping knife in its leather sheath. Breeches and leggings enclosed his thighs and legs, and his feet were supplied with moccasins. Cannot one envision this young Scotsman as a star in an American movie?

When Robert was 26, he was appointed peace officer in charge of 600 square miles of Pennsylvania lands — a huge territory in which to maintain order. In 1772, the Proprietaries, Thomas and Richard Penn, granted to Robert, by patent, a franchise for operating a ferry over the Susquehanna River near Sunbury. A year later, he was appointed a "viewer" to lay out a road from Lewisburg through Buffalo Valley.

About this time Robert married and began a family that eventually numbered 15 — all of whom are documented in his preserved Bible. Robert and his wife, Elizabeth McCullough, took up residence in a then new village called Northumberland, at the forks of the Susquehanna River.

Soon came the fateful 1776 date and what British officers wintering in Philadelphia called the "Scottish-Irish Rebellion." They were zealous advocates of independence for their new land. Some spoke of General Washington's army as being made up of one-half Irish.

Despite his family ties, Robert joined the patriot forces and was immediately commissioned as an officer in the 1st Battalion of Northumberland County Associators (patriot militia).

A few months later, as the 12th regiment of the Pennsylvania Line was raised in Northumberland and Northampton counties, Robert became a 2nd Lieutenant in this activated group, and his longtime woodsman friend, Hawkins Boone (cousin to Daniel), became one of its captains. The 12th had its full share of skirmishes in New Jersey during 1777, and it was at Piscataway, during a "bold enterprise," that Robert received a wound in the skull — so painful he remembered it for 40 years, as remarked on his pension application. His regiment suffered greatly, with many members being taken prisoner by the British, as well as losing several to injury and death. Still, Washington's army remained strongly defensive and the enemy had to change its strategy, which eventually led to the Battle of the Brandywine and to the meeting of Robert and the Marquis de Lafayette.

The young Frenchman had been wounded while helping to rally Washington's troops, and in trying to move onward toward General Washington, he barely escaped capture by the British. Robert King is credited with helping Lafayette off the field of battle and hence saved him from the enemy. In later years (1825), Lafayette revisited Pennsylvania and while in Waterford, Erie County, upon recognizing Robert in the crowd, he came to him, threw his arms around the old man's neck and kissed him on both cheeks, saying, "How do you do, my venerable friend?" (This was documented through

a conversation between a great-grandson of Robert and the Marquis' grandson more than a century later.)

With the defeat at Brandywine, and other losses at Germantown and the Valley Forge trauma, the 12th regiment came to an end as a fighting unit in June 1778. The surviving members were incorporated into the 3rd Pennsylvania. Robert was among this group. General Washington immediately ordered Robert, Capt. Boone and another captain to be detached from the 3rd, and had them sent to their homes on the Susquehanna to assist in the defense of the frontier in central Pennsylvania, especially to preserve their food supplies. Dealing with the wildfire calamities of the Indians in the Northumberland area soon became the most pressing matter of the times and it was in this effort that Robert King found his niche and made his greatest history.

Be sure to read the conclusion of this story in next week's genealogy column.

The above article was developed from data gleaned from "The Life and Times of Robert King," by Henry King Siebeneck and from Nelson's "Biographical Dictionary and Historical Reference Book of Erie County, Pa., Vol. II. 1896." It first appeared in the September 1989 issue of the

Charlotte County Genealogical Society monthly publication, "GENEAGRAM," of which Nita Groh is past editor.

The society meets at 2 p.m. on the third Wednesday of each month except July and August at the Port Charlotte United Methodist Church, Quesada at Viscaya.

Guests are always welcome.

The continuing saga of Robert King

BY NITA GROH
Correspondent

This is a continuation of the exploits of Captain Robert King of Pennsylvania, a valued aide to General George Washington during the Revolutionary War. Today, we learn of his diplomatic efforts to bring peace between the Indians and the white settlers of Pennsylvania.

With his early experience as rifleman, woodsman and Indian fighter, King was sent as a commissioner to the principal villages and lodges of the Six Nations of Indians to make a treaty of peace and to persuade them to be friendly with the Pennsylvanians. The commissioners traveled to Lake Erie (where Buffalo now stands) to the principal village of these Indians, near where Syracuse is today.

They had a half-breed with them who served as interpreter. The Indians were called together in council, and the Pennsylvanians stated their mission. A chieftain of the Senecas, named Big Tree, a very large man and an eloquent orator, made a great speech denunciatory of the "pale faces" and closed by saying, "The Red Men will not listen to proposals for peace until the pale face can refer to some single act of kindness that has ever

Genealogy

been performed by the pale faces to the Red Men."

My third great-grandfather, Robert King, rose and addressed the council: "We are commissioners from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania founded by William Penn, who in friendship purchased from the Indians at Philadelphia, and by several treaties elsewhere, all the lands they occupied, to the mutual benefit of both parties. We lived for a time in peace and friendship, until the revolution when the Indians sided with Great Britain and became our foes. After this time, we earnestly desired to be at peace again, and the outrage and violence committed upon the Red Men were against the wishes of government — committed by outlaws, bad men, whom the government would punish if it could catch them. Your chieftain asks for one single act of kindness done by the pale faces for the Red Men! I, sir, am proud to say that I, myself, found two of your people who had been robbed by these bad men, wythed (tied) to trees, stark naked, and were being eaten by insects. I liberated them, took them to camp for clothes and refreshed them and led them to trails which

they knew and which led to the wigwams of their people."

The chieftain spoke with feeling: "Ha! Was you the man that done that? Would you know the Indians you thus rescued?" King replied: "I would know the elder. The younger was a boy and may have outgrown my knowledge of him."

The two liberated Indians were brought into the council room, at once recognized King, and in their own language announced to their people, "This is the pale face who rescued us!" The Indians in the council room immediately hoisted King onto their shoulders and above their heads and carried him with exulting shouts all over the meeting room.

A favorable treaty was developed and a full-scale war was averted. The Legislature of Pennsylvania voted to bestow upon King 400 acres of land in the new district north and west of the Ohio, Allegheny and Connewango Creek, wherever he might select it. This single act of humanity on the part of King was the cause of stopping Indian massacres on the Susquehanna, and saving the lives and hopes of many of the settlers.

It was not until 1794 that King chose his bounty land in LeBoeuf Township in Erie County — known as the "Triangle." He is considered to have been the first settler of this county. The matter of how he arrived at his bounty land must be told. He and a companion reached the district that became

Erie County from his home in Lycoming County (a 300-mile trek on foot) by crossing the mountains and an almost impenetrable forest, as far as what is now Sheffield in Warren County in Pennsylvania. Here the two men built a canoe from a pine tree, and paddled down the Trionesta River to Allegheny to what is now Franklin. They then poled the canoe 80 miles up French Creek to the site of King's future home.

It is known the men returned to Lycoming by a different route eastward from the Allegheny, and the next spring (1795) the whole King family of wife, five sons and six daughters, made their way to LeBoeuf by way of Pittsburgh. My great-great-grandmother, Sarah King, was one of those six daughters who traveled on foot and by canoe. My mind asks "How many weeks?" Little Sarah was just 2 years old and lived to suffer many things far worse than this journey. Her parents were in their 40s at the time of the move, and the mother, Elizabeth McCullough King, was pregnant with her 13th child at this time.

Their new home was designated King's Garden. Robert lived there until his death in 1826 at age 80 — a period of 31 years of peace and comfort, and of enjoying the respect of the entire commonwealth. He was buried on his own land and his

tombstone reads: "Brave Soldier and Good Woodsman."

I exhort my son to always remember that he shares blood with this all-American hero!

This article was developed from data gleaned from a publication, "The Life and Times of Robert King," by Henry King Siebeneck, and from Nelson's Biographical Dictionary and Historical Reference Book of Erie County, Pa. Vol. II, 1896.

Nita Groh is past editor of the Charlotte County Genealogical Society monthly news bulletin, "Geneagram." This article appeared in the Geneagram in September 1989.

Organize: take the grief out of research

By MARY WILSON
Correspondent

Summer is again upon us and genealogists are heading in all directions to "do their thing." Dorothy G. Heimnick, a member of our local genealogical society, has some interesting pointers for all of us as we visit government offices and libraries on our vacations. Her experience involved visits to the libraries in Enniskillen and Dublin, Ireland. But her words of wisdom apply to any research situation. Come prepared. Don't waste your time and don't waste a busy librarian's time because you did not organize your search.

This is what Dorothy has to say: "Families today are often described as being very mobile. As beginning genealogists chase their elusive ancestors, they soon learn that families in the 1800s also moved a great deal. Most of us would be living on another continent if one of our ancestors had not made a voyage by ship to America. My mother's father came from Ireland in 1880.

"Almost 100 years later, in 1977, I began the search for my ancestors by asking questions of family members, sending to the Ulster Foundation in Belfast for information and reading vital records found at the local courthouse. Retiring in Port Charlotte was particularly helpful in my search since the LDS (Latter Day Saints) Family History Center is located here. The Port Charlotte Library also has a growing genealogy section that is fostered and maintained by the Charlotte County Genealogical Society.

"Personal computers have taken a lot of the work out of genealogical research and the Internet has given us the advantage of easy communication with the world. Realizing this, and because information on my Irish Walmsleys was growing slowly, I turned to the Internet. There I found an "unproven

Genealogy

cousin" living in Enniskillen, the birthplace of my grandfather. We exchanged information and it wasn't long before I was planning a trip to Ireland.

"Several people warned that it was difficult to research ancestors in Ireland, and it was probably better to leave it to the professionals, but to me, it was worth a try. I began by spending one afternoon a week in the genealogy section of the Port Charlotte Library located at the Port Charlotte Cultural Center. I poured over the books on Ireland and learned the difference between counties, townlands, baronies, dioceses, parishes and poor law unions. This made it easier to locate the area I needed to visit. Making a time line of events, which included what documents were needed as sources, helped locate information quickly. One of the most time-saving documents was a chart of the places to research in Dublin and Enniskillen. This chart included the type of documents found in each building, as well as the phone number, address and hours each place was open.

"I was very glad that I had put in this extra time when I visited the library in Enniskillen because the rules allowing access to the old and valuable books were strict, indeed. Furthermore, when I explained my research goals, the head librarian of research responded, 'I don't believe we have anything that will help you except the Griffith series which is in the main library.' She was a bit surprised when told there were three books housed in the Enniskillen Library that had the Walmsley name in the index. I then provided her with the ISBN numbers found through the Enniskillen Library web page. When she saw that some preparation had gone into this research already, she was most

generous with her time and helped us locate several additional resources.

"Time spent in preparation, planning and research does significantly increase productivity and cooperation, as we learned again while later visiting the impressive National Library of Ireland in Dublin."

Well said, Dorothy, and thank you for the reminder!

Here's another reminder. Before you leave town, be sure to treat your genealogy charts and proofs like your other valuables and put them into safe keeping. If your genealogical data is on a computer, copy it on disks and either take the disks with you or file them in a safe place such as a safety deposit box. You will be glad you did if the weather wreaks

havoc while you are gone. We've all seen people lamenting the loss of their family histories. Don't be one of them!

Mary Wilson is vice president of the Charlotte County Genealogical Society which meets at 2 p.m. every third Wednesday of the month except July and August. Meetings are held at the Port Charlotte United Methodist Church, Viscaya and Quesada. Clair Wilcoxon will speak at the May 19 meeting on "Documentation." Guests are welcome.

5-26-99

Photo albums: handle with care

By DEVA GENE DUDLEY
Correspondent

Do you hear strange noises in the night? They might be coming from your magnetic photo albums. Your priceless memories in these albums have been trapped for many years, yellowing and turning brown around the edges. Yipes!

Maybe you have heard that magnetic albums are not the best idea, but did you know that keeping your pictures in these glue-covered pages is the *worst* possible way to store them?

Don't feel bad, we all have done this. I recently was looking through some of my notebooks, and there was one of those pages. I immediately took the pictures out as best I could. Of course, I'm talking about the cardboard pages that have plastic sheets folded over the top. The plastic is pulled back for an instant display of the photos. They are put directly on glue-covered pages. These albums were very popular because they were easy to use and inexpensive, but don't let this fool you. They mean disaster to your photos.

Usually the plastic is made of acetate, a unstable plastic with chemicals that increase the aging process. As I have said, these albums are inexpensive and made with low-quality glue that is applied all over the

Genealogy

pages or in stripes. The glue used on these pages is not acid-free and yellows quickly. If you've ever seen an old, unused magnetic album, you probably noticed the glue was a different color than the page, even without any pictures in them. The paper is usually a low-grade cardboard and the pictures absorb this acid, causing discoloration and deterioration.

You can rescue your photos, though you might have a couple of problems. For instance, you might find that some of the glue got on your photos, or they are stuck so tight you can't budge them. There are ways to get them off these pages. One way is to carefully slide dental floss under the photo and gently move it back and forth to separate the backing from the picture. Also, the cardboard page is usually a big one folded in half. Cut the page out of the album and open it so the photos are face down on a table (clean surface). Try to pull the backing gently away from the pictures. When you turn the album upside down you take some of the stress off the pictures, allowing them to come off more easily. If that doesn't work, try using a blow dryer at its lowest setting to loosen the glue. Sometimes

you won't be able to get the lighter-weight papers to turn loose or come off the page, so just make a copy of it.

Never use water or a deacidification spray on your photos. Put them into a safe acid-free album, box or photo file. I make laser prints or negatives of the rare photos that can't be replaced — the ones without negatives or of people who died many years ago.

Store your albums in an upright position. This takes the stress of the weight of the albums off the pictures. (I have heard that "gravity" has something to do with it.)

Be a hero and save your photos from dying young so that you can continue to share the family pictures with your children, grandchildren and maybe even your great-grandchildren.

Deva Gene Dudley is president of the Charlotte County Genealogical Society (CCGS) which meets at 2 p.m. the third Wednesday of each month. Meetings are held at the Port Charlotte United Methodist Church, Viscaya and Quesada. Guests are welcome. The above article by Deva Gene Dudley appeared in the May issue of the "Geneagram," the monthly CCGS newspaper (again except for July and August). The newspaper is free to dues-paying members.

Family trees sprout online

By MARY WILSON
Correspondent

The top story this week, genealogically speaking, is the online debut of the LDS Church's Family History Department (at www.familysearch.org).

Kip Sperry has written an informative article in the NGS Newsletter describing the goodies you will find on this site. For starters, you will find the Family History Library Catalogue. This is a list of more than 2 million microfilm and microfiche rolls, and the thousands of books and other sources that make the Family History Library in Salt Lake City, Utah, the world's largest genealogical library. (What a help this promises to be as you plan your research trip to Salt Lake City).

The site also provides access to Ancestral File, a database containing more than 35 million names linked to families and pedigrees, and the International Genealogical Index (IGI) which identifies another 285 million deceased people as well as information copied from sources around the globe. Helpful hints on letter-writing and word definitions together with information on records in other countries can

Genealogy

be accessed from the Family History Source Guide. And should you wish to visit one of more than 3,400 Family History Centers, a list of these is also provided, arranged by state and including the hours for each center. For now, the service is free.

Now having said that, I encountered a problem when I tried to enter my queries. I reached the site with no trouble and entered my query. I quickly learned no information on that particular ancestor was avail-

able from that site. I changed my query to another ancestor. This time, a message said each viewer was limited to 15 minutes because of the volume of visitors. I was told I could re-enter the site at 44:(something).

I tried again an hour or so later, entering one name which was returned again with no match. I was on for no more than five minutes, so I entered another name. Alas, once again the frustrating message appears, this time informing

me that time was limited to 20 minutes per viewer. Perhaps I will have better luck (and so may you) if I use an off-peak time. Also, I plan to have my queries organized before I get online, since time to research will be very limited until the traffic problem is resolved.

How many times have genealogists been frustrated because of a lack of documented evidence concerning the female side of the family? Often there is little or nothing on the record concerning them. At the Charlotte County Genealogical Society meeting last week, member Lee Loomis made a very good point. He reminded everyone that the distaff side of our families is often the hardest to trace. He urged each of us who are preparing our genealogies to write good biographies about the women in our families, thereby ensuring they will not join the many nameless ladies of the past. Good idea, Lee. Let us all be sure our mothers don't get lost in time.

