Genealogy Friends News

P.O. Box 860477, Plano, TX, 75086-0477

http:// www.genealogyfriends.org

http://genfriends.blogspot.com/

Email Address: genfriends@genealogyfriends.org Newsletter: Barbara Coakley newsletter@genealogyfriends.org

Saturday Seminars

Mark your calendars now for the exciting Genealogy Friends events in 2011. Meetings are held in the Program Room at the Haggard Library, 2501 Coit Rd., Plano, TX from 10:15 to 12:30:

Today's Topic:

February 19, 2011—"America's New Woman At Work and Play, 1900-1930" by Michelle Nickerson. Michelle teaches US women's, gender, and political history at the University of Texas at Dallas.

Future Topics:

February 26, 2011—Learn N—"Sharing Your Family History on a Weebly Website" by Barbara Coakley and "Online Court Records" by Lynne Darrouzet will be the speakers. LeanN

March 19, 2011—Lynell Moss will introduce us to the new FamilySearch.org.

April 16, 2011—"Using Manuscript Collections in Genealogical Research" by Brenda McClurkin, Archivist, UTA Historical Manuscript Collection.

May 21, 2011—Marilyn Waligore, teaches the History of Photography at UTD. She's going to enlighten us about early photographs. Join us to learn if that image you have of your ancestor is a daguerreotype, an ambrotype, or a tin type.

June 18, 2011—Barbara Brixy Wiley is our speaker. Her topics will be "Curlicues & Chicken Scratch: Reading Yesterday's Handwriting" and "Was Your Grandmother a Relict? What Do Those Old Words Mean?"

July 16, 2011—Our speaker is Tara Carlisle from the University of North Texas. She'll be talking to us about the UNT Digital Libraries and The Portal to Texas History. We have a great resource right here in our own backyard.

August 20, 2011—Need some magic to help with your genealogy research? Ada Nelson's "Research Magic— Showcasing Tools for Genealogists" will be right up your alley. Come learn how Office One Note, Roots Magic, Magic Wand Scanners, iPad, and Skype/Magic Jack can help you conjure up your ancestors.

August 27, 2011—Learn N—topics and speakers will be announced soon

September 17, 2011—Stacy Kemp, the Collin County Clerk will speak to us about records at the County Courthouse.

October 15, 2011—"Y DNA Testing" by Don Raney

November 19-2011—All Day Seminar—Kelvin Meyers will be our speaker.

December 17, 2011—Show and Tell—bring your genealogy treasures and share with the group.

If you have suggestions for programs please submit them to Barbara Coakley at bjc1620@sbcglobal.net.

Publications For Sale

The following are available from Genealogy Friends:

Public Land Survey Systems	$5
Plano Star Courier Index 1904-1910	$20
Plano Star Courier Index 1911-1917	$20
Cemeteries of Collin County, TX	$40
Collin County, TX Voter Registration Index 1867	$20
Place Names of Collin County, TX	$10
Railroads in Collin County, TX	$10
Military Investigations: Red, White & Blue	$10
Colonial Ills, Brews & Concoctions	$10
Library 101: Using Dewey Decimal Sys	$10
Compiled Newsletters with Index	$15

Join Genfriends

Please consider joining Genealogy Friends. The money we raise is used to purchase materials for the Genealogy Section at Haggard Library. Individual memberships are $30 and family memberships are $50. Dues year runs from October 1 to September 31.

Genealogy Friends Logo Shirts

We have logo t-shirts, sweatshirts, Henley's and polo style shirts available. The shirts have a 3" dark green logo printed on the left chest. All shirts are available in toddler through XXXL. T-shirts $15, Long Sleeved T Shirts $18 & Sweatshirts $20 (white, neutral, ash, light blue, pink, yellow and sand) $20.00 Henley's (white, ash or natural) $20.00 Polo Shirts (white, ask or light blue) $20.00.

My Ancestors Life

My Ancestors Life is a website where you can watch videos that depict forgotten life activities. Did your ancestor work in a sawmill, one of the videos shows how the mill worked. www.myancestorslife.com

Genealogy Classes

Are you frustrated with searching for your family on the internet, Collin College (formerly CCCC) is offering a class that can help you research more efficiently—Online Genealogy. Class will be offered from 3/1/2011 to 4/5/2011 on Tuesday nights from 6:30-9:00 pm at the Courtyard Center

The instructor is Barbara Coakley. To register visit the college's web site.

