



Genealogy Friends News

Genealogy Friends of
Plano Libraries

September 2006

P.O. Box 860477, Plano, TX, 75086-0477
<http://www.rootsweb.com/~txgfpl>
<http://www.geocities.com/genfriendsghl>
<http://www.rootsweb.com/~txcolli3>

Email Address: genfriends@comcast.net

Newsletter: Barbara Coakley bjc1620@sbcglobal.net

Saturday Seminars & Lock Ins

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

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 flyer on page 10.

November 18, 2006—Lynne Darrouzet and Barbara Coakley will speak on Research in New England.

December 16, 2006—Annual Show and Tell.

January 20, 2007—Stephen Butler will speak to us about the US-Mexican War.

February 9, 2007—Barbara Coakley will discuss the Ziebold and Schnaiter Family research that led her to the Family History Tour to Germany.

March 17, 2007—Dr. Adrienne Caughfield will present “True Women and Westward Expansion”

April 21, 2007—All Day Workshop—Topic & Speaker To Be Determined

May 19, 2007—Ed Sandbach will discuss Preserving and Organizing Photos and Vicki Bell will discuss Digital Photography

June 16, 2007—Happi McGirk will speak to us about Writing Your Family History and Creating Digital Heritage Albums

July 13, 2007—Lock In—Regional Research. Sessions will cover research in various parts of the US.

July 21, 2007—Martina Willdecharparro will speak on the Victorian Mourning Culture. Second Speaker TBD

If you have suggestions for programs for 2007 please submit them to Barbara Coakley at bjc1620@sbcglobal.net

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

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 jfargo@comcast.net.

Microfiche Reader for Sale

DuKane Explorer 14 microfilm reader, in good condition, with high, medium, low viewing

Used for indexing projects. \$100.

Phone Brenda Kellow, 972-941-9280, or email

TraceRoots@comcast.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

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. Visit the Plano Insider web site is <http://www.planoinsider.net/> and click on either PULSE or ENTERTAINMENT to read the weekly column. Each column is posted for one week only.

The column and archives are posted at <http://www.geocities.com/TracingOurRoots>.

Decoding Courthouse Records & Indexes

By Brenda Kellow, BA, CG

Happy is the day when the hunter finds the hunted within the treasures of a county courthouse. By so doing, the hunter immediately finds a closeness and a connection that one seldom feels with other finds. Why? Because the record was made during the lifetime of the real, living person. That feeling is comparable with walking on the land of the ancestor, or walking down the road or sidewalk he or she trod on so long ago while seeing the same bugs and breathing the same air the forbearer experienced in the distant past.

Within the records filed inside the dusty courthouse walls you can accurately plot the lives of those who lived long ago. No longer will it be a puzzlement deciding with which office to begin the search or what records might be most useful for today's astute researchers. Finding information in the dusty courthouse records is magical, but the process of finding the right office or record can be a nightmare. Then there are the baffling indexes. Some types of indexes are better for small counties, while others are more practical for large cities. Experienced researchers have encountered many types. Newbies to courthouse research have a guide to using these records and indexes, something experienced researchers did not have when they were just beginning their family history.

The first guide is *Courthouse Research for Family Historians, Your Guide to Genealogical Treasures* by Christine Rose. Inside the 219 pages of this book, Christine Rose interprets each record and untangles the plethora of legalese. It is a book rich with information and case studies for all of the record files.

The local courts generate and administer the laws of the county. During the quarterly court sessions, people are drawn to the county seat for often it was a time for partying. Today, on Monday mornings, courthouses and the adjoining parking lots are packed with people who have been called for jury duty.

The second book, also by Ms. Rose, is *Courthouse Indexes Illustrated*. If you have searched courthouse indexes in the past, you know there are many different indexing systems that lead to the records themselves. This is the only book I have ever found that tackles each index system, explains the system simply, and illustrates what each one looks like. It makes it so simple you will know how to use a specific index in a matter of seconds and alleviate wasting precious research time.

If you recall reading my March 2nd *Tracing Our Roots* column ("Few People Fail to Appear in Court Records" http://www.geocities.com/tracingourroots/2006/mar_02_2006.htm), or the April *Genealogy Friends Newsletter*, about my personal research conducted on James A. Burns, you understand why court records are so important to unlocking your own family history, specially for footloose ancestors who have no intention on making your search for them even a little bit easy!

