



Genealogy Friends News

Genealogy Friends of
Plano Libraries

Genealogy Friends News
October , 2017

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Schedule of Events

Mark your calendars now for the exciting Genealogy Friends events in 2017. Meetings are held in the Program Room at the Haggard Library, 2501 Coit Rd., Plano, TX from 10:15 to 12:30 unless otherwise noted:

Today's Topic:

October 21, 2017—"Microsoft OneNote, An Electronic Research Notebook" by Barbara Coakley

Future Topics

November 15, 2017—DNA Interest Group—6:30 to 7:30 pm

November 18, 2017—"Genealogy Sources" by Susan Kusterbeck from the McKinney Library.

November 18, 2017—Microsoft OneNote User Group—2:30-4 pm, See page 8 for more details

December 16, 2017—Show and Tell

December 20, 2017—DNA Interest Group—6:30 to 7:30

The Legacy Users Group meets the fourth Tuesday of each month, downstairs at Haggard Library from 1:30 to 3:30. There is an after meeting session if you need one on one help. Contact ptxlegacyug@verizon.net

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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
Colonial Ills, Brews & Concoctions	\$10
Library 101: Using Dewey Decimal Sys	\$10
Compiled Newsletters with Index	\$15

Genfriends Membership

Our membership year runs from October 1 to September 30. Individual memberships are \$30 a year and family memberships are \$50. Don't forget to re-new your membership for next year.

The money we raise is used to purchase materials for the Genealogy Section at Haggard Library.

Download the membership form on our website <http://genealogyfriends.org/news/> send it in with payment to

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Funeral Home Records

Records from funeral homes are private business records so their accessibility and content can vary greatly. If you are lucky enough to find a collection of records that includes the funeral of one of your ancestors you might find information about the family in addition to the death place and date, burial place and date, and name of who paid for the funeral. Some also include copies of obituaries for the deceased. As businesses were closed or sold records could have remained in the possession of the owners or destroyed. Don't forget that records could have been transported to locations far from the location of the business by the owners or their descendants. Local genealogy and historical societies, PERSI, WorldCat and NUCMC are a few sources you can check to try and locate records. I was fortunate enough to be able to see the ledger book for the funeral home started by one of my g-g-g grandfathers. The funeral home still bears his name even though it was sold out of the family in the 1970's. If the funeral home is still in business contact them to find out what records they might have and find out if they are willing to share them.

October is Family History Month

What are you doing to celebrate Family History Month? Here are a few suggestions:

- Engage your kids or grandkids. Ideas visit <https://www.familytreemagazine.com/premium/fun-for-the-whole-family/>
- Tackle a family history project. Write a story and publish it on a blog, facebook or a website to share with family members.
- Post pictures on a website like Find a Grave or Billion Graves along with info on some of your ancestors.
- Learn about a record you haven't used in your research before. Check out the wiki on FamilySearch.org.

Tracing Our Roots Column

The Tracing Our Roots column published weekly in the Plano Star Courier (available on the paper's website) and written by Genealogy Friends' member Brenda Kellow, covers a different topic or subject each week.

In addition, Brenda announces national events, fee increases in everyday genealogical records, new records added to the Internet and to genealogists' favorite sites. The past topics are available for several years. Access the site at http://starlocalmedia.com/opinion/blogs/blog_7/. Brenda will add your name to her weekly announcement when her column appears online if you request it by emailing her at bbkellow@verizon.net. You may also request topics for her to cover.

Obituaries Reveal Secrets and Break Through Brick Walls

By Brenda Burns Kellow

I love to root through old newspapers for information on my ancestors. I never know what I might find. Once I was looking for an obituary for my uncle John Thomas Stibbens and found something that opened up a completely new research plans as my aunt had not revealed everything important.

I found Uncle John's obit in the Oklahoma City newspaper. It was a regular obituary giving his full name, date of birth and place, parent's names, wife's name and birth information and his occupation. Next was the seven children's given names and their spouse's names, etc. All was correct except the last child's married name and husband and daughter's name caught my eye. Stop everything! I had only one marriage. This was someone else. Aunt Ruth told me she had only one marriage, and no children. I believed her. I have the marriage record between her and Paul Fondren. However, her name in the newspaper obituary was Ruth Seabolt, Mrs. Dan H. Seabolt. She told me she had only been married once and she was childless. That meant I had more work to do because I had not found everything.

Of course, I began immediately to double check the information. I knew it was not likely to be a mistake, but I had to find the evidence. Searching the court records, I did find she had married Mr. Seabolt in 1934. The birth record search yielded baby girl Beverly who was born in 1936. Wow! Next, I searched for the marriage record to Paul Fondren and found Aunt Ruth married him on December 25, 1939 in Enid, Garfield County, Oklahoma. Beverly was three-years old when she married Mr. Fondren. Aunt Ruth had a prior marriage and a child. What happened to Beverly? There was no death record. I checked the IOOF Catholic Cemetery in Norman where all the family are buried without finding a burial for little Beverly. What happened to her? I am uncovering one mystery after another!