National Conferences

Conferences are a great place to learn, network and shop. The two national conferences are:

NGS—"Where the Past is Still Present" will be held in Charleston, South Carolina 11-14 May, 2011 http://www.ngsgenealogy.org/cs/conference_info

FGS—"Pathways to the Heartland" will be held in Springfield, Illinois 7-10 September, 2011

http://www.fgs.org/2011conference/

Tracing Our Roots Column

The "Tracing Our Roots" column written by Brenda Kellow appears each Sunday in the 'PULSE' or ENTERTAINMENT' section of the Plano Insider newspaper, and in Star Community newspapers throughout North Texas. Her columns are also available in the column archives at http://tracingourroots.weebly.com/

Gen Friends Blog

Gen Friends has a blog where we post information about events, news about the genealogy community, new websites, research tips and much more. We'd really appreciate your feedback on the blog, post comments. You can use Google Reader to watch the blog so whenever new information is posted, you'll be notified so you don't have to remember to visit the blog daily to find out what's happening.

Technology Enables Genealogy

By Barbara Coakley

rootstech

RootsTech, a new conference that focused on using technology for genealogy was held in Salt Lake City, February 10-12th. I was fortunate to be able to attend. As I flew home last night, I realized that I haven't been so excited about genealogy for a long time, and for me that's saying something. RootsTech was held to bring together family history enthusiasts and technologists to discover new solutions for genealogy. The conference sessions focused on technology to enable and further genealogy, genealogy "how to", and problem solving sessions on important topics like genealogy sources and standards.

The main theme of the conference was collaboration and sharing. The main sponsors were FamilySearch, BrightSolid (Find My Past, Genes Reunited and Scotland's People), Ancestry, FGS, Microsoft, Dell, NEHGS, and BYU. I learned about technologies that I can use to enable my research and sharing my family history. Did you ever think about posting a request for a lookup at a courthouse on Twitter, setting up a private Blog to collaborate with other researchers working on a family history project, or watching a how-to video on U Tube about how to use tax records? These are just a few ways that the latest technology can enable your research. The possibilities are growing every day. Moore's law says that technology will double every two years. I thought about the first desktop PC (it ran on DOS, remember that?) that I bought in the late 1980's—it had a 30 mg hard drive and I couldn't believe that I would ever have enough data to fill it up and that 5 1/4" floppy drive was exciting, I could store things on floppy's and trade them with family members. Now my laptop, which is already a year old, has a 450gb hard drive and my new external hard drive is 2TB. They were talking about Petabytes at the conference. 1 PB = 1,000,000,000,000,000 bytes, amazing. I'll share a little bit of what I learned:

Names in Stone

Gateway Mapping is a small company who has developed software to organize and preserve cemetery records. Cemeteries purchase their service and they digitize cemetery maps and store the data from the cemetery books/records in a database. The good part for us is that once the information is ready, it is uploaded to the internet and is available through their website free for family historians—www.namesinstone.com. They do offer a subscription service if you want to save your searches, receive email notices when records you are watching are updated, and a few other premium services which is $39.99 per year.

They currently have over 240 cemeteries on line and are adding more frequently. If your cemetery is available, the search results will not only tell you that your ancestor is buried there but it will show you where the grave is on a map of the cemetery, and how to get to the cemetery. Wait that isn't all, you can upload a picture of the tombstone and information about the ancestor. It get's better. Do you know of a small local cemetery that isn't online? You can contribute by mapping, transcribing and photographing the cemetery and upload the information onto the site. Complete instructions on how to undertake a cemetery project are available on their website. For me this is one step up from Find A Grave. Families are often buried together. Think about being able to not only view your ancestor's grave but see who is buried around them. Cudos to all the groups that walked cemeteries and published books listing the burials but this is a great example of technology taking it a step further—now you can see where the grave is, who is buried around them, and it is available from your own home instead of the only copy being in the local public library that you have to travel hundreds of miles to visit.

Genealogy Blogs

Did you know that there are over 1,500 blogs that focus on family history? They are a great place to find out what's new in the genealogy community, learn how to use that new record you just found, and share information about families. We used to have queries in society newsletters to get our research questions out there, then came forums and mail lists, now we have blogs and wikis. There are two sites that list genealogy blogs—Geneabloggers (www.geneabloggers.com)

Technology Enables Genealogy, continued

(Continued from page 3)

and Genealogy Blog Finder (blogfinder.genealogue.com). Check them out. Look for blogs on the latest genealogy news, the surnames you are researching, the location you are researching, a record you want to learn about, etc.