I am not going to give you a blow-by-blow description of the "Courthouse Research" book, but I do want to give you an overall view of just how it can help you search in county records whether it is in a county courthouse, a town hall, a probate district, or wherever that particular county houses its county records. Finding exactly where they are kept is one of the first things to do on your agenda before you ever leave home. Before I plan on a trip, I first visit <http://>

(Continued on page 4)

Decoding Courthouse Records & Indexes (Cont'd)

(Continued from page 3)

www.usgenweb.com and click on the county in the state of interest. I can usually find whatever I need at this site since it covers almost all the counties. Only the condition and quality of the Website varies. And, always check for a parent county as many counties formed today were taken from one or more much older counties. Also, some cities are independent of the county altogether. Such is the case for the city of Baltimore for instance.

Some US GenWeb sites may contain the indexes to county records such as deeds, deaths, taxes, archives, description of the old and new laws that govern these records, list the hours of operation, give onsite information such as parking, additional repositories, library Web address and email address, and even medium scale lodging. In addition, I check with the Chamber of Commerce for historical background, pertinent weather information, and maps. Often this office has free maps prepared by a local bank which shows churches and cemeteries. Cyndi's List of Genealogy Sites on the Internet, <http://www.cyndislist.com>, has a massive database, but using it these days does take a while to learn to use it quickly and effectively.

The local Family History Center has microform copies of indexes and records. The two books by Christine Rose certainly can be used for searching these records because they are just copies of the originals in the courthouse. Those with Midwestern roots might want to check for records at the Allen County Public Library (ACPL) in Fort Wayne, Indiana, <http://www.acpl.lib.in.us/genealogy/index.html>. The genealogy and local history holdings at ACPL are the largest in the world!

Preparation is the key to successful courthouse research. Remember, the Internet can be used for some of your preparation and research. I never thought so much information would be available online during my lifetime! It is not, however, a substitute for personal onsite examination of all records. Unfortunately, there are still those family historians who believe the Internet has it all. It does not! But, it does offer alternatives and is much greater than I could ever have imagined.

How you pack and what you pack for a successful trip is also important. Pencils are a must because some courthouses and archives only allow pencils and blank paper. Gone are the days when I packed all the necessary books I needed for research and lugged that gut-wrenching suitcase throughout the trip. Today's necessities include my laptop, (I only have laptops these days, and I have three of those that I use, but only one is for trips.) I do have three publications that go with me on trips: Jacobson's *A Field Guide for Genealogists* (Clearfield Company, 2003); *Ancestry's Concise Genealogical Dictionary* (Ancestry, 1989); and my personal *Study Guide for Personal Genealogy Research* (personal, 1992, 2000, 2002). These three little books are tiny, lightweight, and don't take up a lot of room. If I only have a tiny bit of room, then the book the always goes with me is the *Field Guide*, unless it is South Carolina or Alabama. In that case, my *Study Guide* takes precedence.

In addition, I always use my Legacy Family Tree to print out a spreadsheet on the people's vital information I am searching in that county. It names everyone and shows all that I have collected and exactly what I need to collect. Next, I print out my To Do List for that county. I keep that current as I find information or find I have holes in my data. I also pack my Black's Law Dictionary in CD format.

(Continued on page 5)

Decoding Courthouse Records & Indexes (Cont'd)

(Continued from page 4)

Christine's Chapter 2 in the *Courthouse Research* book is terrific in that it lists the records you will find and then explains what will be in those records. This chapter is a must read. As a matter of fact, I am going to add her Courthouse book and the Index book to my list of what I must pack for a research trip.

Subsequent chapters are on civil and criminal courts, property, searching property records, estates, estate documents. She encourages her readers to milk every record for clues that you just might overlook if you have not studied her book. Chapter 8 is just on understanding the court system and the county and state records. Then she goes into identifying all the courts and the legal system. For example: "Ordinary Court, or the Court of Ordinary, Renamed Court of the Probate by states which had such a court." This chapter alone almost replaces the need for my personal study guide.

Her book, *Courthouse Indexes Illustrated*, is an invaluable addition to my personal library. I have never had one tiny little book that so perfectly covers those cantankerous indexes. I believe everyone needs this booklet for their personal collection and to always carry with them on research trips. It certainly will be one of the must have books for future research trips.

These indexes are discussed in *Courthouse Research*, but it does not give as much information on them nor does it have the wonderfully portrayed illustrations of each of the nine plus indexes. Some of them are puzzlers, while others are rather simple. The latter is usually found in smaller, less frequented counties, and the former in more populated areas. There is no longer a fear of missing valuable information just because you encounter an unfamiliar index. In fact, Christine suggests that if you have had trouble with an index in the past, you might need to return to it to give it another try. I certainly agree with that.