...
The War Between the States (otherwise known as the Civil War) saw many brothers fighting against each other and even father against son. Some of us have found this to be true within our own families. The following story, taken from the Internet and sent in by Gene Dudley, president of the Charlotte County Genealogical Society, points to the truth of the observation in a very poignant way. In searching to verify the facts of the story, it appears the basic story appeared in the May 1998 issue of "The Officer," a magazine of the Reserve Officers

Association, Lt. Col. Lew Kirkpatrick AUS (RE.) RO Dept. of Europe, editor:

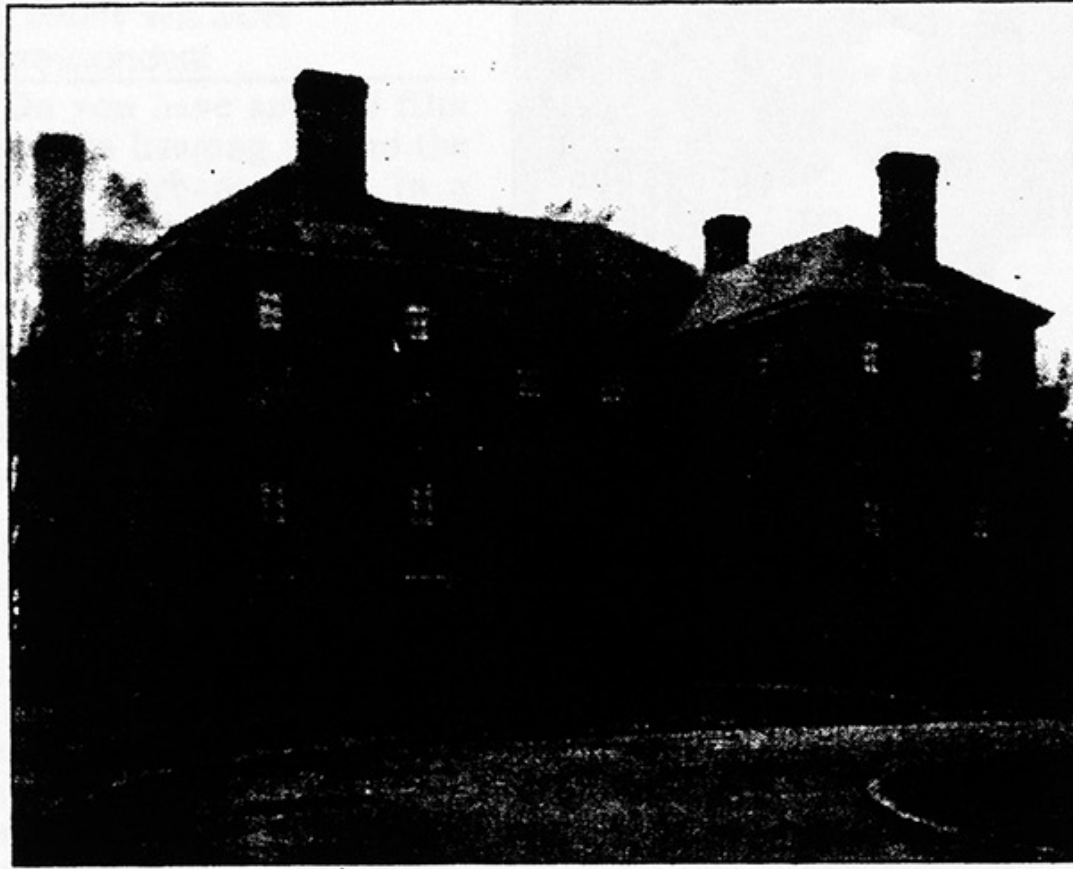
"It all began in 1862, during the Civil War. A Union Army Captain, Robert Ellicomb was with his men near Harrison's Landing in Virginia. The Confederate Army was on the other side of this narrow strip of land. During the night, Capt. Ellicombe heard the moan of a soldier who lay mortally wounded on the field.

"Not knowing if it were Union or Confederate soldier and crawling on his stomach through the gunfire, the captain reached the soldier and pulled him back toward his encampment. On reaching his own lines, he discovered it was actually a Confederate soldier, but the soldier was dead. The captain lit a lantern, then caught his breath and went numb with shock. In the dim light of the lantern he saw the face of the soldier — it was his own son. The young man had been studying music in the South when the war broke out, and without telling his father, he had enlisted in the Confederate Army.

"The following morning, the heartbroken father asked if he could have a group of Army band members play a dirge for his son at the funeral. That request was refused since the soldier was a Confederate. However, out of respect for the captain, they offered to loan him one musician. He chose the bugler. The captain asked the bugler to play a series of musical notes found in the pocket of the dead youth's uniform. This wish was granted. That music was the haunting bugle melody we now know as 'Taps.'"

Mary Wilson is vice president of the Charlotte County Genealogical Society which meets at 2 p.m. the third Wednesday of each month except July and August at the Port Charlotte United Methodist Church, Viscaya and Quesada. Guests are welcome.

Going home: Walking the ancestral halls of Elsing Green



Sun Herald photo by Mary Wilson

Elsing Green's E-shaped wings overlook the driveway where the bones of an Indian were found.

By MARY WILSON
Correspondent

What are you planning to do this summer? Many of you will probably be ancestor-hunting: devouring pertinent information you find in various libraries, roaming through cemeteries and visiting courthouses. I have done those things, too, and they can be extremely rewarding.

But my most thrilling summer excursion was the trip I made to Virginia to visit the home and burial place of my Gregory/Claiborne ancestors. The Claibornes and Gregorys intermarried with each other as well as with the West family. They were highly respected in Virginia as early planters and

Genealogy

administrators.

My great-great-grandparents were owners of a large plantation, Elsing Green, in King William County, Virginia, in the 1800s. They are buried there with descendants and other relatives in a small, lovely cemetery, walled in brick and covered with huge, old magnolia trees.

There is a lot of history connected with the place. Elsing Green was part of a parcel of land that was a gift of the Pamunkey Indians to Col. John West, grandson of Sir Thomas West, the third Lord Delaware (considered the "savior of

Jamestown"). Carter Braxton, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, was another owner of the plantation before the Gregorys took possession for the next 100 years until the mid-1930s.

The old mansion looked immense, built in a U-shape with the wide expanse fronting the river and two E-shaped wings facing the long, tree-lined driveway from the back road. (I suppose that in the very early days, most visitors came by boat, not over land.) Although the house endured three fires, little damage was done to the sturdy walls; thus, the outside of the house remains substantially the same as when it was first built. The front of the mansion faces the Pamunkey River with large, terraced slopes.

The terraces extend at least halfway to the river to a landing where passengers from incoming boats were brought by carriage. The present owners have meticulously restored Elsing Green to its former glory. For instance, brick steps to the landing have been laid just wide enough so the hoop skirts of two women would fit side by side.

In researching stories about the old place, Mr. Rafferty, the current owner, came across the tale of two young sisters who ran down terraced brick steps to greet incoming boats, hoping their fiancés would be among the passengers.

The story goes that they held hands as they ran and the width of the steps was just big enough to accommodate their hoop

skirts. Thus, the decision as to the width of the steps was made.

In their restoration efforts, the Raffertys also discovered the original wall around the place separating the house from the farm area. (The estate was well over 1,000 acres. Today, Elsing Green is a working plantation much as it was in the early days, but with a good portion of land set aside as a bird sanctuary.) The wall has been rebuilt in old brick on its original foundations. Foundations of other smaller buildings have also been discovered and restored.

At one point, while laying utility lines the bones of an Indian were found under the driveway in the back of the property. Since the house had a history of Indian attacks, it is surmised he was killed during such a raid. After expert analysis, the bones of this lonely warrior were replaced exactly as they were found under the driveway. As far as I know, they remain there today. We heard these interesting stories as we accompanied our host around the adjacent grounds, enjoying (but keeping our distance from) the peacocks that roamed the paths around the house.

Having visited the cemetery and seen the grounds, we prepared to take our leave. However, Mr. Rafferty suggested we might want to see the inside of the mansion, where he now lived, and also the East Dependency that dated back to between 1690-1719. This was certainly more than we had hoped for.

The dependency was furnished as an early lodge, with a huge fireplace at one end, a bed and a large table and chairs in the middle of the room. Everything was in perfect order and quite beautiful.

The most thrilling experience of the day was entering the mansion, seeing its antiques, and, in my mind's eye, placing my own ancestors in its large, high-ceilinged rooms. I found myself picturing my great-great-grandmother, Edulia Gregory, walking down the stairs as a bride on a Christmas Eve many years ago. The goosebumps rose and I can feel them again as I write this.

The time had *really* come to say our goodbyes. I thanked our host for his time and for allowing us to see his beautiful home. His response? "It's really your home. I am just taking care of it for you."

Can you imagine a more magical, adventurous day?

Some of you may wish to visit a private estate where your ancestors lived or may be buried. I would suggest you write a letter, as I did, asking for permission to visit the cemetery of your forefathers. Who knows? You may be given the grand tour and take away some exciting personal history.

Mary Wilson is vice president of the Charlotte County Genealogical Society, which meets at 2 p.m. every third Wednesday of the month, except July and August, at the Port Charlotte United Methodist Church, Quesada and Viscaya. Guests are always welcome.

Turn negatives into something positive

BY MARY WILSON
Correspondent

Do you have any old film negatives hanging around the house? Perhaps, once in a while, you pull them out and wonder if anyone could ever develop a photograph from them. Maybe, you think, you will throw them away and make room for something useful. DON'T DO IT!

I have had a stockpile of 80- to 90-year-old negatives hidden away in my desk drawer for the 20 years I have been in Florida. Before that they rested in the basement of my home in Washington, D.C. Needless to say, they were not kept especially well. Some are faded. Many are beginning to "turn" as if they were becoming "positives" instead of "negatives." And no wonder! No effort had even been made to keep them separated. Indeed, they were bunched together in one ragged envelope.

Several weeks ago, I took



A.W. Eastwood from a negative dating prior to 1913.



Sun Herald photos provided by Mary Wilson

Willis and Mary Crane from a negative circa 1918.

them out and re-examined them. I found many of them were taken during what appears to be the first year of my parent's marriage. There was also a negative of my grandfather's house in Keokuk, Iowa, as it looked during the time my mother lived there (from 1888 to 1900). I thought, wouldn't it be great to have a picture of the original house to contrast with the picture I took a few years ago.

Another negative shows my Virginian great-grandfather standing in his front yard. He died in 1913, so this negative is

at least 86 years old. There were several negatives of ladies in their long dresses and gentlemen with their stiff collars.

It seemed a shame to allow these negatives to languish one more day in that drawer. I chose several from the group of negatives and paid a visit to our local drug store to see if they could be salvaged. I was a bit apologetic when I gave the package to the clerk but she said she often had requests such as mine and thought I would be pleasantly surprised

at the results. She did warn me, however, that I might have to wait a while for the results.

It didn't quite take three weeks, but yesterday I received a call to pick up my prints. I am still in a state of euphoria!

They are gems, particularly the one of my father and mother taken shortly after they were married, since it was taken in front of their first house in

Washington, D.C. It is the best picture I have of my mother from this era.

All of the negatives, except two, have been returned and I am waiting expectantly for a call on those. I also plan to go through the remaining cache of negatives and take them up for developing. Who knows what I may find? I don't have a good picture of either of my grandmothers. Wouldn't it be fun if I found something I could tie to these precious people?

If you have any old negatives, by all means, gather them

up and visit your favorite picture developer. You may be as happily surprised as I was in what you discover.

Happy Father's Day to all you dads. Where would we be without you?

Mary Wilson is vice president of the Charlotte County Genealogical Society which meets at 2 p.m. the third Wednesday of each month except July and August at the Port Charlotte United Methodist Church, Viscaya and Quesada. Guests are welcome.

A history of orphan trains

By **CONNIE DIPASQUALE**
Special to the Herald

Beginning in 1854, charitable institutions in New York City began sending orphans on trains to the west to find new families, feeling that the children would fare better out west than on the streets of New York. Orphan trains arrived in Kansas between 1867 and 1930, and some 5,000 to 6,000 children were placed in Kansas homes ...

Who were these orphan train riders?

Orphans ... foundlings ... waifs ... half-orphans ... street Arabs ... street urchins ... all terms used to describe the children who rode the orphan trains. When the orphan train movement began in the mid-19th century, it was estimated that approximately 30,000 abandoned children were living on the streets of New York.

And over the 75-year span of the orphan train movement, it is estimated that between 150,000 and 200,000 "orphan" children were relocated to new homes via the orphan trains.

But the term "orphan" is used loosely in many cases. Some children were true orphans — no parents, no other family to look after them, living on the streets, sleeping in doorways and fending for themselves by whatever means necessary.

But many of these children had parents. Some were "half-orphans"; one parent had died and the remaining parent could not care for them, so they were placed in an orphanage. Some children still had both parents, but were merely "turned loose" because the family had grown too large and they couldn't care for all the children. Some were runaways from abuse, drunkenness, etc.

The factors that "created"

Genealogy

these children are many. Some of them are: parental death due to disease, industrial accidents, starvation, etc.; neglect; abandonment; prostitution; massive overpopulation in the New York area due to extensive immigration in the mid-19th century; and a general attitude among the "higher society" that those in the "lower classes" didn't deserve help, that they "were poor because they chose not to help themselves, therefore, they got what they deserved."

Who started the orphan trains?

Basically, there were two main institutions responsible for this mass emigration of children from New York. Those institutions are the Children's Aid Society and the New York Foundling Hospital. Both are still active today helping children.

The first "train" went out from the Children's Aid Society on September 20, 1854, with 46 10- to 12-year-old boys and girls. Their destination was Dowagiac, Mich. All 46 children were successfully placed in new homes.

While this "placement" effort was not entirely original to these two institutions — there had been similar efforts tried in Boston as early as the mid-1840s — they are the institutions that most often come to mind when discussing the orphan train movement.

Rev. Brace and the Children's Aid Society

Rev. Charles Loring Brace, a 26-year-old Congregational

minister, found his "calling" a little closer to street level than the lofty climes of the pulpit.

In 1853, concerned with the growing number of "homeless" children he saw wandering the streets of New York, he joined together with other "reformers" and founded the Children's Aid Society.

Unlike other charitable institutions of the time, he wanted to provide more than just food, clothing and a place to sleep.

He felt that education and the opportunity to learn a trade were necessary ingredients in properly caring for these children.

For a short while, he tried helping these children with his institutions in New York City, establishing schools for them, teaching the boys a trade, inviting volunteering ladies to help teach the girls the proper way to behave and dress, and establishing a "savings bank" to teach the boys to save their money rather than gamble it away.

But just a year after founding the Children's Aid Society, he knew he needed help. Thus he took up the plan that Boston had tried 10 years earlier: taking "orphans" from the street, sending them "west" on trains and "placing them out" to families at the various stops along the way who were willing to "adopt" them.

Next week we will learn how Reverend Brace put his plan into action, and we will also hear about the "mercy trains" promulgated by the New York Foundling Hospital.

This article was reprinted with authorization of the writer, Connie Dipasquale.

The society does not meet during July and August. The next meeting will take place at noon Sept. 15 at the Ponce De Leon Park picnic shelter in Punta Gorda.



Photo provided by Kansas State Historical Society

Orphan trains took scores of children "out west" in the late 1800s to be placed with adoptive families. It was hoped the orphans would find a better life in foster homes, although some children were abused and treated as indentured servants.

Train heads west to keep orphans off New York streets

By **CONNIE DIPASQUALE**
Special to the Herald

In 1854, the Children's Aid Society, founded by a Congregational minister, the Reverend Charles Loring Brace, successfully placed 46 orphaned boys and girls in homes in Dowagiac, Mich., following an earlier Boston plan of orphan trains.

The Boston plan had also allowed for children to be taken on as indentured servants, but this was not an acceptable option to Brace. He developed what he called the family plan. This meant that a child should be taken into a home and treated as part of the family. He expected the adoptive families to provide the orphans with the same food, clothing, education,

Genealogy

spiritual training, etc., that they would for their biological children.

Sometimes this happened, sometimes it didn't. But, overall, Brace felt these orphans had a better chance at life with placement in a new home "out west" than they did remaining on the streets of New York. He also felt that moving these children west was better for their health than staying in the city. The first group was sent out on September 20, 1854, and America's first foster children were placed.

The basic procedure for adopting children from the Children's Aid Society was as

follows: Determination was made as to which children were to be sent out. If a child was not a "true" orphan, then release for placement was obtained from whatever parent/guardian remained available. It was decided where the train would travel and where it would stop. Advance notice of "Homes Wanted for Orphans" would be put in key newspapers by the placing agents who were to accompany the children. It was desirable to have one male and one female agent accompany each group, but this was not always the case.

Shortly before the day of departure (oftentimes just the night before) the children would be told that they were going on the train, and they

would be bathed, given new clean clothing and their hair was tended to. Then they would board the train and off they went to their new destiny. Upon arrival in one of the projected towns, they would disembark and perhaps go to the local opera house (sometimes the town hall or a local church) and be lined up on a stage or platform at the front of the room.

Usually, a local town committee had been at work prior to the arrival of the train, trying to line up good potential families for the expected children. At this time, members of the community would be allowed to visit with (and inspect) the children. If a match-up were made between adult and child, and the local committee and

placing agents were in agreement, then the child would leave the group and go on to his or her "new home."

Often brothers and sisters were separated by the adoption process, sometimes never to see each other again. It then became the responsibility of the placing agent to keep tabs on each child assigned to a new home.

The agent would make return trips to check on the child's welfare. If the placement was not working out, or the agent thought the child was being abused, he or she would remove the child from its new home and try to find another family.

Next Week: Sister Irene and the baby trains.

Sister Irene and the New York Foundling Hospital

By **CONNIE DIPASQUALE**
Special to the Herald

This is part three of a series on the history of orphan trains.

The story of Sister Irene and the New York Foundling Hospital runs parallel with that of Rev. Brace and the Children's Aid Society. However, there were a few key differences in how they placed children in new homes. The Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul created the Catholic Charities of New York in 1869. Through the New York Foundling Hospital, they had always taken in abandoned babies.

In the foyer of their building stood a white cradle where mothers could anonymously leave their children to be cared for by the sisters. But as knowledge of this cradle spread, it wasn't long before there were more children than they could adequately care for.

Thus began the foundling hospital's "mercy trains," also known as "baby trains." The sisters worked in conjunction with priests throughout the Midwest and South in an effort to place these children in

Genealogy

Catholic families.

While the Children's Aid Society requested that the children they placed be given spiritual training (the choice of religion was left up to the adoptive family), the foundling hospital's placements were strictly to Catholic families.

