Thomas Jay Kemp. 8½” x 11”. 714 pp., paper. $69.95
This best-selling reference book offers complete, up-to-date information on where and how to request vital records (birth, marriage, death, divorce, and adoption records). One-hundred pages longer than its predecessor, the new 6th edition contains the latest ordering forms and information for each of the fifty states as well as the other countries of the world, giving, where available, the current application forms and instructions, as well as the key addresses of repositories or embassies that might help you obtain copies of vital records.

Without Indentures: Index to White Slave Children in Colonial Court Records
Richard Hayes Phillips. xxxviii, 284 pp., illus., indexed, paper. $29.95
Mr. Phillips’ shocking new study of colonial slave labor contains the names of more than 5,000 children kidnapped from Ireland, Scotland, England, and New England and sold into slavery in Maryland and Virginia, ca. 1660–1720. We have long known about indentured servants, who agreed in writing, by indenture, to work without wages for a number of years to pay off the cost of their passage and lodging, after which time they were freed. We were rarely told about others who did not consent and whonever contracted in writing!

Dr. James Rose. DVD. Illus., indexed. $39.99
The WPA conducted thousands of interviews with former African-American slaves between 1937 and 1938. However, few researchers have exploited the genealogical potential of these African-American sources. In this DVD, Dr. Rose discusses ex-slaves who were living throughout the U.S. but were born in Virginia, or who had parents or grandparents born in Virginia.

Jamestown People to 1800. Landowners, Public Officials, Minorities, and Native Leaders
Martha W. McCartney. 556 pp., indexed, paper. $39.95
This volume gives us a detailed look at the people associated with Jamestown from its founding in 1607 to 1800. Based on government records and private archives, it provides historical biographies of Jamestown Island landowners, public officials, Native-American leaders, and African Americans associated with Jamestown. It also covers more than a thousand people who did not own land on Jamestown Island but who inhabited Virginia’s capital city.

Sustainable Genealogy: Separating Fact from Fiction in Family Legends
Richard Hite. 126 pp., illus., paper. $18.95
This work explains how to avoid the traps many family historians fall into, whether it’s a proud family legend, a venerable publication, or the claims of an Internet family tree, the unsubstantiated genealogical source is like a house of sticks before the Big Bad Wolf—it won’t stand up.

QUICKSHEETS! The Historical Biographer’s Series by Elizabeth Shown Mills. 8½” x 11”.
Four-sided laminated folders. Each $8.95

The Historical Biographer’s Guide to Cluster Research (the FAN Principle)
Introduces the concept of “Cluster Research,” based on the FAN principle: to prove identity, origin, and parentage individuals must be studied in the context of their FAN club—family, associates, and neighbors. The true value of any piece of information is unknown until it is put into community context.

The Historical Biographer’s Guide to Finding People in Databases & Indexes
While databases and indexes are valuable tools for research, sometimes they can actually impede the research process. Why—because historical records involve vagaries that defy technical formulas. Databases and indexes then become obstacles that actually block discoveries. This guide shows how to adopt proactive strategies to overcome this problem.

The Historical Biographer’s Guide to the Research Process

The Historical Biographer’s Guide to Individual Problem Analysis. 8½” x 11”, two-sided, laminated sheet. $6.95
Recognizing that solutions to tough research problems require thoughtful analysis, Mrs. Mills has designed a 10-step solution to genealogical problems to help researchers construct a case for their proposed solution. This guide also contains a “Life Stages Worksheet,” covering most life events from birth to death through six specific stages of life.

Postage & handling: One item $5.50; each additional item $2.50. For orders totaling $10.00 or less: one item $4.00; each additional item $2.50. Maryland and Michigan residents please add 6% sales tax.
Fortunately, winter of 2013–14 is nearly history, which only means that spring is right around the corner. Spring is a time for renewal, a time for growth, and FORUM is in the process of changing as I write. Starting with the next issue of FORUM, each issue for 2014 will be related to a theme.

Our first themed issue kicks off with an anniversary, FORUM’s anniversary to be specific. It’s hard to believe, but FORUM has reached a milestone—twenty-five years of serving the genealogical community. Look for articles relating to the history of FORUM throughout the years.

Future themed issues will center on conferences, technology, and records preservation. But, we can’t do this all alone. Be a part of FORUM by submitting an article. Ideas for articles, along with writer’s guidelines, are now available at http://www.fgs.org/upload/files/FORUM_Writers_Guidelines.pdf. Remember, the ideas listed in the guidelines are simply to help get your creative juices flowing. If a theme piques your interest, contact us at forum@fgs.org.

It’s not too late to have your work appear in the conference/society benefits issue. Deadline for queries is 15 April, with full articles due by 16 May. Enjoy!
Federation of Genealogical Societies

FORUM

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FGS Purpose
Founded in 1976, the Federation of Genealogical Societies (FGS) is a nonprofit organization comprised of more than 500 genealogical/historical societies and libraries, ultimately representing more than one million individual genealogists. The Federation actively represents and protects societies, coordinates and facilitates their activities, and monitors events that are critical to the future of genealogy. The Federation aims to serve the needs of member societies, provide products and services to improve organizational management, and marshal the resources and national efforts of historical and genealogical organizations.

FGS Membership
Organizations or societies wishing information on membership or activities of FGS should direct inquiries to

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Visit our website at www.fgs.org. Membership is on a calendar basis from January to December.

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Gramps wasn’t kidding about sweeping Grandma off her feet.

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Three Important Questions

By D. Joshua Taylor, FGS President

With the first few months of 2014 behind us, many are looking for signs of spring after an incredibly harsh winter. Some societies are gradually springing back to life after winter - while others are putting their finishing touches on spring seminar. As our organizations prepare for an onslaught of activities - it is an excellent time to ask a few important questions.

1. What is my society doing differently this year?
   Making adjustments to events and services, based on attendee feedback or delving into a new technology is part of a continued growth pattern for any organization. Whether your society has decided to try out Vine (http://www.vine.com), revitalize its Facebook page, or present a new schedule for your annual seminar there will certainly be a flurry of societies trying something new. I want to personally invite you to share the new successes you see in your society - either through the FGS Voice (voice@fgs.org), FORUM (forum@fgs.org), and especially in person at the FGS 2014 Conference in San Antonio.

2. How will we give back to the community this year?
   We have always been known as a community of volunteers, always willing to share our time, knowledge, and research expertise. With so many priorities facing us in our daily lives, it can be important to reserve a small amount time to give back to local organizations and the larger family history community. Perhaps our society can volunteer to assist with a local heritage event, donate and spread the word about the national Preserve the Pensions Project, or create a free event for our local community to help satisfy the growing curiosity they have about their family history. By giving back, we might find ourselves gaining a few more volunteers and increasing our membership.

3. How will we celebrate our successes?
   Defining success is not always easy for societies. We know that the value of a genealogical society extends beyond the size of their membership and bank account. Please set aside some time to define success and celebrate when it is achieved. Celebrations do not have to be extravagant; they can be a potluck to renew friendships, a gathering at your favorite restaurant, or even a dedicated event where your leaders and volunteers are free to research their own tree.

   The year ahead is an exciting one for family history. We will once again see our favorite pastime on prime-time television, participate in national and regional family history events (in some cases, through online streaming), and each of us will continue to push forward with our own discoveries. My inbox (president@fgs.org) is always open to your thoughts, ideas, and your answers to the three questions raised above.

   Until next time,

Josh

My book, which has over seven hundred of my own sequential illustrations, reveals the style clues that timedate clothes worn by men, women, and children in the nineteenth through twenty-first centuries. Although it is filled with fascinating gems of social history, it can be used like an encyclopedia to match your photograph to a particular time frame.

So it was that Caroline Rober immediately validated my work in progress by saying, “I have bought numerous history of costume books, but none of them tell me what I need to know in a manner I can easily access, absorb and utilize… Your book is so easy to understand, I want to be the first to endorse it!”

Caroline sent me a family picture to decipher for her. It showed two women wearing tailor made suits and big hats: gently shaped midlength jackets with ankle-length, Aline skirts and largebrimmed hats which I dated between 1912–1914.
Here is how I came to that conclusion: Tailormade suits (aka tailor made costumes in England) first became popular in the 1880s. In various proportions and silhouettes, they continued in popularity to the 1920s. By 1909, tailormade suits outnumbered dresses in the Sears Roebuck Catalog.

Suits became mainstays in women’s wardrobes because different shirtwaist styles could change outfits from plain to dressy, as needed. Worn with or without their jackets, suits could span the seasons.

From 1900–1909, suit jackets which fitted over fashionable Scurve corsets, produced the Scurve silhouette (aka the pouter pigeon look). Shirtwaist blouses, which bloused over the tops of waistlines, are primary clues of those years.

After 1909, styles dramatically changed. Paul Poiret, a French designer, had revolutionized women's fashions with a high waisted, natural silhouette and a shorter skirt that showed the ankle: The distortion of corsets was now passé for women. Suits now had gently shaped mid-length jackets; skirts were Aline and shorter, showing the shoe, and hats were larger.