If you want to keep up with multiple blogs and don't want to have to visit each site every day to see if something new is posted you can use Google Reader. Add a blog to Google Reader and every time something new is posted, it will show up there, that way you only have to visit one site. You can even put a gadget on your iGoogle home page that shows the post. It shows you the headline and you decide if you want to read the article. This is a great time saver and unlike subscribing to multiple mail lists, your email box won't fill up.

Blogs can be public or private. Private blogs are a great tool to collaborate on a project with a fellow researcher or for a committee to plan a family reunion. Use a public blog to post the latest finds in your research, they are included in Google searches, that distant cousin who has the answer to your brick wall might just find you. There are two popular tools you can use to create a blog, Blogger (www.blogger.com) and WordPress (wordpress.org). I found Blogger easier to use, it walks you through setting up your blog. With WordPress, you download software and have to find a hosting site. Why not set up a free account and try it? Not ready to do your own yet, read and comment on other blogs. If you want to start small check out the Gen Friends Blog where we post information about upcoming events. The url is gen-friends.blogspot.com. Please take the time to comment on the posts, it will help us know which events you like and what else you would like to see in future presentations.

Internet Archive

Brewster Kahle, the founder of Internet Archive, was one of the keynote speakers. I knew that Internet Archive had a great collection of digitized books but I had no idea how vast their project goals were. They want to put everything online and make it available to everyone. It sounds like they have a viable strategy and are making impressive progress. Their collections not only include books but documents, photos, movies, audio, television, software and webpages, that's pretty much everything. They have scanning centers all over the world and have everything stored in three places for data redundancy.

The Wayback Machine is over 3 pedabytes of data today. It began in 1996 and stores web pages every two months. Did you realize that the average web page lasts only 100 days before it is changed or deleted. The Wayback Machine stores web pages so that you can go back and find them. Moral of this story, when you find something on a web page, download it. It might be gone the next time you go looking for it. Here is the url—http://www.archive.org/web/web.php Type or paste in the url you are looking for and click Take Me Back.

The text collection of the Internet Archive contains many books including county histories, directories, maps, and family histories. Also, did you know they have the entire US Census Collection—that's right all of them. I found a Post-office directory for 1866 that listed my Great-great grandfather as the postmaster for Burksville, Monroe County, Illinois. This record places my ancestor in a location at a specific point in time and it tells me that he was the postmaster.

They are working on a check out program where libraries can check out digital books to patrons on the Open Library portion of the Internet Archives. This of the possibilities, that reference book in a genealogy collection that wouldn't circulate—well you can now use it online through interlibrary loan. www.archive.org

With the focus on technology, it was refreshing to attend a case study session where it turned out the answer wasn't available on the internet. The problem was to prove the parents of an ancestor. Online we found him on the census, in a death index and in a digitized family history. However, his death certificate was the document that provided the proof of his parents and since he died in Illinois the image wasn't available. Also his obituary was in a newspaper that wasn't available online. However, we did find an email for the local genealogy society. An email request resulted in getting the death certificate and obituary which solved the problem. The internet can help make us more efficient researchers but not everything is online… yet.

I'm already planning on attending next year. RootsTech will be held February 2-4, 2012 at the Salt Palace Convention Center in Salt Lake City. Watch their website rootstech.familysearch.org for more information.

Online Family Trees

By Barbara Coakley

You can upload or enter your family tree on Ancestry.com, MyHeritage, One Great Family, Geni, and many other websites. There are pros and cons to using this function.

Benefits

- Great way to share your information—I've found that by sharing my research with family members they have contributed to our family history. On many of the trees you can add pictures. Once I put my pictures out there and invited my cousins to look at them, they started adding pictures that I didn't have. Some have also contributed family stories. They may not want to help with the research but the pictures and stories add clues and details to the family history.

- Get in touch with others researching the same families—another researcher may have the clue in their branch of the family that will break through your brick wall. It's like the lottery, if you don't buy a ticket you can't win. If you don't post your research interests other people won't know who you are researching.