Probably the largest difference in how the foundling hospital placed their children is that the children were not sent out to be randomly adopted from a town hall or opera house, but were requested ahead of time by families who wanted a child. Requests would be sent to the NYFH for a child (for example, a 2-year-old, blue-eyed, blond-haired girl), and then the sisters would do their best to find a matching child. They would then send the requesting family a receipt for the child indicating when and where the child would arrive by train.

This notice requested that the family be at the station ahead of time so as not to miss the train. When the train arrived, the new parents were

to have their "notice of arrival" with them which they were to present to the sisters. This notice had a number on it that would match up with a child on

the train. Once the match was made, the parents signed the receipt for the child, and they were free to leave with their new child.

The Children's Aid Society and the New York Foundling Hospital continued to place out

Please see SISTER, page 20

Orphan Train Timeline

1856 - Orphan train movement began in New York City.

1867 - First Kansas-bound orphan train arrives in state.

1893 - 960 children had been "placed" in state.

1901 - Kansas passed legislation mandating that the state Board of Charities had authority to scrutinize all organizations or institutions placing children. With the passing of that legislation, the board immediately ruled that no homeless children could be brought into Kansas without a certificate of good character and a \$5,000 security bond.

"We cannot afford to have the state made a dumping ground for the dependent children of other states, especially New York." — William Stanley, Governor of Kansas, (1899-1903).

1902 - Anna Laura Hill applies for position with CAS as "placing agent." She became the main agent for placement in Kansas.

1910 - More than 4,100 children had been "placed" in state.

1927 - Despite growing debate against indenture, 12 states — Wisconsin, Illinois, Michigan, Indiana, Pennsylvania, Arkansas, Maryland, Rhode Island, Virginia, West Virginia, Nebraska and Kansas still allowed indenture of institutional charges and children

who had been turned over to county authorities or poor farms.

1930 - Last orphan trains arrive in Kansas.

1930 - "Official" end to orphan train movement.

★ SISTER

From page 6

children until 1930.

There were several reasons for the orphan train movement to end. The beginning of the depression in 1930 made it extremely hard for families to consider "adding another mouth to feed"; and new laws

and programs were being instituted that were designed specifically to help children. These laws made it harder for the trains to continue bringing children into states, and new foster care homes were beginning to replace the large institution/orphanages of the past.

It is estimated that there are approximately 500 orphan train riders still living as of 1996. All would be 70 years old or older. It is also estimated that around 2 million people are descendants of an orphan train rider. Do you have a rider in your past?

If you would like to read more about the orphan trains, here are a few excellent books:

• Warren, Andrea, "Orphan Train Rider: One Boy's True Story"

Boston, Mass., Houghton

Mifflin Co., 1996.

• Patrick, Michael, Evelyn Sheets and Evelyn Trickel, "We Are a Part of History"

Santa Fe, New Mexico, Lightning Tree Press, 1990.

• Vogt, Martha Nelson and Christina Vogt, "Searching for Home: Three Families from the Orphan Trains"

Grand Rapids, Mich., Triumph Press, 1986.

• Johnson, Mary Ellen (ed.), "Orphan Train Riders: Their Own Stories, Vol. I-V"

Baltimore, Md., Gateway Press, 1992, 1993, 1995, 1996.

The next meeting of the Charlotte County Genealogical Society will be held at noon Sept. 15 at the Ponce de Leon Park picnic shelter in Punta Gorda Isles. Call CCGS President Gene Dudley for additional information.

When the 'Robin' comes bobbin' along

By NITA GROH
Correspondent

I moved away from my small hometown within a year after high school graduation, as did many of my peers. Within a few short years there was a great chasm among my long-time special friends, and this saddened me.

Inspired by a desire to keep up with the careers, family lives, and newly developed interests and activities of these precious friends, one day I produced a proposal letter. I sent it to five girls of our most cohesive little clan from elementary and high school years. I outlined how we might begin a round-robin letter so that we might never lose touch.

The genesis of this occurred in the early '50s and I'll reveal in this paragraph that, as we approach the millennium (about a half century), the "Robin" still flies, which I think is a record to be proud of.

You may feel this is an unnecessary effort in these days of e-mail and less costly telephone calls. But I have yet to find anyone who doesn't feel a special thrill when seeing a personal letter tucked in among the catalogs and junk mail as he or she sorts through a stack of mail.

We haven't had any hard and fast rules among our scribes, but we like to keep the big manila envelope moving along and my group could have had better rules for the holding period of each participant. However, none of us are sorry that we have hung together, even when we had to wait many months before one of the group could pull things together enough to add her contribution and pass it on to the next person on the list.

We set up a list of rotation, naming who follows whom on the mailing list. Through the years we have shared photos, clippings, narratives of weddings, children's births and accomplishments, special anniversaries, recipes, advice, travel excitement, educational and job wonders, and at this stage in life, health news — and sometimes there was just close, emotional reflection on myriad subjects.

When the packet arrives the

Genealogy

recipient enthusiastically reads all the letters in the chronological order of dates and checks through the enclosures, enveloped with memories and love. The recipient removes her old letter and adds a page or two of fresh news to send along to the next person on the list.

It is good to have a time limit on how long each friend might keep the Robin before moving it along. If you have a fairly large group, probably one month should be the limit, so the news in the combined letters will not be severely out of date for the people toward the bottom of the list. Each cluster entering into such a practice can easily decide how often they wish to space their messages for the turnaround period.

This same procedure can be used in families — especially in large families of siblings who want to remain up to date on the activities of their kin — nieces, nephews, in-laws, grandparents, aunts, uncles, parents and cousins. The results are that you write one letter and perhaps receive 10 or 12 in return.

You can read and re-read these letters, and even make copies before sending the bundle on, if you are so inclined. You'll discover much about your relatives in this exchange of thoughts, jokes and future plans. You will even enjoy re-reading your own "old" letter in the packet — the one that you are going to remove as you add a current one.

It will remind you of how you were thinking a few months back, and you might want to keep your "removed" letters as a sort of diary. Many family members remark that this is a superb way of keeping the family attached to a form of umbilical cord. It's sort of like a reunion, except that it's on paper and everyone comes together with greater frequen-

cy.

This kind of communication can be very helpful in your genealogical studies. The letters give you an opportunity to ask elders what they remember about certain occasions. I'm always amazed at how differently siblings remember events — even those experienced together.

The e-mailers out there probably cannot see the true value of this pastime, but I've had so many positive reactions to this stable manner of connecting family and friends that I have to be a believer.

And how can I deny the value of the 50-year longevity of my own round-robin venture?

Nita Groh is a member of the Charlotte County Genealogical Society and has many published writings to her credit.

Practice some 'gene' therapy

Use summer slowdown to organize research, check facts

By MARY WILSON
Correspondent

I don't know about you, but I can hardly believe that summer is almost half over. It won't be long before we will be welcoming back our winter friends and listening to their tales of adventure and rewarding research in libraries, courthouses and other repositories of historical documents. But take heart! You don't have to leave town to have a fulfilling summer and wind up with a feeling of accomplishment, genealogically speaking.

There are things you can do right here. For starters, this is a good time to do your research at the Port Charlotte Cultural Center Library. The crowds are gone, and you have the reading room pretty much to yourself. You say you have already been to the Port Charlotte Library and it doesn't have what you need? Take advantage of the slowdown in activities in other ways. Write letters to county clerks in the counties you are researching, or to libraries in the towns of your ancestors, even to long-lost cousins or elderly relatives who may have a store of information just waiting to be tapped.

Ah, hah! So, you can't take any more information until you clean up your files! There is no better time than the present to get organized. Start tossing out those meaningless pieces of paper and make up new fold-

Genealogy

ers. In putting your files in good order, you will not only improve the look and utility of your work space making it easier to find things, you will also become reacquainted with the information you have accumulated. The exercise will give you a chance to review your data. Perhaps you will find, as I did, that the adage "nobody is perfect" is never truer than in genealogical research.

Last week, an occasion of housecleaning permitted me to do an extensive review of some early files. I was surprised by what I found — a family line that was cluttered with confusing and incorrect data. Errors abounded. In this early research, I had copied material from two textbooks (whose authors happened to disagree) without trying to reconcile the information they had produced. Furthermore, my eye was not

educated enough to accurately interpret some of the information contained in these worthwhile and respected texts. Instead of going directly to the original sources (land office, courthouse) to verify the information for myself, I copied it down eagerly and went on to the next generation.

My own judgment was off-base regarding conjectured dates for some in the female line, and children were divided among first and second wives without any apparent basis. For instance, all 11 children of one man were attributed to a second wife. Last week, I noted the father of the first wife mentioned his granddaughter in his will. This doesn't prove anything, but it does intimate that my great-grandmother hailed from an entirely different line than what was noted in my early research.

In another instance, a father had died well before the child was born and in another, a mother was 60 years old at the time of her child's birth. There was conflicting information in two files that should have been identical. In one file, a woman was listed as being married to one of my great-great-grandfathers, Walter Chiles, Sr. In the other, the same woman was identified as the wife of Walter Chiles, Jr. And so, while there appears to be no doubt as to the validity of the paternal line in this 1600-1700 family, there is considerable question about the maternal line. Indeed, the female line may forever remain a mystery.

We all know what I should have done to begin with, don't we? Instead of being satisfied with the references in the textbooks, I should have gone to the original sources, which I discovered last week were listed in the reference books.

Perhaps this experience of mine will be of help to beginners and "old-timers" alike. To

beginners, truly it is easier to do it right the first time than to go back later and correct it! Be very careful when you read text. Be sure you are copying it correctly, cite your sources and, whenever possible, go back to the original source of the textual material.

And to all you "old-timers," perhaps when you started your research you were more careful than I in copying material and noting sources, but you may want to take a second look anyway.

Mary Wilson is vice president of the Charlotte County Genealogical Society. She can be reached by e-mail at: nightmare@nut-n-but.net

High visibility preserves your name in family history

By MARY WILSON
Correspondent

How can we help ensure that our own names will not be lost over the years?

As genealogists, we often find ourselves bemoaning the fact that one or another of our ancestors (often a female) seems to be invisible. We search the usual records only to find that the "courthouse burned," or the family Bible "was lost."

There just doesn't appear to be any documentation on Great Grandma. Certainly the female lines of the past were often invisible. If cited at all, the distaff side was usually noted by her married name.

When my second great-grandmother died, her husband was granted permission to leave a session of the Virginia House of Burgesses due to the death of "his lady." Luckily I had other references on this lady which helped identify her. But I have many question marks on the female side of my family tree. You probably have, too.

Can this happen to the

Genealogy

United States over a period of a 100 years? Certainly the "accidents" that have destroyed our public and personal records in the past could happen again. People haven't changed much. Fires are still caused by carelessness. Deliberate pillaging still occurs in time of war.

People move away and old churches with their records and cemeteries fall into decay. Sometimes records get tossed during a spurt of zeal for housecleaning at the office as well as at home. How can we help ensure that our own names will not be lost over the years?

I think we need to make as many "tracks" as we can to help our descendants in their searches. After all, one never knows which piece of paper will be the one to point the way. Are you involved in a civic association? Are you a member of an organization or a society? If not, consider joining one.

If you are reading this, you are probably interested in genealogy. Join a genealogical society in your area. Once you join, actively participate. Accept that presidency or other leadership role when it is offered.

If you do, chances are your name will find itself not only on the roster of membership, but also in the organization's newspaper, or even in an area newspaper or two (wonderful sources for future genealogists).

Don't be shy. The more pieces of paper you leave behind you, the better chance your descendant has of finding you. The name of this game is "visibility."

Genealogists, of course, take a big step in that direction when they begin their family research projects. They diligently assemble facts and proofs, acquiring a mass of information over time.

Unfortunately, sometimes this data never gets out of the hands of its compiler.

Sometimes the compiler fails to take the next step, providing for the safekeeping of those precious records.

If you are planning a book, that's great. But don't put it off until you have every detail totally proved. Write what you know to be true. Cite your sources, and if you have an interesting story or possibility of an unproven line, include it but be sure to let your readers know it isn't a proven fact.

I heard somewhere that everybody has one book "in" them. But if you don't feel that you are of literary bent, gather your pedigree sheets and put them in a binder.

The Charlotte County Genealogical Society has a file of pedigree charts belonging to past and present members and it is tucked away at the Port Charlotte Cultural Center Library.

Whether you have forms or a book, see to it that the local genealogical society, public library and even the Library of Congress in Washington get

copies.

Scatter the fruits of your labor among your children and your nieces and nephews, as well. In this way, you will be taking a giant step in seeing that the names of your ancestors will be preserved *somewhere* and that your name will be preserved along with theirs.

Whatever you do, don't rest on your laurels. Amass as much proof of your life as you can. Remember, the more visible you are today, the more visible you will be to a future descendant who wants to take up where you left off.

Mary Wilson is vice president of the Charlotte County Genealogical Society. The next meeting will be at noon Sept. 25 at the Poncè de Leon Park picnic shelter, next to Peace River Wildlife Center.

If you have any questions about this article or CCGS, direct your queries to Mary Wilson at:

nightmare@nut-n-but.net

Conquer research dead ends by taking up wall climbing

By MARY WILSON
Correspondent

Well, it's finally happened. After 20 years of relatively "easy pickins'," genealogically speaking, I appear to be facing the proverbial stone wall. I am talking about the whole gamut: burned courthouses, a dearth of family papers and memorabilia, no more information from the experts, and an unknown great-grandmother or two.

It is pretty obvious I have arrived at a point where I will have to do some imaginative digging to take the next step in one of my lines. So, what am I doing about it?

At first realization, I must admit to a fleeting feeling of hopelessness. A little thought, however, convinced me I should not allow one iota of defeatism to enter my thoughts.

After all, didn't I know when I first entered into genealogy that there would be times it wouldn't be easy? And haven't I had it pretty easy up to now? My pep talk must have helped because I am actually looking forward to unraveling the puzzle ahead.

Having passed the attitude adjustment phase, I began to educate myself concerning the complicated problems that lay ahead of me. This wasn't too difficult. Most genealogists are experts in self-education and there are many interesting articles out there containing suggestions on how to climb the "stone wall." From these, I received encouragement and ideas. This summer I began the project.

Genealogy

My first action was to take stock of the information I have in my files, gathered over 20 years. There I found many clues, such as names in family cemeteries I had not researched before because they were not direct lines. Now, however, they may throw some light on the subject. This was noted on the "things to do" list on my computer.

It wasn't long before other "things to do" were noted, such as rechecking the census and canvassing surnames in my area of research interest. Of course, I am looking for collateral relatives. This would be a good source for you as well. Oftentimes, collateral relatives can lead you to that special hidden person.

Maybe your great-grandmother didn't have the family Bible. Maybe her sister did. Maybe a copy of the will that was burned in the courthouse fire was kept by that same sister and passed down. Remember too that fathers weren't the only ones who made wills. An aunt or uncle could have remembered a first cousin or niece or nephew in his will. And that person could

wind up being your relative.

Another excellent source I plan to study in-depth is land records of the area. In the case of land records, even if they are burned, copies are apt to be refiled. These records often contain names and relationships of former owners, and refer to original records.

I have an original deed from 1905 that refers to an earlier deed admitted in 1844 and, because of fire, readmitted in 1891. In addition, the 1905 deed in my possession gives a history of the land and lists three generations of family members and their relationships.

Now, about burned records: There has been a lot of talk about burnt courthouse records. But take heart. In some counties, records were burned in courthouse fires. In many

cases, however, some records were saved and yours may be among them. A few years ago, I was researching in King William County, Va. The courthouse there suffered a devastating fire around the time period in which I was interested. I had been told all records were burned. But guess what? Thanks to a public-spirited passerby at the time who bravely dashed into the burning building, many valuable records were partially saved.

The original charred records were later photocopied and are on file. Some copies are more legible than others. Some con-

tain only scraps of information — a name, a date — while others are almost complete. I was lucky enough to find three pages of a premarital agreement between my third great-grandfather and his second wife.

Though some of it was illegible, it yielded names (relatives, perhaps?) and the date of signing, October 23, 1820. I will never take "no records available" for an answer again.

But what if records do not come to light after such an in-depth search? In such a case, a

Please see WALL, page 20

★ WALL

From page 6

last-ditch effort on my part will consist of a process of elimination: Checking out all the possible surnames in the area to prove they couldn't possibly be the parents of my great-grandmother. Sounds like lots of work? You bet, but it might give me the answer I am seeking.

Regardless of any other research activity, I plan to do a

lot of networking! An inexpensive way to do this is to hook up to the Internet. It's a fantastic source for genealogists offering lots of information, some for free, some for a fee.

If you find a surname that rings a bell, make yourself known. Not only could you receive a bonanza of information, but you could be of help

to someone else. However, networking also means attending meetings and seminars, and seeking out other genealogists. So, go ahead, have fun meeting new people and learning new skills. Have a ball and climb the wall!

Mary Wilson is vice president of the Charlotte County Genealogical Society.

Narrate the family saga through the pages of a book

By MARY WILSON
Correspondent

Last week, we talked about stone walls and how to get over them. Sometimes though, stone walls may suggest that it is time to temporarily stop researching and get down to the business of recording your findings for posterity.

Uh, oh! Are those groans I hear out there? As Aunt Carrie used to say, "Don't say 'can't,' say 'I'll try.'" Writing a book is a formidable task to the uninitiated, but if you want to ensure that your research work has not been done in vain you need to record your findings in a manner that is interesting and readable. Bumping into a few stone walls of my own lately has caused me to believe now would be a good time to begin work on my family history. Perhaps you have arrived at the same conclusion. If so, you may be interested in the way I have approached this project. At least, you may find some inspiration to get started on a similar project of your own.