Since suits could be worn for a long time and were expensive, an outfit could be quickly updated for the price of a new hat (or maybe, a remodel of an old hat). No one wanted to be out of style (inspiring the phrase “That's old hat!”). So the best way to date suits in those years is to recognize the changing shapes of millinery; that is how I came to the conclusion that Caroline’s picture was taken sometime between 1912–1914.

Next, Caroline sent me another picture to date for her. This time it was a wonderful example of high style vintage fashion. The woman in the picture was wearing a narrow-skirted gown with a short fitted jacket. Long, upholstery fringe edged the draped apron overskirt which ended in drooping back bows over a mermaid train. Her hair was long in back, narrow at the sides, piled high on top with feathery bangs. This outfit and hairstyle could only have been worn between 1878 and 1883, but the woman thought to be in the picture had died in 1872! That meant the wrong ancestor was being tracked. For a genealogist, this was both disappointing and important to know.

At about this time, I attended a lecture. After a long,
convoluted detective story about how she [the speaker] had deducted the date of the picture shown on the projection screen, which involved tombstone tracings and trips to dusty archives for records, the presenter triumphantly announced the date of the photograph. I didn’t have the heart to tell her she could have dated the picture by the shape of the sleeve caps!

The lecturer went on to show a slide of a woman wearing an enormous picture hat. The picture was cropped at the chest; draperies were behind her. The lecturer deduced that because of the draperies, the picture was taken in one of those newfangled penny arcade photo booths. So, she dated the picture by the introduction of photo booths. I, on the other hand, could tell it was 1914 because of the size of the huge hat. These had reached their peak of exaggeration at that time. Some of them measured 22 inches in diameter. I also thought that the draperies could have been in a living room parlor (a now obsolete word) or a photographer’s studio. The hat was probably too large to enter and wear in a tiny photo cubicle and the camera could not have taken a complete picture of the entire hat at such a short distance.

Too bad the lecturer did not have access to page 235 of my book: She would have seen the same hat illustrated and dated as 1914.

One of my favorite case histories came to me from a reader of my Ancestry Magazine columns (available in online archives of Ancestry Magazine 2008–2010 titled “Out-of-Style”). The picture showed three women, two standing and an older lady who was seated. I could tell by the erect, vertical sleeve caps that the picture was taken between 1888 and 1892 (probably 1890–1892, because the women in the...
picture were not avant-garde fashion types).

After 1892, vertical sleeve caps lowered, widened, and mutated into leg-o’mutton sleeves (developing into their most extreme proportion between 1895 and 1898).

I first saw the photo in question on my computer screen, but unexpectedly it printed out much larger. I now saw that all three women were wearing first phase mourning crepe on their dresses. This meant that someone close to them had died that year. (Refer to the section in chapter 7 of my book, "How to Recognize Mourning Clothes in a Vintage Photograph.")

The older woman, who was seated, was obviously the widow because her skirt was made with a broad band of mourning crepe across it, plus more on her bodice. The other women had dresses made with somewhat less mourning crepe on their sleeves, collars, and skirts.

An entire industry had developed in England for heat crinkling dull black, silk gauze into a rough textured fabric (like exaggerated crêpe paper). The European spelling was English crape. This unexpected information provided the date of death of the husband of the older woman sitting in the center of the picture.

Recently, on the Facebook page of Ancestry.com, I saw a photo of a dress with a long, wide skirt that had a two-tiered, apron overskirt. A soft wide belt ended in a bow in back. It was worn from 1866–1872. This was a transition dress that preceded the bustle. The top tier was later lifted, pulled to the back... VOILA... the birth of the bustle!

It was rumored that the influential fashion designer Englishman Charles Worth, who went to Paris to open the world’s first couture dress salon, saw his laundress pull her top skirt to the back to keep it clean. He was inspired to create the first bustle. (Well, it sounds logical to me!)

In any case, the Ancestry.com Facebook page dated this twotiered dress “from the 1870s,” which could have meant from 1870–1879. How much more informative to a tracking genealogist it would have been to know that it could only have been worn from 1866–1872. I rest my case... histories!

Betty Kreisel Shubert has designed clothes and costumes for stage, screen, TV specials, readytowear, Las Vegas musicals, Disneyland, and much more. She has designed the uniform programs for major cruise lines, race tracks, and for hotels, restaurants and casinos all over the world. As a regular columnist for Ancestry Magazine (2008-2010), she wrote and illustrated a column for genealogists titled “Out-of-Style.” Her book, Out-of-Style A Modern Perspective of How, Why and When Vintage Fashions Evolved, was recently named to the prestigious Kirkus Reviews’ Best Books of 2013 list in the Indie Books category. Visit http://www.OutofStyleTheBook.com for more information. Betty can be contacted at bettyshubert@cox.net.

All illustrations have been excerpted from Out-of-Style: A Modern Perspective of How, Why and When Vintage Fashions Evolved. Copyright 2013 Betty Kreisel Shubert.
Do you find it more and more difficult to find that very unique gift for holiday giving? Let me share with you a wonderful way to share a family memory with loved ones that may or may not shout out “genealogy.” You will need a woodburning tool and a piece of decorative wood. Both items can be found in any craft store. You will also need carbon paper which can be found at an office supply store.

I used a recipe that was in my grandmother’s handwriting that I found in an old church cookbook. The recipe happens to be for a rhubarb pie with a crumb topping that my family
looks forward to each spring. I scanned the recipe into my computer and then imported the image in to a word document. I was able to enlarge the recipe to fit the size of the wood plaque I had purchased. Once the pattern was the right size, I printed it out.

Tape the carbon paper to the plaque so it will not move around. Then tape your pattern to the carbon paper to ensure stability. Using a ball point pen with the tip retracted; trace your pattern on to the plaque. You do not want to press hard as you do not want an indentation in your wood. Once you have traced your pattern, remove the design and the carbon paper. Your design will now be traced on the plaque.

You may want to experiment on a scrap piece of wood first. Using the writing tip that comes with your woodburning tool, heat the tool properly making sure you have a non-flammable surface to work on. I used a cookie tray turned upside down.

Hold the woodburning tool in a comfortable manner and with a fairly light to medium touch, start tracing your design. There will be a slight curl of smoke as you do your tracing. Depending on the size of your design, it will not take too long to finish the project. Be careful not to let the hot tip rest in one spot too long, you want to keep a continual movement. You may also want a damp towel or another scrap of wood to occasionaly ‘clean’ the tip from the resin buildup.

Once your design is fully traced and you are comfortable with the final design, spray your project with a clear Krylon paint to seal the wood and design. Add a hanger to the back of the plaque and you now have a one of a kind heirloom to give as a special gift.
I have always been a seamstress. I learned how to sew in Girl Scouts and am as passionate about it today as I was forty years ago. A few years ago I was thinking and praying about new business ideas around the same time my father-in-law died. My mother-in-law made bears that year for all of us out of his favorite shirts. Once I saw the impact and meaning these bears had to our family, I realized it would also bring meaning into other people’s lives. Voila! Keepsake Threads was born to repurpose clothing, pictures, and documents that people are sentimental about.

Last year, the Allen County Public Library’s (ACPL) Genealogy Center launched an initiative to offer personalized textile products to genealogy enthusiasts. Using our company, Keepsake Threads, the Center has developed an initial product line with ideas for future product launches. This partnership was forged with a shared interest to give genealogy enthusiasts a local textile source for their research. These items can be ordered using the button in the top left-hand corner of the ACPL Genealogy Center’s website, http://www.genealogycenter.org.

These inspiring products will be created using your family tree, your family crest, or cherished family photos. All of these items can be transferred to fabric and incorporated into the finished products. Large custom orders can also be placed that will utilize more complex family trees for an additional charge. In addition, if you have a particular color preference for the fabric and the look of the product, Keepsake Threads will customize your order with your color preference as well.

The initiative was created with the genealogy enthusiast in mind and also to build the ACPL Foundation. A percentage of the sales from this strategy will be directed into the Foundation, which was created in 1984 as a private, nonprofit 501(c) 3 trust to receive, administer, and distribute income exclusively for the charitable and educational purposes of the Allen County Public Library. The Foundation raises private dollars to enhance the library’s acquisitions, innovations, and special projects beyond the capacity of the normal operating budget.

These products were debuted last summer at the FGS conference in Fort Wayne, Indiana. If you have partnership ideas for your society with Keepsake Threads, please contact us Deb McClintock at familytree@keepsakethreads.com.
Madilyn Louise Coen Crane passed away quietly on Sunday, 8 December 2013 at her home in Austin, Texas, after a long and courageous battle with colon cancer. Although born in Brookfield, Missouri, she grew up in Marceline, the boyhood hometown of Walt Disney. She met Disney several times and remembered Marceline with fondness. Madilyn married her husband Roderick “Rod” Crane in Richardson, Texas, and they recently celebrated their thirty-sixth wedding anniversary. In 1981 they welcomed the birth of their only child Michael “Mike.” In 1998 the family moved to Austin.

