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JULY/AUGUST 2018

M A G A Z I N E

Solve Ancestor Mysteries

REAL-LIFE CASES!

"I Found My
Sperm Donor
Father With DNA"

PAGE 54

How Genealogists
Help Coroners
Find Next-of-Kin

PAGE 18

38 Old Records
You Won't
Find Online

6 Secrets for
Eastern European
Research



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branchingout 17

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ON THE COVER:

- Get organized! **41**
- "I found my sperm-donor father" **54**
- Genealogists helping coroners **18**
- Records that aren't online **48**
- Eastern European research **24**

COVER PHOTOGRAPHY: AL PARRISH;
COMPOSITE: JULIE BARNETT

18 Open Cases

When someone dies alone, county coroners must track down next of kin to notify—and they're increasingly asking genealogists for help. See how three determined researchers cracked a tough family-finding case.
by Pat Williams

24 Going East

Our expert shares six common obstacles for Eastern European genealogy—and how to overcome them.
by Lisa A. Alzo

33 State Research Guides

Our series helps you trace your ancestors in US states. In this issue:
MAINE 33
by Leslie M. Stroope
NEW MEXICO 37
by David A. Fryxell

41 Top Secrets

Professional genealogists share their 12 top tips for staying organized, catching every clue, and making the most of your research minutes.
by Janine Adams

48 Off the Grid

Some of the best genealogy sources won't be found online. You can make these 38 exciting family history discoveries only in person.
by Shelley K. Bishop

54 Finding Connections

Professional genealogist John Vanek's successful search for his sperm-donor father—and the men's thoughtful navigation through their new relationship—offer inspiration to birth family searchers.
by Sunny Jane Morton



14

everything's relative 5

6 Lisa's Picks

Family history faves from the founder of Genealogy Gems.

by Lisa Louise Cooke

8 Timeline

The history of fences and border walls.

by David A. Fryxell

10 Stories to Tell

A genealogist moves far from his family's hometown—only to discover deep roots in his new city.

by Diane Haddad

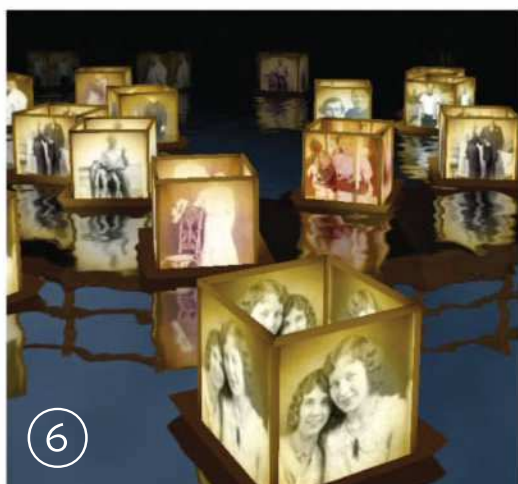
12 Your Turn

Preserve your memories by answering our family history prompt.

14 Family History Home

How to preserve and curate your collection of vacation souvenirs, old and new.

by Denise May Levenick



6

treetips 61

62 Now What?

Researching Catholic nuns and translating old German handwriting.

by David A. Fryxell

64 Document Detective

Finding clues in an old application for a dog license.

by George G. Morgan

65 Tech Toolkit

What's New: Using genetic genealogy to solve crimes, DNA help for adoptees and more by Diane Haddad 65

DNA Q&A by Diahann Southard 67

How To: Sync your mobile photos to Google by Diane Haddad 68

Roundup: DNA tools by Rick Crume 70

Website: Access Genealogy by Diane Haddad 71



65

IN EVERY ISSUE:

Out on a Limb 3

Tree Talk 4

The Rest is History 72

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Family Tree Magazine, published in the United States, is not affiliated with the British *Family Tree Magazine*, with Family Tree Maker software or with Family Tree DNA.

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SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION:

U.S.: 1 (888) 403-9002; international: (386) 246-3364;
familytree@emailcustomerservice.com,
<www.familytreemagazine.com/contact>

Single copies, back issues and shopfamilytree.com:
<shopfamilytree.com>

NEWSSTAND AND INTERNATIONAL DISTRIBUTION:
Curtis Circulation Co., (201) 634-7400

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out on a limb



Family tree research is often compared to detective work. Like actual detectives, genealogists investigate clues in old records, analyze pieces of evidence gathered from different places, and develop a picture of what really happened. I've heard many a family historian say that solving these puzzles is what he or she loves about doing genealogy.

But the comparison is more than just a figure of speech, as you'll see in this *Family Tree Magazine* issue. We'll show you how genealogy is being used in actual detective work. You'll meet three genealogy society members—people a lot like you—who helped locate the relatives of an unclaimed deceased woman (page 18), allowing her family to find peace. And in our news section (page 65), you can read how genetic genealogy was the key to identifying the suspect in the Golden State Killer case in California.

In both cases, investigators employed the same strategies you use as you scrutinize the maybe-tall-tales your grandfather told you, seek out distant cousins and track down the mystery people in your family tree. Their stories might even reveal a few new techniques you can use as you put together your own genealogy puzzles. We'd love for you to share your success stories with us on Facebook <www.facebook.com/familytreemagazine> or by emailing ftmedit@fwmedia.com.

Diane F. Haddad

➤ Read more genealogy news and find research tips on our Genealogy Insider blog <familytreemagazine.com/articles/news-blogs/genealogy_insider>.

TREE TALK

Readers' favorite family finds

JUST GOT MY LATEST ISSUE of *Family Tree Magazine* and I have to say I like the new format. [I] have gotten your magazine for quite a few years now, and just about every issue has something I can use in my family tree research.

David Rice, Norwich, NY

I had a box of photos going back to my great-great-grandmother. Using “Photo Detective” articles and ages in the census, I was able to identify all the pictures.

Marlene Henry Greene, San Jose, Calif.

My older brother and two sisters wanted to name me after my quiet cousin, Karl. I turned out to be a girl, so my name has an “a” added.

Karla Mattson, Spring, Texas

My mother saw “Gone With the Wind” and really enjoyed it. She named me after the characters Bonnie Blue Butler and Belle Watling. I was Bonnie Belle Pooler (now Elsten). *Bonnie Elsten, via email*

ON BEHALF OF EVERYONE at Save Ellis Island, thank you for including the South Side immigrant hospital in the article “Behind the Golden Door” in the May/June *Family Tree Magazine*. I’m enjoying the magazine, particularly Heirloom Hand-off. I’m the owner of many, many sets of family china—including my own, purchased 48 years ago and complete with every piece intact.

Janis Calella, President, Save Ellis Island, Inc.

I STARTED LOOKING through the table of contents [of the May/June issue] and couldn’t quickly find what I was looking for. It took a few minutes to find the cover stories in small print at the bottom of the page. I like some of the changes, but the old way of listing cover stories is better than the new.

David E. Templeton, Duncanville, Texas

Editor’s note: See the bottom of page 1 for the page numbers of our cover stories.

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everything's **relative**



THE COUNTRY'S LONGEST-RUNNING FOURTH OF JULY celebration happens each year in the town of Bristol, RI, whose observation began in 1785 with a "patriotic exercise." That year, a handful of people gathered at the First Congregational Church to hear rousing speeches. Today, a three-week celebration is capped on Independence Day with a parade that draws more than 50,000 from out of town. The tradition is so embedded in local identity that painted red, white and blue stripes replace the yellow highway lines along the parade route. Learn more at <fourthofjulybristolri.com>. ●

Your Genealogy Summer

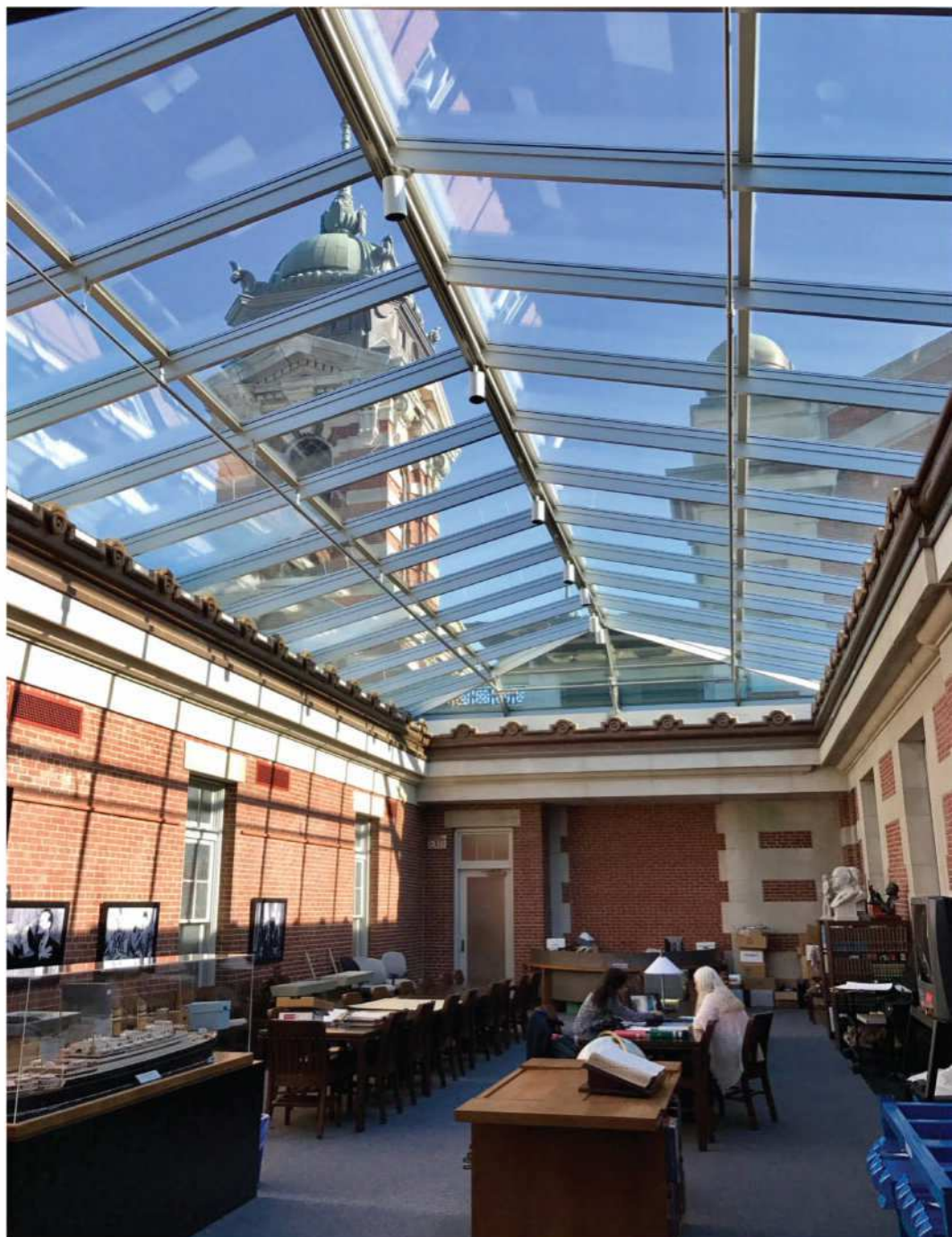
Lisa Louise Cooke shares her favorite family history books, tips, tools and hot spots.

Historic Hotspot ►

On a behind-the-scenes tour of the Ellis Island immigration center, historian Barry Moreno guided me through a brick-walled, skylit space that was once an outdoor garden for detainees. Today it houses the Bob Hope Memorial Library (Hope immigrated in 1908), with 390,000 artifacts and more than 1 million archival records documenting the histories of Liberty and Ellis islands. Learn about the collection at www.nps.gov/elis/learn/historyculture/collections.htm.



Lisa Louise Cooke is the founder of the Genealogy Gems website and podcast lislouisecooke.com, and host of the Family Tree Podcast familytreemagazine.com/podcasts.





Family History in Action

Our ancestors knew how to preserve summer's bounty of fruits and veggies. My grandmother taught me the art of canning and how to cook up her simple syrup, a hot, sweet liquid that enveloped almost every type of fruit. Just combine sugar and water in a pot (one part sugar to 10 parts water for light syrup; one to one for heavy syrup) and heat until the sugar dissolves.

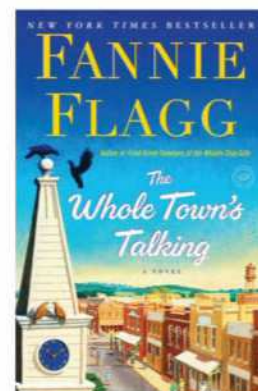
App Obsession ►

Obon is Japan's Festival of Souls, a three-day summer celebration with roots dating back more than 500 years. Locals visit ancestral places, clean graves and on the final evening, guide departed souls to the spirit world with a floating *toro nagashi* ("lantern cruise"). Now, the Toro Nagashi iPhone app lets you create your own flotilla featuring family photos. Watch your lanterns glide under a bridge, accompanied by soothing water sounds.



◀ Podcast

In July, Family Tree Podcast host Lisa Louise Cooke and guests talk about tracing ancestors who were adopted and using DNA in birth family searches. Listen in iTunes or at familytreemagazine.com/podcasts.



▲ Recent Reads

Soak up the warmth of *The Whole Town's Talking* by best-selling author Fannie Flagg (Random House). The tale follows several generations of Swedes in a small Midwestern town, where the "residents" of the cemetery engage in lively commentary about their descendants. This beach blanket read will get you thinking: What might your ancestors be saying about you?

Learning Opportunity

I'll show you how to turn your tablet into a genealogy powerhouse in my Genealogist's iPad Crash Course video class. You'll learn the best techniques and apps for taking your tree on research trips, recording new finds, repairing old photos, and more. Download it instantly from the Family Tree Shop familytreemagazine.com/store/genealogists-ipad-crash-course-download. ●

Mending Fences

"GOOD FENCES MAKE good neighbors," the poet Robert Frost famously opined, but history has sometimes shown otherwise. Even before a US/Mexico border wall became a talking point, some fences were good for keeping "neighbors" out—while others kept people in.

Our word "fence" comes from the Middle English for "defense." Historically, however, fences have been associated more with property: As philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau put it, "The first man who, having fenced in a piece of land, said 'This is mine,' and found people naive enough to believe him, that man was the true founder of civil society." Societies with no notion of private ownership, such as many Native American tribes, had no need for fences. These events are fenceposts, if you will, in the development of border walls and fences.



221 BCE

Emperor Qin Shi Huang orders the Great Wall of China built to protect against northern invaders. Soldiers and convicts do most of the work; many of the 400,000 who died during construction are buried within the wall. The original wall stretched some 3,000 miles westward from the China Sea. The wall as we know it dates from the early Ming Dynasty and spans about 4,500 miles. Contrary to popular lore, it's not visible from space.

0

500

600s BCE

Numa, the second king of Rome, decrees citizens should surround their land with boundary and stone landmarks. These boundaries were dedicated to the god Terminus and celebrated with sacrifices at an annual festival.



122

Romans begin building Hadrian's Wall along the empire's northern extent in Britain. The *Vallum Hadriani* may have been built to keep out Scottish raiders, deter smugglers, or show off Roman might. The stone and turf barrier ran 73 miles from coast to coast, at 11 to 20 feet high and as much as 20 feet wide, with 15 fortifications spaced along it. A ditch, 20 feet wide by 10 feet deep, ran alongside.

600s

The King of Wessex (now southern England) proclaimed that landowners must fence their property. Their zigzag-style fences are called "worm" fences—wooden rails crossed at angles that didn't require driving fenceposts.



David A. Fryxell

is the founding editor of Family Tree Magazine. He now writes and researches his family tree in Tucson.

In the 1940s, the National Park Service built a border fence along Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument in Arizona to keep Mexican cattle away from the delicate ecosystem. In 2004, the fence was upgraded to block vehicle traffic.



1874

Joseph Glidden patents the barbed wire fence, which he created using a coffee mill to twist the barbs. After a bitter patent fight, he became one of the richest men in America. The “devil’s rope” also transformed the Western landscape, where an 1871 government study had declared the lack of fences an obstacle to settlement.

1883

Range wars and drought lead to a rash of fence-cutting in Texas. Armed bands with names such as the Owls and the Blue Devils strike at night, liberating grazing lands from ranchers who’d staked claims with barbed wire. Damage statewide is estimated at \$20 million, leading to a law making fence-cutting a felony punishable by up to five years in prison.

1961

With 2,000 East Germans fleeing to the West every day, Communist authorities install 28 miles of barbed wire through Berlin on the night of August 12. Three days later, the concrete Berlin Wall begins to replace the fencing, topped with more barbed wire, guard towers and machine-gun emplacements. Another wall was built 100 feet away, with a “death strip” between. It ran across neighborhoods, streets and even buildings; one church was isolated between the walls.



1000

1500

1844

Charles Barnard of Norwich, England, adapts cloth-weaving technology to produce metal chain-link fencing. He establishes Barnard, Bishop & Barnards to mass-produce the fencing, which became popular for its relatively low cost and the open weave that lets sunlight through. The Anchor Fence Post Co., established in 1891, bought rights to produce chain-link fencing in America.



1876

Mark Twain’s Tom Sawyer becomes famous for tricking folks into his fence-whitewashing chore. Picket fences got their name around 1690 from the French *piquer*, meaning “to pierce,” a reference to the posts’ pointed ends. Prized for their sturdy and utilitarian design, white picket fences grew popular after the Revolution and later came to symbolize an old-fashioned ideal in an increasingly suburbanized America.

1885

Australia completes the 3,488-mile, wire mesh Dingo Fence to protect sheep in southern Queensland. Later, from 1901 to 1907, a 2,023-mile Rabbit-Proof Fence guards Western Australia against invading bunnies (descendants of 24 wild rabbits Thomas Austin released in 1859, saying they “could do little harm and might provide a touch of home, in addition to a spot of hunting”).

Putting Down Roots



Brent Newton started doing genealogy only after moving away from his Alabama home. He didn't realize he'd actually moved closer to his roots.

A Maryland transplant discovers deep roots in his new home state.

Brent Evan Newton moved to the Washington, DC, area in 2009 for work. He'd been born and raised in Alabama, like generations of his family before him. So when he launched a genealogy search, he expected to find Deep South roots.

His paternal fourth-great-grandparents Rueben Phillips and Rebecca Watkins were among Alabama's earliest settlers. But Newton soon discovered that Rebecca's line traced back to a mere hour's drive from his new home in Maryland. Rebecca's grandfather Evan Watkins, born about 1709 in Talbot County, Md., built Watkins Ferry on the Potomac River. For decades, he escorted passengers between his ferry house at Falling Waters, Va. (now West Virginia), and Williamsport, Md.

"I'd taken my younger daughter to play softball in Williamsport," Newton says. "Little did I know that was where my sixth great-grandfather had operated a ferry across the Potomac nearly three centuries before."

The shallow crossing Watkins selected was strategic in American wars. Gen. George Washington used the ferry in 1755 on his way to Fort Duquesne during the French and Indian War. A lithograph by 19th-century artist David Blythe captures Union Gen. Abner Doubleday's crossing at the site in June 1863—nearly a century after Watkins died—with the small white ferry house at river's edge. That July, Gen. Robert E. Lee's army, defeated in the Battle of Gettysburg, slipped back across the Potomac at the same spot.