The names of the major indexes are: Cott; Russell; Graves; Proceedings Index; Campbell Index; Vowel Index; Stark Index; Devisor/Devisee Index; Traditional index; Hall & McChesney; Grantee/Grantor Index; Bollman's Index; Orphan's Court Index; Town Hall Indexes; Cross Index to Judgments in Civil Actions; Hustings Court Index. From this listing of indexes found in Christine's *Courthouse Indexes Illustrated*, you won't wonder why I don't write anything further on this subject. She covers it all and gives well-done examples of each in the book. So, why should I reinvent the wheel?

As you can see, there are many different kinds of courthouse records, and a equal amount of kinds of indexes, some with subtle clues that just might be missed by the casual researcher. To insure this does not happen to you, these two new publications are a must have for your own personal library. Then, when you are going on a courthouse field trip, just scoop these two books off your shelves and carry them with you on the hunt. Neither are expensive, nor heavy. Certainly on future research trips I will include both the *Courthouse Research for Family Historians* and *Courthouse Indexes Illustrated*.

For under \$30, both of these books can be yours. Each is worth its weight in gold. These are available at some local bookstores, over the Internet through <http://www.Amazon.com>, or from the publisher at <http://christine4rose.com/Rosebooks.html#anchor23364>.

Collin County Bits—John Abston

By Joy Gough

The state of Texas was not created until 70 years after the Declaration of Independence was signed. Many of Collin County's early settlers were the children and grandchildren of veterans of America's early wars - the Revolution and the War of 1812. A handful were veterans of the War of 1812 - Henry Cook, Thomas Finley, and George Washington Smith come to mind. There were others.

Revolutionary War veterans in Texas are very rare. I read somewhere that there are six (6) Revolutionary War veterans buried in the state of Texas. That is amazing in itself since they would have to be close to 80 years old when they moved here. Collin County is special in that one of those Revolutionary War veterans - John Abston - settled in the county. He is the only Revolutionary War veteran buried in North Texas. The cemetery where he is buried carries his name and has a Texas State Historical Marker. A DAR monument marks his grave.

In the eighteenth report of the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution, published in 1914, there is the following story about John Abston:

“Abston, John. Born Jan. 2, 1761; died 1856. Son of Joshua Abston, Captain of Virginia militia; served two years in war of the American Revolution. Enlisted from Pittsylvania County, Virginia; was in Capt. John Ellis Company under Col. Washington. The evening before the battle of King's Mountain, Col. Washington, who was in command of the starving Americans at this point, sent soldiers out to forage for food. At a late hour a steer was driven into camp, milled, and made into a stew. The almost famished soldiers ate the stew without bread and slept the sleep of the just. The next morning they made the gallant charge that won the Battle of King's Mountain, one of the decisive battles of the American Revolution. After the battle Col. Washington went to the place where the steer had been slain, and finding one of the horns, gave it to John Abston, a personal friend, saying “This is the horn of the steer that won the battle of King's Mountain.” Abston took the horn and carried it as a powder horn until the war was over. In later years it was used to call slaves from their work in the fields. The horn is now as hard as flint, the color of gold, and has a polish equal to gold. A grandson owns the rifle and horn and treasures them very highly.”

From the General Services Administration, National Archives and Records Service, Washington D. C.: The Application of John Abston – Bounty Land Claim for service during the American Revolution:

“John Abston, born Jan. 2, 1761, declared that when he entered the service he was residing in Pittsylvania County, Virginia and that his father, Joshua Abston, was a captain in the Virginia Militia...that he volunteered when he was 18 years old...in the latter part of the winter season in 1779 at Jasper Mountain, Pittsylvania County under Captain John Ellis with whom he served but a few weeks...The new enlistees were transferred to the command of Captain Rose at New London, Bedford County where they joined the main army...The troops marched from New London toward Richmond, then turned south and went into North Carolina...that he was in the Battle of King's Mountain...that he was honorably discharged at New London, Bedford County, Virginia in the latter part of 1781 a few months after the surrender of Lord Cornwallis at Yorktown.”

John Abston's father, Captain Joshua Abston, served as an Ensign in the Pittsylvania County Militia 1770-1775. When the colonies severed relations with England early in 1775, the Committee of Safety met in Richmond, Virginia on September 27, 1775 to organize for their defense. Joshua Abston was appointed as a Captain in the Colony of Virginia Militia which position he held until 1781.