Madilyn’s love of gardening was exemplified in the Crane’s beautiful backyard, where Madilyn spent many long days planting and pruning hundreds of plants. Her favorite quiet times were sitting in the backyard, throwing a ball to her dogs, and enjoying the beauty of her surroundings. Genealogy was Madilyn’s passion. She served as executive vice president of the Dallas Genealogical Society and editor of the Dallas Quarterly. From 1995 until 2005, Madilyn was the office manager for the Federation of Genealogical Societies (FGS) and received the President’s Citation for her work. During that time, hundreds of people often asked her for help and guidance on their own family research and Madilyn freely gave whatever advice she could. Her knowledge and research skills were respected by many professionals in the field of history and genealogy. In 2000, Madilyn and her husband, Rod, designed and implemented a website for FGS.

Madilyn’s skills in writing and editing led to published articles and books. In 1989 she published a book on her family entitled Our Family History, the Mayes and Kellogg Families of Shelby County, Missouri. In 1999 she co-authored a book called Numbering Your Genealogy: Basic Systems, Complex Families, and International Kin.

Madilyn and her husband enjoyed many trips through the years that included Williamsburg, Maine, Nova Scotia, Italy and several trips to the Pacific Northwest and British Columbia. They also enjoyed walking on the many Texas
countryside paths with their dogs. Friends are invited to visit the Cook-Walden Chapel of the Hills Funeral Home website, http://obits.dignitymemorial.com/dignity-memorial/obituary.aspx?n=Madilyn-Crane&lc=4885&pid=168500302&m id=5766949 and leave photographs, comments, stories, and memories that will ultimately be available in book form for the family.

Madilyn is survived by her husband, Rod, and son Mike.

The family asks that donations be made to the Capital Area Food Bank of Texas, http://www.AustinFood-Bank.org, where Rod and Madilyn donated many hours of their time and money.

Remberances

“It was my good fortune to work with Madilyn Crane for many years on the FGS Board. During that time, I saw first-hand how efficient, how skilled, and how generous she was in helping others. Madilyn loved FGS because she understood the power this organization has for bringing diverse organizations together to accomplish great work. She also had a great deal to do with forming many of the policies and procedures that continue to make FGS the efficient and strong organization it is today. She quietly donated hours of her time and energy to FGS, as well as to other organizations and individuals so that everyone might share the joy of family history research as much as she did. We miss her sweet smile and her caring ways, but the work she did to help others is her lasting legacy.” Loretto “Lou” Szucs

“A lovely person has left us. I remember Madilyn’s warmth and total dedication to her job at FGS. As a member of the FGS Board, I was given the responsibility of overseeing her shortly after she began to work for FGS, and it was obvious to me that she was very competent. Very early in our association I told her ‘Madilyn, I do not plan to micromanage you. You are authorized to make decisions without my approval. As a consequence you will make mistakes from time to time. If you make a mistake we will evaluate it together to determine how to prevent it in the future.’ There was a sense of relief by her from my statement. From that point on, Madilyn ran the office as she felt best, and I do not recall any—there must have been a few—instances where we postmortemed a decision she made.” Gary Mokotoff

“What a privilege to know Madilyn during the time I served on the FGS Board of Directors! She was always well-organized, precise, passionate about quality, and fun! She ran the FGS office with the precision of a well-oiled machine, and would offer to assist in any situation. I have fond memories of shopping at the craft village outside of Salt Lake City a couple of times with her. She always had an eye for quality handmade products.

I always knew that she would have time to talk when I called her and we would share lots of laughs along the way. I will miss her terribly.” Linda McCleary

“I met Madilyn after I was asked to serve on the FGS Board in 1995. At the annual conference, I volunteered to help at the FGS booth and there I met someone who I would love and respect as my dearest friend for the next eighteen years. I loved her professionalism, directness, and attention to details. She always knew the answers and seemed to be at ease with any crisis that occurred. We soon found so much in common that we began researching and traveling together. We met at every conference and shared our genealogy wonderings. Although we lived far apart (she in Texas and I in Florida), we seemed to find ways to always communicate and stay in touch. We rarely went a week or two without talking on the phone to each other. Madilyn had a way of listening better than most anyone I knew and she provided answers that almost always was the right one. She gave so much of herself and I will miss her valuable friendship and support.”

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Greater Omaha Genealogical Society
By Lisa A. Alzo, MFA

We are continuing our new feature where we spotlight one of our FGS member societies. All member societies are eligible and selection will be from a random draw. Please send questions or comments regarding Member Society News to publications@fgs.org.

Our featured society for this issue is the Greater Omaha Genealogical Society (GOGS), located in Omaha, Nebraska. GOGS is a non-profit organization whose purpose is to unite those persons interested in the pursuit and study of genealogy and family history; to encourage the preservation of public and private records; and to promote programs of education which support the growth and development of these fields.

Society meetings are held at 7:00 p.m. on the third Wednesday of each month (except July, August, and December) at the Josie Harper Campus of the Nebraska Methodist College, 720 North 87th Street in Omaha. In August a picnic or other activity is held. In December the Society hosts a Christmas dinner at a local restaurant.

Currently, GOGS is undertaking several different special projects: a cemetery reading; a census microfilm project; indexing obituaries; and compiling a recipe collection. Volunteers are always welcome at the W. Dale Clark Library genealogy room. For more information on these projects, visit http://gogsmembers.wordpress.com/projects.

Like most societies, GOGS actively presents seminars and workshops for its members. Its most recent two-day event featured J.H. Fonkert on 25–26 October 2013. Featuring the theme, How Did They Get Here? Researching Your Ancestors’ Migration Paths, topics discussed included Midwest historical geography for genealogists, following your ancestor’s migration trail, and genealogy detective skills.


Interested individuals can contact the Society at P.O. Box 4011, Omaha, NE 68104-0011, or via e-mail at omahagensoc@gmail.com.
One of my most popular presentations to genealogy societies is on the use of mailing lists, message boards, and other online forums for communicating about genealogy. I usually begin that presentation by asking the audience how many of them have used genealogy forums, and surprisingly (at least to me), few have. Perhaps this is just an area of the online genealogy world that doesn’t get the kinds of publicity often found with the well-marketed genealogy databases.

If it is true that numerous genealogists are new to the idea of participating in an online forum, then this fact poses potential problems for the people whose volunteer job it is to manage the forum, because it means that nearly all forums may frequently experience a large number of newcomers who are unfamiliar with forum culture and with the rules and practices that make forums productive and collegial. (I emphasize “volunteer” as it is my experience that the number of paid genealogy forum administrators would represent only the tiniest percentage of all administrators, assuming that they even exist.)

In this article, I will discuss the issues faced by genealogy forum administrators, and based upon my own experience with administering forums (genealogy and otherwise) stretching back to the 1980s, I’ll offer up some opinions as to best practices for maintaining a smooth running online communication tool.

To begin with, there is no one-size-fits-all solution to managing all genealogy forums. Forums exist for many different purposes, and they may serve more than one purpose at the same time. For instance, they normally exist in order to allow for the exchange of information, and more specifically, they lend themselves to a question-and-answer format. You will see this in the vast majority of forums, where someone is asking a genealogical query, or outlining their brick wall problem, and is hoping others can provide an answer to the query or ideas as to how to get past the brick wall.

However, some forums seem to be more about discussing issues, such as privacy, or copyright, or preservation. Examples of these kinds of forums include a mailing list dedicated to genealogy librarians (a list I’ve administered since I created it in 1996) or one dedicated to professional genealogists (a list I’ve administered for several years). And it could be argued that all genealogy forums (although some more than others) have a socializing purpose, which has to be taken into account by the forum administrator.
In order to facilitate these purposes and to minimize conflict, the administrator will be faced with a number of decisions, limited only by the features available in the forum management software, and by any policies that may be in place by a hosting organization.

For example, can posters be anonymous? This is rarely an issue in most forums and is usually not even possible in a message board, Facebook Group, or Google+ Community. On a mailing list, posters are still linked to an e-mail address, although they may not be required to provide their real name when they post. As a rule, genealogists like to know who they are dealing with, and anonymity would get in the way of that, but I can imagine some exceptions in forums designed to discuss sensitive topics, such as adoption.

Prior to the development of social networking features in modern message boards, which link the poster to an online profile, posters to mailing lists and message boards sometimes choose to automatically “sign” each of their postings with a “signature,” a set of lines that might include a number of ways the poster could be contacted, or a list of all of the surnames and locations the poster was researching (even when they weren’t otherwise mentioned in the query). Unfortunately, these types of signatures (the ones with surnames) can lead to a large number of false hits for those searching mailing list archives and message boards, and it is current practice to strongly discourage them. Another kind of signature that can lead to forum discord is when the signature is of a commercial, religious, or political nature. Again, a best practice is to restrict posters by policy to minimalist signatures, limited to their name (not strictly needed since it usually appears in the message heading in some form), an optional e-mail address, and an optional link to their own website (where they are free to put any content they like).