Newton visited the ferry house, now designated a historical landmark, with his family in 2014. At the Berkeley County, WV, historical society, he found a copy of the original land grant for the property. It bore the signature of Lord Fairfax, the namesake of Fairfax County, Va.

The 2012 death of Newton's father, Wesley Phillips Newton, inspired the younger Newton to start his ancestor search. A WWII veteran and military history professor, the older man never knew he was named after his Alabama settler forbear. He thought someone made a mistake while typing "Phillip" on his birth certificate.

"My dad would've been intrigued to learn that George Washington and Robert E. Lee had crossed the Potomac at Evan Watkins' ferry location," Newton says. And no doubt delighted that he and his wife had unknowingly followed a family naming tradition: Their son's middle name—Evan—is his ferryman ancestor's given name. ●

Diane Haddad

Leading Acid Reflux Pill Becomes an Anti-Aging Phenomenon

Clinical studies show breakthrough acid reflux treatment also helps maintain vital health and helps protect users from the serious conditions that accompany aging such as fatigue and poor cardiovascular health

by David Waxman
Seattle Washington:

A clinical study on a leading acid reflux pill shows that its key ingredient relieves digestive symptoms while suppressing the inflammation that contributes to premature aging in men and women.

And, if consumer sales are any indication of a product's effectiveness, this 'acid reflux pill turned anti-aging phenomenon' is nothing short of a miracle.

Sold under the brand name AloeCure, it was already backed by clinical data documenting its ability to provide all day and night relief from heartburn, acid reflux, constipation, irritable bowel, gas, bloating, and more.

But soon doctors started reporting some incredible results...

"With AloeCure, my patients started reporting less joint pain, more energy, better sleep, stronger immune systems... even less stress and better skin, hair, and nails" explains Dr. Liza Leal; a leading integrative health specialist and company spokesperson.

AloeCure contains an active ingredient that helps improve digestion by acting as a natural acid-buffer that improves the pH balance of your stomach.

Scientists now believe that this acid imbalance is what contributes to painful inflammation throughout the rest of the body.

The daily allowance of AloeCure has shown to calm this inflammation which is why AloeCure is so effective.

Relieving other stressful symptoms related to GI health like pain, bloating, fatigue, cramping, constipation, diarrhea, heartburn, and nausea.

Now, backed with new clinical studies, AloeCure is being recommended by doctors everywhere to help improve digestion, calm painful inflammation, soothe the joint pain, and even reduce the appearance of wrinkles – helping patients to look and feel decades younger.

FIX YOUR GUT & FIGHT INFLAMMATION

Since hitting the market, sales for AloeCure have taken off and there are some very good reasons why.

To start, the clinical studies have been impressive. Participants taking the active ingredient in AloeCure saw a stunning 100% improvement in digestive symptoms, which includes fast and lasting relief from reflux.

Users also experienced higher energy levels and endurance, relief from chronic

discomfort and better sleep. Some even reported healthier looking skin, hair, and nails.

A healthy gut is the key to a reducing swelling and inflammation that can wreak havoc on the human body. Doctors say this is why AloeCure works on so many aspects of your health.

AloeCure's active ingredient is made from the healing compound found in Aloe vera. It is both safe and healthy. There are also no known side effects.

Scientists believe that it helps improve digestive and immune health by acting as a natural acid-buffer that improves the pH balance of your stomach.

Research has shown that this acid imbalance contributes to painful inflammation throughout your entire body and is why AloeCure seems to be so effective.

EXCITING RESULTS FROM

PATIENTS

To date over 5 million bottles of AloeCure have been sold, and the community seeking non-pharma therapy for their GI health continues to grow.

According to Dr. Leal, her patients are absolutely thrilled with their results and are often shocked by how fast it works.

"For the first time in years, they are free from concerns about their digestion and almost every other aspect of their health," says Dr. Leal, "and I recommend it to everyone who wants to improve GI health without resorting to drugs, surgery, or OTC medications."

"I was always in 'indigestion hell.' Doctors put me on all sorts of antacid remedies. Nothing worked. Dr. Leal recommended I try AloeCure. And something remarkable happened... Not only were all the issues I had with my stomach gone - completely gone - but I felt less joint pain and I was able to actually sleep through the night."

With so much positive feedback, it's easy to see why the community of believers is growing and sales for the new pill are soaring.

THE SCIENCE BEHIND ALOECURE

AloeCure is a pill that's taken just once daily. The pill is small. Easy to swallow. There are no harmful side effects and it does not require a prescription.

The active ingredient is a rare Aloe Vera component known as acemannan.

Made from 100% organic Aloe Vera, AloeCure uses a proprietary process that results in the highest quality, most bio-available levels of acemannan known to exist.



According to Dr. Leal and several of her colleagues, improving the pH balance of your stomach and restoring gut health is the key to revitalizing your entire body.

When your digestive system isn't healthy, it causes unwanted stress on your immune system, which results in inflammation in the rest of the body.

The recommended daily allowance of acemannan in AloeCure has been proven to support digestive health, and calm painful inflammation without side effects or drugs.

This would explain why so many users are experiencing impressive results so quickly.

REVITALIZE YOUR ENTIRE BODY

With daily use, AloeCure helps users look and feel decades younger and defend against some of the painful inflammation that accompanies aging and can make life hard.

By buffering stomach acid and restoring gut health, AloeCure calms painful inflammation and will help improve digestion... soothe aching joints... reduce the appearance of wrinkles and help restore hair and nails ... manage cholesterol and oxidative stress... and improve sleep and brain function... without side effects or expense.

Readers can now reclaim their energy, vitality, and youth regardless of age or current level of health.

One AloeCure Capsule Daily

- Helps End Digestion Nightmares
- Helps Calm Painful Inflammation
- Soothes Stiff & Aching Joints
- Reduces appearance of Wrinkles & Increases Elasticity
- Manages Cholesterol & Oxidative Stress
- Supports Healthy Immune System
- Improves Sleep & Brain Function

HOW TO GET ALOECURE

This is the official nationwide release of the new AloeCure pill in the United States. And so, the company is offering our readers up to 3 FREE bottles with their order.

This special give-away is available for the next 48-hours only. All you have to do is call **TOLL-FREE 1-800-748-5760** and provide the operator with the Free Bottle Approval Code: AC100. The company will do the rest.

Important: Due to AloeCure's recent media exposure, phone lines are often busy. If you call and do not immediately get through, please be patient and call back. Those who miss the 48-hour deadline may lose out on this free bottle offer.

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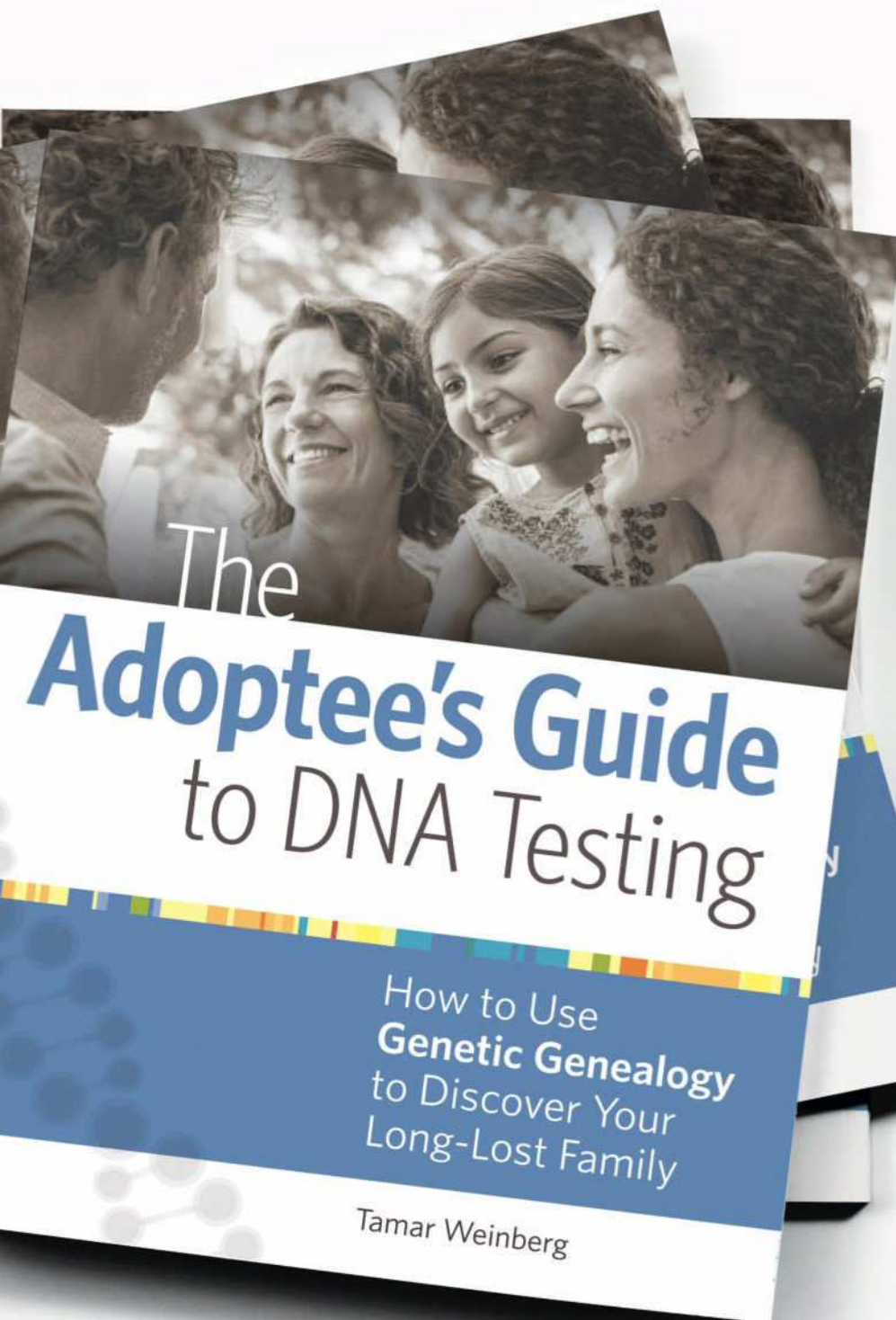
What pastime or skill did you learn from your parents or grandparents? Do you still do this activity? Share your memories.

In each issue, **Your Turn** offers a memory prompt to help you preserve your family's unique stories. Tear out and save your responses in a notebook, or use our downloadable type-and-save PDF <familytreemagazine.com/freebie/your-turn>. We'd love to hear your responses, too! Send them to ftmedit@fwmedia.com with "Your Turn" as a subject, and we might feature them in the magazine or on Facebook to inspire other genealogists.

Find Your Roots

Reconnect to
your birth family
with this guide,
featuring:

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- help understanding the major DNA tests and testing companies
- tips for identifying and contacting DNA matches



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Preserve Vintage Vacation Souvenirs

1. Use what you've got.

Let your inherited travel souvenirs shine! You can create a wall arrangement of platters or fill a coffee table with Las Vegas ashtrays. Frame printed tea towels or a collage of postcards or hankies. Show off seashells or pressed pennies in a shadowbox frame.

2. Share the stories of family travels.

Photograph vintage souvenirs and digitize family photos of the trip. Gather details about the vacation destination at the time your relative visited, add a map from the time period, and put it all together in an album or a slideshow.

3. Store souvenirs safely.

When you're not displaying vintage items, protect them in archival boxes cushioned with acid-free tissue paper (available from suppliers such as Gaylord Archival <www.gaylord.com>). Place paper items like ticket stubs in archival sleeves in an album. Store the boxes on a shelf in a closet off your home's living area—not in the attic or basement.

4. Location matters.

Your antique souvenir may have value if it's associated with an iconic site—think Route 66 or the 1904 World's Fair in St. Louis. Get an idea from antiques and collectibles price guides such as those by Antique Trader <www.krausebooks.com/collector-guides>. You can find a professional appraiser through the American Society of Appraisers <www.appraisers.org>.



Denise May Levenick
aka The Family Curator
<www.thefamilycurator.com>
is the author of *How to Archive Family Keepsakes*
(Family Tree Books).

5. Shop savvy.

Going on a vacay of your own? One unique memento will be treasured longer and stored more easily than a suitcase full of trinkets. Seek a souvenir that reflects the local specialty, whether it's an Amish quilt or Nantucket Island basket. Instead of tourist traps, visit art galleries and museum shops that offer paintings, ceramics and textiles. I love stopping at a small neighborhood market. The shelves are often stocked with locally made preserves, seasonings, cookbooks and kitchenware, at prices lower than gift shops.

6. Send custom postcards.

Our ancestors printed vacation snapshots as real-photo postcards to send to friends and family. Nowadays, smartphone apps like Postagram <sincerely.com/postagram> and Touchnote <www.touchnote.com> let you mail a photo postcard from your mobile phone. Both are free for iOS and Android, with a small fee for each postcard sent.

7. Curate a collection.

If you're a frequent traveler, create a collection by purchasing the same type of souvenir on each trip: a kitschy magnet, a small print or photograph, a shotglass, a postcard.

8. Go for nostalgia.

Kids beg to spend their pocket money in every souvenir shop you pass. Steer them toward the kinds of keepsakes you wish you had today. Charm bracelets never go out of style. Pressed pennies are inexpensive (and make fun key fobs). It's free to take snapshots with welcome signs, or bring a favorite stuffie and make a photo journal of the traveling gnome's adventures.

9. Bring the outdoors in.

Save rocks, shells or sand in a mason-jar memory globe or shadowbox frame, along with a topographical map or photo. Of course, these mixed materials may deteriorate over time. They'll last longer when displayed away from direct light and heat, with archival-quality framing materials. ●



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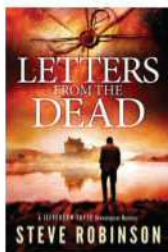
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GENEALOGY RESEARCH AND DETECTIVE WORK are natural companions, in real life and in fiction. British author Steve Robinson <www.steve-robinson.me> introduced his American-born genealogy hero Jefferson Tayte in his debut novel *In the Blood* (Thomas & Mercer) in 2011. Tayte, a professional researcher tracing the loyalist Fairborne family from Cornwall, learns the records he needs are missing—and someone else is willing to kill to keep it that way. Tayte stars in six more mysteries, with the most recent, *Letters from the Dead*, coming in August. See <familytreemagazine.com/articles/news-blogs/genealogy_insider/summer-genealogy-reads> for family historians' favorite summer reads. ●



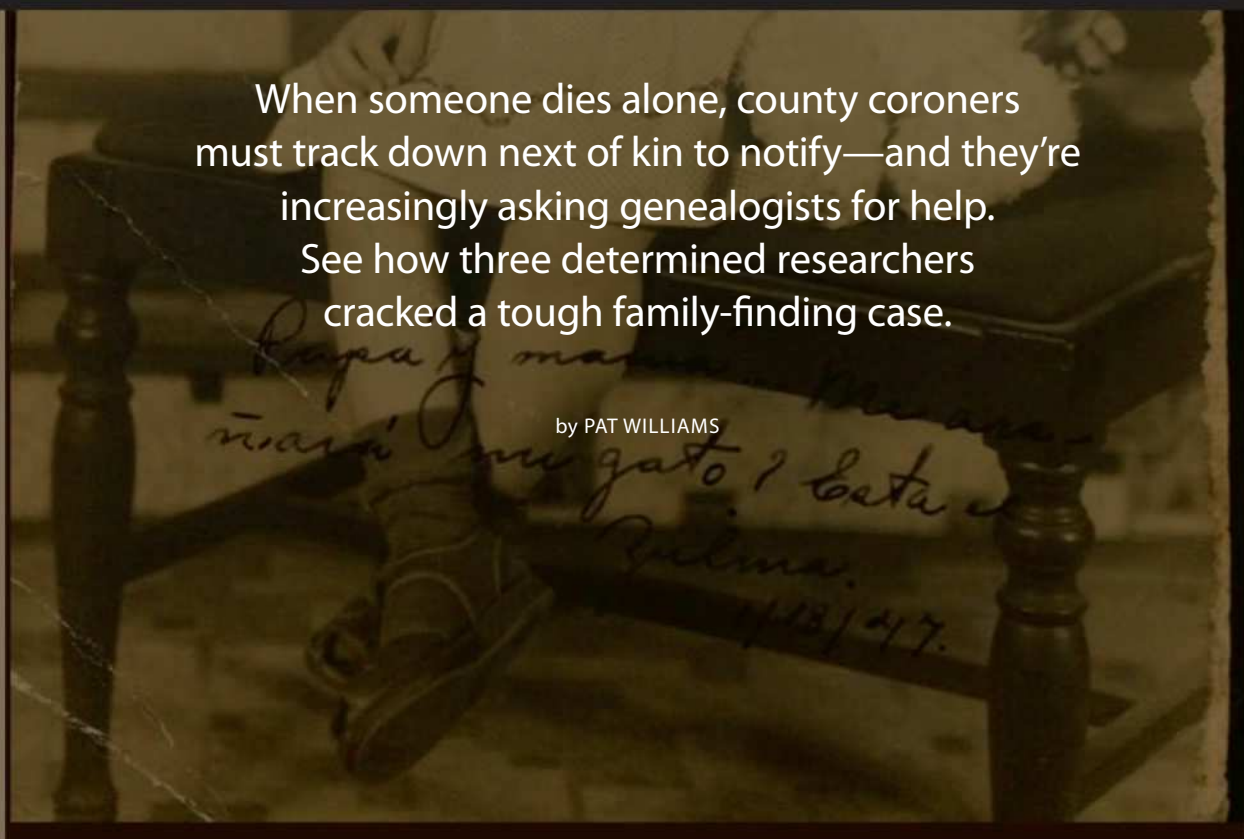
OPEN CASES

When someone dies alone, county coroners must track down next of kin to notify—and they're increasingly asking genealogists for help.

See how three determined researchers cracked a tough family-finding case.

by PAT WILLIAMS

*Papa y mamá
niarú nu gato? Gata
Julma.
4/13/47.*



Zulma Ramos died alone of cancer two weeks after the start of 2016. Investigators at the Orange County, Calif., coroners office, charged with notifying her family, knew that she was somebody's someone. A sibling? Mother? Wife? Friend? Who would want to know she was gone?

Every year, US county offices investigate thousands of unclaimed deceased persons, looking for next of kin to contact about burial arrangements and estate distribution—and just to let the family know what happened. But finding families isn't always a simple matter. Overburdened coroners and medical examiners increasingly are reaching out to another group accustomed to reconstructing the lives of the dead: genealogists.

After 71 days of working leads in Ramos' case, Supervising Deputy Coroner Kelly Keyes contacted the Genealogical Society of North Orange County (GSNOCC) <gsnocc.org> in Yorba Linda, Calif. Follow the three amateur genealogists—myself, Maury Jacques and Lynn V. Baden—who worked the case, using scraps of minimal and misleading information to find Ramos' lost family.