Early in the Revolutionary War, the British blockaded our seaports to cut off supplies. Among the items that could

(Continued on page 7)

Colin County Bits—John Abston (Cont'd)

(Continued from page 6)

no longer be imported was salt-petre, a necessary ingredient of gunpowder. John Abston's maternal grandfather, Benjamin Clement, remembered that a mixture of salt and salt-petre had long been used at hog killing time to cure hams and shoulders as they hung from the rafters in the meat houses. Although he was seventy-five years old, the old gentleman dug up the floor of his meat house, boiled the soil, strained the liquid through straw and thus was able to reclaim much needed salt-petre. It is said that he was the first person in the colony to do so with help of a young neighbor. They were able to make fifty pounds of gunpowder each day in the little mill at his home, "Clement Hill". In this way, patriot Benjamin Clement was able to keep those long American rifles firing.

John Abston married Frances Thurman on July 25, 1789 at Chatham, Virginia. They became the parents of two sons, Jesse and Stephen. In the 1830s, after the death of his wife, John Abston sold his holdings in Virginia, and with his son Jesse, Jesse's wife, Sarah, and little daughter, and his son, Stephen, moved to Independence, Jackson County, Missouri. In 1846 he divided his fourteen slaves between his two sons.

At sometime in the early 1850s John Abston and his son, Jesse, converted their bank notes into gold bars, put them safely in a small trunk carried on a wagon pulled by oxen. In 1853 he began his journey to the Texas.

When the family reached the Red River, they found a very turbulent river on the rise following recent heavy rains. With great difficulty, they were able to cross the river and saved all of their possessions, including the gold bars and their faithful slaves.

When they reached the area near present-day Melissa in Collin County, Jesse contracted pneumonia, died, and was buried there in an unmarked grave. The family moved on farther south in Collin County to a site near present-day Lavon. John Abston and his daughter-in-law, Sarah, widow of his son, Jesse, purchased land on January 19, 1854 from Samuel and Susannah Rainer.

John Abston, who died in 1856, is said to be the first person buried in the Abston Cemetery. The Abston (Old Bellew) Cemetery is located one mile north of Lavon on Highway 78. There are thirty seven marked graves in the cemetery. Abston's grave is marked by a granite monument erected by the Richard Royal Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution, in 1913 and by a medallion placed there by the Sons of the American Revolution. The Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution organized in McKinney in 1975 was named the John Abston Chapter in his honor.

John Abston first applied for his Revolutionary War pension July 7, 1855 when he was ninety-eight years old and nearly blind. The affidavit did not comply with the regulations which necessitated his filing a more formal affidavit in February 1857 as follows:

State of Texas:

County of Collin: In Chambers Feb'y 4th AD 1857

On this Fourth day of February AD 1857 personally appeared before me George H. Pegues, Chief Justice and Judge of the County Court of the County and State aforesaid (in vacation) John Abston a resident of the County of Collin and state aforesaid, aged ninety-six years who being duly sworn according to law doth on his oath make the

(Continued on page 8)

Collin County Bits—John Abston (cont'd)

following declaration in order to obtain the benefit of the Act of Congress passed June 7th 1832.

That he entered the service of the United states under the following named officers and served as herein stated: To wit, that he volunteered in the "Army of the United States" in latter part of the winter season in the year AD 1779 at Jasper Mountain, Pittsylvania County, Virginia under Capt. John Ellis whom he served but a few weeks.

The Company then went with Capt. Ellis, and this affiant was transferred to and went under command of Capt. Rose at the Town of London in Bedford County where they formed the main Army. He states that he served under Capt. Ellis and Capt. Rose and some other Captain, whose name he has forgotten, for two years and some few days and was discharged at New London, Bedford County, Virginia on the _____day of _____AD 178_.

He recollects that he was discharged as aforesaid a few months after the surrender of Lord Cornwallis at Yorktown.

That when he entered the service he resided in Pittsylvania County, Virginia, and his father, Joshua Abston, at the time of his enlistment was a Captain in the Virginia Militia.

He states that the troops marched from New London towards Richmond where they turned south and went to North Carolina. He states that he was in the Battle of King's Mountain and was encamped for a short time at Ninety Six.

The only staff officer he now has any recollection of was Col. Washington. That Thomas Smith, Thomas Hancock, and William Stranger volunteered at the same time he did. He states that he has no documentary evidence of his service-his discharge having been destroyed by fire, and he knows of no person whose testimony he can procure who can testify to his service.

He hereby relinquishes every claim whatever to a pension or annuity except the present, and declares that his name is not on the pension roll of any state.

