



Genealogy Friends News

Genealogy Friends of
Plano Libraries

March 2006

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

[http:// www.rootsweb.com/~txgfpl](http://www.rootsweb.com/~txgfpl)

<http://www.geocities.com/genfriendsghl>

<http://www.rootsweb.com/~txcolli3>

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Saturday Seminars, Field Trips & Lock Ins

Mark your calendars now for the exciting Genealogy Friends events in 2006:

April 1, 2006—Field Trip to the Southwest Regional Branch of the National Archives. Look for details in next months newsletters.

April 15, 2006—Dr. Colleen Fitzpatrick, author of *Forensic Genealogy* will discuss what can be achieved by applying the investigative techniques of forensic science to genealogy. Her book will also be for sale at the seminar.

May 20, 2006—Ed Sandbach who works at Warehouse Photographic will talk to us about photographs in genealogy and preservation and care of old photos.

June 17, 2006—Jennifer Pitts will share her knowledge of Adobe Photoshop Elements - learn to perfect, transform, organize and share your photos like a pro.

July 7, 2006—Lock In—Little Used Sources. See the article on page 2.

July 15, 2006—Learn about 19th Century Funeral Customs from Carol Taylor, the head of a genealogy library who has been researching her family history for over thirty years.

August 19, 2006—To be announced

September 16, 2006—All Day Seminar—Lloyd Bockstruck will be speaking on Colonial Topics.

October 21, 2006—Thinking about joining a lineage society? Representatives from the Daughters of the American Revolution, Sons of the American Revolution, Sons of Confederate Veterans, Daughters of the Republic of Texas, Colonial Dames of the 17th Century, and more will tell us about their societies and answer our questions.

October 27, 2006—Lock In—Using Computers in Genealogy. See article on page 2.

November 18, 2006—Richard Preston will talk to us about Migration Patterns.

December 16, 2006—Annual Show and Tell.

2007 Research Retreat to Washington DC

Genealogy Friends will be sponsoring a trip to Washington DC in October 2007. You will have an opportunity to research at the National Archives, Library of Congress and the Daughters of the American Revolution Library. Orientation sessions will be held at each institution. If you are interested please contact Barbara Coakley at bjc1620@sbcglobal.net. More information will be available at a later date.

Genealogy Friends Logo Shirts

Be one of the best-dressed genealogists in town. Order your Gen Friends logo t-shirt or sweatshirt now. The shirts have a 3" logo printed on the left chest. Shirts are available in white, natural, or ash gray with a dark green logo.

T-shirts are \$12.00 for toddler through XL and \$14.00 for XXL and XXXL

Sweatshirts are \$17.00 for toddler through XL and \$19.00 for XXL and XXXL

Collin County Historic Photographs Web Site

Members of GenFriends are contributing photographs of Collin County to the newest Gen Friends web site *Collin County, Texas Past Finders Photo Collection*.

<http://www.rootsweb.com/~txcolli3>. The web site now contains over 3,400 photographs. Categories include Cemeteries,

Churches, Schools, People, Places, and Tombstones. If you would like to contribute photos of Collin County subjects, contact Joy at jfarrgo@comcast.net.

History & Genealogy Web Site

Members of Genealogy Friends are contributing to a new web site—History and Genealogy for the Active Researcher located at <http://www.geocities.com/genfriendsghl>.

The goal is to expand the knowledge of those researching in Collin County and North Texas.

Check out the timeline—a daily calendar of events in Collin County through the years.

Publishing Your Family History

Here is one company who you might want to look into if you are ready to publish:

M.T. Publishing Company

PO Box 6802

Evansville, Indiana 47719-6802

1-888-263-7328

Publications For Sale

The following are available from Genealogy Friends:

NEW 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

Tracing Our Roots Column

The "Tracing Our Roots" column by Brenda Kellow appears in Plano Star Courier, Star Community Newspapers and DFW Community News weekly.

The column and an archives of past columns are also available at <http://www.geocities.com/TracingOurRoots>.

Book Exchange

Genealogy Friends would like to exchange Collin County books with books from other societies.

If you have an area or society you would like us to try and exchange with, please contact Joy Gough at jfarrgo@comcast.net.