I don't have any experience in book writing, so the first thing I did was to seek help from the experts. I went to my store of "old reliable" Heritage Quest magazines and discovered several articles full of ideas and helpful hints. I also sought out other family histories, paying particular attention to how they dealt with such problems as scope of material and organization. The Port

Genealogy

puter, seriously consider investing in one. There are programs out there that will cut your work in half.

Also, if you think your writing skills are a bit rusty, you can quickly brush up with a short course in writing at one of the educational centers in the area — The Learning Center at Port Charlotte Cultural Center comes to mind, but there are others.

I came to this project with several questions in mind. One involved the extent of the scope my book was to take. One of my family lines traces back to 400 A.D., while another line only goes as far as my immigrant grandfather. Still other lines extend to several different eras.

How will I organize this myriad of time frames into intelligible reading? Could I

possibly incorporate so much into one book? The experts recommend that a novice writer limit the material, and as a result, limit the length of the book, breaking it up into several books if necessary. This is sensible advice and you may elect to take this route.

As for me, I am not getting any younger. I have decided I may not have time to write the three or four books that would complete my genealogy. And so, experts notwithstanding, I have elected to write one book with individual sections for each different component.

My next puzzle involved style and organization. There are several paths to take here. A genealogy book could take a narrative form in which stories of interest about each individual are told. Such a narrative can be a strict telling of your family history or might even be written as a novel based on family history.

Another style to consider might be one that contains only names, dates, places and sources. The latter would certainly appeal to genealogists doing research and it would be short and, therefore, less complicated to produce. But it probably wouldn't hold the interest of the general reader for long, and that could include your own family.

In my family, for example, one of my daughters com-

plained vigorously after she received a pedigree chart from me with names and dates only. She was disappointed that I had not included the interesting stories she had seen in an earlier version. Another daughter would prefer not to have the narrative interrupted by footnotes and explanations. It disturbs her train of thought to have the explanatory notes

Please see BOOK, page 21

★ BOOK

From page 6

intrude upon the stories.

Since my daughters are the two main reasons I am writing the book, their preferences are important to me. As a genealogist, however, I know that genealogical researchers want to know names, places, dates and sources. What to do? I decided to take the proverbial "third way out" and marry the two styles, going with the narrative, yet sprinkling it with pedigree charts and pictures, a table of contents at the beginning and an index and source citations at the back of the book.

This is my plan. Will it work? I think so. If it doesn't, I'll make some changes as I go along. After all, this is my book. I can do anything I want with it. The important thing is to start writing, and that is my next step.

Your plan may be entirely different. You may even have dreams of writing a historical novel. Great! Go for it. Whatever you decide to do, do it with confidence. Remember, this is *your* book. The choices are yours. Make this year the one you are published!

Mary Wilson is vice president of the Charlotte County Genealogical Society. The next scheduled meeting will be Sept. 15 at Ponce de Leon Park, where the group will meet for a picnic and a time of sharing.

Writing a personal obituary guarantees life after death

Has this ever happened to you? After months of searching for a death date for your great-great-grandmother, you finally find an obituary notice that someone had cut out of the newspaper years ago and saved. Wow, you think, this is just what I need! Then you start to read. What a disappointment!

When I was researching my great-great-grandmother, I found an obituary notice for her among some papers. Now, I didn't have much in the way of written proofs on this lady and, of course, I was excited to find it.

My excitement was short-lived, however, for this is the way it read: "Mrs. Edulia Gregory died here Wednesday of this week at the home of her daughter. Mrs. Gregory was the daughter of William Gregory of Elsing Green."

What a tantalizing bit of information! It was my great-

grandmother who WAS the daughter of William Gregory of Elsing Green. But this obituary didn't give me a

clue as to when she died and where. So, I was left to guess the detail that she died on Wednesday, but I was left in the dark as to which Wednesday of



Mary Wilson

what year the event occurred. It states that she died "here" but where is "here"?

The name of the newspaper, its address and the date of issue were all missing. Of course, I cherish the clipping. It establishes that Edulia Gregory lived, and commemorates her death, but what a boon it would have been to her genealogist-descendant if it had included other spe-

cifics such as birth dates and places of birth, marriages, deaths and names of family members.

Other genealogists have had similar experiences. So, we do, as genealogists, to help ensure that our descendants will find our obituaries rich with

"What can we do, as genealogists, to help ensure that our descendants will find our obituaries rich with genealogical information?"

genealogical information? One of the most obvious things we can do is to write our own obituaries.

Genealogists are in a pretty unique position when it comes to writing obituaries. After all, haven't we spent hours cutting and clipping other obituaries, culling them for scraps of information, sometimes successfully, sometimes not? No one is more qualified than we are to write these abbreviated versions of our own lives. So what's stopping you?

You have the information at hand, you KNOW what your descendants will want to know.

like the basic facts of birth, death and marriage dates. They will also want to know where

you were born, where you lived, and if you have a talent or a special accomplishment in your life, they will want to know that,

too. And they will want to know where you are buried, and from what church?

(Haven't planned that far ahead? Neither have I. That's okay, just leave those latter questions blank so somebody else can fill them in.) Be sure to be succinct in your wording.

Some newspapers are charging advertising prices for obituaries and this can become expensive. But, whatever you do, in this age of planning everything in advance, please don't neglect the obituary only YOU can write.

Another contribution we can ALL make toward improving

our obituaries WE clip include the name of the newspaper and the date when the article was pub-

lished. In the case of Edulia Gregory, I could easily have identified the

Wednesday on which she died, even though the specific date was not included in the notice, itself. And from the name and location of the newspaper, I might even have been able to learn the place where she was living when she died.

We need to remember that newspaper obituaries that are published today will be cherished and used by our descendants in the years to come. For all we know, these pieces of paper may be the only surviving data on us or our loved ones. We must make them as useful as we can.

On another note: Jack Gilbert, member of the Charlotte County Genealogical Society, announces the 68th reunion of the descendants of John Gilbert, the immigrant (1635), via his youngest son, Joseph (1650), and his descendant, Edward Marshall Gilbert, of Jones Co., MS.

For more information, contact him by e-mail at: jgilbert@nut-n-but.net

Mary Wilson is vice president of the Charlotte County

Genealogical Society. The society will resume its meetings with a picnic on Sept. 15 at Ponce de Leon Park.

Genealogy

Name changes complicate family connections in records

I'll bet at least once in your life you have made an acquaintance, maybe at a meeting or a party, and discovered you shared last names. Could there be a family connection? They think not. While the names may sound alike, they are not spelled alike. Theirs is spelled "Smythe," while yours is spelled "Smith." Case closed!

Not so fast, you say, and rightly so. If there is one thing that genealogy teaches you it is that you can't bank on anything staying the same, and this is particularly true when it comes to names. Misspellings were rampant in the "old days." Copying mistakes were made. And people deliberately changed their names for various reasons.

Many immigrants to this country shortened their names voluntarily for convenience's sake. Others had them shortened for them by impatient immigration officials. That was called Americanizing. Some immigrants escaping persecution took different names in their new country for security



Mary Wilson

reasons.

Also, when families intermarried and named their children after the patriarchs in the family, it often resulted in children in various related families bearing the same given names. When this occurred, it was not unusual for a young man, having reached his majority, to change the spelling of his last name in order to distinguish himself from like-named cousins or even fathers.

Census takers, too, made mistakes. The person being interviewed may have had a

heavy accent. The interviewer could not understand him or her and so, he made a guess or wrote the phonetic version. In other words, he wrote what he heard. Any one of the above reasons may have been responsible for the situation my sister-in-law, Geraldine McCausland, discovered in researching the Sinclair branch of her husband's family tree. In this particular family, she found four different spellings of the name within three generations.

Gerry traced the Sinclair family in Virginia back to 1771, when the will of John Sincleare was probated. In his will, John and his children are identified with the surname "Sincleare." After his death, however, the estate inventory listed John as "John Sinkliar." Here we have two variations on the same man.

On to the next generation: John's son, William, signed a marital agreement as William Sinklor. Did William pronounce his name accenting the first syllable? If so, it is easy to see how it became "Sinklor" on

the public record. The third generation from John, William's children, returned to what is traditionally thought to be the original spelling, Sinclair, and it has remained so in this particular branch of the family.

Perhaps you will run into someone with a name similar to yours. If you do, don't be concerned with the technicalities of name spelling. Compare other data: dates, places, first names, etc. Whatever you do, don't hesitate to pursue the possibilities of a family connection. I know I plan to keep my eyes and ears open.

And a good place to do that will be in Sarasota this fall. The Florida State Genealogical Society, Inc. will be having a two-day conference October 29-31 at the Sarasota Hyatt. The guest speaker will be Sharon DeBartolo Carmack. Topics will include: "Flesh on the Bones"; "Putting Your Ancestors into Historical Perspective"; "Oral History"; "Use It or Lose It"; and "Painless Organization: How to

Organize Everything in Your Genealogy Life." Those are all great topics and Sharon is an excellent speaker. I am putting it on my calendar! Mark YOUR calendar now and watch for more info later!

Another note: I have an interesting request from Joyce Lightfoot White. She is trying to gather information about her grandfather, Charles E. Lightfoot, who disappeared on a ship around 1920 off the coast of Florida. She is particularly interested in finding information about the ship that went down, its name, exact location of sinking, etc. Anyone who can help her, please get in touch with me.

Send e-mail to:
nightmare@nut-n-but.net

Mary Wilson is vice president of the Charlotte County Genealogical Society. The first meeting of the new season will be Sept. 15. It will be a picnic at Ponce de Leon Park, Punta Gorda. Bring your own lunch (and drink) and come prepared for a nice, breezy afternoon.

Always check your facts and sources; GEN-FAIR 2000

We seem to be living in the best of times for doing genealogical research, don't we? Just think of the advantages we, as genealogists, have today over those who lived just a generation before us. No carbon paper hassles for us — we can make nice clean copies on a copy machine or printer. Not too many manual typewriters around but computers are close at hand, ready to take our data, store it and retrieve it in a half-dozen ways. The compact disc industry provides us with a flood of information. And by way of the Internet, we can explore libraries around the world, including the Family History Library in Salt Lake City, Utah. Sounds like today's genealogist shouldn't have to move out of his desk chair to thoroughly research his family tree, doesn't it?

Well, it's not quite that easy. Certainly, there are a lot of good genealogical compact discs out there: census indices, marriage records, family histories and the like; and the Internet is awash with data. The computer IS an excellent tool and the many c.d. programs as well as the Internet provide us with exciting new avenues to explore.

But the truth of the matter is that most of the data we get from these sources will require additional work. For instance,



Mary Wilson

that census index you are working with now will require you to get a copy of the real thing later. Did you find something interesting at the on-line Family History Library site? There is so much more to delve into at the library itself, so think about making that trip to Utah. Maybe you think that was YOUR great-great-grandmother you saw on World Family Tree? Maybe it was, but have you checked the contributor's source? Was there even a source included with the data? Most of the files I have tapped into do not have sources listed. If there is a source and it is a written document you will need a copy of it for your files. And remember, publishers of family history compact discs, including World Family Tree, do not guarantee that the data they are pro-

cessing is reliable. (For that matter, you have no guarantee about the data you get from Internet sources either.) The old rule "always check the sources of any information" is never more true than when you are using computerized data having to do with family histories.

I think the best thing about using the computer in research other than its speed and convenience is the amount of leads it gives us, and ideas we are fed as we follow the avenues it provides. Certainly, the computer has greatly aided and in many ways simplified the search for our ancestors. E-mail keeps our families in touch and many of us HAVE discovered new cousins as we rove through the thousands of genealogy home pages all over the world. Sometimes these new cousins come equipped with a needed birth, marriage, or death certificate. Sometimes they may have old bible records that you never heard of, a newspaper clipping or other memorabilia that could be just the thing you are looking for. When this happens you have reason to rejoice over your good fortune.

So by all means invest in a computer, plunge into the inter-

net, explore the new compact discs, but be a smart computer researcher. Don't take anything for granted. Evaluate your material and check your sources. Remember that it takes a lot of digging and searching out original source material to produce a true and reliable family history. That part hasn't changed.

GEN-FAIR 2000

On another subject: A very exciting development is taking place in our Charlotte County genealogical world. A GEN-FAIR 2000 will be sponsored by the newly formed Alliance of Southwest Florida Genealogical Societies. The Alliance is composed of The Charlotte County Genealogical Society, the Lee

County Genealogical Society, the Bonita Springs Genealogical Society and the Genealogical Society of Collier County. The event will be held March 4, 2000, in Fort Myers. With noted lecturer George Morgan on hand plus some top-notch genealogical vendors, this is going to be something you won't want to miss. As I said, this is still in the planning stages. I'll have more information later.

Mary Wilson is the vice president of the Charlotte County Genealogical Society. The next meeting will be a picnic starting at noon on Sept. 15, at Ponce de Leon Park, Punta Gorda. Bring your own lunch and be prepared for a relaxing day.

Family newsletter interests youth in record keeping

Many genealogists, after years of research and strict record-keeping, are wondering who will take up the torch after they are gone. Will there be any descendants who will preserve the data that has been collected so painstakingly? Well, let me tell you about a woman who is doing something about that problem. Helen Volpe, a resident of Punta Gorda and a member of the Charlotte County Genealogical Society, has come up with a wonderful idea for not only preserving her own research but also to interest the younger generation in a similar project.

Helen started a family newsletter. Now, family newsletters are always a good idea, but this has something special going for it! You see, Helen had several objectives in mind when she started this project.

First, she wanted to preserve records for the future generations. Second, she wanted to nurture communication among the cousins. And third, and most important, she wanted to get the future generations interested in preserving the family history record.



Record
Your
Family
Roots

Mary Wilson

How did she go about this? As she puts it, "As the person in the family who was putting together the family's roots, I had become acquainted with my cousins who are now grandparents and great-grandparents." She had names and addresses and telephone numbers of relations all over the country. When

she started her search for a title for the newsletter, she called a cousin in Arkansas for some ideas. His suggestion? "The Norsky Newsletter — Where We're From and Who We Are."

That problem being solved, Helen was off and running. She created a mailing list from descendants charts based on the lines to be covered and from that mailing list she started assembling the staff. While visiting in Palm Springs, Helen tapped Sandy Larsen, a college girl from Santa Monica, Calif., for general editor. Sandy is a member of her family's younger

generation. Corinne Bowen, another cousin living in Onalaska, Wisc., has agreed to be co-editor. Three other cousins, each representing a different family line, have signed on to be correspondents for the newsletter.

Okay, so all family newsletters have editors and correspondents. What makes this one a little different is that it also has an Internet editor! And this Internet editor is Helen's 14-year-old grandson, Chester Gillmore. Chester has a number of interests. Among them are drama and water polo, but he has had a huge interest in computers for more than five years. The section he will edit is entitled "The Internet Generation — Downloading the Secret of Life," and this is what he says about it:

"The future lies in cyberspace, a land as infinite as the universe itself. A land we created, and a land that may one day 'create' us. My job on the Norsky Newsletter is to make it easier for the younger generations to correspond, communi-

cate and reply (sending information about yourself, etc.). 'Till we meet again, peace out."

As Helen explains, "Chester is a special gift to us oldsters," because he will be the bridge between the old and the young.

How did Helen get such splendid cooperation? With a lot of planning and work on her part, of course. First, she made up 55 cunning cards decorated with a Norwegian girl and a Viking horn, and sent a card to each descendant for whom she had an address. The cards announced the birth of the new publication, named the staff and predicted the time of its first mailing, e.g. before Thanksgiving. Isn't that wonderful timing, by the way? It will give the cousins something to talk about during those family Thanksgiving dinners.

A follow-up binder was sent to each staff member which included a descendants list, an organization chart suggesting lines of responsibility, and suggested deadlines for newsgatherers, such as the week before Valentine's Day, Easter and

Labor Day with the newsletter being sent out before Thanksgiving. Oh, yes, Helen also put together the first 3 1/2 pages of the newsletter ("for encouragement," she says, "and to provide some 'seed material'"). And, of course, a "thank you" note was included in the second mailing.

Lots of work, right? Will it be successful? It sounds like a real "go" to me, but we will have to ask Helen after Thanksgiving. She says that is when the first mailing goes out.

In the meantime, Helen's story may give you some food for thought about starting your own family newspaper. Do you know where YOUR cousins are?

Helen Volpe is corresponding secretary for the Charlotte County Genealogical Society.

The next meeting will be at noon Sept. 15 at Ponce de Leon Park. It will be a picnic, so fix your favorite food and come for a relaxing good time.

Mary Wilson is vice president of CCGS and a genealogy columnist for the Punta Gorda Herald.

Letter to Queen of England tells Brown family history

Author's note: I met my husband's grandfather, John Brown, briefly in Sept. 1958. Al and I had been engaged for about two weeks and I recall that John chose a seat next to me, picked up his magnifying glass and proceeded to give me the once-over. Intimidating! He died about a month later, but I have come to know John Brown through the papers, letters and postcards he left behind. I particularly prize the following letter not just because it is addressed to the Queen of England, but because it gives a sense of the man himself, as well as his contemporaries, and contains a wealth of family history. The copy is undated, but it surely was written between World War II's end and his death:

**"H.R.H. Queen Elizabeth
London, England:**

"Your Gracious Majesty,
"When I have read in newspapers and elsewhere of your graciousness in conversing with humble folk who had some connection with your early years, I have wished I could talk with you about Glamis, where my people have been for generations and are still living. As it is most unlikely I shall ever speak with you, the idea of writing to you has come to me. As you are kind enough to converse, you might be gracious enough to receive a letter.