- Preserve your research—the more places and formats that you store your research in the better the chance that it will survive. Hard drives fail and media changes—the big websites will be backed up so the chances improve that if you loose your copy, theirs will be there.

- Find clues—evaluate the information you find on other people's trees carefully, not all of it is well researched and documented. Treat the information as clues don't assume it's true. Use the information and prove it yourself. I recently found a tree that listed a village in Germany for a family that I didn't have. I had other clues that led me to believe the family was from the area of Kaiserslautern in Bavaria so I was doing a grid search of the church records in the area, but I hadn't found the family yet. There was a tree on Ancestry.com that listed the village of Ramstein. Some of the names and dates for the family members were incorrect and some family members were missing but sure enough the town was correct. A search of the catholic church records for Ramstein resulted in two more generations and lead me to the nearby village of Weilerbach where I found even more family members.

Things to Consider

- Websites change—if you post your tree today, the site may not be there in a number of years so you might have to start over. Choose the site you use carefully.

- Cost—Some of the websites charge to use their services. Compare the sites and their services before you decide where to put your tree.

- People will copy your information and sometimes merge it with other trees that are incorrect. That's true but for me the benefits out weigh this problem.

- Trees are full of incorrect information. True, some are. If I see someone who has a tree with different information than I have, I'll contact them and ask for their sources (assuming they aren't included) and explain that I found something different. Sometimes I hear from them, sometimes not. On some sites you can comment/correct incorrect information—do it.

- Privacy concerns—don't post anything for living family members.

- Data ownership—read the policies for the site you choose to be sure you understand what will be done with your

Online Family Trees, continued

(Continued from page 5)

data.

If you are going to post your tree:

- Check out the site so you make an informed decision.

- Look at the usability of the site, we all have different preferences for user interfaces, choose one that works for you.

- Be sure to include sources and label any information that hasn't been proven yet. With the sources available others will know that your data has been carefully researched and is trustworthy.

- Don't include information on living family members.

There are some things you have to be careful of when you use online family trees, for me the pros definitely trump the cons so I'm building a tree online.

Websites & Tools

FlipPal Mobile Scanner—one of the coolest new "toys" at RootsTech was the Flip Pal. This is a small, battery operated scanner that allows you to copy things anywhere. It is self contained, doesn't need to be connected to a computer. Images are stored on a memory card, like your digital camera. http://flip-pal.com/

Dropbox allows you to sync information between multiple devices and it's saved on their website. You create a dropbox folder on your computer. When you put files in the dropbox folder it makes them accessible anytime where ever you go. You can store up to 2 gig of data without a charge. http://www.dropbox.com/

The Relatively Curious Toolbar puts genealogy websites at your fingertips. http://relativelycurious.ourtoolbar.com

The Archive of Popular American Music covers popular music in the United States from 1790 to the present. The collection includes over 450,000 pieces of sheet music, anthologies, and arrangements. There are also 62,500 recordings. Searching this collection could give you insight to the music your ancestors'

listened to.

http://digital.library.ucla.edu/apam/index.html

Evernote can be used to store notes and keep you organized. You can capture info from a web page or enter note items. The notes are available on your device and the web. You can search by keyword or tag to find your notes.

http://www.evernote.com/about/home.php

The National Genealogy Society Quarterly is full of informative articles on research methodology and sources. NGS has put the index online and access is now free to both members and non-members. If you find an article that interests you , members can access the quarterly online. Non-members can locate the journal in a local library to view the article or purchase back issues on the NGS website http://www.ngsgenealogy.org/cs/ngs_quarterly_archives

The Genealogy Center at the Allen County Public Library has the second largest collection of genealogy materials in the US. They are digitizing records and adding them to their website. Collections aren't limited to Indiana either.

http://www.genealogycenter.org/Databases/FreeDatabases.aspx

Gen Friends Learn-N:

"Online Court Records"
by Lynne Darrouzet

And

"Sharing Your Family History with a Weebly Website"
by Barbara Coakley

Saturday, February 26, 2011
from 10:30am to 12:30pm
W O Haggard Library, 2501 Coit Rd, Plano

Court Records are one of the most underutilized genealogy sources. Learn about these records and how to locate them on the internet.

Weebly provides a quick, easy way to create a website. Putting the results of your research online is a great way to share your hard work with relatives and connect with other researchers.

A $10.00 donation would be appreciated.
Donations are used to purchase materials for the Genealogy section of the Haggard Library.