I found a notice of her marriage to Mr. Fondren in the paper but no mention of Beverly. This is a big mystery.

That is when I resorted to interviewing family to uncover the secret. It was not long before I found just the cousin who knew the story and knew exactly where Beverly was. He was in Kansas and told me by phone to contact his sister in Oklahoma City for the full story. He said she had pictures of Aunt Ruth's child, Beverly. He also asked that I contact Beverly and tell her, but I declined. I felt it was not my place.

From the cousin in Oklahoma City, I was able to unravel the mystery completely. One of the pictures I had in my collection of questionable photos was the Oklahoma cousin with Aunt Ruth and baby Beverly. I recognized that picture as one I had. I was never able to place the woman and child. I did not know or suspect the little girl was Aunt Ruth's child. When I talked to the cousin on the phone, she told me Beverly grew up from the age of three with Aunt Ruth's best friend's family. She said Beverly had graduated from high school, college, married, and had children and grandchildren of her own.

Those events in Beverly's life were in the old newspapers. I would not have found them without help because I did not know her surname after Aunt Judy gave her away, or Beverly's married name.

All of this had a good ending. My Kansas City cousin called Beverly a couple of months later at her home in Oklahoma. He told Beverly she was adopted and that I had information and pictures to share if she was interested. Three months passed before Beverly called me. She knew she was adopted. She had found a paper in an attic trunk regarding the adoption, but she did not know her birth mother. Now, she would.

She and my cousin went to visit with Aunt Ruth several times, in her assisted living home. Never once did she admit Beverly was her daughter. She said Beverly was just a niece. How sad.

That mystery began with a newspaper obituary, continued with uncovering several things about my aunt, and finding my newfound cousin, Beverly. She was academically smart and was in the paper several times before her graduation from high school and college. She went to the same college where her biological grandfather had worked. I stopped the newspaper search after I found her well-publicized marriage to another schoolteacher in the community and the birth of her child two years after that. I have talked to her several times and shared the baby pictures of her with her birth mother. It tickles me that I did this through old-fashioned research without having to use DNA at all. Grin!

Oh, you might wonder why Aunt Judy gave up her daughter. The reason was that Uncle John had a character flaw. He did not like Aunt Judy's first husband because he was American Indian. He also did not want a granddaughter that was half American Indian. How sad.

Obituaries Reveal Secrets and Break Through Brick Walls

Are you searching for obituaries in newspapers? Many are on film in libraries and on the Internet. You can even subscribe to Newspapers.com. Newspapers are the source where you may find far more than what you were expecting, as I did. Besides the obvious information, you might find arrival dates in new locations, or the number of years the person lived in the area. The obit may also give names of surviving children, relatives, and where they are living as well as those preceding the person in death. Usually, but not always, the living children are given in birth order. The problem is that it may not explain the birth order position of the deceased and his siblings. Nevertheless, root through those old collections. Before the mid-1940s, obituaries gave in-depth descriptions of death notices. Location of the funeral service and cemetery.

Hunt newspapers nearby where the family lived, but you might find it in other towns where the deceased lived or was reared. Always search the paper published in the county seat because that paper might have reached into all the areas of the county for news. When you find an obituary, I advise you to check for further mention of the deceased on other pages in the newspaper.

You might just find something as big as a never before mentioned husband or child who had been intentionally erased through time—almost. Fortunately, I was able to find a well-kept secret and break through a brick wall by simply reading the entire obituary. Newspapers are priceless.

Delia Brey, A Case Study

Ernst Frederick Brey and his wife Maria Regina Kroener brought their family from Wurttemberg to New York on the ship Cotton Planter, landing on 13 August 1844. The family moved west to St. Louis where Maria died of Typhoid Fever the week of October 25, 1858.

Odilie or Delia as she was known in St. Louis, was six years old when the family arrived in New York. She attended school in St. Louis and then the St. Louis Female Institute where she graduated in June 1854. Delia is listed in the St. Louis City Directories from 1866 to 1877 and she is enumerated on the 1860 and 1870 federal census records in St. Louis. Then the records stopped. There were three options, Delia married and her name changed, she moved out of the St. Louis area or she died.

The answer was, she died. Her broken column tombstone is symbolic of a loved one who passed away prematurely or at a young age. Delia was only 34 when she died. The next question was, how did she die?

The Death Register for the City of St. Louis from 8 May 1877 provided some clues but generated more questions. The cause of death was listed as an Overdose of Chloroform.

Since this sounded like a suspicious death, coroner's records would be a good place to go next. There was an inquest on 9 May 1877. The coroner ruled her death an accident. Delia was found in her bedroom on the third floor of the boarding house located at 2702 Olive Street where she lived at about 6:00 pm. The findings were that she died of an accidental overdose of chloroform which she was using to "allay the pains of a facial neuralgia from which she was suffering at the time."