Record
Your
Family
History

Carol Brown

"James Annand and wife Margaret, their sons, daughters and son-in-law, have been Strathmore tenants and farmers. Those of them now beyond this life sleep in Glamis Kirkyard near by the castle. A son, John Annand, and daughter, Mrs. David Fyfe, still live at Plaus of Thornton — they have given sons and grandsons for your empire in two German wars. What an event it would be for them in their last years, if their gracious queen called on them when in residence at the castle. It would comfort them for the loss of sons they did not grudge to give.

"The writer of this letter, John Brown, of Dundee, was married by Dr. John Stevenson Jan. 1, 1894. From then until now her folk have been my folk, and Glamis is still my village, though I am far from it now. My weekend bicycle rides from Dundee to Glamis took me to the Garden of Eden, it was situated behind the cottage home of the Annand at Plaus of Thornton. She gave me a son and three daughters; they have given me four grandchildren.

"Your Gracious Majesty,
"When I have read in newspapers and elsewhere of your graciousness in conversing with humble folk who had some connection with your early years, I have wished I could talk with you about Glamis, where my people have been for generations and are still living."

Her spirit has returned to God who gave it. Her mortal remains sleep on a sunny hillside in Belgey Cemetery, Dundee,

where the nearby river Tay sings her requiem. In a letter of condolence to her parents I spoke of her as noble daughter, matchless wife, peerless mother. A tribute that may be applied in all truth to yourself. I am not forgetting you are a great queen by remembering you are also a noble woman. For years she and the children spent their summers at Glamis and Kirrie.

"My son, James, worked for Patterson the Forfar baker, and brought your bread to the castle daily. One day your father gave him a letter to mail in Forfar, a small service, if any service for the castle folk could be small. I came to relatives in United States after my wife's death. The children came one by one later. Mary, another daughter, married John Turnbull, village blacksmith. He retired from blacksmithing and took a sheep farm among the Kirrie Glens. He was the most contented man I have known, roaming among the hills with his sheep and lambs was all

his heart desired. He is now with the great Shepherd, doubtless engaged in some shepherd task.

His son-in-law, Will Shaw, took up where he left off and carried on. His widow lives in Oglivie Cottage, North Muir, Kirriemuir, a granddaughter caring for her. In her garden there is the original of the Minor Well in Barrie's 'Little Minister.' American tourists ask to see it, I am told. Kirrie means about as much to me as Glamis. When a young man, going weekends from Dundee on my bicycle, I was rather proud when I pushed it right over Lumley Den and over the Mill brae on to High St. Kirrie without coming off.

"Do you know Violet Jacobs' lines about Kirrie? I have taken them from Dr. Barbour's life of Dr. Alexander White, prince of Scottish preachers. Probably the book is in your library: 'O the braw, braw toon o' Kirrie, Many a year I hae loved thee, And winne seek to leave ya, Tho I'm spared anither score, I'd be greeting like a laddie, For the auld reid croodit houses.'

"My lifelong Dundee friend, Norval Serymgeour, FASS, journalist and poet, told me in a let-

ter he had been twice to Glamis Castle assisting Your Mother in some historical research, and helping yourself studying Scottish Stone. You graciously accepted a brooch made of Scottish Stone. Norval compiled an anthology of the poets of Angus and the Mearns. I donated a copy to University of Chicago, with some other Scottish material.

"My name is John Brown, numerous notable Scotchmen have borne the name. One was Queen Victoria's loyal servant, Dr. John Brown, who wrote that Scottish classic 'Rob and His Friends'; Rev. John Brown, great divine; and the American John Brown, abolitionist. If your Majesty reads this letter and autographs the enclosed picture postcard of Glamis Castle, I will feel that I have graduated from

Sept 15, 1' '9

the ordinary John Browns to the notable ones.

"To complete the story. After my four children were married and in homes of their own, I married an American lady after being a widower 20 years. The Royal Family by their character and courage, and Winston Churchill, by his judgment and energy, were the chief bulwarks against the Axis enemy and brought their defeat. May the high of the peace be realized and good somehow come out of evil.

"If this letter has the good fortune to reach your hands, I trust you will find some interest and pleasure in it.

"Enclosed two poems I hope you will like.

"Your humble servant"

Did John get an answer to his letter? If we find it, you'll be the first to know.

Don't forget the Charlotte County Genealogical Society picnic at noon today at Ponce de Leon Park in Punta Gorda. It's a brown-bagger, so cook up or pick up your favorite food and beverage, as well as a comfortable chair if you wish, though there will be picnic tables and seats. We'll see you at noon at the park.

Carol Brown is a member of CCGS who writes a genealogy column for the Punta Gorda Herald.

Letter records heritage

So many times in genealogy one hears remarks such as, "I didn't get interested in genealogy until all of the people who could help me with it had died." This didn't happen in my family, however, thanks to a chance question from a grandson to his grandfather: "What was it like when you were a little boy?"

This is one grandfather (my great uncle) who took his responsibilities seriously. He sat down and wrote an interesting story on the subject. Perhaps you will be interested in reading it. The letter is dated December 19, 1980, and addressed "To my Grandson John."

"You will no doubt remember that a few weeks ago you asked me to tell you what it was like when I was a little boy.

"On May 9, 1906, Frank and Blanche Dawson became the proud parents of an oversized son. After much thought, they finally decided to keep it, and they named it Walter Franklin Dawson (me). I was born in their home at 315 Arter Avenue, Oakland, Kansas, located about three miles northeast of downtown Topeka.

"At the age of six years, they sent me to the first grade in the Oakland Elementary School, located on Michigan Avenue, about four blocks from their home. I walked to and from school—in the morning, to home and back for lunch, and in the afternoon.

"When my dad took me to the barber shop to have my long curls cut off, as I got into the barber chair I became frightened and screamed to high heaven—but the poor unfortunate barber and the other customers had to put up with the noise.

"During the elementary grades, I had a Coaster Wagon and a sled for the winter snows. I suppose I had a tricycle sometime during that period, but I cannot remember it. Bicycles began to show up around town about the time I was in the upper elementary grades. So far as an auto was concerned, during my elementary and high school days, no kid had an auto to drive to school.



Record
Your
Family
Roots

Gene Dudley

"I started taking violin lessons when I was maybe 10 years old. Really, I wanted to play a cornet or the drums, but my folks wouldn't agree to the noise, so the violin it was. I took lessons from a Miss Phipps, a Professor Bunson and a Mr. Clarence Messick. I finally got good enough on the violin to play in the school orchestra, the church orchestra and in the Santa Fe Railway Orchestra. I even played a lot of solos here and there, including at my own eighth grade graduation exercises in the school auditorium. (After I got home, I was told that the person accompanying me on the piano lost his place and stopped playing for a while, but I didn't even notice it and continued 'sawing away' on my solo.)

"When I was around 10 years old, we moved from 315 Arter Avenue to 275 Forest Avenue—some four blocks west. It was a newly built house and a much larger one than we had before. This location made it much easier for me to go to and from school, because the schoolhouse was right across the street.

"In my early days most all of the streets in Oakland were not paved, and there was a ditch between the edge of the parking and the street itself. Sometime after we moved to Forest Avenue, a man by the name of Ike Gardner collected enough money from the people on Forest to have that street covered with cinders. This certainly helped eliminate deep ruts in the street during the rainy periods.

"We would rake the leaves from our yard into the ditch to burn them. The kids in the block would run and jump through the dense smoke. One time I did that in the wrong spot and hit the hitching post (metal one) on the other side of the smoke—making it necessary to have the doctor come all the way to Oakland to sew up the cut in my left eyebrow.

"Oakland had a mayor, and other officials, including a marshal. The City Council put a lot of ordinances on the books, including:

1. \$1 fine for intoxication—first offense.
2. \$5 fine for each additional offense.
3. A curfew bell (the schoolhouse bell) rang at eight o'clock during the summer months and at seven o'clock in the winter, and all kids had to be off the streets, or be subject to arrest.

4. There was another ordinance prohibiting anyone from

letting their animals perform sex acts in public.

5. Another laid out rules and regulations on how large, how deep, etc. an outdoor privy could be."

Next week we'll learn how grandpa and grandma met, their senior prom date and something of the style of living in the early 1900s in Kansas.

Sorry Mr. Floyd knocked us out of our picnic at Ponce de Leon Park last week. See you all in October at the next regular meeting.

Gene Dudley is the president of the Charlotte County Genealogical Society. She is also a board member of the Alliance of Genealogical Societies of Southwest Florida.

Grandfather's letter relates 'good old days' to grandson

Editor's note: This is a continuation of a Dec. 19, 1980, letter written by a grandfather, Walter Franklin Dawson, to his grandson, John, answering the boy's question, "What was it like when you were a little boy?" (Dawson was Gene Dudley's great uncle).



Record
Your
Family
Roots

Gene Dudley

on the east side of Forest Avenue, and I lived in the middle of the same block on the opposite side of the street.

"In my early years, every Saturday night a laundry wash-tub was brought up from the basement, put in the kitchen beside the range, filled with warm water from the range and that was the way we took our baths. Some years later, a bathroom with a lavatory, a bathtub and a gas-heating stove was built on the rear of our house.

"The only light fixtures in the house when we first moved into it were gas-burning lamps piped down from the ceiling. Later, these were augmented by the use of wick-type kerosene table lamps. When it was necessary to go outdoors at night (to the privy at the end of the lot, for example) we had a wick-type lantern that burned kerosene. You can take my word for it; that privy was really a cold place to be in the winter and one didn't linger there very long.

"After several years of using this type of lighting, electric lines were strung on poles put up in Oakland. My folks then

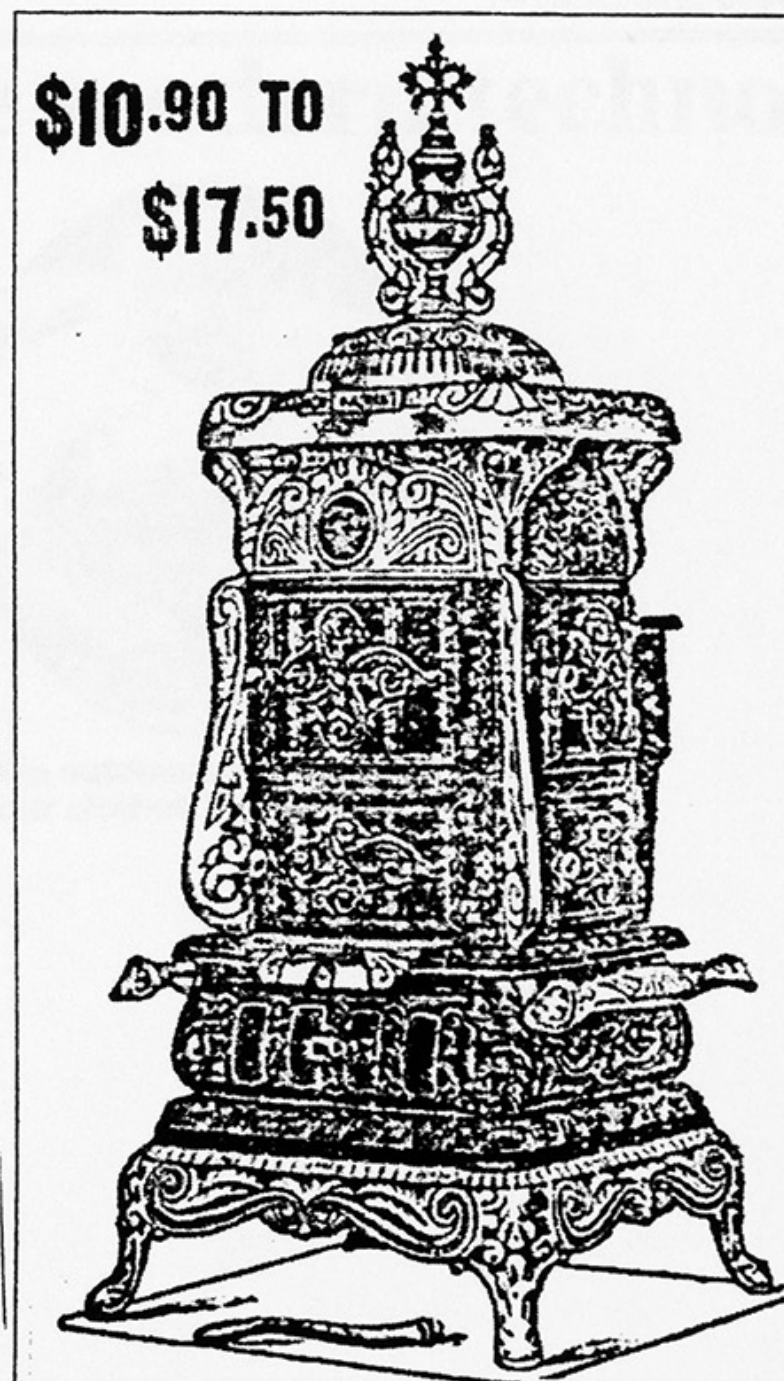
had their house wired and we had an electric cord hanging down from the ceiling, with a little socket and a small wattage lightbulb. Electric floor and table lamps came along later.

"To start with, there were no water or sewer pipes in the house, like we have today. We had a large cistern right behind the house that was piped into the 'pitcher pump' located next to our kitchen sink. The cistern water was rainwater off the roof, and it was used for laundry purposes, etc.

"We had a drilled well with a long-handled pump in the back yard, up close to the house, where we got our drinking and cooking water. In the winter it was necessary to wrap the pump to keep it from freezing. When the pump was not in immediate use, we would raise its handle clear up to force the water to drain down below ground level; then when we needed to use the pump the next time, it was necessary to pour some water into the top of the pump to 'prime' it.

"Heating the house: There was a coal-burning heating

stove in our dining room. To start with, this was a plain round iron stove that burned coal. This was later exchanged for a base burner stove, which was a fairly large, square stove, (see picture) having many mica windows in the three sides, so we could watch the flames inside. This base burner did a pretty good job keeping the living room, dining room and the middle bedroom warm; however, when the temperature outdoors got down too low, my



\$10.90 TO
\$17.50

Graphic
provided

This
Acme
Radiant
Base
Burner,
a nickel-
plated,
coal-
burning
stove,
could be
purchased
from the
Sears,
Roebuck
& Co.
catalog for
\$10.90 to
\$17.50
in 1902.
It was
used for
heating
the house
as well
as for
cooking.

folks would close the doors between the living room and the dining room, leaving the living room mighty cold.

"Some years later, a coal burning furnace was installed in the basement, with heat stacks to the various rooms. My dad would order from three to five tons of coal to be delivered and unloaded through a coal chute located in our basement wall, into the coal bin next to the furnace. It was a daily

chore to carry out buckets or ashes and clinkers removed from the ash pit of the furnace. On a really cold day, it was necessary to make many trips to the basement to shovel in some more coal to keep the furnace going.

"Cooking: The coal-burning range in the kitchen consisted of the main cooking space, a baking oven below, a water reservoir at one end and an oven-warming compartment above"

Grandfather describes life before modern technology

Editor's note: This is a conclusion of a 1980 letter written by a grandfather, Walter Franklin Dawson, to his grandson, John, answering the boy's question, "What was it like when you were a little boy?" (Dawson was Deva Gene Dudley's great uncle). This week's art should serve as a reminder of the good ol' days.



Record Your Family Roots

Gene Dudley

crank, and spin it until the engine started.

"The only heater in this car was a piece of metal wrapped



This is how we used to vacuum the carpet.

"The first automobile my parents owned was a brand new 1924 Ford Touring Car. It had a soft top, with side curtains which could be snapped on and off, in case of cold or rainy weather. There were isenglass, or plastic, windows located in these side curtains.

To drive this Ford, it was necessary to use three pedals; namely the clutch, reverse and brake. To start the engine, one had to walk around to the front of the car, take hold of the



This is before frozen presliced potatoes.

around the manifold of the engine; the metal was then made into a pipe, which extended back through the fire wall, into the car right above the pedals.

This pipe was open at both ends so the wind coming through the radiator would

enter the pipe, be warmed as it passed over the manifold, and continue on into the passenger section of the car. About all one could say about that type of heater was 'It was better than nothing.'

"Oakland did not have a fire department, as we know it today. We did have a volunteer firefighter setup. My dad was one of the volunteers and he kept a fairly heavy fire extinguisher in our home. Whenever the fire bell rang (in the school-

house), he agreed to carry the extinguisher to the fire and help put the fire out.

"About 1 a.m., one cold winter night, the bell sounded. Dad had the flu, so I dressed and carried that extinguisher to the fire — which was clear down in the northeast corner of Oakland. When I got there, a man took the extinguisher, climbed up his ladder, but the extinguisher wouldn't work. They found that in carrying it, some liquid spilled into the hose nozzle and froze it shut. I had to carry the extinguisher all the way back home. You might like to ask why someone didn't thaw the nozzle with a cigaret lighter — the answer: at that time there wasn't anything like



We automatically washed our clothes by hand.



Solar energy was used to dry clothes.

a cigaret lighter except a match.

"In Oakland we had baseball teams, football teams, basketball teams, Boy Scout troops, Sunday School class picnics and family picnics. School rules prohibited drinking, smoking, swearing, dancing. The main mischief was pushing over privies in October (especially if we thought someone was sitting in it). I know of one case where an old-fashioned buggy was placed on the church roof; another time a live cow was tied up on a flat roof.