Commercial content is often abhorred by forum users, so it is best that the forum has a strict policy regarding what advertising, if any, is allowed. There is usually a bit more leeway if an announcement of a commercial product or service is made by someone who has nothing to gain financially from the announcement, but even self-promotion might be permitted under the forum guidelines if certain limits are observed. For example, I administer several forums where the users do want to hear about new genealogical products and services, so for many years I have put into place a compromise policy that allows such announcements if they are not made more often than once every three months by the same vendor. This prevents the forum from being inundated with advertising, but useful information is still communicated.

Many genealogists are unfamiliar with the fact that online content still falls under copyright protection, and copying content from another forum or from somewhere else on the web may be a violation of copyright. One way to avoid this is to encourage posters to post only links to where the copyrighted information may be found. If the material being posted came from a private e-mail message without the author’s permission, privacy rights may be violated, too. Forum policy should require explicit permission before reposting a private message.

Administrators of mailing lists, which may distribute copies of the original message to hundreds if not thousands of list subscribers, have long had to deal with setting a maximum message size. Too many large messages, usually caused by large attached files, can cause some mailing list subscribers to exceed their e-mail quotas, and it is unlikely that more than a tiny percentage of the subscribers will actually want to see the
attached file. It is often best to advise posters not to attach files to mailing list messages, but instead, to post the content online somewhere and then link to it in the mail message.

Forums are normally created to facilitate communicating about a particular topic. The vast majority of mailing lists and message boards are centered on either a surname (with spelling variations) or a place (country, state, county, etc.). Others are intended for discussion of particular record types or specific brands of genealogy software. A few forums, such as the original genealogy list ROOTS-L, have an extremely broad scope when it comes to genealogy. But whatever the scope of the forum, the administrator will have to deal with whether or not a particular posting or thread is within the bounds. With threads, it is entirely possible the original posting was on topic for the forum, but that a series of responses have moved the discussion to off-topic content. A few forums actually allow for off-topic content if the original poster identifies the posting in the subject line as off-topic, but I find this compromise problematic and I would not recommend using it. People usually subscribe to a mailing list, visit a message board, or join a Facebook Group or Google+ Community because they are interested specifically in the content the forum is intended to provide, and off-topic postings are likely to annoy a significant number of posters, even causing some to leave the forum. The administrator will have to decide when to step in and remind forum members to stay on topic.

Forums are subject to the issue of “cross-posting,” where the same message is submitted to multiple forums. If too many forums are involved, this can appear to be a form of spam, and forum users will be quickly annoyed if they have to see the same message multiple times. Another problem caused by cross-posting on mailing lists is when one of the recipients does a “reply all,” responding to all of the lists, even those that the recipient is not subscribed to and therefore not normally allowed to post to. This will cause bounced messages that the list administrator will have to deal with. Because of these problems, it is best to have a policy banning (or at least extremely discouraging) cross-posting between forums.

One problem that surfaces on many different kinds of forums is that posters may post to the forum about some particular technical problem they are having with using the forum (for instance, being unable to unsubscribe to a list), or they may have a problem with something that someone else posted (being off topic or abusive). A forum administrator may need to repeatedly remind posters to contact the administrator(s) directly with these kinds of problems or questions or comments, so as not to clutter up the list with “administrivia” or endless, nasty debates on whether a particular posting was on topic or was abusive to a subscriber.

At some point, a forum user will step over the line and violate a forum rule or guideline. The administrator will need to decide what action to take, depending on the seriousness of the offense, the history of the offender’s actions, and the likelihood of future offenses by the same offender or by others who may think that the behavior is acceptable. For mailing lists, this usually means placing the offender on moderated status, to see if they can participate appropriately going forward. On the downside, this may create added work for the administrator if the offender is a frequent contributor to the forum. Depending upon the personality of the offender, moderation may simply result in the offender leaving the forum, but in such cases, this is probably the best outcome.
for all concerned. Egregious offenders may need to be removed from the forum permanently and banned from all future participation. Fortunately, these situations are rare, at least for most genealogy forums.

To be fair, all genealogy forums should have a posted set of rules and guidelines, and in the case of mailing lists, these should be included as part of the automatic welcome message sent to all new subscribers. In some cases, it might be a good idea to re-post these guidelines to the list from time to time (every month if the list is busy, or at least every year if it isn't), since long-time subscribers may have forgotten some of them. To be honest, one can imagine that these will be skimmed if read at all, but at the very least, an offender cannot legitimately claim that the rules don't exist or weren't made available. Message boards and Facebook Groups have the ability to pin a posting to the top so that it can't be missed, but I recommend keeping these very short (so you don't have to keep scrolling down just to see new content), and where possible, just using the brief pinned post to link to a file that has the full set of rules and guidelines.

Subject lines are an issue for mailing lists and message boards, and posters should be encouraged to keep their subject lines brief but descriptive. Because long threads tend to drift to new topics, remind posters to change the subject line to something more appropriate if the topic has drifted. And in the case of mailing lists, explain appropriate behavior for responding to a message that appeared in a digest, or suggest that subscribers switch from digest mode to individual message mode and use their e-mail software to filter messages to its own folder.

Speaking of replying, another problem occurs when posters quote an entire message when they are replying to only part of it. Remind posters how to quote only the relevant portions of a message when replying.

Now for some general guiding principles: Understand you are not administering a democracy. When it comes to a genealogy forum, you, as administrator, are a benevolent dictator. You can't take a vote for every administrative decision you make, and no matter how you decide, not everyone will be happy. Certainly, you should listen to suggestions and complaints (again, encouraged to be sent to you privately), but you will need to make some tough decisions, and when you do, you are likely to get more compliments than criticisms. You will still need a thick skin to deal with the criticism, but keep in mind that unhappy forum users are always free to go elsewhere and start their own forums.

Finally, things can go wrong quite quickly in a forum. A flame war among posters may break out in the course of only a few minutes or hours. Because of this, it is generally best not to wait when it looks like things might be heading in a bad direction. Of the choice between interceding too early or too late, choose to be too early. Less damage is done that way. As you gain experience in administering a forum, you will develop a feel for how long you can wait to terminate a thread or to admonish a poster, and there will be cases where you can reasonably choose to wait it out and let it all blow over.

Since the 1980s, I have observed many forum administrators in action, and I have found that most of them are very competent and they care about their forum and its users. In some cases, brand-new administrators may make poor choices or find themselves overwhelmed with the task. But that's OK, because we all learn from our mistakes. Depending upon the busyness of the forum, being an administrator can take up a lot of time, and one can easily fall into the trap of trying to administer too many forums. Learn when it is time to give up the reins of control to others, so that the forum will have an administrator who can devote sufficient time. Regardless, being a forum administrator can be a rewarding experience, and if you've got reasonably good communication and technical skills, you may be just the right person to take on the job!

Clan Munro now has a free genealogical database that can be downloaded from our website:
http://www.clanmunrousa.org

The database contains genealogical information on
Monro, Monroe, Munro & Munroe
and septs
Dingwall, Foulis, Fowlis, MacCulloch, McClullich, Vass & Wass

The database consists of the collection amassed by Clan Munro genealogist Allen Alger and the genealogical collection of our late Scottish genealogist R.W. Munro
Family Associations
By Christine Rose, CG, CGL, FASG

The Saffold Family Society is composed of descendants of William Saffold I and Temperance Shore of Virginia and South Carolina. Formed in 1997, the Society’s purpose is to further research into all lines of the Saffold family and to preserve and make available its history to others.

Though family tradition in some branches states the first Saffold in the New World was a small boy found wandering on the docks at Charleston, South Carolina, the Society has conducted some investigation and believes there is substantial evidence that the first Saffold was living as an adult in Virginia and North Carolina long before he went to South Carolina, and that the story of the small boy is a family legend.

The progenitor of the Saffolds, who later lived in the southern United States, was William Saffold I. His marriage to Temperance Shore in the mid-eighteenth century is believed to have occurred in Virginia. William died on 16 October 1784 in the Abbeville District of South Carolina, where there are still Saffolds living today. A second group migrated into the area around Valdosta, Georgia, in Lowndes and Twiggs counties. The third group left for what was still Indian land, the newly opened Mississippi Territory, and

settled in what would later become Alabama, later spreading into Mississippi and Texas.

Though it appears from the Society’s website, https://sites.google.com/a/saffoldfamily.org/www/home, that there have been no additional postings since 2009, nonethe-
less those tracing the Saffold name may find some of the displayed information useful.

The Edmund Rice Association is open to all who are interested in the origins and descendants of Edmund Rice of Sudbury and Marlborough, Massachusetts. The Association publishes a newsletter, the Edmund Rice (1638) Association Newsletter. Recent issues are available at their website, http://www.edmund-rice.org.

The Association has published books that provide accounts of Rice descendants. Older accounts have been augmented with a computer database which includes source citations to a variety of early records. These accounts are available to members.