SEPARATE WAYS

Ramos was discovered dead in her Garden Grove, Calif., apartment after a neighbor who hadn't seen her in a few days got worried and called 911. The coroner concluded Ramos had died Jan. 14. Papers in the apartment showed she was being treated for breast cancer.

Like all of us, Ramos started her life with a family. Many whose lives end alone lost those family ties due to geographic distance, poverty, drug addiction or childhood trauma. The National Institute of Justice estimates that 40,000 sets of human remains lie unidentified in county morgues across the country. The National Missing and Unidentified Persons System database of unclaimed remains <identifyus.org> has around 12,000 open cases.

County administrators' offices launch kinship searches to notify relatives of the death and locate heirs to a person's estate. But in many counties, administrators don't have the resources for extensive investigation. That's where volunteers come in. An online group called Unclaimed Persons <unclaimed-persons.org>, which serves as a clearinghouse for county officials and volunteer researchers, has solved 482 cases, a 70 percent solve rate. In Orange County, the coroner and GSNOCC began partnering on cases in January 2016. So far, the group has solved all but two cases of the 70 worked. Some take 15 minutes. Others, hundreds of hours.

Volunteers aren't necessarily certified or professional genealogists, but they do have research experience and the need-to-know persistence of a private detective—along with a desire to help.

"Bringing the deceased and the next of kin together is a loving and caring act for the family involved and for the larger community," says Baden, a librarian and genealogy veteran of 30 years.

Jacques, a genealogist for eight years, saw the opportunity to stretch his skills while doing good. "This was a new and fun challenge that I knew I could do. I wanted to help."

CASE AT HAND

Genealogy is central to kin research. Volunteers look for the names of the deceased's parents, grandparents and even great-grandparents, then work forward to identify descendants of all those ancestors. The cases involve problems familiar to genealogists: common surnames, no surnames, multiple names, variant spellings and false history.

Clues in Ramos' apartment had helped Keyes locate an ex-husband, who provided names for her parents: Rita Rivera Feliciano and Arturo Ramos Lombard. But Ramos' marriage had been brief and distant, and her ex could offer little else except that she was born in 1945 in Puerto Rico, and may have had half-siblings.

We started by trying to confirm this vague information. Based on Zulma Ramos' reported age at death, 71, finding living parents would be a long shot. Siblings, children or cousins were more likely. Still, this seemed like a lot of leads compared to other unclaimed persons cases we've worked.

Scouring public record websites, such as Been-Verified <www.beenverified.com>, Instant Checkmate <www.instantcheckmate.com> and Intelius <www.intelius.com>, is among the first

in the shop

Forensic genealogists use their research skills to solve inheritance and other legal cases. Learn their secrets in our Forensic Genealogy Crash Course video class <familytreemagazine.com/store/forensic-genealogy-crash-course>.



This photo of Zulma Ramos (above) might have been taken for her second birthday.

Ramos (above right) and half-siblings Arturo (left) and Isabel (center) often spent time together at their grandmother's house.

steps in kin searching. The array of online information available about living people can be shocking. Beyond addresses and phone numbers, these sites offer details from property and financial records, professional licenses, interactions with law enforcement, and vehicle information. Websites with databases of these records cost around \$25 to \$58 per month to use, with some sites allowing a smaller fee per search.

Type a name into a people search site, and two types of associates of the person typically emerge: close family and possible relatives. The latter may include neighbors, roommates, business partners and in-laws. Kin researchers keep notes on associates and compare their listed addresses across records, looking for overlap with our unclaimed person. But the results were dead ends in Ramos' case.

The next step was identifying historical records to search for. Ramos had been married and divorced, both record-creating events. She lived somewhere; that meant telephone directories and other residential records. If she indeed was born in Puerto Rico, there should be birth and perhaps

church records. Assuming her parents were deceased, their death certificates and burial records would be a source.

We searched familiar genealogy websites including Ancestry <ancestry.com> and FamilySearch <www.familysearch.org>, and created an online tree for Ramos. We used family group sheets to document sources and made notes of negative findings. But with such a common name, unless we had something to connect a piece of information to, it couldn't be considered a fact. In the end, all that researchers could associate directly with Zulma Ramos was a 1962 record of arrival by plane in San Juan, PR, her Nevada marriage record, and three residential addresses from Garden Grove, Calif. Huge chunks of her timeline were missing.

Lisa Louise Cooke shows you tricks to find cousins using "reverse genealogy" at <familytreemagazine.com/premium/undercover-genealogy>.

**When I get a case, the rest of my life stops.
If I have a photo of the decedent, he or she stares
at me from my desk. I can do nothing else until I solve it.**

FAMILY FINDS

Another common genealogical problem cropped up in this search: the language barrier. Some Puerto Rican records are written in conversational longhand Spanish, rather than in neat columns or on a preprinted form. Fortunately, Google Translate <translate.google.com> was enough to get by and understand documents such as the marriage record for Ramos' parents, dated Feb. 4, 1944, in San Juan.

We never found a death record for Ramos' mother. But we soon learned that her father's second surname wasn't Lombard—it was *Llompart*. In Spanish-speaking cultures, children traditionally receive two surnames: the father's (considered the primary surname), followed by the mother's.

Ramos is the surname that Arturo took from his father; Llompart is from his mother (which she, in turn, received from her father).

With that spelling, we found Arturo Ramos in the 1930 and 1940 censuses of Santurce, PR, with a brother, Ernesto. Arturo was born about 1921; Ernesto, in 1923. Death records showed both brothers died in 1989, Ernesto in Florida and Arturo in San Juan. Their parents—Zulma Ramos' grandparents—appear in the 1910 and 1920 censuses.

A record of Arturo Ramos' second marriage, on Aug. 20, 1948, to Eva Darmau, had particularly helpful *notas*: Arturo and Rita had been divorced in April, 1946, because he'd abandoned Rita and his daughter Zulma Ana, then a year old. But his death record led to a break in the case: It listed an *hijo* (son), Arturo Ramos Dalmau, living in Colorado,

A note on the record for Arturo Ramos Llompart's second marriage, in 1948, states he was divorced from Rita Rivera, Zulma's mother.

NOTAS
Que el contra-
yate es divorciado
de Rita M. Glinea
el 5 de Abril 1946
por abandono y
nació una hija
nombrada Zulma
Ana.

Certificación de la Celebración de Matrimonio

Yo, Celestino Linera, mayor de edad,
de estado Soltero, de profesión Sacerdote y vecino de San Juan,
en mi carácter de Sacerdote, celebré en San Juan
a las Ocho de la Noche del día 20 de Agosto de mil
novecientos 48, el matrimonio que de su libre, espontánea, voluntaria y consciente
Arturo Ramos Llompart y Eva Dalmau Dalmau,
certificando la celebración de tal acto los testigos presenciales del mismo, Rafael Rodríguez Nieves y José
natural de Yajay, B.S.P. y vecindado en la casa número 32 de la calle
de la Cruz de San Juan, y Maria Ramirez Palmer,
mayor de edad, de estado Soltera, de profesión Accionista, natural de San Juan
y vecindado en la casa número 53 de la calle de la Cruz de San Juan,
San Juan, P. R., 20 de Agosto de 1948.

Arturo Ramos Llompart y Eva Dalmau Dalmau.
Rafael Rodríguez Nieves y Maria Ramirez Palmer.
(Firma del contrayente) (Firma del testigo)
(Firma del sacerdote) (Firma del testigo)
Celestino Linera
Sacerdote Católico.

Transcrito hoy día 23 de Agosto de 1948, bajo el No. 455
del libro de matrimonios. San Juan, P. R., 23 de Agosto de 1948.
José Martínez Chir.
Registrador.

as his next of kin. The son's second surname was almost identical to that of Arturo's second wife. Could this be a half-brother to Zulma Ramos?

Public record websites gave up nothing on the son. *Nada*, as they say in Puerto Rico. Arturo Ramos' death certificate listed alcoholism as a contributing cause to his passing. Maybe he'd been estranged from his children. Following that hunch, we searched with the son's maternal surname, Dalmau. And there he was, in Fort Collins, Colo. He showed up on four living person sites,

with address and phone number listings matching his location and estimated age.

MAKING CONTACT

Volunteers aren't permitted to contact potential relatives of a deceased individual. When they identify a living person believed to be family, they hand the case back over to the coroner's office. Then they wait, holding their breaths, to find out if the search was successful.

8 Tips to Find Living People

1 Search public record sites. Look for family members on people search sites such as BeenVerified <www.beenverified.com>, which I like because it doesn't charge a lot of fees. Cyndi's List has links to more sites at <cyndislist.com/finding-people>. Look for a phone number, email address, residential address, and social media profiles. If you find clues about employment, Google the business. Search online for email addresses (inside quotes: "john.smith@xyzco.com") to find web pages where the address appears.

2 Mine social media. Type a name into the search box on Facebook <www.facebook.com>, then click on Tagged Location on the left to filter results by a place. Most people search sites include links to Facebook profiles among their matches. Scour potential relatives' profiles for clues, including their friends, groups they've joined, and places they've checked in or liked. An old post from Grandma's birthday party might have the answers you need. Also check Twitter <www.twitter.com> and Instagram <www.instagram.com>.

3 Note every address. Addresses you find may be out of date, but they're still good leads. If you're on an unclaimed person case or searching for someone who's fallen out of touch, remember that people might bounce among family members. If your target person has matching addresses with two different people, it's possible those two people are related to each other.

4 Search for genealogical records. Survivors named along with the target person in obituaries may be relatives. If you can find a person in a school yearbook on Ancestry <ancestry.com>, MyHeritage <www.myheritage.com> or elsewhere, check other editions for siblings. Researchers solved one case with an old newspaper: A photo caption named the unclaimed person's children.

5 Step into the person's shoes. What would you do to keep busy? One unclaimed person had been a librarian. We checked with her local library, and she had indeed volunteered there. Was the target person religious? Follow up with synagogues or churches in the area.

6 Explore cemeteries. Maury Jacques, a researcher in Orange County, Calif., solved a case by locating the cemetery a parent was buried in. Then he checked cemetery records for the person handling the arrangements. Search Find A Grave <findagrave.com> to identify potential family buried near a parent. If there's no one in the same cemetery, try cemeteries nearby.

7 Crowdsource visual clues. Researchers I work with have uploaded images such as unique tattoos to the Whatisthisthing? subreddit <reddit.com/r/whatisthisthing>, a forum where people all over the world weigh in. A tattoo, for example, may be associated with an organization or activity you can investigate. This subreddit also could be handy for mystery-photo clues like IDing an old car model.

8 Check court records. Instant Checkmate <instantcheckmate.com> is a good site for learning about interactions with law enforcement, which can put the person in a location and provide names of accomplices. Use case numbers to look up court records where the infraction occurred.



Keyes called the man we'd identified as Zulma Ramos's half brother—and it was him. Arturo Ramos Dalmau, though sad to hear the news, was relieved. "I visited her 24 years ago for a week, and it was wonderful," he says. "I never thought it would be the last time. After that, I would call her every week or two, but gradually, she just stopped returning my calls. I don't know why."

When they last spoke, she told him she'd been diagnosed with breast cancer. She said she felt good after being prescribed antidepressants for the first time in her life. "She was still my same driven, independent sister, with her ribald sense of humor," Dalmau adds.

He filled in more puzzle pieces. Zulma Ramos, fiercely independent, moved alone to the mainland at age 17, finished school and worked at a hospital. She lived in Texas for a while, a residence that didn't show up in any of our searches. Her mother also had moved to Texas, where she remarried and later died with her husband's last name. That's why we couldn't find her death certificate.

Arturo Ramos had another daughter with a third woman, whom he never married. This daughter, still living, took the surname of her mother. That left not a shred of evidence connecting Zulma Ramos with her half-sister. Dalmau disputes the *nota* indicating their father

abandoned his eldest child. Father and daughter kept in touch by phone, and he helped her financially. "The first time I ever saw Zulma cry was when our father died in 1989," Dalmau says. "She was visibly the most upset of all of us."

A SENSE OF CLOSURE

"I hear comments from a family like 'we had hired a private investigator to track him down with no luck,'" Keyes says, "or, 'we always wondered what happened to her,' or that 'mom died wondering where he was, and now we'll be able to bury his ashes next to hers.'"

Now, Dalmau no longer has to wonder and worry about his sister. Search volunteers hope to bring this peace to families, although not all contacted family claim their dead. Sometimes the chasm is too deep. I always hope that once the shock of that phone call dims, the news of the death still brings some kind of closure. ●

Pat Williams, a genealogist and writer in Placentia, Calif., helped establish the GSNOC partnership with the Orange County Coroner in 2016. "When I get a case, the rest of my life stops," she says. "If I have a photo of the decedent from social media or a yearbook, he or she stares at me from my desk. I can do nothing else until I solve it."

Supervising deputy coroner of Orange County Kelly Keyes (left), worked with genealogists Pat Williams, Lynn V. Baden and Maury Jacques to find relatives of Zulma Ramos.

GOING EAST

Our expert shares six common obstacles for Eastern European genealogy—and how to overcome them.



by LISA A. ALZO

They say genealogy is a journey, not a sprint. But for those of us trying to trace ancestors back to Central and Eastern Europe, the journey seems to cover unpaved, bumpy terrain with endless obstacles. As a person with ancestors from several Eastern European countries, I can tell you: The hurdles are real. But they're not insurmountable. You can overcome name changes, migrating places and language barriers. I'll share six of the most common obstacles to discovering your roots in Poland, Slovakia, Hungary and other countries of Eastern Europe—and more importantly, how to get past those problems and cross the family history finish line.

1

PLAYING NAME GAMES

Eastern European names are complex and downright challenging. It could be you don't have a consistent or correct spelling. Or you might have the right name, but can't seem to find it in an index. Name stumpers can be the result of an unfamiliar language, accent and handwriting; name changes; or the use of nicknames. As for immigrant ancestors from other places, the name that North American records call your Eastern European ancestors may or may not be the name he or she used back home. Use these strategies to help determine your immigrant ancestor's original name and how it might appear in US records:

- **Consider phonetics and alphabets.** Your ancestor's native language—whether Polish, Czech, Slovak, Latin, Hungarian, German or Russian—plays an important role when deciphering names. The Polish, Czech and Slovak languages have letters not in the English alphabet, and their pronunciations can trip up English speakers. This might result in an incorrectly transcribed name that stymies your searches in genealogical indexes and databases. For example, the Polish letter *Ł* (and the lowercase *ł*) is pronounced like an English *W*. It may be transcribed as an *L* in English, or the *l* may be transcribed as the similar-looking *t*. Similarly, the Polish *q* is pronounced *ahn* but often is transcribed as an *a* in English.

A helpful read is “Mutilation: The Fate of Eastern European Names in America” by William F. Hoffman (download a PDF at <pgsa.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Mutilation.pdf>). It discusses how phonetics impacted Czech,

German, Polish, Slovak and Russian names when translated or pronounced in English. Also look up surnames and given names on Behind the Name <behindthename.com> for variants by country. Look for more surname clues at the Guild of One-Name Studies <guild-dev.org/index_A.html> and Eastern European-focused sites such as Moikrewni.pl <www.moikrewni.pl/mapa>, KdeJsme <kdejsme.cz>, and Origins of Last Names (Slovakia and Hungary) <www.pitt.edu/~votruba/qsonhist/lastnameslovakiahungary.html>.

- **Try alternate Soundex systems.** Many indexes that genealogists search use the Russell Soundex system to find records with variant surname spellings. That includes census and passenger list indexes. But if a website you're searching gives you the option, try alternative Soundex schemes such as Daitch-Mokotoff, which is designed to better handle Eastern European surnames. Learn more about Daitch-Mokotoff at <jewishgen.org/infofiles/soundex.html#DM>.

- **Look for nicknames, middle names and native first names from the home country.** Your Uncle Bill or Aunt Stella may have been born Bolesław or Stanisława. A person named Ludwig might be called Louis, Lewis or Lou in records—or all of the above. Try searching the web for the name and words like Polish (or Czech or Slovak) nicknames or diminutives. The page at <en.wiktionary.org/wiki/Appendix:Polish_given_names>, for example, shows Polish given names, common nicknames and English equivalents.

- **Familiarize yourself with the script used in records from the time.** This will help you understand how handwriting could affect the way a name was transcribed. Look at the letters in other, easier-to-interpret names. Does a handwritten *P* resemble an *F*? Does a *J* look like a *Y*? This will help you find variations to try when searching databases and print records.

- **Make a timeline.** Variant name spellings can make it hard to tell if a record is for your ancestor. How do you know you've found the right

In 1905, when this map was published, Austria-Hungary was the largest nation in Eastern Europe and included Austrians, Hungarians, Czechs, Slovaks, Ukrainians, Serbs, Croats, Slovenians, Romanians and Italians. Most of Poland was under Russian rule, as was Finland.

Perhaps you've determined the exact name of your ancestor's hometown, only to be thwarted when you can't locate it on a modern-day map.

Jakub Novotný? Make a timeline of all you've learned about him, so it's easier to see if his location at a given time matches a new record you've found. You can do this on paper, in your genealogy software or online tree, or with a utility such as Twile <twile.com>. You also can use your ancestor's family members to "anchor" him. Look for names of his parents, siblings, spouse or children in records with him—especially if one of them had an uncommon name. For instance, Jakub's sister Bohumila will be easier to ID in records, and you'll know you have the right family when you find the two names together.

• **Surnames may be wrong, but DNA doesn't lie.** A Y-DNA test can show when two same-named men are related, and estimate the number of generations back to their most recent common ancestor. Family Tree DNA <familytreedna.com> is the only major testing company offering Y-DNA tests; check its website for surname studies. Those with Czech roots will want to read about the Czech American DNA study at the Czechoslovak Genealogical Society International's website <www.cgsi.org>, which has a listing of surnames that have participated in the study. More on DNA ethnicity estimates below.

2 **PARSING PERPLEXING PLACES** Determining an immigrant ancestor's town or village of origin is critical to your research success once you cross the ocean. Orienting yourself to the geographic area of research is always essential to genealogy, but probably even more so for those with Eastern European ancestors because of the area's complex history and shifting borders. The

tip

US immigration officials didn't change immigrants' names (or encourage them to do so). The article by Marian Smith at <ilw.com/articles/2005,0808-smith.shtm> explains how this myth arose—and why our ancestors often "Americanized" their own names.

homeland of your ancestors was most likely a multicultural society, evidenced by the number of languages in which records are written.

Just as with surnames, American record-keepers didn't usually change Eastern European place names intentionally. "Most immigrants were illiterate," Hoffman writes, "and probably didn't have a clue what *powiat* or *kreis* or *uyezd* they had lived in." Those Polish and German terms are administrative subdivisions comparable to counties and districts. "If, somewhere along the line an official made a mistake copying this information on a form, they couldn't correct him."

Hoffman adds that some immigrants left to avoid military conscription, debt or criminal charges; they might cover their tracks by giving vague or incorrect information about their origins. A lack of familiarity with Eastern European geography also contributed to distorted place names being passed down to modern researchers in family papers, on passenger lists and passports, and in vital records.