Collin County Bits — Deed Research

By Joy Gough

While I was at the Collin County courthouse the other day, I met a man attempting to do deed research. He knew the date of the deed, the name of the person, and the location of the property, but he could not find the deed for a legal description of the property. He had a lot more information than most of us have when we start deed research, but he did not know how to use that information to find what he wanted. Going to the courthouse to do deed research can be quite intimidating.

The courthouse itself is this big official building with numerous offices, none of which say “Deeds.” Where do you go in the courthouse? In Texas the county records are divided between a District Clerk and a County Clerk. The District Clerk has the records pertaining to trials. The County Clerk has land records, deeds, probate, birth, death, marriage, divorce, name changes, maps and a few others. Deed research is done in the County Clerk’s office.

The researcher should know two things right away about deed research.

1. No chronological list of deeds exists. You cannot go to “June 5, 1950,” to find a list of all the deeds written on that date.
2. No alphabetical list of deeds exists. You cannot go to the name “Gough” to find all the deeds written for that surname.

The references for deeds are listed in deed indexes. The County Clerk’s office contains several sets of deed indexes, each for a different time period. For Collin County the first set starts at the beginning of the county, January 1, 1846, and ends on December 31, 1911. The second set goes from 1912 to 1934, and so on to 1974. Collin County deeds from 1974 forward are on the computer.

Collin County, and most other counties, uses 2 indexes, the Direct Index and Reverse Index. Each set of deed indexes contains Direct and Reverse Indexes arranged alphabetically, about 16 volumes. The sellers are listed in the Direct Index, also called the Grantor Index. The buyers are listed in the Reverse Index, also called the Indirect Index or the Grantee Index. Rather than try to remember what a grantor and grantee is, I generally call them the buyer and seller indexes. Every deed should have 2 listings in the indexes, one for the buyer and one for the seller.

Occasionally a county will have one index that includes both the buyers and sellers. A column after the surname will have D or R to indicate what kind of listing it is. Fannin County lists its deeds in one index. The surnames in the indexes are not in alphabetical order. You cannot flip to the name you want. Surnames are grouped together in alphabet ranges, much like Soundex, and then listed chronologically. To find the index page number for the surname you want, you go to the first page of the index. Page 1 of the index references listings for personal deeds; page 2 refers to listings for businesses. The right hand side of Page 1 lists alphabet ranges. Aa - Ab - 2; Ac - Ad -3; Ae - Ag - 4, etc. From this you can see that the surnames Aaron, Abernathy, Abrams, and Abbey are all listed together on page 2 in the index; Ackers, Acuff, Adams, Addison are listed on page 3; Aerd, Aflack, Agnew are on page 4, etc. In the middle of Page 1 of the index surnames have been added that have so many deed listings that they are assigned their own page number.

Just because the surname you are researching is not listed with these names, do not assume that your ancestor did not have any deeds. It just means there are not enough deeds under that name to warrant a separate listing. The reverse is also true. If you look at the alphabetical listing and do not find the surname you want, check to see if there is an individual page number for that surname. It should be noted that there are several page 2s, as many as are needed to list every deed for the surnames in the alphabet range. This can be 2 pages or 5 pages. The listings for the State of Texas can cover 50 actual pages that all have the same page number.

When you find the alphabet range that the surname falls into, go to the referenced page number in the index. There you will find a chronological list of deeds for everyone in that alphabetical range. For the first set of deed indexes, that means the list starts with the deeds for that range that were written about January 1, 1846, and ends with deeds written around December 31, 1911. A listing is one line in the index and should give you the person’s name, the buyer’s or seller’s name (or the grantor’s or grantee’s name), the kind of deed, the volume and page number of the actual deed in the deed books, the date it was written and the date it was filed (these can be years apart), and a brief description of the property. In Collin County the description is usually the name of the survey and the number of acres. Occasionally it is a lot in a city or even a cemetery. The kinds of deeds include warranty deeds, deed transfers, liens, affidavits, land patents, quit claims, and others. The man I met at the courthouse wanted a deed that was written in 1970. That means he had to use the deed indexes to find the volume and page number for the deed.

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Court Records: Important for Knocking Down Brick Walls

By Brenda Kellow, B.A., CG

Few people fail to appear in these important records at one time or another.