Signed: John Abston by marking X as his mark

Attest: Anthony Bewley

Sworn to and subscribed by the said John Abston the day and year aforesaid. Witness my hand and the seal of said Court, this 4th day of February AD 1857. George H. Pegues, Chief Justice of Collin County, Texas.

N.B. The scrawl below the name and mark of the applicant is the attempt he made at signing his name and his blindness and extreme old age prevented his making it more legible hence the reason for having him make his mark. Geo. H. Pegues, Chief Justice.

His claim for a pension was denied because, at age ninety-six years, he could not present documentary evidence of his service or the testimony of comrades who could state that he was a soldier of the American Revolution.

Web Sites

Free Public Record Finder and Search Systems are two ways to find living people.

<http://freeprf.com/>

<http://www.searchsystems.net/>

Looking for medical terms, check out these web sites:

merksource.com

cancerweb.ncl.ac.uk/omd/

paul_smith.doctors.org.uk/ArchaicMedicalTerms.htm

Looking for occupations:

Olivetreegenealogy.com/misc/

Usgenweb.org/research/occupations.shtml

Freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com/~dav4is/Sources/Occupations.html

Occupations.html

Cpcug.org/user/jlacombe/terms.html

German Research

Users.foxvalley.net/~goertz/faqwpr.html

Www.routes.de/ausimint.html

Members.cox.net/hessen/table.htm

Home.att.net/~wee-monster/engines.html

Missouri County Formation maps

Mymissourigenealogy.com/mo_maps/mo_cm.htm

Illinois County Boundaries

rootsweb.com/~ilcumber/ilctybnd/

In the first person is an index to letters, diaries. Oral histories and personal narratives from more than 2,500 collections of oral history in English from around the world.

Downloadable History of the US Postal Service

Www.usps.com/cpim/ftp/pubs/pub100.pdf

Grave Stone locator for Mid Atlantic states

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

Pennsylvania Obituaries 16 October 1891 to 3 March 1904

www.researchbuzz.org/206/04/state_of_pennsylvania_offers_o.shtml

North Dakota Death Records

<https://secure.apps.state.nd.us/doh/certificates/deathCertSearch.htm>

Missouri Death Certificates

www.sos.mo.gov/archives/resources/deathcertificates/

inGeneas is “dedicated to helping you find your Canadian Roots”.

Ingeneas.com

If you are researching ancestors from Luxembourg check out these web sites:

www.stthomas.edu/libraries/special/bachdunn.htm

[www.igd-leo.le/igd-](http://www.igd-leo.le/igd-leo/onomastics/villages/villages.html)

leo/onomastics/villages/villages.html

rootsweb.com/~luxwgw/research.htm

Website on Coal Mines in PA, MD, OH & VA

www.coalcampusa.com/

Gen Friends Web Sites

Volunteers from Genealogy Friends maintain three web sites to provide information for you:

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 jfargo@comcast.net.

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. There is also a biography of Gladys Harrington.

Genealogy Friends of Plano Libraries Website <http://www.rootsweb.com/~txgfpl>. This page contains information on membership, the calendar of events, copies of past newsletters, etc.

Computers & Genealogy

Friday, October 27, 2006 from 6:00 to 11:00 P.M.
Gladys Harrington Library, 1501 E. 18th Street, Plano



Topics offered for all levels of experience:

- Retouching Photos Using Photoshop Elements – Learn how to use Photoshop Elements to touch up that precious family photo that has been damaged.
- Computer Security – Keep all the work you have done on your family history safe.
- Creating Multi-Media Presentations – Share the information & photos you have collected with relatives using Passage Express.
- Easy Ways to Catalog Your Genealogy Library – Electronically organize your library using either Readerware Software or online at www.librarything.com.
- Using a Digital Camera to Manage the Paper – Use the text feature on a digital camera to take pictures of documents instead of making photocopies.
- Organizing Photos, Creating Slide Shows & Sharing Photos Online – Picasa is a free product that can be used to keep track of and share your photos.
- Private Consultations by appointment between 10:00 and 11:00 p.m.
- Internet Computers – Library Card and authorization required*
- Open Research – Use the vast resources available at the Harrington Library to research your family.

Details:

Check-in at 5:30 P.M. The library closes to the public at 6:00.

Registration is a \$10.00 donation. Option: Pizza, cookie & beverage available for \$4.00. Additional beverages are \$.50 each.

Make checks payable to GenFriends. Pay at the door. Sorry, no credit or debit cards.

For further information contact: GenFriends at genfriends@comcast.net

NOTE: To use the Internet computers, you must have a library card and be authorized by the library prior to 5:30 P.M. on the evening of the lock-in.