To sort out perplexing place names, tap into tools such as maps, atlases and gazetteers (geographical dictionaries that list places alphabetically, with descriptions of administrative divisions, population statistics and other information).

In the JewishGen Communities database and gazetteer, do sounds-like and partial-word searches if you don't know the spelling. You can search all Eastern European countries, or by specific country. For each locality, the search results will display the place's name(s) over time and in different languages, with the native name in bold. This tool can help you locate Eastern European towns whether or not you have Jewish roots. But it's not always 100 percent reliable for determining alternate place names. You may discover that some alternate forms of a town or village name are missing.

It helps to view digitized maps published around the time your ancestors lived in an area using the David Rumsey map collection <www.davidrumsey.com>, Foundation for East European Family History Studies Map Library <feefhs.org>, and Topographic Maps of Eastern Europe

OSOBNÝ POPIS
SIGNALEMENT

Mantelka — Femme

Zamestnanie / Profession: *sculiacka paysanne*

Rodisko a datum narodenia / Lieu et date de naissance: *13. 10. 1899 Hanigovce*

Bydlisko / Domicile: *Hanigovce*

Obličaj / Visage: *podlh = long*


Barva očí / Couleur des yeux: *sivé = bleu*

Barva vlasov / Couleur des cheveux: *hnede = bruns*

Zvláštne znamenie / Signes particuliers: *—*

DETI — ENFANTS		
Meno / Nom	Vek / Age	Pohlavie / Sexe

Mantelka — Femme



PODPIS MAJITEĽA
SIGNATURE DU TITULAIRE

Veron Sztraka

A JEHO MANŽELKY
ET DE SA FEMME

ZUPAN ZUPY SAVIŠKEJ

Podpis držiteľa vydávajúceho centrom pas
Signature de l'agent délivrant le passeport

V. Velich

ssance
ko) *Hanigovce*
ile)

Verona Sztraka's 1922 Czechoslovakian passport shows her place of residence (*bydlisko*) of Hanigovce. This village, located in the Prešov region of what's now Slovakia, might be called Hönigsdorf in German or Hönig in Hungarian.

<easteurotopo.org>. Check for print or microfilm maps at large genealogical libraries such as the Allen County (Ind.) Public Library <acpl.lib.in.us> and the Family History Library in Salt Lake City <www.familysearch.org>. To learn the county and district, main parish churches and religious makeup of the population, look up places in online gazetteers. Two that Eastern European genealogists commonly use are the 1877 *Dvorsák Gazetteer of Hungary* <kt.lib.pte.hu/cgi-bin/kt.cgi?konyvtar/kt03110501/0_0_1_pg_1.html> and the *Słownik Geograficzny Królestwa Polskiego* (*Geographical Dictionary of the Kingdom of Poland and Other Slavic Countries*), published between 1880 and 1902 <dir.icm.edu.pl/Słownik_geograficzny>.

The *Family Tree Historical Maps Book: Europe* <familytreemagazine.com/store/family-tree-historical-maps-book-europe> reproduces maps from the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries to help you visualize how Eastern European boundaries changed over time. I also like *The Palgrave Concise Historical Atlas of Eastern Europe* by Dennis P. Hupchick and Harold E. Cox (Palgrave Macmillan) for its insight into political changes.

3

SPANNING GEOGRAPHY GAPS

Perhaps you've determined the exact name of your ancestor's hometown, but you can't locate it on a modern-day map. Places might be renamed because of political changes. For example, Eperjes, Hungary, became Prešov, Czechoslovakia, in 1920 (it's now in Slovakia). The historic Hungarian town of Herczegfalva became Mezőfalva after World War II. A village might be incorporated into a larger, adjacent town or city. You might see different hometowns listed in an ancestor's documents, as for my Slovak grandmother. Her domicile was Hanigovce in some papers, but Milpoš in others. From gazetteers and the book *Nazvy obcí Slovenskej Republiky* (*Names of Villages, Slovak Republic*) by Milan Majtan, I learned that Milpoš was a hamlet of Hanigovce until 1950, when it became its own village (see <milpos.sk>).

Pogroms and religious violence, particularly during the Holocaust, depopulated hundreds of Jewish neighborhoods and villages. Widespread upheaval after World War II included Operation Vistula, the forced resettlement of Ukrainians in Southern Poland (Galicia). Some villages became

Keyword Searching

Learning a few key words can help you understand Polish baptismal records like this 1790 Catholic Church register, written in Latin. It's available online from FamilySearch.

RELIGION (options include Catholic or not Catholic; the church was charged with recording all births, even for those of other religions)

PARENTS (father, mother)

GODPARENTS (name, status)

HOUSE NUMBER

NAME

SEX (male, female)

LEGITIMATE

ILLEGITIMATE

DAY AND MONTH

1790.		Nomen.	Religio		Sexus		Parentes.		Patrini.			
Dies & Mensis.	Numerus Domus.		Catholica	Acatholica	Mas	Femina	legitimus Thori.	illegitimus Thori.	Pater.	Mater.	Nomen.	Status, Conditio, vel Dignitas.
Die 23. Mensis Februarii.	7.	Marianna	-	-	-	-	-	-	Mathias Pacholczak Rusticus de Villa Grabowa Pater	Regina nata Parete Jaczak Mater.	Vincentius Nyncek + Marianna Dudzińska +	Rusticus de Villa Grabowa Rustica de eadem Villa
Die 20.									Franciscus	Salomda nata Paren	Josephus Domanski	Rusticus de Villa

If you can identify the column headings in this record, you'll understand that Marianna Pacholczak was born Feb. 23, 1790, to Mathias, a peasant from Grabowa, and Regina (born Jaczak). Her godparents were Vincent Nyncek, also a peasant from Grabowa, and Marianna Dudzińska, from the same place ("de eadem villa").

defunct due to development, such as the construction of the Starina Reservoir in Eastern Slovakia's Snina District. Starting in 1981, it prompted the evacuation of seven villages.

Sometimes, a place name's prefix or suffix was removed or added over time (Velky Lucska becomes Lucska, now in Slovakia). See iabsi.com/gen/public/place_name_terminology.htm for a list of common place-name prefixes or suffixes, and their meanings. Or it might turn out that the place name you found isn't a city or town at all, but a different geographic term for a region, state, province or other area. Sometimes, these areas have well-defined boundaries; other times, they're only vaguely defined. And many Eastern European countries, including Austria,

Germany, Hungary and Poland, have rearranged and renamed their counties over time. This often obscures old regional names that were well understood by the immigrants of the time, but may not appear on modern maps. For example, Cechy is the Czech name for Bohemia, which once was the western part of what's now the Czech Republic). Siebenbürgen was a name for Transylvania, which is now central Romania.

The same geography tools that helped you pinpoint a place name also can get you over this hurdle. Interactive tools such as Google Earth google.com/earth let you overlay historical maps onto present-day ones, so you can see where a town is today. JewishGen's Communities Gazetteer jewishgen.org/communities/loctown.asp

provides community or village names in various languages, and includes political jurisdictions over time. It shows exact latitude and longitude coordinates, as well as direction and distance from major cities, the country in which the locality sits today, and other details.

4

BREAKING DOWN DNA

So you took a DNA test and your ethnicity estimate shows 95 percent Europe East. What does that mean?

While it takes some dedicated study to grasp the full power of using genetic genealogy to connect with cousins and solve research problems, we'll go over some basic points. First, your ethnicity estimates aren't necessarily exact. Instead, they're merely percentages of your autosomal DNA that the testing company's algorithm associates with its reference population from a particular geographic area. Changing borders and migratory populations, like those in Eastern Europe, can make it difficult for geneticists to determine which DNA characterizes which population group.

Furthermore, each testing company uses different reference populations and ethnicity breakdowns, so ethnicity results will vary by company. At press time, the major DNA testing companies reported on the following categories that relate to Eastern Europe. Use the web address provided to see the geographic areas each category includes:

- **23andMe:** Southern European, Eastern European, and Ashkenazi Jewish <23andme.com/ancestry-composition-guide>
- **AncestryDNA:** Eastern European, European Jewish, and Finnish and Russian <ancestry.com/dna/ethnicity/eastern-european> (see our January/February 2018 issue for information on place clues in your AncestryDNA "DNA Story")
- **Family Tree DNA:** Sephardic Jewish, Ashkenazi Jewish, Finland, West and Central Europe, Southeast Europe, and East Europe <familytree dna.com/learn/user-guide/family-finder-myftdna/myorigins-population-clusters>
- **Living DNA:** Northeast Europe and the Baltics, Southeast Europe, Germanic, and Western Russia <www.livingdna.com/family-ancestry>
- **MyHeritage DNA:** Ashkenazi Jewish, Balkan, Baltic, East European, and Finnish <www.myheritage.com/help-center#/path/DNA/Ethnicity-Estimate>

DNA companies continually improve their ethnicity analyses to show heritage from more

regions. It's also important to note that because you inherit autosomal DNA randomly from your ancestors, some people on your family tree—usually, starting about four generations back—aren't represented in your autosomal DNA. This also explains why your sibling's ethnic breakdown can look different from yours: She may have inherited a couple of your Irish third-great-grandmother's chromosomes that you didn't get. And her DNA matches who are descended from that same ancestor won't be on your match list.

Ethnicity prediction is an evolving science, and in the future, it may be possible to more closely identify the source of your Eastern European DNA. In the mean time, focus on your genetic matches for family tree research, and increase your understanding of ethnicity estimates using the information your testing company provides.

5

THE RECORDS WALL

When you're researching Eastern European genealogy, record-finding obstacles increase once you get back to your ancestral village. Among the most valuable genealogical sources for these ancestors will be church and civil vital records created by clergy (mostly Roman Catholic or Orthodox Christian), Jewish congregational scribes or civil registrars. These are records of births, christenings, marriages, deaths, and burials, and they provide names, relationships, and the dates and places of births, marriages and deaths. In most cases, civil registration began only in the late 1800s. Jewish congregational records usually date from the early 1800s, and church records might date from the early 1600s or even earlier. For some areas, you also can research censuses, military and nobility records. But boundary changes, record loss and privacy laws, can make it difficult to track down and get access to records of your ancestors.

Start with FamilySearch <www.familysearch.org>, which has a large collection of digitized records from Eastern European countries. You



Examine Eastern European church records with us at <familytreemagazine.com/premium/eastern-european-church-records>. You can view a limited number of premium articles on our website each month, or get full access with a Premium subscription <familytreemagazine.com/store/family-tree-premium-membership>.

can search many of them online from home by registering for a free FamilySearch account. Some collections are restricted based on FamilySearch's agreement with the archives that houses the original records, and you may have to go to a local FamilySearch Center to view these records. Find a location near you at <www.familysearch.org/locations>.

You'll also find records and advice elsewhere online. I've listed some of my favorite Eastern European records sites in the box below, and provide lots more guidance on how to use them in my book *The Family Tree Polish, Czech, and Slovak Genealogy Guide* (Family Tree Books) <familytreemagazine.com/store/the-family-tree-polish-czech-and-slovak-genealogy-guide>.

If you're still striking out, consider hiring a professional researcher in your ancestor's area, who knows the local archives and the language. Search for a qualified researcher in the online directories of groups such as the Czechoslovak Genealogical Society International <cgsi.org>, Polish Genealogical Society of Genealogists in America <pgsa.org>, Association of Professional Genealogists <apgen.org>, and the International Commission for the Accreditation of Professional Genealogists <www.icapgen.org>.



LEAPING THE LANGUAGE BARRIER

Records in Eastern Europe are in a mélange of different languages: Latin, German, Hungarian, Polish, Russian. The language of your ancestor's records depends on the time period, religion and ethnicity of the person named in the records, and the administrative language of the nation with jurisdiction over the locality. Many Eastern European towns changed hands several times over their history.

But you don't necessarily need to become fluent in Russian or earn a degree in Slavic languages. Focus instead on learning the basics of the alphabet, as well as dates, numbers and common genealogical terms. The most important record group you'll need help with is church records, primarily baptisms, marriages and burials. Luckily, church book entries generally follow a formula, so you'll be able to pick out the names and relationships.

Early church records were written in a narrative style and read much like a sentence. These records were formulaic, with information presented in a consistent order. In the 1800s, churches began organizing entries into columns. Once you identify the column headings, you'll find that the data contained therein is fairly standard: dates, given names, surnames and place names.

Seek translation assistance for the rest of the entry. Tools such as Google Translate <translate.google.com> can help with basic terms if you can make out the handwriting. Also use word lists on the FamilySearch Wiki <www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Genealogical_Word_Lists> and in the book series *In Their Words: A Genealogist's Translation Guide* by Jonathan Shea and William Hoffman (Language and Lineage Press). In Facebook groups like Genealogy Translations <[facebook.com/groups/genealogytranslation](https://www.facebook.com/groups/genealogytranslation)>, you can post an image of a document and ask members for help.

Language barriers, perplexing places and other Eastern European genealogy hurdles might slow down your research and send you along a few twists and turns, but they need not stop you. With these tips and your research fortitude, your family tree will continue to flourish. ●

Lisa A. Alzo coaches Eastern European genealogists in Family Tree University courses and her book *The Family Tree Polish, Czech and Slovak Genealogy Guide* (Family Tree Books). Her Slovakian grandmother Verona Straka Figlar arrived at Ellis Island nearly 100 years ago.

Eastern European Genealogy Websites

Czech Genealogy for Beginners

<czechgenealogy.nase-koreny.cz>

Federation of East European Family History Societies

<feefhs.org>

Geneteka (Poland) <geneteka.genealodzy.pl>

GenTeam (Austria) <genteam.at>

Hungaricana (Hungary) <hungaricana.hu/en>

Hungary Exchange <hungaryexchange.com>

Jewish Records Indexing: Poland <jri-poland.org>

JewishGen <www.jewishgen.org>

Portafontium (Bavarian-Czech) <portafontium.eu>

Poznan Project (Poland) <poznan-project.psn.pl>

The Polish State Archives <szukajwarchiwach.pl>

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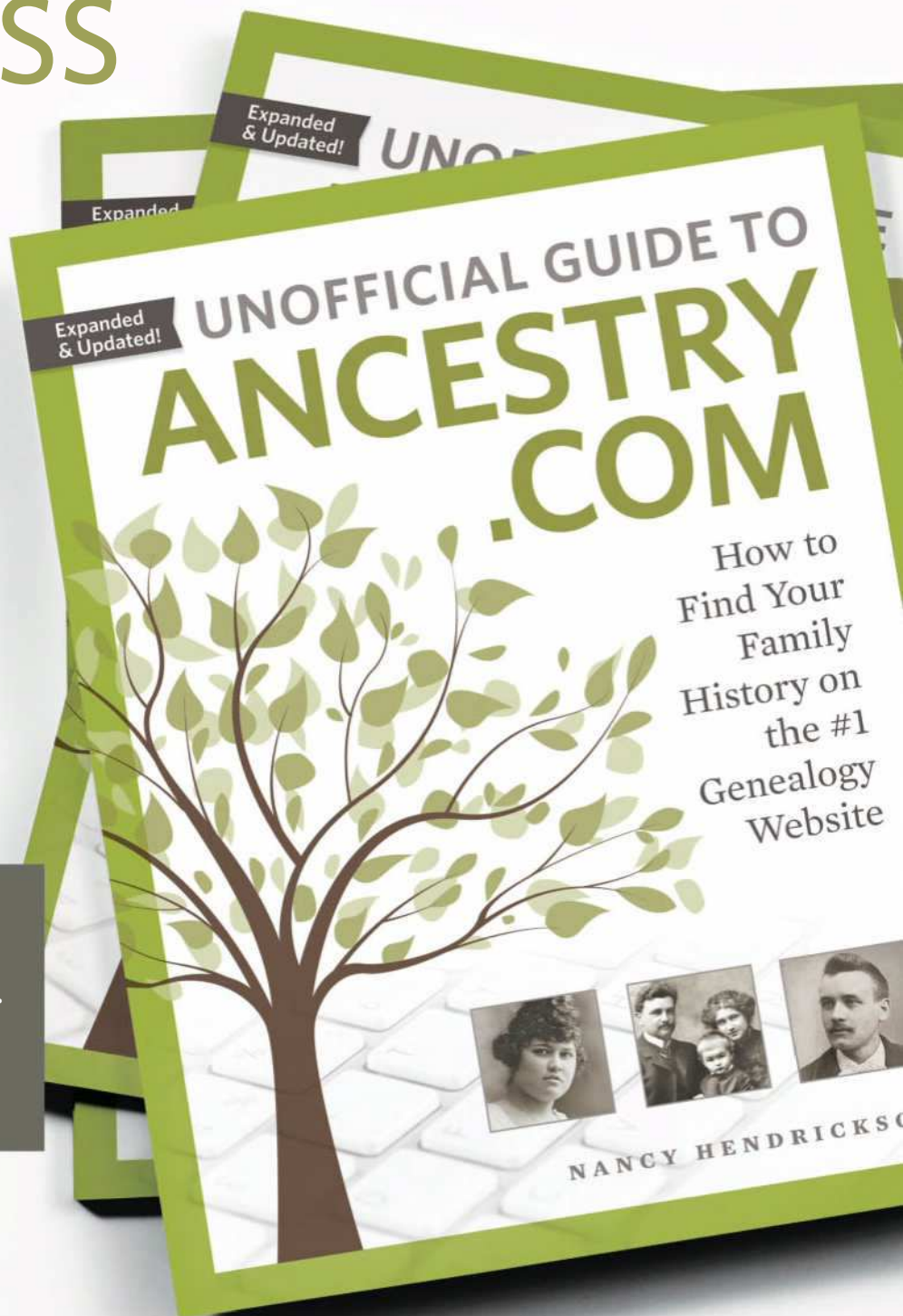
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STATE GUIDE

MAINE

by LESLIE M. STROOPE

THE PILGRIMS WHO established Maine's first colonies in the early 1600s set the state's reputation for its hard-working, fiercely independent citizens. Their autonomous spirit—Maine, for example, is the only state to declare war on a foreign power, the Aroostook War against England in 1839—guided it to early support for the abolition, women's suffrage and temperance movements. Embrace the spirit of your Original Down East ancestors (so-called because mariners traveling from western ports sailed downwind to reach the area) by diving into these Pine Tree State resources.

COLONIAL HISTORY

Before European explorers arrived in what we now call Maine, American Indian tribes including the Passamaquoddy, Penobscot, Micmac and Maliseet lived there. Pierre du Gast Sieur de Monts established the state's first European settlement in 1604, at the mouth of the St. Croix River. Three years later, Pilgrims with the Plymouth Co. started the Popham Colony on the Kennebec River. Both hamlets were short-lived.

Despite that initial setback, European colonization continued, and by 1622, Sir Fernando Gorges and Capt. John Mason had secured royal patents to the Province of Maine. Meanwhile, Massachusetts' jurisdiction crept northward until that colony annexed Maine in 1652. Gorges' grandson sold his interest in Maine to the General Court of Massachusetts in 1678 for 1,250 pounds sterling, and Maine remained in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts until it became the 23rd US state in 1820.

Maine records created before 1820 may be with those of Massachusetts.