Since I still had questions, the next stop was the Godfrey Memorial Library website to review newspapers from St. Louis. The first article I found was published in the St. Louis Globe-Democrat, the headlines read, "Was It A Mistake? A Lady School-Teacher Found Dead in Bed. The Peculiar Circumstances Attending the Sad Case." The story described the circumstances of Delia's death—allegedly she took chloroform by mistake for camphor. The son of the owner of the boarding house went to the Kirkbride's drug store for Delia to purchase camphor to treat a neuralgia in the right side of



Delia Brey

her face as the result of a cold. Delia was found in bed with a towel over her face and a small bottle labeled camphor but contained a small quantity of chloroform. Her roommate insisted that there was no chloroform in their rooms, they had searched for some on the previous Sunday to remove a speck of grease from a dress and found none. A search for another bottle of camphor in the rooms was performed and none was found.

The owner of the boarding house insisted that the bottle his son brought back from the drug store contained camphor, not chloroform. He smelled it himself. The druggist kept camphor and chloroform in two different places in his store and chloroform required a prescription which camphor did not. The bottle he showed the reporter which was like the one he filled for Delia did not look like the bottle found near Delia's body.

Delia's funeral was held at the First Presbyterian Church at Fourteenth and Locust streets on May 10th. According to another newspaper article, this is not where Delia attended church but it was chosen because it was more "commodious and central." The church was filled to capacity with relatives, friends, and students. She was a member of the Second Baptist Church. Reverend J V Schofeld of the Fourth Baptist Church presided over the service. After the service, Delia's friends and family passed by to "see the face of the deceased, reposing in a dreamless sleep." Her remains were transported to Bellefontaine Cemetery where she was laid to rest in block 199 lot 182 in a lot purchased by her brother W.L.C. Brey.

Published along with her obituary were resolutions from her students and members of the Executive Committee of the St. Louis Central High School Alumni Association. Delia had been a teacher of languages at the school and a member of the Executive Committee for three years.

The newspaper articles didn't end there, on Sunday, 13 May 1877 a tribute to Delia was published by her friends and students. The article written by a group of her friends dispels any possibility of suicide. These people had been acquainted with Delia for as long as twenty years and found her "conscientious. What she thought wrong she would not do or excuse. What she thought right was done. Added to this was a disposition wonderfully self-controlled under physical suffering; not always from resignation or patience, but from a supreme contempt for weakness in any shape. She suffered a great deal from severe headache, and learned early the control that has been her very nature. The third significant fact was that she did not use narcotics in any shape." The article goes on to say that Delia was afraid of chloroform and was adamantly against its use. They believed that she would have been upset by the publicity her death had caused. The last part of the article caused more questions—"And last, her early life was filled with many sorrows, but the days of her great trials were long since passed, and the future had begun to broaden and brighten for her as it only could for a noble, useful woman, who had lived through and conquered her trials, and had at last no more to lose than gain." The article is signed by eight of her friends by name, the Public School Superintendent, and the teachers of the public schools and seniors of the Central High School.

On 5 June 1877 a notice was posted that Letters of Administration had been granted for Delia's estate to her brother Wm L C Brey. This meant there was a probate file. Fortunately the probate records for the City of St. Louis for 1877 have been digitized and are available on the Secretary of State's website. What I found supported the opinions of Delia's friends, Delia's estate included a house on Sixth Street in Carondelet that she was renting out and certificates of deposit in addition to her personal possessions. Her estate was valued at almost \$2,000. That would be \$635,000 today.

The undertaker listed on the death register was J T Smithers, no records of his business have been found to date.

Based on what has been found to date, Delia was a strong, successful woman who was well respected in her community who had many dedicated friends who were willing to take a stand to protect her reputation. It is a shame that she was taken from them at such a young age. She is a woman that I would have liked to have known.

Since there were multiple newspapers in St. Louis in 1877, next steps to finish this project include trying to locate articles in other papers and the deed for Delia's property.

The next project will definitely be to try to uncover what the events were that were described in the tribute to her as filing her early years with sorrow.



Microsoft OneNote User Group

Genealogy Friends of Plano Libraries is sponsoring a new Special Interest Group—Using Microsoft OneNote for Genealogy. Our goal is to share information about OneNote.



The SIG will meet for the first time on Saturday, November from 2:30-4 downstairs in the Genealogy Section at Haggard Library. Barbara Coakley will be the SIG leader. If there is enough interest we'll meet regularly.

Microsoft OneNote is an electronic notebook. It is a great way to keep your Family History research plans and research notes organized.

Have you ever had trouble finding your research notes from a visit to a repository or from a website? With OneNote you create an electronic notebook with different sections and pages. When you need to find something you can search.

You can access OneNote from different platforms—tablet, pc, laptop, phone. If you store your notebooks in the cloud you can access them from any device.

You can collaborate with other researchers working on the same family by inviting “cousins” to share your notebook. You control who can view and update the notebook.

OneNote is part of Microsoft Office, if you have Office you have OneNote. There is also an app that you can download.

Bring your laptop or tablet and questions about using Microsoft OneNote.