Descendants of Edmund Rice were holding reunions as early as 1851, but it was not until 1912 that the Association was formed and officers elected. Incorporation under Massachusetts law took place in 1934. The Association sponsors an annual reunion. In 2013 the reunion was held in Marlborough, Massachusetts, where speakers lectured on a variety of topics of interest to family members.

Those interested in learning more about the Association should contact Susan Berger at editor@edmund-rice.org or visit their website, http://www.edmund-rice.org.

**Revisited**

We first visited the John Libby Family Association in our December 1995 column. The Association is still active and continues to publish a newsletter. The most recent reunion was set for September 2013. Their second annual Libby Hill Forest Longest Day of the Year 5K Trail Race and Kids Fun Run was set for a June 2013 evening at the Libby Hill Road in Gray, Maine. Libby descendants can keep up with the activities of this group by visiting their website, http://libbyfamily.org.

The Association exists primarily to continue the genealogical research started by Charles Libby in 1879 into the extended family of John Libby born in England in 1602 and who came to America around 1636. The nonprofit organization is funded by memberships and sales of previously published Libby Family books, as well as the various publications listed on the General Store page of their website. A new book is available about the founding of Scarborough, Maine.

The Association also hosts the annual John Libby Family Reunion in Scarborough, Maine, near the original homestead of John Libby. Their website is the latest addition to their efforts to further the pursuit of knowledge regarding the Libby Family in America. “Like the newsletter, the genealogy committee, and the membership committee; it [the website] is driven by volunteerism and fueled by the enthusiasm and contributions of our members.”

Interested individuals should visit the Association’s website or contact their president, Pat Libbey Davis at pittypatd@aol.com.

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**FGS Forum**

Take the FORUM reader survey!

Click **HERE** and let your voice be heard...
Buying a new car is a difficult task. Once you choose your preferred model, you still have to sift through dozens of add-ons and customization options. It takes some real thought to determine what you want to fit your needs.

Building a blog is like buying a new car. There are expectations and choices. Just like you expect a car to have four wheels and at least two doors, you expect your blogging platform to have a text box and options to add photos and links. However, with the basics aside, there are countless ways to customize cars—and blogs—to get them to do exactly what you want.

The general term for these individual blog add-ons is a “widget.” The term has many definitions, but in the computer world a widget is a small application with a specific purpose. You add widgets to your blog just like you add an optional third-row seat or a sunroof to an SUV. They are not necessary to run the machine, they just make it better.

Blogger and WordPress both utilize widgets though they have different names for them. Weebly does not use widgets but has several add-ons that aid in blog customization. There are so many collective choices that it is impossible to even scratch the surface of options here, but hopefully examining some of the widgets below will get your creative gears going.

**Blogger gadgets**

Blogger has several add-ons that are part of their platform. To see all of them, go to the Overview page or dashboard for your blog and click Layout from the drop-down menu. You should see your blog’s current layout and an option to Add a Gadget. Click on that to see the list of over twenty-five gadgets currently available on Blogger.

One of the more “popular” gadgets allows you to add a list of your most popular posts to your blog sidebar. From a genealogy standpoint, this is a great way to show readers your best work. There is also a gadget for including a roll of your favorite blogs. Societies can use this on their organizational blogs to highlight member bloggers or others that relate to their community. FGS member society the California State Genealogical Society and Library has a member blog roll on the right side of their blog.

Blogger also has a gadget to add a “+1” button to your blog. This is somewhat similar to Facebook’s “like” option, but it also lets blog visitors recommend your content and give your posts a little push in the search results department. Another useful gadget is the Slideshow customization option. This is great for genealogy bloggers to share their ancestors’ photos.

There are also many widgets available that fall outside the Blogger umbrella, but can still be added to your blog. A simple online search of “Blogger widgets” will give you lots of great ideas and options to im-
prove your genealogy blog. One of my favorites is this handy YouTube video on how to add social media icons to Blogger blogs.

**WordPress plug-ins**

Lucky are the bloggers on the WordPress platforms as they have over twenty-six thousand widgets from which to choose. WordPress calls their add-ons plug-ins, and they have a ton of them all searchable on their **Plug-In** page.

JetPack is one of the most popular WordPress plug-ins. It contains many features, including site stats, embedded media abilities, social media integration, and much more. If you search the WordPress Plug-In page, often the results will include JetPack because it contains the widget you are looking for.

Genealogy bloggers write for varying reasons but they have the same issues as other types of bloggers. Comment spam is a problem across the board. Many WordPress bloggers use Akismet to manage comment spam. Captcha is another option, though it is sometimes the bane of reader experience. If you utilize a comment widget, be sure to get feedback from your blog visitors. Otherwise you might be running a blog where no one likes to leave a comment.

Broken Link Checker is another great plug-in for the seasoned blogger. Years of blog posts in your collection include many links. In time, some may no longer work. This plug-in does all the monitoring and notifying so you don't have to manually check your links.

These days it is essential for bloggers to integrate social media into their message. This is true for individual bloggers as well as genealogy societies. The WordPress **Social Media Tabs** plug-in allows you to add tabs to your blog for each of your social media accounts. All the big names are included, like Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, and more.

**Weebly elements**

Weebly does not have traditional widgets, but they do have several elements that allow for blog customization. Look for the **Widgets and Other Content** page of Weebly’s Help section. All of these elements are relevant to genealogy blogs. A search box is handy for allowing visitors to better navigate your site. A calendar is ideal for genealogy society blogs to manage and publicize their events.

Those with more advanced tech skills can utilize Weebly’s **HTML / CSS Editor** to adjust themes or the **Page Types** element to add unique pages. This is a good option for societies that want a website/blog combination.

**Add-Ons in action**

FGS member society the Utah Genealogical Association utilizes several add-ons on their blog, including a scrolling calendar of events located on the right sidebar. Activities include meetings and special events for local societies. It is a nice way to inform readers of genealogy activities in the area.

The St. Louis Genealogical Society’s blog News Flash contains a gadget that allows visitors to subscribe to their group’s blog posts via e-mail. The add-on is positioned prominently at the top of the right sidebar where it can’t be missed by potential members and new readers.

Head over to the Ontario (Canada) Genealogical Society blog to see an example of how they are using a WordPress **Facebook social plug-in** to attract blog visitors to their Facebook page. To see how a “recent post” widget is utilized to feature a blog’s latest articles, check out the **Dallas Genealogical Society** blog.

**The widget world is your oyster**

Think about your blog’s purpose. What does it do now? What do you want it to do for you or your organization? Make a wish list of desired blog features, then search for the widgets to make it happen.

If you don’t know what you are looking for, that’s okay. Study the genealogy blogs of others. Look at their sidebars and see what widgets they have. Notice where they are placed and how they are featured. If you have questions, ask the bloggers. The vast majority are happy to share their experiences and opinions.

“Must have” blog widgets will depend on your subject and purpose. However, most bloggers would benefit from widgets that connect their blogs to other forms of social media. Look for tools that direct readers to all areas of your online presence. Look for tools that allow visitors to stay connected to your blog and be informed when it is updated. Look for tools that highlight your best blog work. Lastly, look for tools that give blog readers a positive online experience with your brand.

When it comes to customizing your blog, the vast widget world is ripe for exploration. If you can envision it, chances are someone’s made a widget for it. Ready, set, search.
AmericanAncestors.org requests the honour of your presence at the marriage of...

Miss Priscilla Mullins & Mr. John Alden

... and more than 35,000 brides & grooms of early New England.

Please join us for the ceremonies:
AmericanAncestors.org/wedding
At the FGS conference held in Fort Wayne, Indiana, Records Preservation and Access Committee (RPAC) members, state liaisons, state genealogy society presidents, and others interested in records access, met for an hour presentation titled, “Strategies for Protecting Access to State Vital Records.” RPAC chair Jan Alpert opened the meeting and introduced the presenters, Jan Meisels Allen, International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies vice president and RPAC member, and Fredrick Moss, JD, LL.M, who is the FGS legal advisor and RPAC member. Several items were discussed and shared:

- What is RPAC, who participates, and how does RPAC respond to threats against access to vital records?
- How the draft 2011 Model Vital Statistics Act may extend the time vital records are closed to the public
- Actions being considered by the European Union (EU) which would limit access to vital records
- A review of several bills pending in the US Congress which would limit or close access to the Social Security Death Index, and
- Learn how you can help protect access to vital records by visiting and writing your state and federal representatives, particularly when they are on session break in August and back in their home districts.

The complete presentation on PowerPoint can be downloaded from the RPAC Publications page at http://www.fgs.org/rpac/publications. Click on the entry, RPACatFGS2013 final (3).

Alpert summarized the 2013 State Legislative Accomplishments, and I have copied her summary below. It can be located on the RPAC blog at http://www.fgs.org/rpac/2013/07/14/2013-state-legislative-accomplishments/.