See <www.sec.state.ma.us/arc/arcgen/genidx.htm#maine> for details on the Massachusetts state archives' holdings for Maine. Search for names of early Mainers in compiled histories indexed on subscription site Ancestry <ancestry.com>.

Portland was the state capital before Augusta took the helm in 1827 (though the legislature met in Portland until the state house was completed in 1832). See a database on the history of towns, cities and other places at <digitalmaine.com>. Note that Maine's northeastern border (with New Brunswick) was set only in 1842, after the Aroostook War.

LAND RECORDS

Though England and France bickered over Maine during the early 1700s, settlers put down roots along its rugged coast and in its rich forests. You'll find some of their names in the *York Deeds* collection, an 18-volume set of transcribed pre-1737 deeds—it's available in print or on film at most of Maine's state and university libraries, the Maine Historical Society (MHS) <mainehistory.org> and the Family History Library (FHL) <www.familysearch.org>.

By 1763, England had gained control. As the threat of Indian raids ebbed, immigrants from Ireland, England and Scotland settled in southern Aroostook County, while Acadians (French whom the British had expelled from Canada's Nova Scotia and New Brunswick provinces) made homes along that county's northern border. Massachusetts gave 100-acre lots to anyone who'd settle in Maine, doubling its population between 1743 and 1763. Later, Massachusetts authorized the Committee for the Sale of Eastern Lands to settle Revolutionary

FAST FACTS

- ★ **Statehood:** 1820
- ★ **First federal census:** 1790
- ★ **Statewide birth and death records begin:** 1892
- ★ **Statewide marriage records begin:** 1892
- ★ **State-land state**
- ★ **Counties:** 16
- ★ **Contact for vital records:**
Maine Department of Human Services Office of Data Research and Vital Statistics, 220 Capitol St., 11 State House Station, Augusta, ME 04333, (207) 287-3181, <maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/public-health-systems/data-research/vital-records>

MAINE



timeline

1607

The Plymouth Co. establishes the Popham Colony at the mouth of the Kennebec River.

1773

York residents stage their own version of the Boston Tea Party.

1839

Maine Gov. Edward Kent declares war on England over a boundary dispute with New Brunswick.

1851

The "Maine Law" bans the manufacture and sale of alcohol.

1876

Portland sees stars, stripes and snow when a freak snowstorm hits on July 4.

1912

Leon Leonwood Bean founds Freeport-based L.L. Bean.

Even today, you'll hear French spoken in much of the St. John Valley and many cities of Maine.

War debt by distributing Maine land through lotteries, grants, patents and auctions. The Massachusetts archives holds deeds, titles and correspondence through Maine's separation and statehood. Maine's state archives has microfilm of these and later land records. You'll also find microfilm at the FHL. For land sales between private citizens, check with the county clerk where the sale happened. Digitized deed books are on FamilySearch for Aroostook (1865-1900) and Piscataquis (1838-1902) counties.

Maine also granted bounty land to Revolutionary War and War of 1812 veterans. Find records at the Maine archives and digitized on FamilySearch, with indexes at Ancestry, Archives.com <archives.com>, and HeritageQuest Online <heritagequestonline.com> (a genealogy service that's free through subscribing libraries). Free downloadable indexes are at <www.maine.gov/sos/arc/research/military.html>. Maine archives staff will mail out copies of bounty-land applications for a fee, or you can view them on microfilm at the National Archives and Records Administration <archives.gov> and the FHL.

IMMIGRATION RECORDS

After statehood, Maine's population hovered near 300,000 due to Huguenot, German, Irish and French Canadian immigrants lured by jobs in the textile, shoe and lumber industries. Even today, you'll hear French spoken in much of the St. John Valley and in many cities.

Boston was the most common port of immigration for New England settlers. Arrivals also might've sailed to New York City or to Canadian ports. Search passenger lists for US ports on Ancestry and FamilySearch. Both sites also have records of border crossings from Canada starting in 1895. Canada began keeping ships' passenger records in 1865; you can search and view them on Ancestry (1865-1935) and FamilySearch (1881-1922). Library and Archives Canada has research guidance and links to its free online databases of passenger

indexes and/or record images at <www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/immigration/immigration-records>.

For immigrants before passenger lists begin in 1820, look to resources such as US and Canada, Passenger and Immigration Lists Index (both in printed volumes and at major genealogy websites) and the New England Historic Genealogical Society's Great Migration series of books and databases <www.americanancestors.org>.

CENSUSES AND VITAL RECORDS

Mainers were enumerated in the 1790 US census as part of Massachusetts, but the schedules are grouped separately

Blueberry Hills

August in Maine fairly bursts with excitement over the local wild blueberry crop. These aren't your typical grocery store berries: They're smaller, sweeter and grow naturally on low bushes in fields and barrens from the Down East coast to the state's southwest corner.

American Indians first used blueberries, fresh, dried and for preserving meat. In the early 1800s, settlers gathered berries as a public privilege on the barrens of Washington County. But only in the 1840s did Mainers begin to commercially harvest the tiny fruit. As the producer of 99 percent of the country's wild blueberries today, Maine considers the industry so economically important that it has imposed a special "blueberry tax."

Most of those berries are sold frozen. To enjoy them fresh, your best bet is a late summer trip to Maine for events like the Machias Wild Blueberry Festival, happening Aug. 17-19 this year in the Down East town of Machias <www.machiasblueberry.com>. Find more fests at <www.wildblueberries.com/the-better-blueberry/the-story-of-wild/wild-blueberry-fairs-festivals>.

1934

Prohibition is repealed, ending Maine's 83-year alcohol ban.

1947

10,000 acres of Acadia National Park burn in wildfires.

1949

Skowhegan's Margaret Chase Smith is the first woman elected to both houses of Congress.

1974

Maine native Stephen King publishes his first novel, *Carrie*.

1984

Cape Elizabeth native Joan Benoit Samuelson is the first women's Olympic marathon champion.

2015

An end-of-January blizzard dumps 27 inches of snow on Portland.

TOOLKIT

Websites

Cyndi's List: Maine <cyndislist.com/us/me>

Maine Archives and Museums <mainemuseums.org>

Maine Memory Network <mainememory.net>

Maine Genealogy <mainegenealogy.net>

Maine.gov Genealogy Resources
<maine.gov/sos/arc/research/genealogy.html>

Publications

The Dictionary of Maine Place Names

by Phillip R. Rutherford (Cumberland Press)

Genealogical Dictionary of Maine and New Hampshire

by Sybil I. Noyes, Charles Thornton Libby and Walter Goodwin Davis (Genealogical Publishing Co.)

Maine Life at the Turn of the Century

by Jack Barnes and Diane Barnes (Arcadia Publishing)

Pioneers of Maine and New Hampshire, 1623 to 1660

by Charles Henry Pope (Genealogical Publishing Co.)

Archives & Organizations

Bowdoin College Special Collections and Archives

3000 College Station, Brunswick, ME 04011,
(207) 725-3288, <library.bowdoin.edu/arch>

Kennebec Historical Society

107 Winthrop St., Augusta, ME 04332,
(207) 622-7718, <www.kennebechistorical.org>

Maine Franco-American Genealogical Society

217 Turner St., Auburn, ME 04210, (207) 786-3327,
<simplesite.com/MFGSWebsite>

Maine Historical Society

489 Congress St., Portland, ME 04101,
(207) 774-1822, <mainehistory.org>

Maine State Archives

84 State House Station, Augusta, ME 04333,
(207) 287-5790, <maine.gov/sos/arc>

Maine State Library

64 State House Station, Augusta, ME 04333,
(207) 287-5600, <maine.gov/msl>

Massachusetts State Archives

220 Morrissey Blvd., Boston, MA 02125,
(617) 727-7030, <www.sec.state.ma.us/arc>

National Archives at Boston

380 Trapelo Rd., Waltham, MA 02452,
(866) 406-2379, <archives.gov/boston>

under Maine. Search decennial census records through 1940 on Ancestry and FamilySearch. In 1837, Maine took a head-of-household census. Not all records survived, but FamilySearch has an online index of those that did. You can use an 1864 town-by-town poll list as a kind of census. Both enumerations are on microfilm at the state archives.

Maine didn't require statewide vital records until 1892. Many towns, however, have recorded births, marriages and deaths since the 18th century. About a fifth of them (listed at <maine.gov/sos/arc/research/vrtowns.html>) sent copies of pre-1892 vital records to the state. They're at the state archives and online in FamilySearch's collection called Maine Vital Records, 1670-1921. You also can request records from the town clerk where the birth, marriage or death occurred.

Visit the state archives to view vital records from 1892 through 1922, or request copies for 1923-present from the Maine Office of Vital Statistics <maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/public-health-systems/data-research/vital-records>. The Maine Genealogy site <mainegenealogy.net> has online indexes to marriages (1892-1966 and 1977-2009), divorces (1820-1903) and deaths (1955-2009). Find more vital records indexes for Maine at Ancestry, Archives.com and FamilySearch.

MILITARY RECORDS

The Maine archives holds records of state militia who fought in the War of 1812 and other wars through World War I. Federal service and pension records are available through the National Archives, with some on microfilm at the FHL or digitized through FamilySearch, Ancestry and Fold3 <fold3.com>.

NEWSPAPERS

Although no repository covers all of Maine's newspapers, the state library's Maine Newspaper Project <maine.gov/msl/newspapers> lists titles, publication locations and library holdings for papers dating to 1785. It also links to a list of free digitized papers. The Portland Public Library's Maine News Index Online <digitalcommons.portlandlibrary.com/news> offers abstracts of articles from 15 papers dating mostly to the 1990s—useful for obituaries. Also check subscription sites Newspapers.com <www.newspapers.com> and GenealogyBank <www.genealogybank.com>.

ONSITE RESEARCH REPOSITORIES

Should you be able to travel to Maine, visit the MHS library for immigration and naturalization papers, historical newspapers, city directories, and business, town and church records. Then make your way to the state library in Augusta (see holdings at <www.maine.gov/msl/services/genealogy>). Using these resources as a beacon, you'll sail smoothly on course toward your Down East ancestors. ●

STATE GUIDE

NEW MEXICO

by DAVID A. FRYXELL

NEW MEXICO'S VENERABLE city of Santa Fe is as old as historic Jamestown. In 1607, around the time those English colonists were unpacking in Virginia, Castillian-born Juan Martinez de Montoya established the first settlement where Santa Fe is now. Santa Fe wasn't officially founded until 1610, which still makes it the oldest capital city in the United States.

It's important to know where in that long and varied history your New Mexico ancestors' events fall, because most repositories catalog records by time period. Even records originally created by one agency, such as a county government, may now be housed elsewhere, for example, the state archives <nmcpr.state.nm.us>. New Mexico divided up its counties over the years, too. For instance, Doña Ana County spun off Grant County, which in turn spawned Luna and Hidalgo counties. See <publications.newberry.org/ahcbp> to learn about county formation dates and names of parent counties. Then you're ready to dive into the deep well of New Mexico's past.

COLONIAL-ERA RECORDS

New Mexico's European history began in 1536, when a small Spanish exploratory party reached the southern part of today's state and went home telling tales of the golden Seven Cities of Cibola. A search for those reputed riches brought Francisco Vázquez de Coronado around 1540. But the Spanish didn't come to stay until 1598, when Juan de Oñate traveled up the Rio Grande from present-day El Paso to establish San Juan de los Caballeros.

The area the Spaniards dubbed *Nuevo México* already had been long occupied, of course, by native groups. Evidence of

the Sandia people's habitation dates back to 25,000 BC. Other Indian cultures arrived in turn, among them the Mogollon and the Anasazi.

In 1680, the Pueblo—a diverse group of several native cultures—rose up in a revolt that sent the Spanish fleeing. They didn't return until 1692, under Don Diego de Vargas, who thwarted a second Pueblo revolt in 1696. Next came the Apache, who also proved troublesome to European attempts at settling this rugged country.

If you have American Indian roots, see <www.accessgenealogy.com/native-american> for details on New Mexico tribes. Then check the Family History Library (FHL) <www.familysearch.org> for microfilmed Bureau of Indian Affairs records, which document births, deaths, marriages, divorces, land allotments, homesteads and schooling. You can use films at the Family History Library in Salt Lake City, and check the FamilySearch website for digitized versions. Original records, spanning 1878 to 1944, are at the National Archives and Records Administration's (NARA) Denver regional facility <archives.gov/denver>.

For roots in the Spanish and Mexican era, turn to colonial censuses taken between 1750 and 1845, all published by the New Mexico Genealogical Society (NMGS). The state archives has Spanish (1693 to 1821) and Mexican (1821 to 1845) land records. Ancestry has a variety of digitized records (1821 to 1846) from the state archives.

Long before New Mexico's government began keeping vital records, the Catholic church recorded births, baptisms, marriages and deaths. Records from the Archdiocese of Santa Fe, now at the state archives, extend to colonial

FAST FACTS

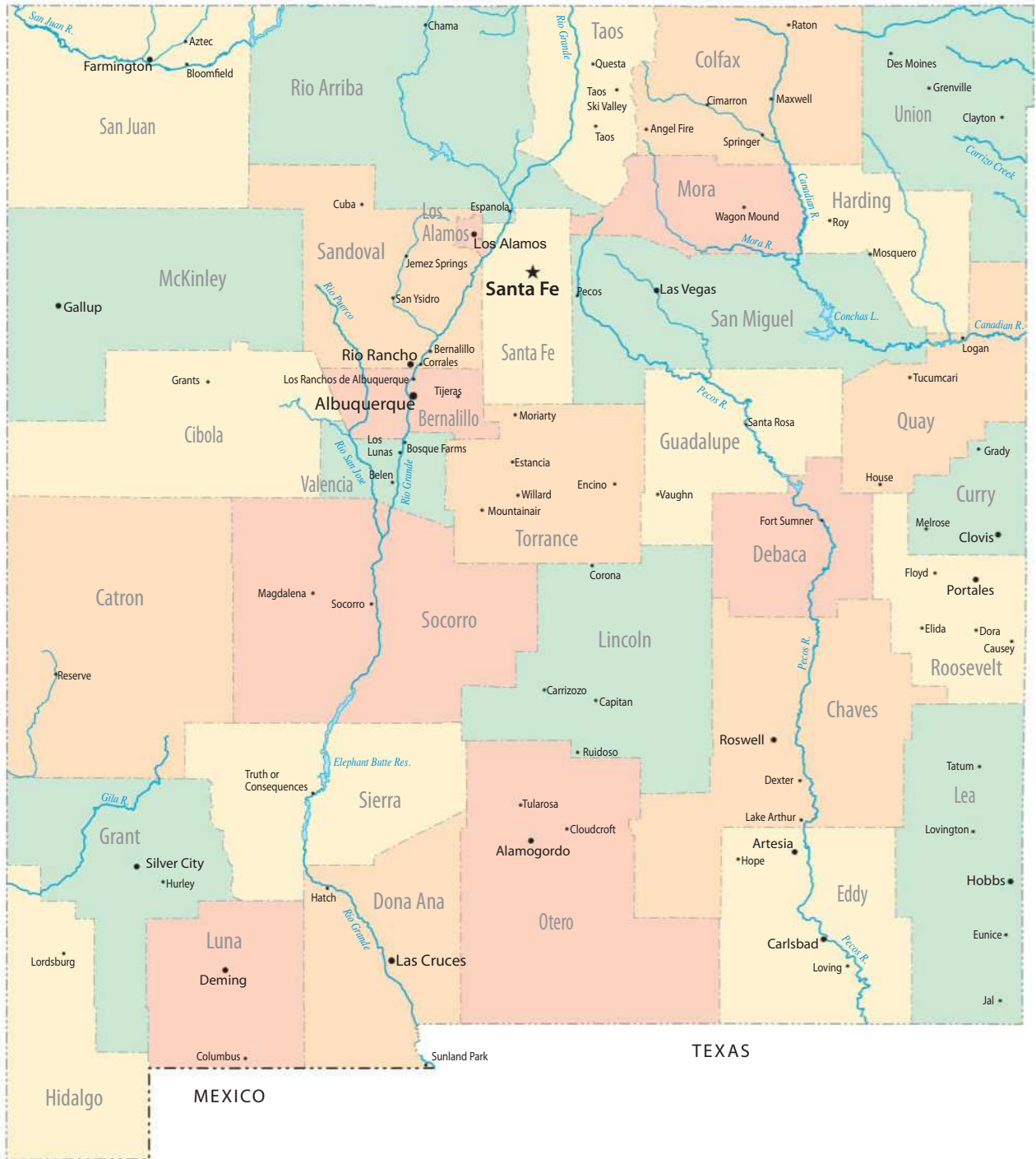
- ★ **Statehood:** 1912
- ★ **First federal census:** 1850
- ★ **Statewide birth and death records begin:** 1920
- ★ **Statewide marriage records begin:** None; kept at county level
- ★ **State-land state**
- ★ **Counties:** 33
- ★ **Contact for vital records:** New Mexico Department of Health, Vital Records, Box 26110, Santa Fe, NM 87502, (505) 827-2338, <vitalrecordsnm.org>

NEW MEXICO

COLORADO

OKLAHOMA

ARIZONA



TEXAS

timeline

1598

Juan de Oñate claims what's now the Southwest United States for Spain.

1610

Don Pedro de Peralta makes Santa Fe the capital of Spanish New Mexico.

1706

Albuquerque is founded as a presidio (military garrison).

1821

William Becknell pioneers the Santa Fe Trail from Independence, Mo.

1846

United States annexes New Mexico during the Mexican-American War.

1848

Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo grants most of New Mexico to the United States.

Santa Fe was officially founded in 1610, making it the oldest capital city in the United States.

days; FamilySearch has microfilmed them back to 1726 (run a place search of the online catalog for Santa Fe and look for a church records heading). See NMGS' online guide to locating these records at <nmgs.org/e-research> (click on Finding Aids for Church Records). The society's published volumes of extracted church records include baptisms (from 1701), marriages (from 1726) and cemetery recordings.

TERRITORIAL-ERA RECORDS

Legend has it a friendly Apache showed Spanish Lt. Col. Jose Manuel Carrasco the rich copper veins at Santa Rita del Co-bre, near today's Silver City, in 1799. A few years later, Zebulon Pike led an American expedition to New Mexico. Then in 1821, William Becknell blazed the Santa Fe Trail connecting New Mexico with Missouri, an occurrence that coincided with Mexico's independence from Spain. In 1828, the first major gold strike in the West occurred in the Ortiz Mountains south of Santa Fe.

Soldiers from the new nation of Texas invaded in 1841, unsuccessfully attempting to claim land east of the Rio Grande. After the outbreak of the Mexican-American War in 1846, however, US troops under Gen. Stephen Watts Kearny proved victorious, conquering Santa Fe and Albuquerque. The 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ended the war, awarding most of New Mexico to the United States and fixing the area's border at the Rio Grande and the Gila and Colorado rivers. The 1854 Gadsden Purchase added southwestern New Mexico and southern Arizona.