Local courts generate and administer the laws of the county. It is also a place that brings the people together. In past times, the quarterly court sessions became a social occasion complete with partying. Even today, on Monday morning many people are brought together to the courthouse for jury duty. There are many other functions of the court such as deed registration, filing of wills and probates, tax payments, and record auditing to name a few. To find your people in court records may not be easy. You may have to dig because indexes and court dockets do not disclose the names of everyone involved within the record.

Probate and guardianship records are among the most important records when searching in person in the court house. Some are on microfilm at the Family History Library, but not always. Case files may include anything from court minutes, receipts, guardianship files, photographs, marriage certificates, and deed copies for all records regarding litigants. The court creates minutes, orders and judgments involving a litigant in order to keep a record of everything regarding each case until its resolution. These loose records, usually produced in writing in the older records, are kept together in a box or file and referred to as case files. In one of these boxes is where I found hundreds of loose papers involving the adult James A. Burns who was a guardian of the court. The details are listed in the case study below.

The sheriff was appointed James' guardian of his property, possessions, and care and schooling of the minor children and the welfare of the widow. The recording of his guardianship began in the first term of the court following James' incarceration and continued until his death. From these records I found out about his medical problem, personal problems, children's names born after the 1870 census was taken, date and place of death, casket cost, burial clothing, and the closing of his records, etc. The only thing missing from this detailed record is the place of burial.

From there I began looking at his intestate estate, which also began in the first term of the court following the death. Because he did not leave a will the court appointed an administrator to disperse James A. Burns' estate. The administrator must follow the letter of the law. Usually a family member is appointed as the administrator, but in James' case a male with the surname Burns was appointed to both administer the estate and be guardian of the minor children and widow. At this time I do not know the relationship between the deceased and the administrator. Normally, the administrator is appointed in the following order: spouse, one of the adult children, parents, grandparents, brothers or sisters, uncles, aunts, nephews, nieces, great-uncles, great aunts, first cousins, creditors or anyone competent and creditable. The administrator must post a bond equal to the assets of the deceased, faithfully perform his/her duties and protect the widow and heirs.

James' inventory of his estate was in the file. He had many books, tools, cattle, horses, swine, linen goods, pewter, beds, etc. The administrator, as did the guardian, followed the common procedure sanctioned by the court, of periodically selling land and animals to support James' family. The court decreed the manner for the personal and financial care of the family.

The administrator presents a written account of all actions to the court for approval. The guardianship of the minor children continues until the females marry or the males become 21. Females were considered adults after they marry regardless of their young age.

Probate case files are more reliable than records such as census records. I hope searching for loose papers in the case files, usually found in the musty basements of old courthouses, becomes a necessary tool for finding and identifying your family members. These are invaluable for their wealth of information as described in the case study below.

Detailed Case Study

What ever happened to James Anderson Burns? He had a lovely wife, fine children, and a nice big productive farm. His wife, Nancy J. (Farmer) Burns, died after the 1880 census. She is buried in the family cemetery with a nice tombstone. For an expla-

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Court Records: Important for Knocking Down Brick Walls

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nation, read on.

Why am I interested in James? My goal is to find three generations of ol' John Burns descendants for a three/four generation genealogy. The purpose of a three/four generation genealogy is to find documented and interesting information on the life of a particular couple, their children, and their grandchildren from when they are in their parents' home, through their adult years until their own deaths. The fourth generation requires only the names of the children in the household of the target's grandchildren's families. When working on a family, I try to collect evidence that gives readers enough information so they feel acquainted with the subject.

I found James in Tennessee and on the 1860 Mississippi census, and the 1870 Texas census. I lost him after that, so I resorted to other records to help get passed this brick wall. Here is what I found.

I read probate minutes including the loose papers, appointment of guardianship, intestate estate files, and inventories in the county where he was living when the 1870 census was taken. These records gave me the entire story of the unexpected events in this man's life from 1877 until five years after his death.

Prior to my research of probate records, I only knew that James was a successful landowner and cattleman. On the 1870 federal census he was a farmer with real estate worth \$5,200 and personal worth of \$6,000. I just don't know what happened to his personal life. He definitely changed. Here is what I found in the Civil and Probate Minutes.