As the legislative year draws to a close in most states, it is a good time to assess its impact on genealogists. RPAC, member organizations, and concerned genealogists wrote letters to appropriate legislators, committee chairs, and governors. We are pleased to report that when the genealogical community became aware of an issue and responded we had a favorable impact on legislation. Record closures were averted or remained unchanged in several states.

As we reported in March, a working group consisting of state and local vital statistics executives and one lawyer, drafted the 2011 Revision of the Model Vital Statistics Act which extends the closure periods for access to vital records to 125 years after the date of a live birth, 75 years after the date of death, or 100 years after the date of marriage or divorce. You can read the proposed 2011 Model Act at http://www.naphsis.org/about/Documents/FinalMODELAWSeptember72011.pdf.

The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) put the 2011 Revision “on hold” in April 2012. Impatient for its DHHS approval, the National Association for Public Health Statistics and Information Systems endorsed the Model act in 2011. Frustrated by the delay in approval at the federal level, several state vital records officials introduced the 2011 Model Act in their state legislatures.

**Oklahoma** was the first state to approve the revised Model Act, which remained unnoticed until early 2013 when the new procedures for accessing vital records were implemented.

**Washington**: RPAC first heard about the 2011 Model Act being introduced at an administrative committee in Washington State early in 2013. Genealogists immediately became involved and the issue never made it out of the committee.

**Texas**: The 2011 Model Act was introduced in the Texas state legislature. The Texas genealogical community testified against the bill and it again died in committee, in part because the vital records officers were unable to present any compelling reasons to extend the closure dates for accessing vital records.

**Oregon**: The 2011 Model Vital Statistics Act was introduced in Oregon. Although other provisions of
the bill passed, there was no change to the existing vital records closure periods. In the hearings Mitch Greenlick, chair of the House Health Care Committee, commented about the volume of responses against the Act from genealogists.

After the tragic events in Newtown, Connecticut, the Newtown town clerk initiated legislation to close access to death records that have been public and open records since the earliest settlement of the state. Again after testimony by several genealogical organizations and letters from many organizations, including RPAC and the press, the legislation died on the floor. Another bill, which passed at the last minute and mostly impacts the press, authorizes police to withhold crime scene photographs and 911 audio recordings where the individual speaking describes the condition of a homicide victim.

California also had a last-minute trailer bill tacked on to the budget, which would have made the delivery of documents by county and town officials optional. We were not quite sure if this bill included documents for which the requestor paid a fee, such as copies of vital records and deeds, or whether it applied to requests for copies of administrative meeting minutes. The press and genealogy organizations, including RPAC, wrote letters objecting to the legislation. As a result the governor vetoed the bill and a replacement bill was passed and signed without this objectionable provision.

In addition to the above, RPAC also wrote the Governor of Georgia and several of the Georgia Senate and House committee chairs, objecting to the severe cuts to the Georgia Archives budget. As a result of several months of activities by the Georgia Genealogical Society, supported by RPAC, partial funding was restored and the Archives were transferred from the Secretary of State to the Georgia University System.

Action Steps: We expect the 2011 Model Vital Statistics Act to be introduced in many more states in the next legislative sessions. We also need to be alert to the possibility that some of the provisions may be introduced as state regulations. We encourage the presidents of each state genealogical society and APG chapter presidents to visit with the chairman of the House and/or Senate Health Services Committee in their state before any legislation is introduced. Educate them on the importance of family history and especially family health history that requires timely access to death records. Genealogists recognize there are many beneficial reasons to update the Model Act, but the provisions extending the closure periods for access to vital records are not necessary and will have a detrimental effect. To date the Model Act proponents have been unable to present any compelling reasons to extend the closure periods limiting access to vital records.

RPAC would appreciate hearing about the results of any legislative visits at access@fgs.org. Also let RPAC know any way we can help support your efforts.

States
CALIFORNIA: Governor Jerry Brown signed SB 112 that became Chapter 118 of the Statutes of 2013 in August. This law opens the voter registration records after 100 years from the creation of the record. Records microfilmed or digitized prior to 1989 are not affected, i.e. those copied by FamilySearch in the 1970s and on Ancestry are still accessible.

COLORADO: The Pikes Peak Library District (PPLD) Special Collections in Colorado Springs completed the entry of its entire local newspaper card index into the Pikes Peak NewsFinder online index. Members of the Pikes Peak Genealogical Society and the PPLD staff members provided the support and volunteer time on this decade long project. Nearly half a million cards, indexing news stories, obituaries, and other vital records from the Colorado Springs Gazette from 1872–1999 were entered into the database, and are available for use at no charge. The Pikes Peak NewsFinder can be accessed through the PPLD website, http://more.ppld.org:8080/SpecialCollections/Index/article_search.asp.

SOUTH CAROLINA: In July, York County, South Carolina, experienced a tremendous amount of rainfall in one night, which resulted in the flooding of a storage room full of important county documents. Records containing mortgages, property deeds, and old surveys and plats over 100 years old, to as recent as 2009, were among the victims. Fortunately, all of the records can be salvaged, and most have already been digitized.

VIRGINIA: Governor Bob McDonnell announced a partnership between the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) and the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) allowing DMV to issue birth certificates at its customer service centers beginning in March 2014. Starting in January 2015, the Virginia DMV is authorized to issue certified copies of all death, marriage, and divorce records.
RECORDS FROM HOME, ACROSS THE POND AND BEYOND

- Explore our collections from across the United States
- British Newspaper Archives: 400 years of regional and national newspapers from England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland

- Over 1 billion records from overseas, dating from 1200 to the present
- Over 46 million parish baptisms, marriages and burials from across England and Wales dating back to 1538
- Rare and unrivaled Irish specialist records
This work is written in an approachable tone and it would seem likely to appeal to folks whose research efforts are at their starting point. The examples given in the work are drawn from Ms. Schultz’s own research on family history and genealogy. Her suggestions are likely useful to one beginning the journey as a genealogical researcher. To her credit, she makes no suggestion that genealogical endeavors center around instant gratification, making it clear that research does indeed involve both time and effort.

The author makes some assertions that falter, however. In the opening paragraph, in a discussion of genealogy’s popularity, Ms. Schultz writes, “Since the 1970s, Americans have been trying to discover who they are.” (p. 1) Have genealogical researchers been at work only since the 1970s? More precise wording here would be helpful, since Americans have long engaged in genealogical research, though a decided uptick took place in the mid-1970s to be sure.

Imprecisions continue throughout. Very early, the author suggests a sensible, three-fold approach to research: begin with family resources, survey published and Internet materials to determine the work of others, and then “you fill in the remaining gaps in your family’s story by using original records…” (p. 12) Work undertaken in original records, such as birth, marriage, or death records, along with censuses, land records, and other materials is not only to fill in gaps but also to verify the information amassed on a family from published and online resources. Too often, published and Internet-accessed materials are insufficiently source-cited, if they carry any verification at all. Independent verification is more than filling in gaps.

In discussing vital records, over-generalized statements are presented as fact. Of birth records the author writes, “Be aware that doctors and midwives reported births to the record keeper. If no doctor or midwife was present at the birth, there is not likely to be a record.” (p. 38) In the modern context the attending physician verifies and signs a birth record. Over various venues, times, and jurisdictions records will demonstrate a number of informants: doctors, midwives, parents, grandparents and others.

In the same way, death records “will tell you the name of the deceased and the cause of death.” (p. 38) Again, this is normally true, but not universally so—and a cautionary note would be welcome. In a subsequent discussion of the death certificate, information about the right and left sides of the form, and who completed the sections, is shared. Such may have been the case in many jurisdictions for many years. More recently, though, forms have been revised with the identifying data at the top of the form, and the medical cause of death being listed near the bottom of the form. An ill-advised discussion labeling where to find data on a generic form that is not factually accurate, would best be excised or revised.

The author further asserts (p. 41) that marriage records “are seldom found at the state level.” Historically in most American venues, local registrars, such as a county clerk or city clerk, officially recorded the event. In many
states, marriage records are also filed as duplicates with a state’s bureau of vital statistics or its equivalent agency, as early as the first decade of the twentieth century in some places. In the same fashion, on page 44, the author asserts parenthetically that on a marriage license application the contracting parties, if over 21 years of age “are simply allowed to state ‘over 21.'” In certain venues or periods, this may be correct, but it is far from a universal practice or custom.

In discussing probate, the author cites Webster’s Third New International Dictionary. In many parts of the genealogical realm, various editions of Black’s Law Dictionary are seen as the standard for legalisms and terms. A brief discussion of various types of wills is made, including mention of nuncupative wills, defined as “dictated and written by someone else.” (p. 69) While true, a more critical factor, genealogically, is the fact that the will is unsigned by the testator. This may be of crucial import for a researcher.

The author’s discussion of bounty land warrants for the War of 1812 on page 99 is misleading. She notes that bounty lands were available for service in Arkansas, Illinois, Michigan, Louisiana, and Missouri. The Act of 6 May 1812 set aside military tracts or reserves in Arkansas, Michigan, and Illinois; land in Missouri was subsequently substituted for that in Michigan. However, the bounty acts of 1850 and 1855, which granted warrants to soldiers of various rank from the conflict of 1812, permitted holders to claim any land then in the public domain, not only those in designated reserves, nor limited to those states named. The later warrants, available in the textual form at the National Archives in Washington, are currently subject to digitization efforts by the Federation of Genealogical Societies and other organizations.