"I am sure there is more I could add to this, but for the

present THIS IS IT."

The letter was signed "Your Grandpa Dawson" and was dated December 21, 1980.

Do you have a little boy in your family? Perhaps, if he asked his grandpa "What was it like when you were young?" he might get a response such as this one, too.

Deva Gene Dudley is second-year president of the Charlotte County Genealogical Society and a member of the Board of the Alliance of Genealogical Societies of SW Florida.



This was "tap" water.

Genealogy calendar hums with activity this season

Attention all genealogists and wannabes! Get out your calendars and pencils, and start making notes. Our lazy summer days are over and "the season" is pretty much upon us. For you as well as for me this means activity!

This season seems to be especially busy, starting with the October meeting of the Charlotte County Genealogical Society on Oct. 20. The meeting will be at its usual place, the Port Charlotte United Methodist Church (corner of Viscaya and Quesada) beginning at 2 p.m. Local professional genealogist Bonny Stover will speak on the ins and outs of researching land records, a wonderful source sometimes overlooked by genealogists.

(Side-note: You won't want to miss Bonny's genealogy class coming up in January at the Port Charlotte Cultural Center. Bonny's courses are always informative and fun. If you are just starting to research, this is the best way to learn the ropes. But even an old-timer needs a review now and then. That's why I plan to capture a front row seat on the first day of school).

An exciting genealogical event coming to our area soon is the Florida State Genealogical Society Annual Conference at the Hyatt, 1000 Boulevard of the Arts, Sarasota, Oct. 29-30. Sharon DeBartolo Carmack will be the principal speaker at the two-day meeting.



Record Your Family Roots

Mary Wilson

Her topics will include: "Flesh on the Bones - Putting Your Ancestors into Historical Perspective"; "Oral History - Use it or Lose it"; and "Painless Organization - How to Organize Everything in Your Genealogy Life." The annual conference is always a great meeting. In addition to professional lecturers and top-notch vendors, there is a lot of pageantry with the various member societies parading their colors. The Charlotte

County Genealogical Society will be there represented by President Gene Dudley and Vice-President Mary Wilson who will be proudly showing off the society banner. If you would like to attend, call Linda Kleback at (850) 265-8817, or e-mail: kleback@bellsouth.net

The Nov. 17 meeting of the Charlotte County Genealogical Society will carry the theme "Researching Beyond Our Shores." Members Hilda Marson, Arthur Haug, Clair Wilcoxon and Patricia LeBeau

will discuss researching England, Germany, Norway and French Canada, respectively. It sounds like another informative program.

If you are low on genealogical supplies or just curious to see what's out there, you might want to take in the Lee County Genealogical Society Vendor Fair Nov. 18 at Wesley Methodist Church, 4141 DeLeon St., Fort Myers. Our Charlotte County society will be participating in this project.

Heading into the year 2000: The Florida Chapter of the Ohio Genealogy Society will celebrate its 16th annual conference in Madison, Fla. The conference will feature library research. (I understand that Elmer C. Spear's library will be open almost 24 hours a day while conference participants are in town!) The guest speaker will be Curt Witcher. For more information, contact Elmer Spear at (850) 929-2846, or e-mail espear@digitalexp.com

And finally, but certainly not least, plans are speedily being laid for Gen-Fair 2000 to be held March 4, 2000, at Shady Oaks Community Center in Fort Myers, Fla. Sponsored by the Alliance of Southwest Genealogical Societies, and hosted by Lee County Genealogical Society, this meeting promises to be a hot calendar item. The recently formed alliance consists of the Charlotte County Genealogical Society, Collier County Genealogical Society, Lee



Photo provided

Betty DeHaven, President Deva Gene Dudley, Vice President Mary Wilson and Helen Eckhardt will represent the Charlotte County Genealogical Society at Gen-Fair 2000.

County Genealogical Society and Lehigh Genealogical Society. These nonprofit societies have formed a cooperative arrangement in order to provide programs with more variety and interest to their members.

Gen-Fair 2000 is a product of this effort and will showcase well-known author, columnist and lecturer George Morgan. He will speak on four subjects: "Genealogical Orienteering — Using Maps"; "Bits about Obits"; "Bringing Ancestors to

Gen-Fair 2000 promises to be genealogists' dream

Life — Developing a Profile"; and "Planning Cemetery Trips." In between lectures and during the lunch break, you will be able to browse through a variety of genealogical ven-

dors standing by to serve you. Mark your calendars for this one, folks, and watch this column for information as it develops

Please see HUMS, page 27

★ HUMS

From page 11

develops.

Something new on the horizon: Ever hear of PGCS coding? Maybe not. I hadn't until I received a note via the Internet from David Dole. The initials

stand for Publishers Genealogical Coding Service, and represent a system whereby a newspaper, for a small one-time fee (about \$25), is given its own special identification code to be inserted in obituaries published by that newspaper. If the obituary should get lost from its title page, the researcher only needs to check

the I.D. code in the body of the obituary against a matching code you can find at : www.obituarycoding.com to find the newspaper's name, location and the date the obituary was published.

By the way, PGCS has the approval of the Association of Professional Genealogists, the Council of Genealogy

Columnists, the Federation of Genealogical Societies and the National Genealogical Society, with each of these societies represented on the PGCS Steering Committee. At least five Minnesota papers are using PGCS coding. If you are interested in learning more about this, contact David W. Dole by e-mail at: dwdole@fishnet.com

Mary Wilson is vice president of the Charlotte County Genealogical Society. The society meets at 2 p.m. the third Wednesday of each month at the Port Charlotte United Methodist Church, Viscaya at Quesada. Guests are welcome.

...more of the newly released details. The date to remember is March 4, 2000. The place: Shady Oaks Community Center, 3280 Marine St., Fort Myers (Lee County has agreed to play host for this one). The group has secured the services of noted writer and lecturer George G.

Using "Maps," "Bringing Ancestors to Life: Developing a Profile," "Planning Cemetery Trips," and "Old and Obsolete."

Though I haven't heard him speak, I understand that Morgan's treatment of his subject matter is bound to be not only educational but also entertaining. There will be vendors

to be a lot of value, so mark your calendars to look for this one. Don't miss it, I won't.

I have started reading AGAIN the very fine book "Albion's Seed," by David Hackett Fischer, history professor at Brandeis University. I read this book several years ago and was impressed with it then.

William Penn, the Quakers' and the Delaware Valley, and still another deals with the 1717-1775 emigrants from North Britain (Ireland and Scotland) to our backcountry.

He writes about the ways of the people, religious customs, superstitions, attitudes towards business, even the approaches

to marriage and death. He also traces the roots of these cultural habits to the regions in England from which they came.

Mary Wilson is vice president of the Charlotte County Genealogical Society which meets at 2 p.m. the third Wednesday of each month at the Port Charlotte United Methodist Church, Viscaya at Quesada. Guests are welcome.

Gen-Fair 2000 promises to be genealogists' dream

There is excitement in the air and it isn't named Irene! There are some new kids on the block and they call themselves The Alliance of Genealogical Societies of SW FLA. A non-profit group, the alliance is composed of genealogical societies from Charlotte, Lee and Collier counties. Their common purpose? To provide more varied and interesting educational programs to their members and to the public. I would say that they are starting out on the right foot. Yesterday, at a meeting in Fort Myers, plans were finalized for their first venture: Gen-Fair 2000.

You have heard a little bit about Gen-Fair in this column. Let me give you more of the newly released details. The date to remember is March 4, 2000. The place: Shady Oaks Community Center, 3280 Marion St., Fort Myers (Lee County has agreed to play host for this one). The group has secured the services of noted writer and lecturer George G.



It's All
In The
Genes

Mary Wilson

Morgan, who will speak on four subjects which I think are sure to be of interest to all genealogists, beginners or the more advanced. They are: "Genealogical Gazetteering: Using Maps," "Bringing Ancestors to Life: Developing a Profile," "Planning Cemetery Trips," and "Bits and Obits."

Though I haven't heard him speak, I understand that Morgan's treatment of his subject matter is bound to be not only educational but also entertaining. There will be vendors

galore (another delight of genealogists — don't we just love to pore over the new books and supplies?) and plenty of time between lectures and at lunch to shop the goodies they will offer. To give you more time to do just that, lunch will be provided.

But that's not all! In addition to professional vendors, individual genealogical societies as well as lineage societies will have exhibit tables filled with informational materials. Now doesn't that sound like a hot spot for genealogists? (I also understand that a number of lucky individuals will walk off with some fine door prizes.) Honestly, folks, this promises to be something of value, so mark your calendars in INK for this one. Don't miss it. I won't.

I have started reading AGAIN the very fine book "Albion's Seed," by David Hackett Fisher, history professor at Brandeis University. I read this book several years ago and was impressed with it then.

It is a good reference work for anyone who is interested in understanding the origins of cultural differences exhibited in the various parts of our country. The author discusses four major British folk cultures that were introduced into North America with the early colonists and the influence these folk cultures have on area cultures today.

He touches on the Puritans in Massachusetts and describes their backgrounds in East Anglia. He treats on the influx of immigrants from the south of England to Virginia, including the cavaliers and the elite as well as the servant-immigrants. Another chapter deals with William Penn, the Quakers' and the Delaware Valley, and still another deals with the 1717-1775 emigrants from North Britain (Ireland and Scotland) to our backcountry.

He writes about the mores of the people, religious customs, superstitions, attitudes towards business, even the approaches

to marriage and deftly traces the roots of these cultural habits to the regions in England from which they came. If you are interested in knowing more about your own cultural background, you should read this book. You may wind up learning more about yourself.

Meeting today

There will be a Charlotte County Genealogical Society meeting at 2 p.m. at the Port Charlotte United Methodist Church, Viscaya at Quesada. An interesting program is assured with Bonny Stover, professional genealogist, speaking on searching land records. Hope to see you there.

Mary Wilson is vice president of the Charlotte County Genealogical Society which meets at 2 p.m. the third Wednesday of each month at the Port Charlotte United Methodist Church, Viscaya at Quesada. Guests are welcome.

Salem witch trials: Imaginations gone wild lead to hangings

Check your next door neighbor or that sales clerk at the department store. Do you feel strange in their presence? Does your eye twitch?

Does your arm ache? Could they be witches? In 1692 in Salem, Mass., and surrounding towns, just such accusations were made.

It was a time of political uncertainty, add to this the French and Indian War, unusually cold weather, pirates, smallpox and uncertain ownership of land.

All these problems increased the tension in these small towns. To the religiously restricted populace there was no other answer. Surely the Devil had his hand in all this trouble.

Children were "to be seen and not heard," must learn their Bible readings by heart and were "protected" from all adversities. A group of girls became regular visitors at the home of the Rev. Samuel Paris. Here, with his daughter Elizabeth and her cousin, Abigail Williams, they listened avidly to the stories told by the Paris' slave, Tituba from the West Indies. Tituba and her husband, John Indian, described the evil spirits that caused torture and disabilities



It's All In The Genes

Ruth Chapman

in anyone who provoked them. The tales were colorful and terrifying to these Puritan girls. They became so emotionally excited they sobbed, had convulsions, and cried out unintelligible conversations, to the concern of their parents.

Seeing this as an escape from their restricted world, the girls did all kinds of forbidden things laying the blame on being bewitched. When asked by authorities to point out the "witches," they chose Tituba, the slave, Sarah Good, a pipe smoking beggar, Sarah Osborn, a cripple, and Martha Cory who had an illegitimate, half-caste son.

A court was set up by the religious leaders of the day to examine each of the accused. This was not a civil court, but

one conducted solely by the clergy. The "witches" were hanged after being accused of believing in devilry and sorcery.

The girls, frightened by these hangings were afraid to reveal their make-believe attacks. They continued to accuse various persons of witchcraft. They chose people who were a little bit out of the ordinary. Rebecca Nurse, 71 years old and bed-ridden, never would say she had practiced witchcraft. When asked why she remained in bed, she replied that she knew "... nothing of sorcery. I have not but my old age." She was hanged.

Ann Pudeator was hanged, as was Mary Parker. Mrs. Foster died in jail from ill treatment and exposure. Mary Lacy saved her own life by confessing. (All those who confessed to witchcraft were set free by promising to reform.)

Two women accused had judgment delayed, due to pregnancy. By the time their babies were delivered, the witch hunt had ended.

Before her death, Mrs. Foster admitted riding on a broomstick with Martha Carrier. Martha Carrier was accused even by her own children who were tortured with

head and heels tied together until blood flowed from their noses.

The group of accusing girls was taken from village to village where they continued to accuse persons of witchcraft. Capt. John Alden was accused. He was ordered in court to stand on a chair and face the girls. They all fell to the floor. Alden was jailed in Boston but after 15 weeks he escaped.

John Willard, a constable who had made several arrests of "witches," began to suspect the girls as the real culprits. When he accused them, he was accused by the girls, arrested and hung. Eventually about 150 people were arrested.

The court proceedings were long and complicated by the hysteria surrounding each case. In all, about 30 were tried. Of these, 19 were hanged and one man was crushed under a wooden door piled with stones.

When the girls accused the wife of the Governor, he called a halt to the religious court and brought the trials to Civil Court.

Though many remained jailed, no more were put to death. Cotton Mather and the other clergy who conducted the trials begged forgiveness.

The girls were reprimanded

and sent home. The weather cleared, the smallpox died out, land ownership was settled and the witch hunt was finished.

John Greenleaf Whittier summed it up as follows:

Rebecca Nurse
Yarmouth, England, 1621
Salem, Massachusetts, 1692

"O Christian martyr, who for truth could die

When all about thee owned the hideous lie,

The world redeemed from superstition's sway

Is breathing freer for thy sake today."

Editor's note: George Chapman, the author's husband, past president of the Charlotte County Genealogical Society and genealogy authority, is a direct descendant of the Martha Carrier who was accused of riding on a broomstick. Martha Carrier was hanged.

Ruth Matsinger Chapman, also a member of CCGS, is a professional writer, having published articles in numerous magazines and newspapers around the country. CCGS meets at 2 p.m. every third Wednesday at the Port Charlotte United Methodist Church, Quesada and Viscaya. Guests are welcome.

DeJoux family spans generations from castles to cabins

By HENRY DEYO
Correspondent

Back in 1034 A.D., a 600-foot precipice in the Jura mountains near the French-Swiss border overlooked three valleys that converged: one from France, another coming south from Germany and the third, north from Italy, right where the present small town of La Cluse-et-Mijoux is located. This is about seven miles inside the French border on the road leading to Lausanne, Switzerland. To the west is the French town of Pontarlier. It is to this part of the world that I have traced my early ancestors.

The site has been occupied since the times of the Romans, but no castles appeared until 1034, when Chateau DeJoux (Deyo Castle) was begun. It covers five acres, and has the deepest hand-dug well in Europe at 375 feet through solid rock and is 16 feet across.

We know some of the early names (remember, there were no last names back then). They were exotic names and they belonged to ruthless and powerful men. To name a few:

Genealogy

Narduin (900s), Uldric (early 1000s), Amauri I (1057-1083), Landri (1086-1110), Amauri II (1110-1140), Hugues I (mid-1150s), Amauri III (1166-1189) and others. Amauri III went on the third crusade with Frederick Barbarossa of Germany, King Philip of France, and Richard the Lion Heart of England. He came back several years later to find his wife, Berthe, with a lover, the knight Ame' de Montfacon. Needless to say, lover Ame' was quickly dispatched outside the castle walls by hanging and the errant wife was able to watch the whole proceeding from her cell.

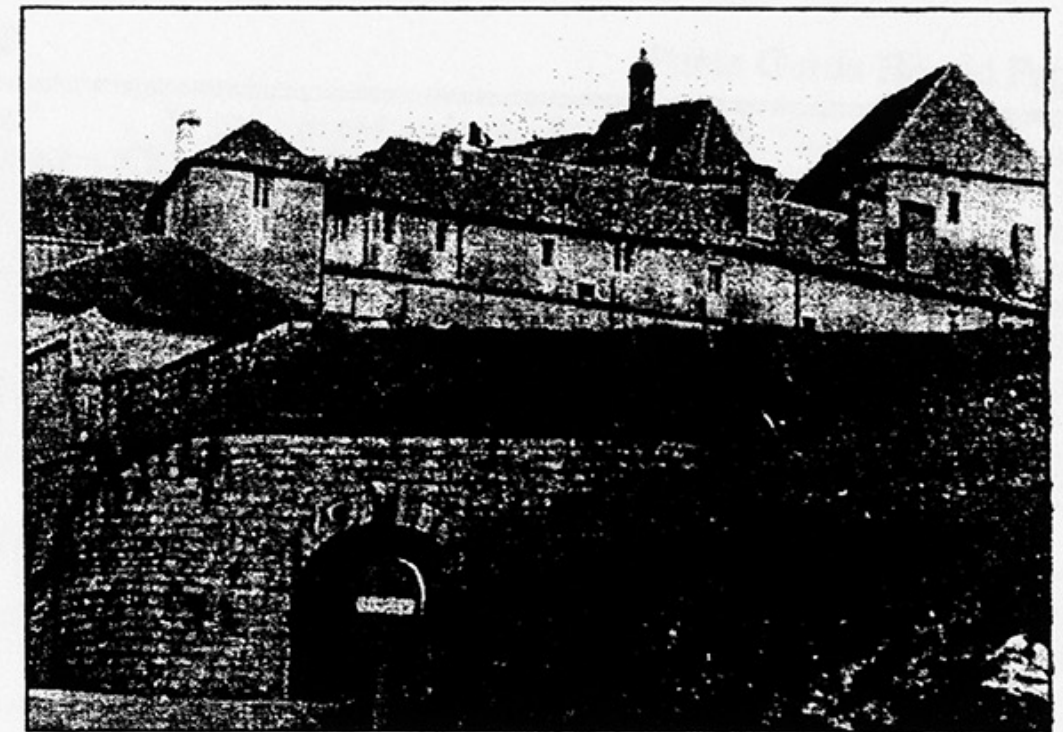
The castle was sold to King Louis XI in 1473 and in later years, the notorious Toussaint L'Ouverture, whose revolt set free the slaves in Hispaniola (e.g., Haiti and the Dominican Republic), was imprisoned there by Napoleon Bonaparte. L'Ouverture fared no better than Montfacon. In 1803, he starved to death.