He was declared incompetent in January 1877. The records labeled him an epileptic and an alcoholic. James' choice of beverage was whiskey and gin. Among the receipts, I found he, at least three times, had broken furniture in saloons and hotels and compensation for these acts were paid to the female proprietors. The receipts covering the cost of the broken furniture was in the loose papers. He also was in jail many times after 1877, each stay costing \$40 a day.

The sheriff became his personal guardian, guardian over his holdings, and the care of James' wife and three minor children. In one case the sheriff gave the wife and three minor children money to attend a 'show.' The sheriff, as guardian, sold some of James' land to pay bills for James and his wife and three minor children. These sales happened a couple of times so there would be cash on hand. The sheriff also sold some livestock. A couple of times there were records of paying the drug store for medicine for James and his family, indicating some kind of family illness. James' medicine was mainly 'wizard juice.'

The court ordered wood to be cut and stacked, and on hand for the widow at all times, as was a cow for milk, sheep for wool, etc. It mentioned three minor children by name. In the 1870 census there was no mention of Ben, the youngest and newest child that I found mentioned in the guardianship records. I don't need to research Ben for this project because he is the great-grandson of ol' John Burns.' I only list the names of children in the fourth generation.

By 1879, James A. Burns was referred to as "James Anderson Burns, Inebriate." I had never seen inebriate used in that manner before. On the Civil and Probate Minutes, at the very top of the page was hand written in big letters, "drunkard." His guardian was the sheriff of the county and the sheriff paid many bills for transporting James to jail in the next town.

Finally, he was admitted to an insane asylum. I found all those asylum and jail bills and receipts in these records. The monthly fee for the asylum was only \$25 a month. Quite a difference from the \$40 a day jail costs. His guardian bought him clothes for his stay in the asylum which cost another \$25.

The final account of James A. Burns was in the probate packet where it said he died on 24 June 1879 after an epileptic seizure. All accounts of James were settled by his guardian. James A. Burns and his wife Nancy were both young when they died—both

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Collin County Bits—Cont'd

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He was looking for the name "Cox." He had found it on page 2 of the index in the "C" volume for the 1970 range. The "Cox" heading he had found was for a business. He wanted a person and needed to be on page 1. On page 1 of the index the surnames typed in the middle of the page included Carter, Campbell, Cooper, Carpenter, Culwell, and many others, but there was no listing for the name "Cox." He needed to look at the alphabetical listing. The right-hand side of page 1 of Volume "C" has "Caa to Cad to Cal - 1; Cam - Can - Cap - 3; Car - 5, Cas - Cat - 7, Cau - Cav to Caz - 9, etc., on to Cu - Cz - page 50." "Cox" came under "Cou to Cov to Cow to Coz - 33."

No one named Cox listed on all of the page 33s in the book he was looking in. Was he looking in the right index? Was Mr. Cox the buyer or seller of the property? Mr. Cox was the buyer of the property and he was looking in the seller's index. Remember the Direct Index is the seller's index. The Reverse Index, or Indirect Index, is the buyer's index. When he looked at all of the page 33s in the buyer's index, he found the listing for Mr. Cox, which gave the volume and page number of the deed. Also listed were the seller and the bank that held the mortgage. A look at the microfilm at the deed itself should give a description of the property or should tell where the description is.

Deed research can be very rewarding for the genealogist

2006 Lock Ins

Lock Ins are held at the Gladys Harrington Library. Registration begins at 5:30, the library closes to the public at 6:00. Suggested donation is \$10.00. Pizza, drinks and cookies are served at 7:00 for an additional \$4.00. Lock Ins are a great place to learn in small groups. Participate in classes, get help with a research consultation, or use the resources available to do your own research. A Plano Library Card and Internet Registration are required prior to 5:30 pm to use library computers.

July 7th—Little Used Sources

Classes include Institution and Coroners Records; Using Newspapers for More than Obituaries; Genealogy Journals—They can be useful even if your ancestor isn't mentioned; and Hiring a Professional Researcher.

October 27th—Using Computers in Genealogy

Classes to be determined.

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in their early 40s.

After his death, his administrator was another Burns male first thought to be James' oldest son, J. C. Burns. This is an incorrect assumption since the son by that name would only have been seven years old.

This ending is appropriate. Once we get passed one brick wall, another brick wall appears. Now I must find out what relation J. C. Burns was, if any, to James A. Burns.

The beginning!