While considering churches and their records, Ms. Schultz has presented some helpful ideas, but has used terms imprecisely which may lead to confusion. On page 115, she uses the word “denominations” to describe a record-keeping function that is better understood as a responsibility of a “congregation.” Denominations, generally speaking, establish regulations about clergy and churches. Congregations are left to act on those requirements. Accordingly, a denomination may require a parish register be kept, but it is the local congregation, or parish, which creates those records. Membership rolls—specific names and details of individuals and families—are maintained locally; though a congregation’s historical archive may be held by denominational authorities. Summary or aggregate details of a parish or congregation are generally held, even now, only on the denominational level.

Regrettably, the inaccuracies continue. On page 119, the author writes about cemeteries and their records noting, “If a cemetery has an office, you will still be able to pinpoint the location of the burial in the cemetery. Cemetery records also give the interment date and identify who paid for the lot.” Certainly such a claim is true for many cemeteries. It is not, however, universally true, even for all large public cemeteries in major metropolitan areas, and certainly is untrue for any number of smaller cemeteries in other locales—even those with an office.

Ms. Schultz references (p. 212) the second edition of The Complete Idiot’s Guide to Genealogy, listing Christine Rose as its author. Ms. Rose’s co-author, Kay Germain Ingalls, is not mentioned. Such an over-
sight may seem insignificant, but one of the tasks genealogists undertake is the accurate representation of resources and proper credit where it is due. Similarly, on page 207, in considering the Genealogical Proof Standard (GPS), the writer asserts that the Board for Certification of Genealogists “has created a standard for building a credible pedigree.” Use of the GPS is hardly limited to pedigree construction. It is intended for any instance where resolving conflicting evidence or assembling a credible conclusion is the goal. On page 209 in describing the first step in the GPS, she mischaracterizes it as “reasonable and exhaustive” rather than the standard’s “reasonably exhaustive” wording.

This book may be seen as a tool for beginners who have been warned that its suggestions and assertions are not universally accurate, or in other ways missing attention to detail. A second edition to clarify these oversights would be welcomed. Until such revision is made, though, proceed with caution.

David McDonald, DMIN, CG
DeForest, Wisconsin

This is one of those little books that almost all researchers would benefit from reading as it gets us thinking about how names were created and may have changed over time. For Americans this can be a significant issue when dealing with so many immigrants of various nationalities. Who for example would readily spot that Theophilus Taylor, Gotlieb Schneider, and Amadeus Sartor to be one and the same person (p.13)? There can also be an issue as immigrants moved from one colony to another, where pronunciations may have differed.

The book is divided into five chapters: an introduction to the subject, forenames, surnames, toponyms, and a short selected bibliography of legal change of names. The chapters are broken up with bold headings and a simple addition to the table of contents would have made specifics easier to find. There is no index, and a subject index, if not a surname index, would have made searching the book easier.

After reading this book you are likely to remember something relevant to your own research, but will have no easy way of finding it again.

A closer look at the headings in the chapter on surnames will highlight the comprehensive nature of this volume and thus its value. The sections include: maiden surnames; spelling fixation; surname confusion; misinterpretation of letters of surnames; the unaspirated initial letter of surnames; pronunciations; the terminal “G”, nee, alias and genannt; adoption of a step-parent’s surname; military influence on surnames; from English to another language; from one European language to another; the dit name; dialects and minorities; Dutch surnames; abbreviations of surnames; the crossed tail of the letter p; the long S; the female title of Mrs; Idem sonans; translation into English; surname shortening; the letters “R” and “L”; “Ou” and “Wh”; gender and surnames; ethnic clues; statutory changes; district and county court changes of names; multiple independent appearances; Spanish; African American; Jewish; and American Indian surnames.

The book covers a lot of different scenarios with lots of illustrative examples. It may not be perfect,
Every family has stories, and beginners are always told to talk to the older family members to learn the stories and the details about their families. The tendency is to believe the stories, rather than viewing them as clues with facts to be verified. These oral histories are important, as are the “written oral histories” that appeared in the old county history “mug books” that were popular at the turn of the last century, but the modern researcher cannot trust them. The stories need to be confirmed.

What Mr. Hite does is thematically analyze the stories that are often found in families and with lots of examples from his own family, breaks them down to help the reader see how to determine what is true and what is not. Every story has a kernel of truth in it.

The book examines the common story themes: ethnic origins of family names; maiden names of female ancestors; relationship to someone famous; relationship to royalty, nobility or wealth; birthplaces; military service; two or more brothers as immigrants; associations or encounters with famous people, and Native American ancestors. The concluding chapter gives examples of how much misinformation can be crammed into one piece of “written oral history” and there can be many. Each of the chapters is subdivided into short sections, all listed in the table of contents, and appearing as bold headers in the text. This makes it very easy to find a specific theme or thought about a story. This detailed table of contents is valuable for there is no index. When reading a specific chapter, Mr. Hite illustrates the themes with stories from his own family history, which may be early New England or Virginia immigrants, or recent immigrants. One family story may be fully contained under one sub-heading but in some case crosses multiple sub headings.

Stories are common in all families. This book gets the reader to think about and analyze those stories breaking them down into their components. The researcher can then determine how to prove what is or might be fact, and what might be fiction, or a combination from another part of the family. This is an interesting read.

Paul Milner
Park Ridge, Illinois
The West Country of England is defined as the southwest region of England between the Bristol Channel and the English Channel. As with many regions the boundaries are not specific, but for this guidebook it encompasses the counties of Cornwall, Devon, Somerset, and the City of Bristol. The early chapters introduce the reader to the region, its counties, cities, towns and villages, followed by an analysis of population growth within the counties.

The following four chapters examine specific aspects of life within the counties, covering: travel and transport (turnpikes, railways, inland waterways); local government; army and navy history; and occupations (primarily seafaring, agriculture, and mining). The remaining chapters cover the record groups that are typically examined by family researchers: parish registers; nonconformity; education; rich and poor (parish chest, probate, newspapers, etc); and migration. The reality is that all these records and the working lives of our ancestors all form part of a documentary trail, just that some are easier to find and follow than others.

When reading a regional specific guide like this, I am looking for the regional specific details I will not find in the general national research publications. There are parts of the book where that regional emphasis is clearly stated as in sections for: parish record transcripts; nonconformists, etc. But in other places I found myself wanting more references. What is most frustrating is that I know of excellent resources in print and online that did not get mentioned. For example: Devon an important classic history of the county by W.G. Hoskins; A Handbook of Devon Parishes – A Complete Guide for Local and Family Historians by Helen Harris; Allen Buckley’s The Story of Mining in Cornwall; or a copy of the Bibliography of the History of British Metal Mining by R. Burt and P Waite, available online, along with updates on the Mining History Network, http://projects.exeter.ac.uk/mhn/new/bibtoc.html with a section specifically for Cornwall, Devon, and Somerset; or mention of the excellent publications of the Devon and Cornwall Record Society, such as the Exeter Militia List 1803 by W.G. Hoskins, or Exeter Freemen 1266–1967 by Margery Rowe and Andrew M. Jackson.

Overall, I liked the book and it is a good starting point for someone new to researching in the region. However, as an outsider to the area I want a regional guide that is going to point me in the direction of more resources unique or specific to the area, similar to some of the other regional volumes in this series, and in that respect I was left wanting more.

Paul Milner
Park Ridge, Illinois

At some point in their research, many genealogists will need to make the leap across the ocean to track down records in an ancestor’s place of origin. But conducting research in Europe can often be a daunting task, especially for those just starting out. This book helps to make the research process a bit easier.

In 148 pages, Mr. Szabados tackles a broad subject with practical advice and useful examples, giving the reader gentle guidance on how best to track down ancestral birthplaces and the documents needed to do so. The author writes in a friendly, straightforward voice, and includes anecdotes, stories, and visual examples from his own research.

This book is organized into sections instead of chapters. There is a brief introduction, followed by four main “steps.” Step one is “Finding Town Names” and covers the basics of how to track down documents from the “old country,” how to interview relatives, and the documents most likely to contain the name of the immigrant’s hometown. Step 2 is “Learn the History of the Country and Area”—a critical step since many countries experienced border changes (sometimes several times). Step 3 covers “Using Gazetteers and Maps,”—key tools for understanding current and historical geography of a locality. Finally, Step 4 discusses “Finding Ancestor Records” and includes using the Family History Library and FamilySearch databases, tracking down records in the “old country,” dealing with German script and different alphabets, and translating records.

There is an unnumbered section entitled “Desperate Measures” (a pretty accurate description of how to solve brick wall problems!) that covers techniques, such as using genealogy message boards, forums, and online family trees to track down missing clues. However, there is no mention of social media (blogs, Facebook, Twitter, etc.), which many genealogists are using today to locate long-lost relatives and connect with other researchers.