A trip to the area afforded me the privilege of visiting both the small cell from which Berthe saw her lover hanged as well as the place where L'Ouverture was imprisoned and starved.

It is quite consistent with history that the younger sons of the family DeJoux should be sent north to the Province of Artois in North Burgundy to take over the lands acquired through the Burgundian conquests. Included in the Artois region is the town of St. Pol, about 30 miles southwest of Lille and 40 miles southeast of Calais. This is where my ancestor Christian Deyo (DeJoux) was born about 1610, 10 generations ago. There he lived until the 1650s when he and other Huguenot friends fled France because of persecutions of the French King Louis XIV.

In 1675, they felt the pursuit of Louis XIV's agents even in the area of Mannheim, Germany. After the January 21, 1675, marriage of Christian's son, Pierre, and Agatha Nichol

Please see SPANS, page 21



Sun Herald photo provided

Chateau DeJoux was built in France in 1034 A.D.

★ SPANS

From page 10

from nearby Mutterstadt, they and 11 other families came to America to found in Ulster County, N.Y., my own hometown of Die Pfalz (New Paltz). On May 26, 1677, five chiefs of the Esopus Indian tribe sold 39,683 acres of land to the 12 Huguenot families. This is five years prior to the land buying of William Penn that is in our

history books. This is recorded in the New Paltz Library.

The first homes were log cabins. As the cabins started to rot, they were replaced with stone houses such as those they had left behind in France. The Deyo stone house was built in 1692, followed by dwellings built by other families over the next few years. Currently, all the stone houses are owned by the family societies. The U.S. Interior Department lists Huguenot Street as the "oldest

street in America still in use."

My mother's maiden name was Deyo and she was a descendant of Christian. I also trace down from most of the other founding families of New Paltz: Hasbrouck, LeFevre, DuBois, Bevier and Freer. Chrisspel is the only original family name I don't have in my ancestry.

To get back to the earlier mentioned item of the "younger" DeJoux sons going north to Artois:

If you should visit the Port Charlotte Library Genealogy Room and select the book, "Heraldry — Sources, Symbols and Meaning," by Ottfried Neubecker, you will find on page 29 a color plate of 25 shields of Knights of Artois. The first shield in the fourth row down, left side, is the shield emblazoned in the master hall of the DeJoux Castle (three yellow frets crisscrossing on a dark blue background). On page 28, opposite the plate is

noted: "a page from the so-called WIGNBERGEN ARMORIAL, which assembles the first 25 of the 64 arms of the March of Artois. This painting was done before 1291." This ties the DeJoux family from the Franche-Comte area of South Burgundy to the north Burgundy area of Artois and within 30 miles of St. Pol where my ancestors originated.

Henry Deyo Mertz is a member of the Charlotte County Genealogical Society.

Spice up genealogy by placing ancestors in natural setting

Been wondering how you can make your genealogy story interesting? Want to make your book more readable, your ancestors more real?

Well, then, you should have attended the Florida State Genealogical Society Conference this past weekend in Sarasota. These questions were addressed at the conference.

Certainly, there was a crowd in attendance. Member societies from all over the state were there "strutting their stuff" and showing their banners. President Deva Gene Dudley, Marion S. Germano and I represented the Charlotte County Genealogical Society. It was a fun trip for us, but also an informative one. We came away with all sorts of ideas on better ways to research and organize our genealogy as well as how to write a genealogy history that someone *else* will want to read.

The featured speaker of the meeting, Sharon Debartolo Carmack, started things off right with her helpful talk on



It's All
In The
Genes

Mary Wilson

"... Putting Your Ancestors in Historic Perspective." In this lecture she stressed the importance of learning everything possible about the environment in which an ancestor lived, even down to the diet of the day. And how do you do that?

Well, of course, there are histories that often give you that kind of information. I have a set of old histories belonging to my grandfather that I consult all the time. They are written by famous historians of the past and paint vivid pictures of the eras they describe. I have a few

autobiographies of people who lived during the same era in the same place and under the same economic circumstances, which I also consult. And there are many "new" histories out there today, written as interestingly as novels or even, in some cases written *as* novels, but with biographical material and footnotes added to inform the reader.

Some of the authors I like to watch for include Antonia Fraser, Carrolly Erickson, Margaret George, Alison Weir and Sharon Kay Penman. In addition to these, Carmack suggests perusing the novel section in the library for books paralleling your ancestor's time period. You can draw conclusions about the life and experiences of your ancestor from anyone of these sources. Just remember to phrase *your* writing so that it reflects a surmisal, not a fact: "Grandmother Crane *may* have had cornmeal mush for breakfast." After all, Grandmother Crane may also have been a holdout who would rather starve than eat cornmeal

mush.

Speaking of grandmothers, Carmack had a very good point to make in connection with oral history interviews with older relatives. Perhaps you have already thought of it. I hadn't, but shall use it in the future. She suggested that when interviewing older relatives, instead of just asking, "When were you married?" phrase your question so as to elicit memories. "Tell me about your wedding, what was it like? What did you wear? Who attended? What was the ceremony like? What was served at the reception?"

It seems to me that is a very good suggestion for people who are seeking oral histories. These are the kinds of questions that will open up a flood of memories. Certainly, we need the facts and dates, but we

also want to know what it was like for them living in their time. And, more importantly, this is what people in the future, the ones who will be reading your book, will want to know.

Finally, Carmack warns we should be aware that many of our present-day terms in English usage may not be relevant to or understood by future generations. In the beginning of this article, I mentioned the phrase "strutting their stuff." This was a popular term when I was growing up. It is not as popular now. In future generations, this term may have no significance at all. So if I were to include it in a genealogy meant for some future descendant to read, I should explain

the term in a footnote. This is another point that I had not thought of, but that I shall look out for in the future.

So, thanks Sharon Debartolo Carmack for stirring my thought processes and giving me new perspective on an old dream, that of writing a genealogical history!

Mary C. Wilson is vice-president of the Charlotte County Genealogical Society, which meets at 2 p.m. the third Wednesday of each month at the Port Charlotte United Methodist Church at Viscaya and Quesada. Be an earlybird and join Betsey Lambert's 1:30 p.m. discussion group. Guests are always welcome.

Port Charlotte Library houses unique genealogy section

Have you ever experienced the feeling that you are persona non grata when you turn to a librarian for help in your genealogical research? Well, I know of at least one library where such is not the case and where every effort is made to make the genealogist feel at home. I am talking about Port Charlotte's own gem of a public library located at the Port Charlotte Cultural Center on Aaron Street.

Bob Kelley, the head librarian, and his staff are pleasant and easy to work with and Frances Ferguson, Charlotte County Genealogical Society librarian, and her staff of volunteers are standing by to aid when needed. Kelley is justly proud of the library's genealogical collection, which, as he says, is unique to the library.

Being the only collection of its kind in Charlotte County, it consists of more than 2,000 books, microfiche, microfilm and CD's, all of which have been donated by members of the Charlotte County Genealogical Society.

I think it would be hard for you to come away disappointed in the genealogical collection. You may find information on your Irish immigrant, your Virginia cavalier, or your New England Puritan among the books on the shelves. Related to royalty? The genealogical section has reliable references that will give you the lineage information you are looking for and maybe some personal



It's All
In The
Genes

Mary Wilson

information as well. Early Charlotte County residents are not forgotten either. Records have been published by CCGS and more are waiting in the wings, and this information is on display in the genealogical section of the library.

Maybe you like to do your research by computer? Several computers are available, as are a number of genealogical CD disks. One computer, supplied by CCGS, is located in the genealogy section and others offered by the library are located nearby. A couple of these are even hooked up to the Internet. There is staff at hand to help you if you have difficulty. I caught the head librarian helping out in this capacity the other day. It's that kind of place!

"Being the only collection of its kind in Charlotte County, it consists of more than 2,000 books, microfiche, microfilm and CD's, all of which have been donated by members of the Charlotte County Genealogical Society."

But, genealogists, don't make the mistake of searching only in the genealogical section. There are other sections in this library where you will find information that will help you get to know the person who was your ancestor. For instance, a good geography book can put into perspective the physical properties inherent in the land on which he or she

lived. Histories will outline the various eras and their unique characteristics and biographies will give you a hint of your ancestors' "coping powers." Even a good historical novel can paint a picture of the mores of the day.

Curious about more specific things, like, for instance, how holidays were celebrated? I found a book that told of a long ago family Thanksgiving celebration. It could be relevant to your family. Other histories were concerned with Christmas music as performed in early Europe and North America,

with sheet music included. Thumbing through its pages, I discovered an interesting fact of which I had not been aware. I'll pass it on here.

If your ancestor lived in merry olde England or English America between 1645 and 1657, he or she might not have celebrated Christmas or sung Christmas carols at all. The Cromwellian Parliament banned all festival celebration including Christmas during those years. So much for merry olde England!

All these types of books can help put you in touch with the life experiences of your ancestor. And there is another boon to exploring the general reference section. These references can be checked out and you can

study them at home. (There are a few "checkouts" as well in the genealogical section.)

Kelley has effected a special change that should be of benefit to researchers. He has made the library hours more accessi-

ble. The new hours are: 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday, Wednesday and Friday; 9 a.m. to 8 p.m., Tuesday and Thursday; and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday. He also urges that if you don't have a library card, stop in and get one and start shopping the WHOLE library. That is GOOD advice. So, see you at the library!

Mary C. Wilson is vice president of CCGS, which meets at 2 p.m. the third Wednesday of each month at the Port Charlotte United Methodist Church, Viscaya and Quesada.

CCGS updates 'Indian Springs Cemetery' book

Interested in local county history? The Charlotte County Genealogical Society has announced the update of its acclaimed research effort, the "Indian Springs Cemetery book." The new update will include a list of burials in that cemetery up to June 1999.

Members of CCGS printed the original book several years ago after much serious research. Many days were spent at the cemetery, discovering and mapping out long-abandoned graves. Innumerable visits were made to the courthouse to check probate records. And personal interviews were held with some descendants of the deceased and longtime residents of this area before the book was finally organized and readied for printing.

The result? A book that is not just a list of names and dates, although like any work of its kind, they are there in abundance. This book manages not only to be an excellent resource for anyone searching for their Charlotte County ancestors, but also a great history of the area.

Indian Springs Cemetery is the second oldest cemetery in Charlotte County. Many of its occupants have descendants in the area to this day. Check out some of these names, for instance: McQueen, Peeples, Cleveland and Whidden, all residents of Indian Springs Cemetery and all listed in the CCGS book, some with fascinating anecdotes about their lives.



It's All In The Genes

Mary Wilson

Virginia Taylor Trabue, for instance, was laid to rest there. At the time of her death she was the widow of the town's founder, Isaac Trabue. You probably know that Isaac was the first lawyer in the town and the first postmaster, and that he built the first house. But did you know that Virginia's mother was the first woman entomologist in the United States, and that Virginia, herself, founded the Good Shepherd Episcopal Church?

Bet you didn't know that the first bride in Punta Gorda is buried in Indian Springs Cemetery. Her name was Mary Lulu Seward and she married

James L. Sandlin in May 1887. She helped to organize the First Baptist Church. He was a pioneer merchant and real estate man. Together they produced the first child born in Punta Gorda, Felix K. Sandlin. These facts and others can be found within the pages of "Indian Springs Cemetery."

Albert Waller Gilchrist, former governor of Florida, lies there, too, as does an enterprising businessman of the 1900s, Adrian Pettus Jordan. Jordan came to Punta Gorda in 1901 and bought the *Punta Gorda Herald*. His epitaph states he was a "Florida Pioneer Newspaperman."

The old cemetery can create an emotional pull, too, when you read about "Baby Land," a place where infants were buried free, and there is a Potter's Field, as well. One of the souls buried here, "Ollie Bracket," was evidently quite a character in life. According to the story, Ollie was a six-foot-tall red-head who had a penchant for sexy dresses and feather boas. She was a "madam" who worked in one of the bawdy houses outside of Punta Gorda, about the turn of the century. Although a cook may have guessed her secret, it wasn't until "Ollie" was stricken with dysentery and required a doctor that she was found to be a man.

Ollie confessed to the ruse in his delirium. It turned out that "Ollie" was in reality Charles Asbel, who had fled to Florida from Alabama after hurling a man to his death. He adopted his female disguise to evade the law. This story is related in the book on good authority by U.S. Cleveland

and Luke Wilson. But don't look for this story at the cemetery. No records of it exist there.

Indeed, the old cemetery has a history and "Indian Springs Cemetery" tells it well. There is not only good reference material here, but also interesting reading.

Mary Wilson is vice president of the Charlotte County Genealogical Society.

Maybe you should check it out for yourself. Call Betsey Lambert for more information at 637-1158.

Christmas luncheon

Don't forget the Christmas luncheon and installation ceremony at noon Dec. 1 at Victoria

Estates. Cost for lunch is \$10. Enharmonics from Port Charlotte High School will provide the entertainment. Casual dress. Call Mary Wilson at 743-2769 for more details.

Practical pointers to prove organized genealogists do exist

Are you an organized genealogist? Can you find a particular paper or document in a matter of seconds? I know some of you are having a problem in this department because I have received some phone calls. And it is certainly true that filing can be a problem for genealogists because our work produces so much paper.

Sharon Debartolo Carmack, noted genealogist and lecturer, gave some excellent pointers on this subject during her talk at the recent 23rd Annual Conference of the Florida State Genealogical Society in Sarasota.

Perhaps the system described below and recommended by Carmack may give you some ideas on streamlining your own filing system. It seems uncomplicated and, if well kept, should pass the "in seconds" retrieval test as well. She calls it "Filing by Couple or Family Group."

With this method, each couple or family group is allotted a folder that carries the names of both partners (the wife is always listed by her maiden name). This folder will contain copies of birth, marriage and death certificates, loose notes, and other supporting informa-



It's All
In The
Genes

Mary Wilson

tion for the family group. (Remember that all original documents must be kept in archival sleeves for safe maintenance.)

Any information collected with regard to the children would be kept with the family grouping until the children marry, at which time, they would be given separate folders. Carmack also recommends placing the names of the children on the front of the parents' folder for quick reference.

An I.D. number (a combination of the individuals' Ahnentafel numbers — that is, the order in which the ancestor appears on the pedigree chart) is assigned to the couple. For example, you are making a

"Are you an organized genealogist? Can you find a particular paper or document in a matter of seconds? ... filing can be a problem for genealogists because our work produces so much paper."

folder for your parents. You are No. 1 on the pedigree chart; so your father and mother would be Nos. 2 and 3, respectively. It follows that the combined I.D. number for your father and mother would be 2-3. The family group sheet with sources footnoted on the back becomes the table of contents for that folder and is kept with the folder. The source material in the folder is marked with the applicable footnote numbers on the family group sheet and placed in the folder in proper order. The folder is then filed numerically.

What to do when a child marries? As mentioned above, he or she simply would get his or her own folder and, if they are a direct ancestor, they are assigned an I.D. number following the formula explained above. However, if the child is not a direct ancestor, but a brother or sister of a direct

ancestor, they would receive the same I.D. number as the parents with a numeral added signifying their birth order. In other words, if the child were the second-born of couple 2-3, the I.D. number would be 2-3 (2).

My system is similar to this except that I have my folders filed alphabetically. I am thinking, however, of going to the numerical system, since the number may be easier to spot than the surname as I look for the file. It occurs to me also that I can use my pedigree charts as an index for the system, if need be.

Carmack offered other helpful suggestions. One in particular I wish I had thought of years ago: taking notes on paper the same size as the files. This would certainly eliminate all those little bits of paper that get lost in the bottom of the file cabinet. She also recommended

the use of letter-size manila folders for filing. I am not so sure I agree with her on this, though, at least not for me. Many of my records are legal-sized and I really don't want to fold them.

Finally, you probably will find yourself making extra copies or cross-filing where your documentation concerns more than one family group. So be it. This will facilitate locating your material when you need it. And, after all, isn't that the end mission of genealogy recording?

Well, don't let me take up any more of your time. Go to it, and happy filing!

Christmas luncheon

By the way, I hope you have your reservations for the CCGS Christmas Luncheon at noon today at the Imperial Room, King's Gate at Victoria Estates, Port Charlotte. Tickets are \$10. This meeting takes the place of the regular December meeting.

Mary C. Wilson is vice president of the Charlotte County Genealogical Society and co-chairman of the ASFGS (Alliance of Southwest Florida Genealogical Societies).

Author breathes life into history of German families

A new book has hit the shelves and you may be interested in looking at it, particularly if you have German ancestry. Called "The Saxon Chronicle Vol. I, The Capitalists," the story traces particular German families (related to the author) through succeeding generations from the year 782 A.D. to 1582 A.D.