The Compromise of 1850 created New Mexico Territory, incorporating today's state plus southern Nevada and Arizona, which split off in 1863. During the Civil War, Mesilla was briefly the capital of the "Confederate Territory of Arizona." Confederate troops captured Santa Fe and Albuquerque and threatened to conquer the whole Southwest until the Union defeated him at Glorieta Pass. You can search indexes to

Civil War service records at the free FamilySearch (search results here link to record images at subscription website Fold3 <fold3.com>).

After the war, the arrivals of the telegraph around 1868 and the railroad in 1878, as well as the 1881 joining of the second transcontinental railroad at Deming, began to tame the rough-and-tumble territory. Miners and ranchers arrived; some of the ranchers battled in the turf wars known as the Lincoln County War, which made a legend of Billy the Kid.

Road to the Past

The 1,600-mile *Camino Real* was a road from Mexico City north to San Juan Pueblo (now Ohkay Owingeh) in New Mexico. Spanish explorer Juan de Oñate y Salazar defined the part of the trail in what's now the United States—now called *El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro*—in 1598.

After crossing the Rio Grande, Oñate laid the foundation for 200 years of Spanish rule in the American Southwest with *La Toma* (The Taking), a ceremony in which he claimed Nueva México for Spain. The trail his expedition blazed served as an artery of commerce until the 1880s. Colonists and missionaries came from southern New Spain to towns along the Rio Grande, bringing horses, cattle, agricultural techniques, and cultural practices. For local Indians, the road also brought foreign language and religion, exploitative rule and even enslavement.

El Rancho de las Golondrinas ("The Ranch of the Swallows") <golondrinas.org>, a historic ranch just south of Santa Fe, was an important *paraje* or resting place for *Camino Real* sojourners. Now a living history museum, it shares the story of the trail and the Hispano heritage of New Mexico.

1854

Gadsden Purchase expands New Mexico and completes the territory of the lower 48 United States.

1881

Sheriff Pat Garrett shoots Billy the Kid at Fort Sumner.

1886

After leading 39 Apache across the Southwest, Geronimo surrenders to Gen. Nelson A. Miles.

1916

Mexican revolutionary Pancho Villa raids the border town of Columbus.

1945

US detonates the world's first atomic bomb near Alamogordo.

1948

In *Trujillo v. Garley*, a federal court rules that American Indians have the right to vote in state elections.

TOOLKIT

Websites

New Mexico American History and Genealogy Project <nmahgp.genealogyvillage.com>

New Mexico GenWeb Project <nmgenweb.us>

New Mexico State Library Digital Collections
<nmstatelibrary.org/research-and-collections/collections/digital-archive>

New Mexico's Digital Collections <econtent.unm.edu>

Rocky Mountain Online Archive <rmoa.unm.edu>

Publications

Genealogical Resources in New Mexico
by Karen Stein Daniel (NMGS)

Historical Atlas of New Mexico by Warren A. Beck and Ynez D. Haase (University of Oklahoma Press)

An Illustrated History of New Mexico by Thomas E. Chavez (University Press of Colorado)

New Mexico Newspapers: A Comprehensive Guide to Bibliographical Entries and Locations by Pearce S. Grove (University of New Mexico Press)

Northern New Spain: A Research Guide by Thomas C. Barnes et. al. (University of Arizona Press)

Archives & Organizations

Albuquerque Special Collections Library
423 Central Ave. NE, Albuquerque, NM 87102,
(505) 848-1376, <abqlibrary.org/specialcollections>

Hispanic Genealogical Research Center of New Mexico
1701 4th St. SW, Albuquerque, NM 87102,
(505) 833-4197, <hgrc-nm.org>

National Archives at Denver
17101 Huron St., Broomfield, CO 80023,
(303) 604-4740, <archives.gov/denver>

New Mexico Genealogical Society
Box 27559, Albuquerque, NM 87125, <nmg.org>

New Mexico State Records Center and Archives
1205 Camino Carlos Rey, Santa Fe, NM 87507,
(505) 476-7902, <www.nmcpr.state.nm.us>

New Mexico State University, Branson Library
1305 Frenger Mall, Las Cruces, NM 88003,
(575) 646-3839, <lib.nmsu.edu>

**University of New Mexico
Center for Southwest Research**
MSC05 3020, 1 University of New Mexico, Albuquerque,
NM 87131, (505) 277-6451, <elibrary.unm.edu/cswr>

Seek pre-statehood New Mexicans in territorial censuses, which were taken as part of regular federal censuses beginning in 1850. You can find federal census records on FamilySearch, Ancestry <ancestry.com>, Findmypast <www.findmypast.com> and MyHeritage <www.myheritage.com>. Note the 1860 US census covered only the area south of the Gila River. A federally administered 1885 New Mexico census is available on FHL microfilm; an index is free on Ancestry. NMGS has published a substitute for the burned 1890 territorial census, *1890 New Mexico Tax Assessments*.

The New Mexico state archives holds a wide variety of records from territorial days, such as land grants, early probates and court papers. Its military records come from the Spanish and Mexican era, the Indian Wars and the Civil War. See <www.nmcpr.state.nm.us/archives/tracing-your-genealogy> for a genealogy guide. Albuquerque's Special Collections Library has land grants and county-level territorial records, and the Albuquerque-Bernalillo County Public Library <abqlibrary.org> has an extensive collection of early newspapers. Territorial probate documents are with US judicial district court records at the National Archives research facility in Denver <archives.gov/denver>.

Many New Mexicans rode with Teddy Roosevelt's Rough Riders in the Spanish-American War. Find an index on Fold3 and a list in *History of New Mexico: Its Resources and People*, Vol. 1, digitized at Internet Archive <archive.org>. The FHL and the National Archives have microfilmed service records, and Rough Rider records are digitized in the latter's online catalog <catalog.archives.gov>.

VITAL RECORDS

Statehood finally came for New Mexico in 1912. It was the last state in the Union to adopt statewide birth and death records—in 1920—but counties have generally kept marriage records since their inception. Birth records are restricted for 100 years and death records for 50 years, but you can search for vital information in the New Mexico Death Index Project (1899-1949) <usgwarchives.net/nm/nmdi.htm>, Western States Marriage Index <abish.byui.edu/specialCollections/westernStates/search.cfm>, and various birth, marriage and death indexes at FamilySearch.

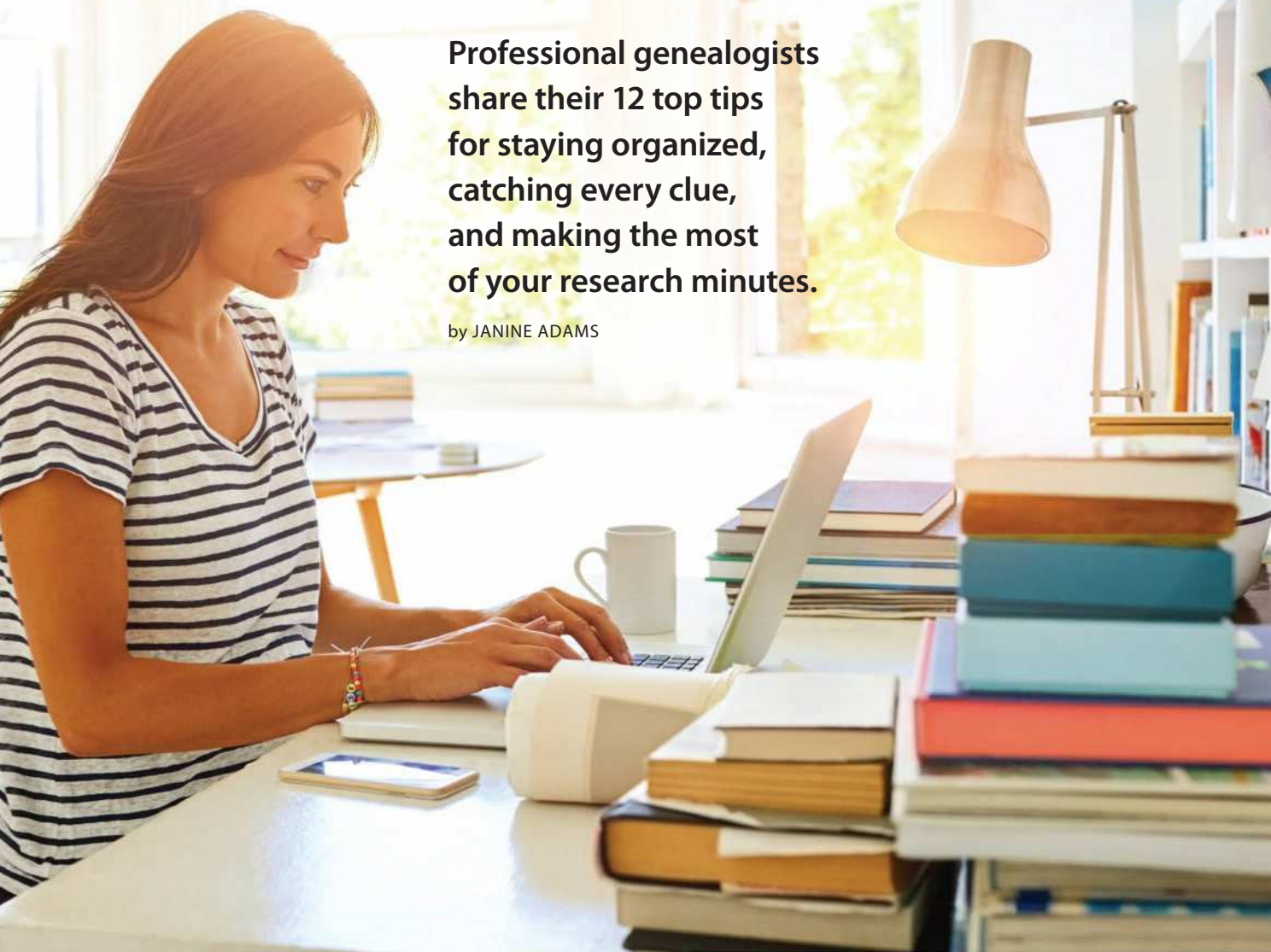
Counties may have kept birth and death records before the official 1920 start date; check with the county clerk in your ancestral county for information.

You'll likely end up wanting to visit New Mexico yourself. Who wouldn't want to spend time in a place called the Land of Enchantment? Before you go, be sure to peruse the Rocky Mountain Online Archive's <rmoa.unm.edu> collection of finding aids for New Mexico holdings at several primary repositories. Then get ready to be charmed—just keep in mind you're delving into a history as old as America itself. ●

TOP SECRETS

Professional genealogists share their 12 top tips for staying organized, catching every clue, and making the most of your research minutes.

by JANINE ADAMS



Genealogy researchers love the thrill of the hunt. When you're on the prowl for old records, it's hard to match that feeling of triumph when you finally net the will or deed you're after. Perhaps less thrilling, though, is the need to organize all the information you find. But unless you do, that information will be less useful to you or the generations that follow. As a professional organizer and an avid genealogist, I've found that organizing my research time can make my research sessions more successful and enjoyable.

Getting your research organized isn't optional if you're serious about discovering your family tree. You can bet that professional genealogists, who might trace the family trees of three or four or 10 clients at a time, have devised clever ways to organize information and maximize their research time. There's much to learn from these pros. Four of these experts divulged their top organization principles to me—and I'm sharing them so you, too, can find your family faster.

1 KNOW YOUR RESEARCH QUESTION.

Start each research session knowing what you're looking for. "Have a very specific research question in front of you so you can keep focused on it," says Drew Smith, author of the book *Organize Your Genealogy* (Family Tree Books) and podcaster at the Genealogy Guys Podcast <genealogyguys.com>.

An example might be, "Where was my great-grandmother buried?" Narrowing the focus of a session to an individual, or possibly a couple, can help you avoid distractions and keep you from feeling overwhelmed as you search online databases and consider which record might belong to your family.

D. Joshua Taylor, president of the New York Geographical and Biographical Society <www.newyorkfamilyhistory.org> and a host of PBS's "Genealogy Roadshow," limits his personal research to two or three projects—that is, questions needing answered—at a given time. "I try to be very diligent about not shifting my focus, but it's much easier said than done," he says. He finds that making the conscious decision to explore only a few specific questions keeps his focus on resources that may pertain to these questions, boosting his productivity.

Taylor sets a time limit of three to six months to finish a research project. If he hasn't found the answer he seeks by the deadline, he puts the project on the back burner and moves on to another question. He keeps a list of his projects, so he always knows which one will come into the rotation when he finishes or tables the current project. "I actually have the next two years of research mapped out."

2 BE REALISTIC ABOUT WHAT YOU CAN GET DONE.

When you're creating a plan for your research session, set yourself up for success by being realistic about what you can accomplish in the time you're able to spend. (This is good advice for organizing any aspect of your life, by the way.) This helps you avoid having to stop midstream. "I try to imagine how long it will take me to do a project, and it helps me plan what I want to accomplish," Taylor says.

There's no need to set aside a whole day to research, Smith adds. He says that for most people, two hours of research is probably the maximum before they feel mentally drained. And short sessions are much easier to fit into your busy schedule. I research every morning for about 30 minutes. My to-do list is brief for these bite-sized sessions, and they're usually productive. For more-involved research questions, I add longer sessions about once a month.

3 JOT DOWN YOUR "BRIGHT SHINY OBJECTS" FOR LATER.

You undoubtedly know the temptation of coming across unexpected information on a family member you weren't researching. These BSOs (Bright Shiny Objects) can distract you from the question you started off with. It's human nature to want to explore an unanticipated find. To stay focused on your research question, Smith suggests taking a moment to bookmark or write down the BSO so you can come back to it later. "Make a note for yourself so you won't have that [distraction] running around in your head," Smith says.

Taylor tries to anticipate distractions, deciding before starting a session what he is and isn't going to research. "I'm never as efficient when I'm going in a million different directions when I'm researching," he says. "So I try to stay focused on the research I set out to do." He keeps a log called Other People, where he notes information that doesn't fall into his current research plan but merits further investigation in the future.

tip

Organization tools with tagging or labeling systems, like Evernote <www.evernote.com> and Trello <trello.com>, let you tag information with ancestors' names, dates, places, file types, subjects and more. This cross-references your information and makes it easy to retrieve all the notes assigned to the tag you search for.

A research log lets you jump right into a task instead of spending the first 10 minutes figuring out where you left off, and keeps you from duplicating efforts.

4

KEEP A RESEARCH LOG.

A research log lets you maximize your research time by helping you jump right into a task, instead of spending the first 10 minutes figuring out where you left off. It also stops you from duplicating efforts. “To me, it’s like Hansel and Gretel with a breadcrumb trail, except the birds are not going to pick up those breadcrumbs,” says Thomas MacEntee, the genealogist behind Abundant Genealogy <www.abundantgenealogy.com>. It’s up to you to search out and keep track of these clues.

Your research log might be a spreadsheet or a list in your genealogy software where you record pertinent information: the date of your research, ancestors searched, records you used, what you found, information extracted from that source, and resources you need to consult next. For example, if you discovered a name in an online index and you need to request a copy of the record or find it on microfilm, record these tasks in your research log. MacEntee suggests checking out different research log formats and trying the one that feels best to you. “You’ve got to find the method that works best for your habits,” MacEntee says. “Otherwise you’re not going to stay with it.” He turned his own research log into a template you can download for free at <www.genealogyresearchlog.com>.

I keep a freeform log in Evernote <www.evernote.com>, with one note per research session that I file in an annual research log notebook. It doesn’t get much simpler than that. After a number of failed attempts at more complicated logs, this simple system has allowed me to create the habit of recording what I did and what my next steps are.

While searching for your ideal system, keep data portability in mind. You want to be able to download or export your data, so you can back it up, create a report with it, or import it into a new system if needed.

5

RECORD NEGATIVE FINDINGS.

Of course you record the information you find in your research. But taking note of what you *didn’t* find can be very helpful as well, Smith says. This can help you avoid checking the same sources again. Paying attention to negative results also can provide valuable clues.

“Not finding something can tell you just about as much as finding something,” Smith says. For example, if someone doesn’t show up as expected in a census or city directory, you might have an indication he or she moved away or has died. Look for him in death records and in records of other places (such as where other relatives have moved).

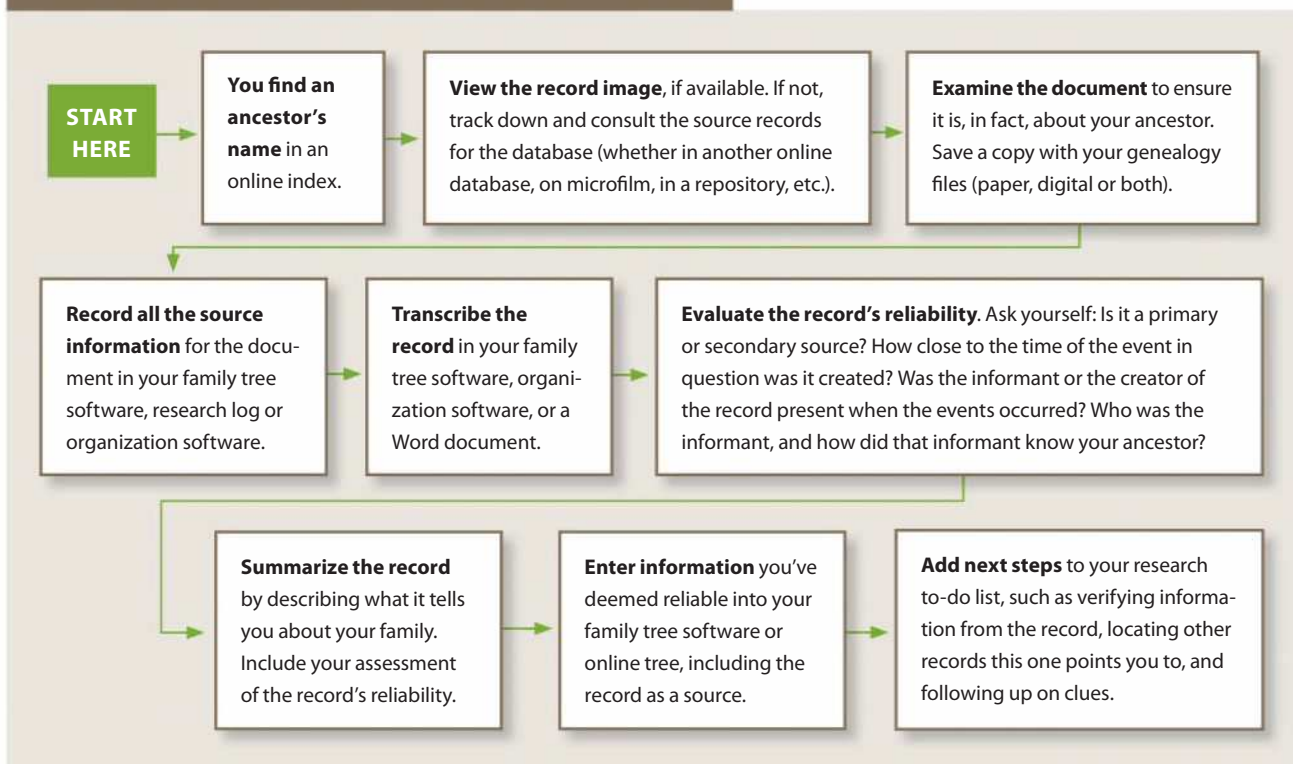
6

USE YOUR RESEARCH LOG AS A PLACE TO HOLD UNPROVEN DISCOVERIES.