Each section includes a brief summary of key points covered. There are plenty of illustrations—including family photographs, screenshots of family trees, and search screens from databases such as Ancestry.com, FamilySearch.org, FindAGrave, CastleGarden.org, and ethnic-specific databases such as JewishGen. org, and Geneteka. There are some very nice examples of census records, passenger lists, obituaries, naturalization petitions and other key documents needed to track down information about an ancestor. The images are all in black and white, but all of the images are clear, and easy to read, with arrows or lines to highlight key data.

Appendix A includes useful websites and books and Appendix B includes some language helps (German handwriting chart, Polish alphabet, Hungarian alphabet, and Czech alphabet). As a Slovak researcher, I was disappointed that Slovakia is not covered or mentioned at all in this book. The Czech Republic is included, but nothing for Slovakia. I would have liked to have seen at least some Slovak resources noted in Appendix A (for example, the excellent Slovakia & Environs Slovakia Genealogy Research Strategies website by Bill Tarkulich http://iabsi.com/gen/public), and Cisarik.com http://www.cisarik.com/, not to mention the databases available on FamilySearch.org. Also, under the Czech section, the website for the Czechoslovak Genea-
Ms. Gagel worked as a photographic archivist at the Toledo-Lucas County Public Library, responsible for the photographic collections in the local history department. While there she compiled a list of Toledo, Ohio, photographers, searching city directories, city and county histories, and newspapers for information. She expanded that listing to cover any photographer in Ohio. The first edition was compiled before the arrival of the Internet, so the author relied on available hardcopy sources.

Since that first edition, information has been provided by many individuals, including relatives of some of the Ohio photographers. The Internet has greatly expanded the sources readily accessible, such as census returns and digital copies of county histories and newspapers. The result is that the biographical section, arranged alphabetically, usually provides birth and death years, often where they were born, where they set up business, names of children, and possibly quotes about them or their business from a county history or business directory. Some of the biographies are accompanied by photographs of the photographer. The alphabetical directory provides the name of the photographer, the community, and years in which they operated. For some established photographers the book identifies multiple street locations where the businesses operated. These are the two primary sections likely to be the ones used most by researchers.

The book opens with a good historical essay describing how early daguerreotypes were being employed within Ohio, who the key players were, and how that differed in Cincinnati, Cleveland, Dayton, Columbus, and Toledo. What struck me was the itinerant nature of the business both in terms of how frequently the photographers moved around the state, but also in how short lived many of the businesses were. In fact, for many taking daguerreotypes this was a secondary business.

New to this edition is a section on writings by or about Ohio photographers, often describing their personal experiences. This is a fascinating way to get a sense of the life and business practices of a nineteenth century photographer. This is valuable, even if your photographer is not specifically included. This section concludes with images or photographs of the inside and outside of some of the photographic studios. The book includes a bibliography of works consulted, but there is no index.

This is a must for any Ohio or photographic research collection.

Paul Milner
Park Ridge, Illinois

Overall, Szabados does a great job covering a massive and often complex subject in just 148 pages. The easy-to-follow steps are not overwhelming, which is good news for beginning genealogists.

Lisa A. Alzo
Ithaca, New York
Small Midwestern towns grow three kinds of people: those who can't wait to get away, those who never leave, and those who come back. W. William Wimberly II is the third kind. He grew up in Wabash, Wabash County, Indiana, and left. After forty-seven years he returned and wrote this history of the town up to the early 1900s. Perhaps for this reason, his chronicle avoids both extremes: ancestor worship (as seen in turn-of-the-century mug books) on one hand, and scathing rejection (as seen in Sinclair Lewis' fictional Main Street) on the other.

Hanna's Town will be of lasting value to genealogists and historians thanks to its even temper, copious endnotes, and extensive use of contemporary newspaper accounts of the place during the 1800s — information that would be difficult to find without its reference notes.

The book begins with a reflective, somber set-piece envisioning the reburial of pioneers' remains in 1902, including those of founder Hugh Hanna, whose name provided the book's title. The author suggests that 1902 may have marked the high point of the “visible progress, cultural energy, and palpable optimism that [the] town had experienced during the preceding sixty-seven years.”

Otherwise the story proceeds chronologically and then topically as it surveys the late 1800s. The town’s unusually steep topography and distinctive built environment are front and center, along with its enterprising and self-confident leaders. Episodes of vice, murder, and chicanery are not skimped, as they might be in a more conventional self-congratulatory work.

Historians will note limits in how the story was told. The book’s viewpoint is that of the town's successful upper middle class; readers do not see the place through the eyes of Indians, Irish canal workers, or factory stiffs. In 1902, the author notes, “The wilderness had been subdued,” a multiple misstatement that glides over the facts of Native Americans’ lives and forcible removal. As for the relative decline of Wabash and other small towns in the twentieth century, the author’s postscript is wistful but not analytic. Once again it is the town leaders’ viewpoint: a queasy sense of loss, but little understanding of how or when a once vital place became irrelevant to an economy of giant corporations.

Genealogists will note missed opportunities. Hugh Hanna, the town’s founder and the book’s main character, is said to have left “a large amount of property,” according to “official records.” But the only record referenced is not his probate file, but an unpublished and undescribed list of descendants created many years after the fact.

General readers will find no clear image of Wabash’s much-discussed topography in the illustrations. The illustrations themselves are plentiful, but as they are grouped on separate pages, without numbers or references to the text, readers may find it difficult to locate an image of the person or building being described.

Harold Henderson
La Porte, Indiana
There is no shortage of books available to Polish-Americans who have an interest in tracing their ancestry. A good number of these books cover general genealogical research, Polish-American genealogy, or Chicago area research. However, author Jason Kruski noticed there was “no tome written for the Polish-Americans of the Midwest, and specifically, the Chicagoland area. So he wrote one.

In his 116-page guide, Kruski blends genealogical methods with the most contemporary tools available to the genealogist, and specifically how Polish-Americans can use them to trace their ancestry. The book consists of fifteen chapters, covering everything from first steps to specific record groups (census, naturalization, military, vital, and miscellaneous); Chicago and Midwestern resources and records; Polish language and records; DNA and genetic genealogy; and contacting living relatives. There are five appendices: Websites of Interest to Chicago Polish, Tips for Searching Internet Databases, Locations of Interest to Chicago Researchers, Recommended Readings, My Genealogy, and Bibliography and Note on Sources. Kruski states in his introduction that “This book is for the modern genealogist—one who searches extensively via the Internet.” There is certainly plenty coverage of online databases, but Kruski also discusses how to obtain information offline. Kruski also points out that his book “is not an encyclopedia or a textbook,” and does a good job keeping his focus—the vast number of Polish-Americans who proliferate in Chicago and the US Midwest.

That said, however, much of the advice Kruski offers will apply to the majority of US residents of Polish-Catholic origin, who seek to obtain records in Poland. Note that persons of Polish-Jewish/Lithuanian/Ruthenian ancestry are not covered in this book, and that the chronological focal point of the work is the last quarter of the nineteenth and first quarter of the twentieth century (when Polish immigration to the United States was the heaviest).

The chapter on Chicago and Midwestern-specific resources, such as birth, marriage, and death records in Chicago’s Cook County records that did/did not survive the Great Chicago fire, Chicago voter registration records, local property records, coroners’ inquest files, databases on the Polish Genealogical Society of America’s website, http://www.pgsa.org/, and other records unique to the author’s geographical area. In addition, as someone who started in genealogy more than twenty-two years ago, I totally agree with Kruski’s objective to show how much easier the process has become in recent years. Yet, as he candidly points out he says “easier,” not “easy.” This is an important distinction, especially for those beginning their genealogical journey in the age of the Internet.

I was also pleased to see some of the best general resource books about Polish-American genealogy included in the recommended reading section, in particular, Going Home: A Guide to Polish-American Family History Research by Jonathan Shea, of which Kruski writes (and I wholeheartedly agree) “This is the single best book I have read on the subject of personal Polish-American family history research.” This comment does not take away anything from Kruski’s efforts; rather I give him credit for
acknowledging other experts on the subject. Mr. Kruski includes many personal examples of his own research and in Appendix E includes an extensive listing of the Polish surnames on his direct line, as well as places of origins for his family divided by partition. The personal research examples could have been enhanced if the author would have included family photographs, images of sample documents, or search screens. It is often difficult to read only text explaining a search technique or a record. As a visual learner, I like to view images and illustrations of the research process or what useful details a particular record includes. In addition, it would be helpful to the reader if the book had an index. Finally, if there is one thing I could change about this book it would be the typeface used. The font is very small and may prove difficult to read for anyone with visual impairments.

Overall, this book is an excellent resource for anyone of Polish-American heritage, and will be particularly helpful to those whose ancestors settled in Chicago or the Midwest.

Lisa A. Alzo
Ithaca, New York

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