It is the first of a three-volume set, and can now be found on the shelves at Waldenbooks at the Port Charlotte Town Center. The author, Jane E. Swan, lives in Port Charlotte and has turned her "ancestor collecting" hobby into an historical novel. Swan told me that she hasn't traced her family all the way back to 782 A.D., but that she has gone back to the early 1400s.

The tale begins with the struggles of the ancient Saxons to resist the conquests of Charlemagne. It continues through the Middle Ages, past the horrors of the Black Death, into the Renaissance and Reformation, and ends with the ascent of the astute merchants who became the first capitalists (thus the name of the book).

But the interesting twist to this story to me is that "The Saxon Chronicle" began life as a simple genealogy record, intended for future generations, perhaps much like the book you are considering now. It wasn't long, however, before



It's All
In The
Genes

Mary Wilson

Swan realized she was not satisfied with just recording names and dates. She wanted to flesh out these people that were a part of her heritage. She wanted to know who these people were. What were their sorrows and joys? What were their lives like? And she wanted future generations to know. (Again, just like you?)

Unfortunately, even though she had traced her family back to Germany and had visited the lands of her forefathers, some of the information she had collected was scanty. In Germany, few, if any, records before the Thirty Years War exist, although in some cases there are rich oral traditions. So she conceived the idea of placing each family, the Bruns, the von Sehndens and Stockmans, in historical perspective.

Of course, she had to delve into heavy historical research, and she spent many, many hours honing up on German and early Saxon history. The result of all this work is a story, part fact and part fiction. But have no fear, you purists out

there, (me included), Swan has separated the two in her author's note. (This is a must when I read a historical novel. I want to know where the fiction ends and fact begins.)

Maybe you don't have German ancestry. Nevertheless, if you are thinking of turning your genealogy into an historical novel, you may still find "The Saxon Chronicle" rewarding reading, since it is sure to give you some ideas about writing your own story. (When you realize the amount of extra historical research you will have to do, you may have second thoughts about it.)

This sounds like a good book to me, though I have not read it. I do plan to pick up a copy, however. It sounds like the kind of book I would enjoy.

Jane Swan is a charmer. And

from what she tells me, she has received good comments from people who have read her book. If you are interested in meeting her, she will be signing her book at the Edison Mall from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday at Waldenbooks. You may visit with her there and discuss her book in more detail.

New news

The year 2000 officers of the Charlotte County Genealogical Society were installed at a gala luncheon on Dec. 1 at Victoria Estates. They are: Jan Masteryanni, president; Karleen Cogswell, vice president; Bob Tedford, treasurer;

Dorothy Heimmick, recording secretary; Helen Volpe, corresponding secretary; Gene Dudley, Nita Groh and Ellen Van Nieuwenhuyzen, board of directors; genealogist, Betsey Lambert; library chairman, Frances Ferguson; membership, Carol Brown; newsletter co-editors, Patricia LeBeau and Robert Pettit; photographer, Robert Croft; program, Arthur J. Haug; publicity, Rose Ann Shephardson; and Web master, Robert Pettit.

Congratulations to all! The society has grown over the years and is so very lucky to

have such dedicated members who are willing to give their time and effort to further its goals.

The Charlotte County Genealogical Society will have its next meeting at 2 p.m. Jan. 20 at the Port Charlotte United Methodist Church, Quesada and Viscaya. Advisory classes in genealogy begin at 1:30 p.m., chaired by Society Genealogist Betsey Lambert. Guests are welcome.

Mary Wilson has held numerous offices in the Charlotte County Genealogical Society, and is at the present time co-chairman of the Alliance of Genealogical Societies of S.W. Fla. She is a member of the DAR-Charlotte Bay Chapter and The Jamestowne Society.

Research reveals past connection between married couple

By WILLIAM FERRIGNO
Correspondent

Ann and I were high school sweethearts, but it wasn't until 30 some years after we were married that we discovered a link in our family backgrounds. Ann grew up on one side of town, I on the other, meeting for the first time in high school Latin class. Ann is of Scottish descent, her great-great-grandfather arriving in the United States in 1840. My Italian grandfather arrived in 1896. Both eventually made their way to Westerly, R.I.

Now a popular tourist destination, Westerly had been host to several industries since its founding in 1667. An attractive site for colonial settlement, it has waterpower from the Pawcatuck River, fertile farmland, an adequate sheltered harbor, and an excellent location for commerce. It also had a hidden resource in the form of a huge "knob" of prized pink granite. Ship building and import-export trade sustained growth through the 18th century. The 19th century brought woolen mills and the granite industry.

The expansive linen and wool industries of Scotland were in turmoil in 1840. Competition from the continent was wreaking havoc with prices, and recession was certain. Civil unrest was rampant as religious issues spread divisiveness throughout Scotland. John Kenneth had found work in the woolen mill in Paisley, and with his bride, Janet Tannahill, had settled down to a

Genealogy

modest but comfortable life. Young William, John and little Margaret had married in quick succession. With the faltering of the mill, which employed a sizable portion of the workers in Paisley, John sensed the need to seek work elsewhere. An advertisement in the Paisley Gazette shouted the need for woolen mill workers in the United States, specifically Greenville, R.I. "Transportation provided in exchange for a two-year work contract," it read.

John kissed his family goodbye, and was off to America. A frugal Scot, John soon saved enough money to send for his family. In 1844, reunited with his family, John moved to Ledyard, Conn., to another woolen mill, and in 1851, he made his final move, to the new mill in Westerly, R.I., 10 miles east.

As a young man, Alexander was mechanically inclined, and found work tending machinery. But an independent nature soon steered him to a business of his own. He opened a blacksmith shop on the eastern outskirts of Westerly, close to the fledgling granite quarry that had recently begun operation.

Nicolo Ferrigno was also lured by the radiance of America and the promise of work. On the rugged Sarrento peninsula, the seaside village of Maiori offered a life as a fisherman, or as a stone carver. Today Maiori is a beautiful Mediterranean resort. Nicolo

learned the stone trade, showing promising skill as a carver. Twenty-two years old, he arrived in Boston in 1896 to seek his fortune. He brought with him a wife, Raphaella, and infant son, Raphael. Within two years he had built a successful reputation for his carving, and was traveling to jobs throughout New England and New York.

Pneumonia was an often fatal illness at the turn of the century, and Raphaella was soon a victim. Nicolo, in later years, told his grandchildren that at the moment when his beloved Raphaella passed, the candle by which he was writing in his journal flickered and died. He knew he had lost his love. Another young woman was selected by his parents back in Maiori — an appropriate "match," as it was termed. Soon he was back in Boston with little Ralphie and new wife, Annie Esposito.

The quarries on Hurricane Island, Maine, were hiring and paying good wages. It wasn't carving, as the product there was paving blocks, or cobblestone, as we know it. But it was an opportunity to get out of the city. The quarry was prosperous, churning out a quarter-million blocks each month, with the island town now numbering more than 3,000 people. The quarry owner, a benevolent Scot, provided good working and living conditions for his employees.

The work attracted two ethnic groups, the Italians and Scots. This is true in virtually

every New England quarry and in those around Granite City, N.C., another granite mining center. The Scots are great engineers, adept at removing blocks of stone from a solid granite hill; the Italians are the carvers, the artisans. They "bring the stone to life," as grandfather Nicolo explained it. The two groups got along very well, perhaps based on their complementary talents.

In 1908, the quarry owner died unexpectedly. The word of his sudden death spread quickly through the little town. The employees knew that the owner's son would now run the company, and that was dreaded. His mean disposition and careless treatment of employees was intolerable. The decision was made, and before nightfall of that day, the workers had set down their tools (company property), gathered their families and belongings and abandoned the island.

When we visited the island in 1986, 78 years later, we found the foundations of the homes, churches, meeting hall, and, yes, hand tools lying on half-finished stonework. The quarry never reopened.

The Hurricane Island workers found work readily, as Maine, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut bristled with the tall gin poles that marked quarry operations. Nicolo made his way to Westerly, R.I., where he once again carved statues and monuments, rather than an unending quantity of cobblestones. Much of the work output of that peri-

od of the Westerly quarry went into Civil War monuments, identifiable by the pink color of the granite.

I still have his carving tools, some 67 years after his death. I remarked to my father that Grandpa's tools showed heavy usage, but were remarkably sharp. He related that for the 20 years that Grandpa worked at the granite works, it was his practice, as a carver, to leave his tools with the blacksmith every night for sharpening, and pick them up in the morning on the way back to work.

And so the circle closes. The grandson of the carver and the great-granddaughter of the blacksmith, neither knowing or even suspecting a connection between families, discover a fascinating story through their genealogical pursuits, and a chance observation. When a field near the quarry was being excavated for a high school athletic complex, the remains of a blacksmith shop were uncovered — the blacksmith shop that served the quarry! It was Alexander Kenneth's blacksmith shop.

Special notice

The December meeting of the CCGS was held Dec. 1. The next meeting will take place at 2 p.m. Jan. 19 at the Port Charlotte United Methodist Church, Quesada and Viscaya. Guests are welcome.

William Ferrigno is a member of the Charlotte County Genealogical Society.

Have a 'Cheery Christmas'

December 22, 1999! Other than the fact that this is the first day of winter, and that there are only two more shopping days before Christmas, what does this mean to you? Well, if you have been paying attention to the Internet gurus, you may have heard about the special event that is predicted for tonight. Charles Dorrel, a golfing buddy of Ralph's put us onto it. Thanks, Charlie. And thanks to Charlie's e-mail friends. I am talking about a REALLY bright moon that should brighten up the sky tonight (if we are lucky and don't have to contend with clouds). Apparently, there will be a full moon occurring in conjunction with a lunar perigee, or something like that. (For all the uninitiated out there, a lunar perigee is a point in the moon's orbit that is closest to earth.) Thus, the moon will appear about 14 percent larger than it does at apogee (when the point in its elliptical orbit is farthest from the Earth). Also, since the Earth is several million miles closer to the sun than in the summer, sunlight striking the moon is about 7 percent stronger, making it brighter. Charlie's info also mentioned that back in 1866, the Lakota Sioux took advantage of this combination of occurrences and staged a retaliatory ambush on soldiers in the Wyoming Territory. But what captured my imagination about the story is that this beautifully bright moon has not occurred in this manner for 133 years. So when you are admiring the moon tonight, remember that 133 years ago, those ancestors you have been so diligently researching saw the same phenomenon. And perhaps your descendants more than a hundred years from now will also enjoy the view, when it presents itself once again. Maybe you don't hear sleigh bells ringing down here in sunny Florida, but there are other signs in the air. Christmas is just a few days away, a magical time of fun and fairyland scenes. For Ralph and I,



It's All
In The
Genes

Mary Wilson

Christmas Eve is a time of relaxation and reflection. All of our Christmas gifts have been sent off to the North to the children and grandchildren. I've made my egg nog from an old traditional recipe and cookies have finally been baked and put away (one way or another). The tree is up and now is the time for reminiscing and partying. We honor Christmases past including the first Christmas, but appreciate the present. And we give thanks for our wonderful families and friends, much as our parents and grandparents did.

One of my prize possessions that I read every Christmas is an old Christmas card sent to my mother and father years ago. It is hand dated 1918. Prohibition was right around the corner. The World War I Armistice had been signed the month before. And a viral influenza was sweeping the world, in one two-week period killing 40,000 people. The sentiment expressed in this greeting is appropriate to those

times, but it is also timeless. Apparently typewritten on what looks like a piece of cardboard, the message was signed: "Love to you and Willis from Clara and Bill."

I think the sentiment is as apropos today as it was 81 years ago. What do you think? Very personal Christmas card, entitled:

"CHEERY CHRISTMAS"

"Tho the world be at sixes and sevens

And battered and twisted and torn,

And old faiths seem shattered and shaken,

Or wiggly and wobbly and worn;

Tho the old Christmas was-sail be frowned on

And the world-gosh!-is fast going dry,

And some be as busted, God save them,

As busted, God help them, as I;

We'll be cheery, gol darn it, it's Christmas!

And we'll laugh as we always shall do.

When you pass me the old-fashioned greeting

And I say, 'The same back to you.'

"Merry Christmas to All!"

Mary Wilson is immediate past Vice President of the Charlotte County Genealogical Society and is a member of the Daughters of the American Revolution and The Jamestown Society. At present, she serves as Co-Chairman of the Alliance of Genealogical Societies of Southwest Florida.

Research basics: how to get started, stay organized

Well, here we are, one foot in the 20th century and one foot in the 21st century. There are a lot of people out there, genealogists included, who are enthusiastically refining resolutions for the Year 2000. If you are a genealogist, your list probably includes finding at least one of your more elusive ancestors, or maybe doing a "clean-up" job on your files. Maybe you are new to the game of genealogy, and just want to "get started." You are looking for ideas. Where do you go?

There are several avenues of help that will aid the novice researcher as well as the more experienced person. Though we have been over this road before, it probably won't hurt to travel it once more.

Take a class

Just about the best first step in organizing your skills or even refreshing a tired memory would be taking a good course in genealogy. Such a course really does exist here in Port Charlotte. Starting Jan. 10, professional genealogist Bonny Stover will be teaching not one, but two classes, at 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. at the Cultural Center of Charlotte County, 2280 Aaron Street in Port Charlotte.

In addition, Bonny has loads of information to share, she is a dedicated teacher, well organized and a good speaker to boot. You won't be disappoint-



It's All
In The
Genes

Mary Wilson

ed in this one. And the cost is minimal. I plan to enroll myself, so maybe I'll see you there, but you'll have to fight me for the front row seat.

So, now you have enrolled in Bonny's class. What next?

Join a society

For starters, join a genealogical society. The Charlotte County Genealogical Society is a forward-moving group that holds genealogy classes before each meeting and presents interesting how-to programs. The society has a large, diverse membership, and you are likely to find someone in the group from your state or, perhaps, researching the same surname you are.

The society meets at 2 p.m. the third Wednesday of each month at the Port Charlotte United Methodist Church, Viscaya and Quesada. (Instruction group led by Betsey Lambert meets at 1:30 p.m.) Guests are welcome.

"If you are a genealogist, your list of New Year's resolutions probably includes finding at least one of your more elusive ancestors, or maybe doing a 'clean-up' job on your files. Maybe you are new to the game of genealogy, and just want to 'get started.' You are looking for ideas. Where do you go?"

Check out the library

Next, get acquainted with the various libraries in the area. The Cultural Center Library, for instance, houses the unique genealogical collection of the Charlotte County Genealogical Society. And what better way to get acquainted there than as a volunteer under the guidance of

Frances Ferguson. Frances is the library chairman of the Charlotte County Genealogical Society, and supervises the volunteers in the genealogy section.

Your big bonus? A chance to really delve into all those books on the shelves. (After all, you won't be busy the WHOLE time you are on duty.) If you think you would be interested in volunteering, call Frances at 625-6231.

While you are checking out libraries, don't neglect the Port Charlotte branch of the Church of Latter-day Saints, at the corner of Quesada and Forrest Nelson. And the LDS Library in Fort Myers has even more material available to the researcher. You would do well

to call before visiting these libraries, though.

Use a computer

But lucky you, if you have a computer! You can connect directly with LDS online and get a whole lot of goodies that way.

Don't have a computer? You really should think about getting one. A computer is a great

organizing tool and a time-saver. And it can't be beat for networking.

Attend a seminar

And speaking of networking, take advantage of the genealogy fairs and seminars when they are held in your area. These one- or two-day events have excellent speakers and I have yet to hear a dry or boring talk. A real plus lies in the professional genealogical vendors who come from around the state to show (and sell) the latest in genealogy aids.

The next big meeting of this kind in Southwest Florida will be GEN Fair 2000, sponsored by the Alliance of Genealogical Societies of Southwest Florida, (an alliance of Charlotte, Collier and Lee county genealogical societies). It will be held on March 4 in Fort Myers at Shady Oaks Community Center, 3280 Marion St. Noted author George G. Morgan will be the main speaker. There will be more on this event next week, in this column, so watch for it. In the meantime, mark your calendar for this all-day meet-

ing. I wouldn't want to miss it. I don't think you will, either.

Thank you

Like the song says, this has been a very good year. And I must thank some very special people whose contributions have helped this column to continue: Charlotte County Genealogical Society people like **Betty Ayres**, Punta Gorda; **Carol Brown**, Punta Gorda; **George and Ruth Chapman**, Englewood; **Deva Gene Dudley**, Punta Gorda Isles; **William Ferrigno**, Port Charlotte; **Judy Gambrel**, Punta Gorda; **Jack Gilbert**, Punta Gorda; **Arthur Haug**, Punta Gorda; **Betsey Lambert**, Punta Gorda; **Nita Groh**, Port Charlotte; **Patricia LeBeau**, Punta Gorda; **Lee Loomis**, Venice; **Henry Deyo Mertz**, Port Charlotte; **Margaret Parker**, Punta Gorda; **Betti Paull**, Port Charlotte; **Margaret (Bonny) Stover**, Punta Gorda; **Robert Tedford**, Port Charlotte; **Helen Volpe**, Punta Gorda; and **Clair D. Wilcoxon**, Port Charlotte.

And another special thank you to **Tami Patzer** and **Sue Dudley Starkweather** of the *Punta Gorda Herald*. Smart folks and easy to work with, all.

Thanks, gang. What a great bunch! Happy New Year, y'all!

Mary Wilson is a member of the Charlotte County Genealogical Society, the Charlotte Bay Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution and a member at large of The Jamestowne Society.