It can be challenging to keep track of finds that may or may not be legitimate—theories about where your ancestor may have migrated or how a same-surname family is related to yours. You don’t want to prematurely give them credence, but you also don’t want to lose track of the clue. Your research log is the perfect place to record this unproven information, suggests MacEntee, who calls this his “sandbox.” It’s a holding place where you can explore the clues more until you prove or disprove them.

It’s safer to store these clues in your log rather than in your genealogy software or family tree. “Nothing goes into my genealogy database until I’ve proven it through the research log,” MacEntee says. That way, your database contains only sourced facts and you can feel good about sharing your tree with others.

SAMPLE GENEALOGY WORKFLOW



7 USE RESEARCH CHECKLISTS.

Creating a workflow—a step-by-step process for doing research and working with your results—can help you keep your research sessions focused and efficient. “You might even want to use a flowchart that gives you all the steps,” Smith says. You can use our sample workflow (above) or create your own that’s customized to your research.

Smith suggests creating checklist templates in a word processing document, spreadsheet software, note-taking app (such as Evernote), or another program of your choice. Copy and then individualize your checklists as needed for each project or research session. These checklists can help you make the most of the records you discover and mine every last clue. Consider using the following kinds of research checklists, and add others you find helpful:

- Your research workflow
- US and state censuses that occurred during the lifetime of the person you’re researching
- Sources you plan to consult on a library visit
- Source information to note for each record you find
- Spelling variants of your ancestors’ names
- Research log to record your findings and source citations (see tip No. 4)
- Books you own (to avoid duplicate purchases)

8 KEEP TRACK OF NEXT STEPS.

Make a note of where you left off at the end of every session. Then when you sit down to research next time, you can simply consult that note and see what’s next. I write down my next steps in my research log at the end of each session, and it’s been an invaluable time-saving habit.

MacEntee describes these notations as “a to-do list with a little more flavor to it.” “So many of us get 15 minutes in an evening to research, and then we put it down and come back a week later,” he says. “Writing down where you left off cuts down on duplication of effort.”

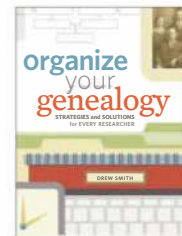
Taylor organizes his research task lists by repository, which might be a library or an online database. Then when he goes to the Family History Library <www.familysearch.org> or Ancestry <ancestry.com>, he can do all his lookups, even if they’re not related to a current research project.

9 KEEP YOUR ORGANIZATION TOOLS SIMPLE AND CONSISTENT.

The simpler the system, the easier it is to follow. “Start simple,” Smith advises. “Once you have that mastered, you can add complexity, like color coding, if you want. But I think for most researchers, the simpler the better.”

In working with my organization clients, I’ve found that complicated techniques requiring things like cross-referencing and special labels might be attractive, but they can be time-intensive to follow—so you won’t do it. It’s far better to establish an easy system that you have a fighting chance of following. I’ve tried and failed to keep complex research logs, filling out fields for where, when and what I found. I needed something simpler. When I finally started allowing myself to create a note in Evernote and write about each session freeform, I was able to create the habit of logging all my searches.

MacEntee suggests creating a digital file-naming system that makes it easy to identify the file by person or date. He also recommends descriptive file names so you know what’s in a file without having to open it. Name your files with a consistent scheme. Mine is Year-Document Type-Person-Locality, as in: *1938-death certificate-GW Adams-Indianapolis IN.jpg*. Starting each file name with a year makes the files line up chronologically in the folders on my hard drive. You might want them in alphabetical order by surname, or some other arrangement.



in the shop

Organize Your Genealogy: Strategies and Solutions for Every Researcher <familytreemagazine.com/store/organize-your-genealogy-paperback> helps you form organized research habits and manage your genealogy discoveries.

10 DO WHAT WORKS FOR YOU.

The best way to organize your research is the way that works for you, which is why Taylor urges you to personalize any organizational system you try. “Don’t try and take something off the shelf and assume that every aspect will apply to your research,” he says. Instead, take what you learn in a lecture or an article (even this article!) and customize it for your own needs, rather than trying to replicate it.

But do consider others who might one day need to sort through your research, adds Denise Levenick, blogger at The Family Curator <www.thefamilycurator.com> and author of *How to Archive Family Keepsakes*. A good system will be open and accessible to your heirs, who may need to determine what information goes with what person, and what’s important to keep.

People have a tendency to give up on trying to get organized the moment it starts to feel like it isn’t working. But instead of jumping to another strategy, or just deciding organizing your research isn’t worth the effort, tweak your techniques. Think about what is and isn’t working for you, and write it down. Can you alter the parts that aren’t working to be more like the parts that are? Often, simplifying a system by just removing the steps you’re resisting is enough of a modification to make it work. If you love color-coding file names, research log entries and paper folders, and you’ll do it consistently, great. If not, it can be an impediment. In that case, just leave out the color-coding step.

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11

DON'T RUSH.

I always urge my organizing clients to give a new system time before deciding it's not for them. Creating an organizing system that works requires creating new habits. And new habits take time to establish.

"Genealogy isn't a sprint, it's a marathon," MacEntee says. "You want to set yourself up to win that marathon in the long run." That means there's no need to cut corners. It also means that patience is a virtue.

Researching your family tree is not something you do in a week or a year. Taking time to organize your findings is just part of that process. The same holds true for inherited family archives. Levenick suggests taking your time when you're working with a family archive, to get to know what's in it. Carefully go through the photos and the letters and see what you have, trying not to disrupt the groups or order of items.

She's found that spending time with her family photos has helped her in her genealogy research. For example, she recognized a name on the family tree of a DNA match because that name appeared on an old photo. If she'd rushed through her photos, rather than carefully examining them, she might not have made this connection.

12

BE KIND TO YOURSELF.

It's unrealistic to expect that you'll be able to organize all your information or your entire family archive in a week, says Levenick. And you may not have access to all the resources, like archival quality storage materials or a flatbed scanner, that you'd like. Be kind to yourself. "You just have to do the best you can with the funds and knowledge you have," she says. "And that's okay."

Don't beat yourself up if an organizing system you read about or heard an expert talk about isn't working for you. It doesn't mean there's something wrong with you. "We're all unique," Taylor says, "and genealogy is part creativity."

Organizing your genealogy information takes time. But it's time well spent. Investing that time up front in setting up a research log, workflow or staying-focused strategies will pay off down the road in more genealogy finds. You'll save hours and effort locating information and documents.

Honestly, wouldn't you rather spend more time researching and less time looking for things? As MacEntee says, "We should be looking for ancestors, we shouldn't be looking for stuff." ●

Janine Adams, a certified professional organizer and author of the Organize Your Family History blog <www.organizeyourfamilyhistory.com>, applies the organizing strategies she uses with clients every day to her own genealogy research.

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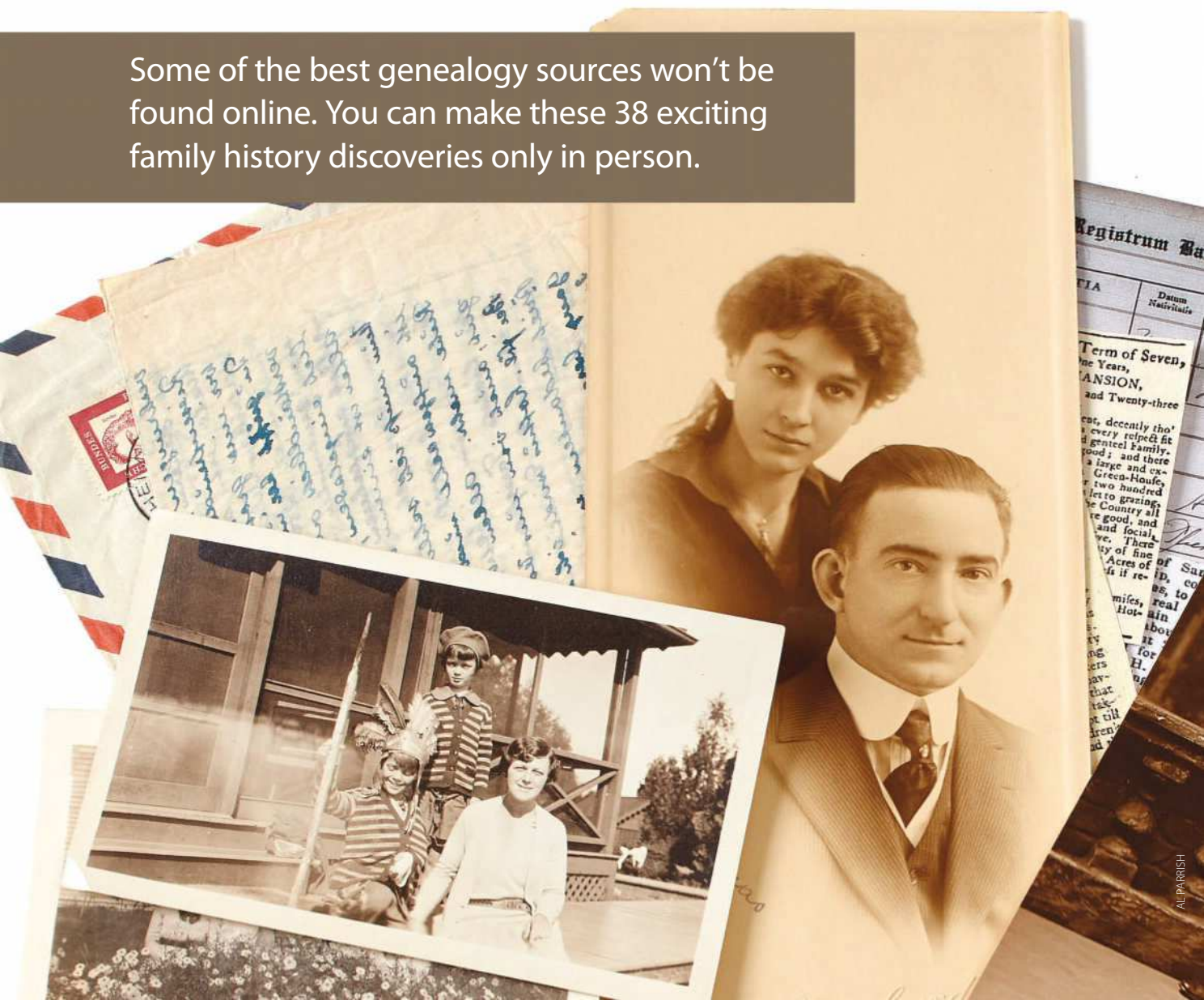
OFF THE GRID

by SHELLEY K. BISHOP

Without a doubt, the Internet is a great place to search for family history. Companies invest huge sums to bring genealogical resources to your fingertips. Archives and libraries strive to move their holdings off the shelf and onto the screen. But don't think that everything you need to discover your family history is online. Here's the truth: Only a fraction of historical resources have been digitized—and even fewer have been indexed for searching by name.

Think of your family history as a 100-piece puzzle. Perhaps 35 of those pieces might be found online. Just as it's hard to assemble a puzzle from

Some of the best genealogy sources won't be found online. You can make these 38 exciting family history discoveries only in person.



one-third of the pieces, it's hard to reconstruct your family picture from a smattering of records. By limiting your searches to only what you find online, you're missing a lot of valuable material.

What types of missing pieces might be awaiting you offline? Where and how can you find them? Come along as we explore 38 resources you'll commonly need to obtain in person. We'll start with sources closest to home, move to the local courthouse, expand the search to state and federal records, and wrap up with some favorites to help you build a complete and colorful picture of your ancestors.

RELATIVE DISCOVERIES

A hunt for home sources—the memorabilia and knowledge of family members—is an essential launching pad for any genealogical search. You and your relatives could have treasures tucked away in drawers, closets, cabinets, basements and attics. Take a look around your home first, then reach out to family who might have collected or inherited family belongings. Explain your interest in family history, and say you'd welcome the

chance to visit and look through photos or keepsakes with them. Respectfully ask if you can scan or take pictures of things in order to make copies.

1 Photographs. Photos literally put faces with the names of your ancestors—provided you can identify them. If loose pictures aren't labeled, you'll need to do some detective work. Show the photos to relatives to see who they recognize. Who owned the photos before you? What clues can you derive from backgrounds, cars, clothing, hairstyles and ages of children? For help understanding these clues, see *Family Photo Detective* by Maureen A. Taylor <familytreemagazine.com/store/family-photo-detective-u9824>.

2 Scrapbooks. Pictures in scrapbooks and albums are usually grouped by event or place, and often labeled—both big pluses. Scrapbooks also may contain ticket stubs, calling cards, announcements, clippings, or other ephemera, offering a fascinating look at the life of the album's creator.

3 Baby and memory books. Baby books chronicling the first few years of a child's life might include a family tree or guest list from a christening or birthday party. Wedding albums, school yearbooks, and grandparents' memory books are similarly rich family sources.

4 Letters and postcards. Letters offer reliable firsthand accounts of births, weddings, illnesses, deaths and other family news. They may give clues to relationships and provide unknown places of residence. They also yield insight into the writer's character and motivations. Even simple postcard greetings can connect scattered branches of the family tree.

5 Diaries and journals. Diaries and journals bear witness to events and relationships from the past, offering an intimate glimpse into your ancestor's life. In addition to the weather (a universal topic), you could learn about relatives, neighbors, religion, holidays and occupations. Look for small pocket diaries as well as larger journals. Appointment books, calendars and address books also might hold personal notes and link your ancestor to other family members and their records.

6 Family Bibles. Notations in Bibles can give dates of births, marriages and deaths that took place before vital records were kept. Some Bibles had special Family Record pages designed to serve as a register. While these can be wonderful sources of information, you should carefully evaluate them for accuracy. Someone might've completed





This 1922 school souvenir booklet from a one-room schoolhouse names the school, students, and their teacher. Can you spot the sibling groups? Look for keepsakes like this to document unique pieces of your family puzzle.

the pages later, from memory. Use what you find to spur research into other records.

7 Certificates, cards and programs. Many couples received keepsake certificates of marriage from officiants or places of worship (these aren't the same as official, government-issued marriage certificates). Certificates also recognized baptisms, cradle rolls, confirmations and first communions. Funeral homes published funeral cards and programs commemorating the deceased. Cards announced graduations, awards, and retirements. Also look for company newsletters and church bulletins.

8 Yearbooks and school souvenirs. It's fun to see a relative's picture in a school yearbook. What activities was he or she involved in? Do you recognize other names? School memorabilia can take many forms: report cards, award certificates, activity programs, sports letters. Some schools published year-end souvenir booklets listing children and teachers. Any school keepsake is one more puzzle piece you couldn't find otherwise.

9 Newspaper clippings. If you find obituaries in mom's or dad's files, note any names and residences of survivors, and investigate unfamiliar names to see if they're extended family. You also might find clippings about weddings, anniversaries, accidents and social events.

10 Military memorabilia. Servicemen and women often saved mementos of their experiences. Keep an eye out for draft papers, discharge certificates, ID cards or tags, pins, awards and more. My father-in-law saved some of the daily briefings from the ship he served on in World War II. These keepsakes provide essential service information and add family history context.

11 Personal records. Deeds, cemetery lot purchases, citizenship papers and other important documents may be among family papers. Passports, social security cards, medical records, family copies of birth and death certificates, and other records all widen your base of knowledge.

12 Family histories. Perhaps you're not the first in your family to take an interest in genealogy. Did someone from an earlier generation put together a history or family chart? If so, you have a path of helpful clues to follow. Remember that the writer could have made mistakes, so test each claim by seeking out historical records to verify it.

13 Living relatives. A relative's memory is one of the greatest assets a genealogist could hope for. Reach out and ask to talk with your aunt or cousin. Prepare questions in advance, but be sensitive if the person seems reluctant to discuss certain events. Ask open-ended questions to invite longer responses and take along pictures to prompt memories. Prioritize interviewing older relatives.

COURTHOUSE FINDS

Courthouses and town halls hold a wide variety of historical records. Many old birth, death and marriage records that local governments created are now available online. Other records may be digitized but not indexed (so you can browse them, but can't search). Or you might find an online index with no document images.

Most places have *some* court records or indexes online, but how much varies widely depending where you're researching. Usually, the following record types are available only in person. Before you go looking for them, have a good idea of the type of record you need and when it was created.

Note that some courthouses have moved old records to offsite storage, a historical society or the state archives. Call or email to check availability: “I’m looking for a probate file from 1888. Do you have those?” Some facilities may be willing to send you copies for a fee. Microfilmed records are often available at the state archives as well.

14 Probate files. Records of an estate settlement name heirs and describe relationships. They include probate dockets, will books, administration bonds, inventory and sale records, and original probate files. Even if a will doesn’t name heirs, the final account or other estate papers might. Examine every paper, front and back. I once found an ancestor’s date of death scribbled on the back of a small receipt in a probate packet—the only place I ever found it.

15 Guardianship records. Guardianships are closely related to probate records. Courts appointed guardians for minor children who had inherited property, even if one parent was still alive. Dockets, bonds, record books and more may reveal names of parents, grandparents or other relatives, and may state the children’s dates of birth.

16 Deeds. Deeds recording the transfer of property, which might be real estate or enslaved humans, help you establish identity, residence and relationships. Look for an index to grantors (sellers) and grantees (buyers) to identify the volume and page number with your ancestor’s deed, then locate the entries in the corresponding books.

17 Tax records. Both real estate and personal property tax records are helpful to genealogists tracking an elusive ancestor. Tax records, studied year over year, can show when a person moved into the area or came of age, when he moved away or died, and whether more than one person of the same name lived in an area. Check both county and state auditors’ records for surviving copies.

18 Divorce records. While some online indexes to divorces exist, you’ll typically need to get the actual record from a courthouse or other repository. Check court dockets, indexes to order books and journals, and judgment books for potential

tip

If you can’t go get a record in person, consider hiring a researcher through the local genealogical society or the Association for Professional Genealogists <www.apgen.org>.

Societies and libraries collect family trees, Bible records, news clippings and other unique materials in “vertical files” arranged by surname or subject.

divorce cases. Once you’ve found a reference, look for a microfilmed record or request a copy of the decree or case file from the county clerk’s office.

19 Pre-1906 naturalizations. Most naturalizations made in federal courts are online, but until 1906, an immigrant could file naturalization papers at nearly any civil, superior, district or circuit court. Check courts in places your ancestor lived for a declaration of intention (also called “first papers”), a petition for naturalization (“second papers,” filed after a required residency period), and/or a certificate of naturalization (declaring the person a citizen). Online or printed indexes may help your search.

20 County homes and orphanages. A pressing need to care for the poor and disabled, especially after the Civil War, led to the establishment of county homes. You might find patient registers and other records of these facilities in county offices or the state archives. The amount of detail provided varies, but they’re worth seeking out.

21 Coroner reports. Some cities and counties have preserved past records of coroner investigations of suspicious and accidental deaths. Relatively few are on microfilm or online. Contact the courthouse or local genealogical society to ask about an index to coroner reports or case files, and years of coverage for available reports.

STATE SOURCES

Records created by state agencies constitute another group of routinely used resources. These records may be with the agency or at a state archives or library. Privacy laws restrict some records to immediate family; check the state health department or vital statistics office. If you have questions about access, contact the agency for clarification.

22 Recent vital records. While it’s fairly common to find 19th-century vital records online, 20th-century records aren’t nearly as prevalent. Many states restrict public access to state-issued birth and death certificates. All shy away from posting online records of people who could be

in the shop

Learn how to find deeds, probate files and other court records in our Courthouse Research Crash Course video class download <familytreemagazine.com/store/courthouse-research-crash-course-ondemand-webinar>.

living. Most digitized death certificates concern deaths that occurred at least 50 years ago. What you will find online are *indexes* to modern births, marriages and deaths, which you can use to request record copies from the issuing agency, when permitted by law. Some states offer transcriptions or noncertified versions of birth and death records for genealogy purposes.

23 Adoption records. Adoption records are protected to varying degrees in every state. Some are sealed by court order, while others are available only to the adoptee or immediate family. Old records may be open. Bear in mind that early adoptions might've been informal arrangements, such as apprenticeships or placement with relatives.

24 Asylum records. Records of asylums, state hospitals and other mental health institutions are frequently closed or restricted to those who can demonstrate a close kinship to the patient. Find

out where the institution's records are held (the state archives is a good starting place), and inquire about access. Unlike patient records, asylums' cemetery records are typically open.

25 Prison records. The state archives is also a good place to begin a search for state or county prison records. As these are public record, access shouldn't be a problem. Newspapers can help you learn the date and place of incarceration.

FEDERAL RECORDS

The federal government created some of genealogists' most-used sources. US census records are widely available online, as are many pre-1900 military records and WWI and WWII draft registrations. But many more federal resources are still offline, particularly those at the National Archives (NARA) in Washington, DC, and its National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) in St. Louis, Mo. You can research these records in person, hire a professional to get them, or order copies for a fee (see <archives.gov/forms>).

26 Military service records. Did your ancestor serve in the War of 1812? Check the War of 1812 Service Record Index at Fold3 <fold3.com> for the details you need to order his record. Service records for Civil War soldiers are a mixed bag: Fold3 has complete files for some states but only index cards for others. If the file you want isn't online, you can order it from NARA.

27 Bounty land files. The federal government granted bounty land to veterans of the Revolutionary War, War of 1812 and Mexican War. While some files were digitized with pension files, many haven't been indexed or microfilmed. Check US Bounty Land Warrant indexes at Fold3 or Ancestry <ancestry.com> for the information you need to request a file.

28 Civil War pension files. Civil War pension files are potentially robust sources of information about the soldier, and sometimes his widow and minor children. A small number of pension applications are digitized on Fold3, but for most, you'll

This Civil War pension application links Benjamin F. Roush of Polk County, Mo., with his service in Ohio. Pension files can provide valuable information like the soldier's birth date, birth place, name of wife, marriage date and place, and names and birth dates of minor children. Index cards to Civil War pension applications are online, but the vast majority of the files themselves haven't been digitized.

Declaration for Invalid Pension.
(Act of June 27, 1890.)

I, the undersigned, being a Clerk of a Court of Record or a Notary Public or Justice of the Peace having a Seal,
do hereby certify that the following is a true and correct copy of the original as the same appears in the records of the Court of Record or Notary Public or Justice of the Peace in and for the County and State of Missouri, County of Polk, ss:
On this 11 day of November, A. D. one thousand eight hundred and ninety one
personally appeared before me, a Clerk of the County Court in and for the county and State of Missouri, duly authorized to administer oaths, Benjamin F. Roush aged 53
years, a resident of near Horn of Hannasville, county of Polk, State of Missouri, who being duly sworn according to law, declares
that he is the identical B. F. Roush who was enrolled on the 15 day of June, 1863, in Company A, 16th Battalion of Ohio National Guards - Capt A. C. March
in the war of the Rebellion, and served at least ninety days in the service of the United States and was
honorably discharged at Leitchville, Ky. Eccles Co Ohio on the 2nd day of April, 1866
That he is unable to earn a support by manual labor by reason of loss of the left arm and right eye and on account of the injuries received in the service of the United States and in the line of his duty as a soldier
That said disabilities are not due to his vicious habits, and are to the best of his knowledge and belief permanent. That he has never applied for pension under application No. _____ That he is a pensioner under certificate No. _____
(If a pensioner, the certificate number only need be given; if not, give the number of the former application, if one was made.)
That he makes this declaration for the purpose of being placed on the pension roll of the U. S. under the provisions of the act of June 27, 1890. He hereby appoints
Le. L. Allen of Bolivar Polk Co Mo. his lawful attorney to prosecute his claim, and agrees to allow him a fee of ten dollars. His postoffice address is Hannasville Polk Co Missouri
Attest: Benjamin F. Roush
(Signature)

need to find the soldier's index card on Fold3 or Ancestry, then order the file from NARA.

29 Federal land entry case files. The US government sold land to individuals through a system of land offices. Begin your search at the Bureau of Land Management General Land Office Records site <glorerecords.blm.gov>. If you find a land patent for your ancestor, order the complete land entry case file from NARA. Applications filed under the Homestead Act of 1862 are particularly rich, with witness testimony and information on the applicant's citizenship status.

30 WWI and later service records. Military records of veterans discharged more than 62 years ago (1956 or prior) are available for research. Request WWI and later records from the NPRC in St. Louis using the instructions at <archives.gov/st-louis/military-personnel>. Records of those discharged after 1956 are available only to the veteran or next of kin. Be aware that a 1973 fire at the NPRC destroyed or damaged over 17 million records. (See the May/June 2018 *Family Tree Magazine* for more on this fire.)

31 Social Security applications. Applicants for the Social Security program provided birth information, including parents' names, on SS-5 forms. You can request a copy of a deceased person's SS-5 from the Social Security Administration. But unless you include evidence that the person and his or her parents are all deceased, or that the parents were born more than 120 years ago, pertinent details will be redacted. Download a request form at <www.ssa.gov/forms/ssa-711.pdf>.

32 US Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) files. From 1940 to 1944, every noncitizen over age 14 living in the United States had to fill out an Alien Registration Form (AR-2). Alien Files (called A-Files) were created for all new immigrants after April 1, 1944. Copies of these forms and files predating May 1, 1951, are available through the USCIS Genealogy Program <www.uscis.gov/genealogy>. The USCIS also manages records including visa files (documenting arrivals under the Immigration Act of 1924) and registry files (documenting pre-1924 arrivals for whom no passenger record could be located).

MORE OFFLINE GEMS

A variety of other valuable resources await researchers willing to do some legwork. As noted earlier, these records may be digitized for some places, but in most cases, they're still with the

original archive. Don't miss out on potentially key discoveries such by assuming that if you can't find records online, they don't exist.

33 Church records. Church registers can document births, marriages and deaths where vital records are missing, with additional clues such as baptismal sponsors. Records may be at the original church, another church it merged with, denominational archives, or an area historical society. Look for print and microfilm sources as well.

34 Funeral home records. Funeral homes gather information on the deceased and on those handling arrangements. Although these are private records (some older ones are published), the home may be willing to send you copies.

35 Cemetery records. Although more and more burial information is on websites such as Find A Grave <www.findagrave.com>, cemeteries also have records such as burial card files, purchase registers and sexton's records. Contact the cemetery to see what's available. See the *Family Tree Cemetery Field Guide* for more help finding these records <familytreemagazine.com/store/family-tree-cemetery-field-guide-r5530>.

36 Genealogical society publications. Genealogical and historical societies have produced scores of resources about their communities. Check the websites of local societies and search local libraries' genealogy collections.

37 Surname files. Societies and libraries collect family trees, Bible records, news clippings and other unique materials in "vertical files" arranged by surname or subject. If you can't visit, call or email the library to ask whether files exist for your surnames.

38 Manuscript collections. Similarly, archives keep unpublished materials like letters, journals, local militia rosters, business ledgers, and more in manuscript collections. Search online catalogs of state, university and regional archives for collections related to your ancestor's place and time.

Even in this digital age, delving into records you must access offline is essential to completing your family puzzle. Resources abound in basements, courthouses, churches, archives and libraries, just waiting for you to venture out and find them. ●

Shelley K. Bishop is a professional genealogist in Dublin, Ohio. Visit her Buckeye Family Trees website at <www.buckeyefamilytrees.com>.

Finding Connections

Professional genealogist John Vanek's successful search for his sperm-donor father—and the men's thoughtful navigation through their new relationship—offer inspiration to birth family searchers.

by SUNNY JANE MORTON

Three years ago, longtime genealogist John Vanek casually told his parents he planned to take a DNA test for family history. Within days—before he even took the test—his folks revealed startling news: He'd been conceived through sperm donation. Almost immediately, Vanek knew two things. First, his chances of identifying his birth father were slim. Second, he was going to try anyway.


And he succeeded—so well, in fact, that he started a genealogy research business specializing in tracing unknown parentage. (For more information, see <www.genealogicresearch.com>.) But this story isn't just his own. It also belongs to Vanek's biological father, Bruce Olmscheid, who never expected to know the offspring conceived with his donated sperm. Their reunion has launched them and their families into uncharted relationship waters. Biology may define their past connection, but whether and how they share the future is entirely up to them.

EARLY INTEREST

John Vanek was about 11 when he first encountered two subjects that would change his life: family history and DNA. Naturally curious about all types of science, he read a book about DNA replication. But a school family history project really captured his interest.

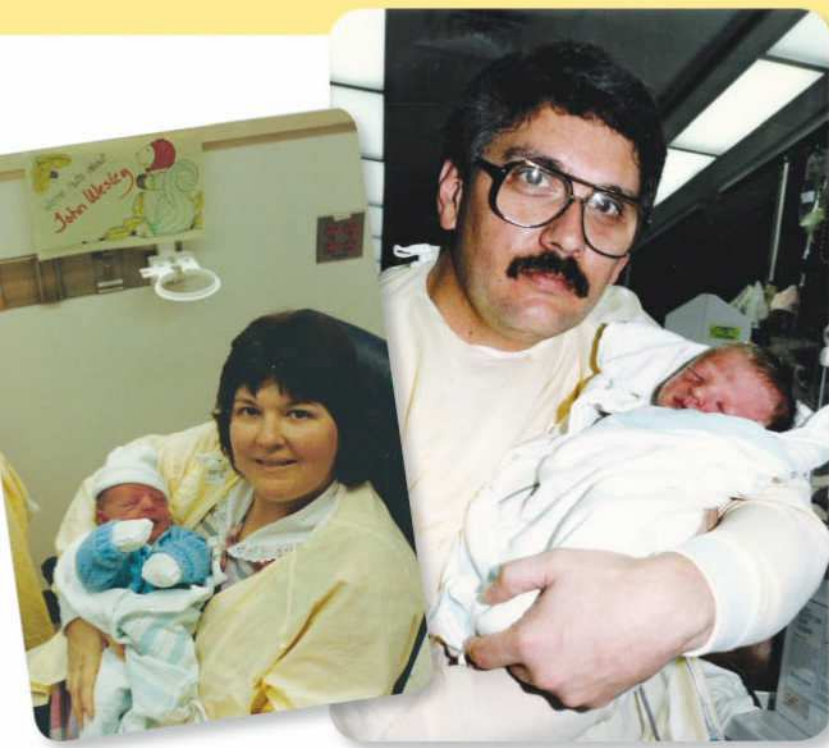
"I was asked to make a family tree and bring it to class," he recalls. "I now realize that for me, the assignment was not about making a family tree, it was about talking to my grandparents. I think that's the goal of these projects: to realize that people had lives before you came along."

For Christmas that year, his parents gave him an early version of Family Tree Maker software <www.mackiev.com/ftm>. He started entering what his grandparents told him and adding to it as his research skills grew.



Two families meet: John Vanek (center) and his wife, Pamela Vanek (right front), along with their daughter, Eliza, and John's parents Wes and Maureen Vanek (left), traveled to California to visit John's biological father Bruce Olmscheid (center, back) and Bruce's husband, Eric Lueck.





When John's parents Maureen and Wes Vanek conceived their son through sperm donation, everyone expected the donation would remain a secret and the donor would stay anonymous.

Vanek's sixth-grade interests intersected again when, in 2015, his wife, Pam, gave him a DNA test for their third anniversary. "She knew I was deep into genealogy, and that I'd been watching as the various tests hit the market. I always knew the DNA technology would just get better and the price would keep coming down."

Vanek told his parents about the test during a trip to the Minnesota State Fair. "I can identify the exact moment they looked at each other and knew they needed to tell me the truth. They declined to go on the next ride with us, and I'm sure they discussed it." By the end of the week, his parents came over for a sit-down with their only child.

"Don't expect to find any Vanek cousins in your DNA matches," they told me. "You were conceived by sperm donation." Vanek's life was set into motion by a live sperm donation at a fertility clinic, with the donor in one room and his parents in another. "My wife jokes with me, 'You were conceived by turkey baster.'"

TAKING IN THE NEWS

"The pieces fell into place about why I was an only child. I wasn't upset then and I'm not now." At the time, though, everyone involved expected that the donor would remain anonymous and the parents wouldn't tell anyone. No one knew that 30 years later, genetic genealogy testing would make it possible to unravel the secret.

"They were told, 'We'll find you a match that's similar enough to the father that it doesn't raise

any questions'" Vanek says. "My dad is 6 feet, 6 inches. I was always the tallest kid in class. It all fit." His parents always found a reason not to tell him. "From their perspective, I totally get it: I'm their only child. There was a level of uncertainty about how I would react. It's complicated to tell your kid after you've said nothing for so long."

As he was still absorbing the news, Vanek asked what his parents knew about his biological father. They knew he'd try to identify the donor. But the live donation would make things difficult: no tracking number, no paper trail.

The nurse had shared a few details with Vanek's parents. "He was about 6 feet, 3 inches, and of mostly German ancestry. He was musical and he was a medical student at the University of Minnesota." Being a thorough genealogist, Vanek called the clinic to confirm the lack of records. The office had moved, the physician was gone and the 25-year retention policy for records had expired.

So he pursued the slender clues in this trail of evidence. "Even before I got my DNA test back, I started looking through the University of Minnesota yearbooks and commencement programs," Vanek admits. "But it's a huge state university and it's the Upper Midwest. Half the people who came here to school were German."

As he moved ahead with his search, he had a couple of concerns. First, he didn't want to upset his parents, with whom he is close. Candid talks with them helped calm those fears. The other question: What did he hope to accomplish if he found his biological father? This one wasn't so easy to answer.

"I said I wanted to learn my medical history," says Vanek. "And that was true, but to be honest, it wasn't my primary motive. This was the most unexpected and unbelievable genealogical puzzle to have about myself and I needed to at least *try* to solve it." He admits that until the time came, he never fully decided what he'd do if he found his biological father. It's not an approach he recommends. "I think it's important for people who are doing this to think about it ahead of time."

DNA SEARCH STRATEGY

Vanek had ordered his autosomal test through AncestryDNA <ancestry.com/dna>, and he asked his mother to test as well. He knew that the enormous pool of DNA profiles (now about 10 million) would

increase the chance of finding helpful matches. He also knew he could set aside any matches shared with his mother; the remainder would presumably be related through his biological father. (This strategy would be more difficult for those whose parents are from an endogamous population, where individuals tend to marry within the group and thus share a lot of DNA.)

Before his test results were ready, Vanek outlined his research strategy. He planned to search the family trees of his genetic matches for German families in Minnesota. “I just had to hope my biological father was right about his ancestry. And then, if I could find two cousins who had a proven relationship, I would try to figure out at least roughly how I fit in. I later learned that this is called triangulation.”

“When I first got my results back, I was really disappointed,” Vanek says. “I had only five cousin matches at the third-to-fourth cousin range, and four of them were on my mom’s side.” He had one third cousin DNA match on his biological father’s side. “She turned out to be about 102. Her grandniece administered her test. This was the only cousin match I ever contacted.” Later, as he discovered more matches, he’d study their linked family trees for information.

Those using genetic genealogy to trace unknown parentage generally identify ancestors who are common in matches’ trees, then trace the families forward in search of descendants who fit what little is known about the mystery parent. By comparing his 102-year-old cousin’s tree to another cousin who matched them both, Vanek was able to zero in on two couples born in Germany in the 1830s. “I was pretty confident that two of these four people were my direct ancestors, but I had no idea where they fit in my family tree. Between them, they had 124 grandchildren. Trying to come forward to the 1950s through that many lines was not going to happen.”

As he extended the family trees of both couples, Vanek waited nearly a year for more cousin matches to surface. A breakthrough came not long after his daughter was born. “Another cousin [match] showed up with a single branch of Germans from the right county. As soon as I saw the surnames, I knew I’d solved the puzzle.” One name—Olmscheid—matched a man in the trees Vanek had built from those first two couples. “Helen Steffes was a



“I have a dad, and I am not looking to replace him,” says John Vanek (left) of his father, Wes.

granddaughter of one of the two target women, by the only child she had with her first husband. Helen married Paul Olmscheid.”

Paul and Helen were born around 1900, about right to be Vanek’s great-grandparents. He figured that if a son of theirs was his grandfather, he had a good shot at Olmscheid being his father’s surname. So he typed *Dr. Olmscheid University of Minnesota* into his web browser. “And there it was on the WebMD profile of Dr. Bruce Olmscheid: ‘Graduated from the University of Minnesota Medical School in 1987.’ It was surreal.” It was also sudden: Within 10 minutes of clicking on the

7 Tips for Birth-Parent Searchers

- 1 Ask any known biological relative(s) to test with the same company you do. Their shared matches can help you connect other matches to the biological parent you’re seeking.
- 2 Expand your search for DNA matches by testing with multiple companies and sharing your raw DNA data with every possible database. Our book *The Adoptee’s Guide to DNA Testing* by Tamar Weinberg <familytreemagazine.com/store/adoptee-guide-dna-testing> can help you use genetic genealogy in your search.
- 3 Follow every research lead. Be patient. Waiting for DNA matches to appear may be your most reliable path to identifying the parent you’re searching for.
- 4 Study the trees of your matches for common people and places. While waiting for additional matches, build a tree for your shared matches.
- 5 Wait to reach out to potential birth parents or siblings until you’ve confirmed the relationship as confidently as possible.
- 6 Before contacting these relatives, define what you’re looking for. Family health history? Information about the circumstances of your birth? A relationship? Understand that your hopes might not be realized.
- 7 Be sensitive to the feelings and concerns of your existing relatives as you explore new connections with biological ones.



John Vanek and his wife, Pam (center, with their parents on their wedding day in 2011), joke that John was conceived “by turkey baster.”

new DNA cousin match, Vanek was looking at a picture of his biological father.

Research in birth records and obituaries confirmed Bruce was a grandson of Paul and Helen. “It’s important to verify every step of your research,” says Vanek. “You don’t just start calling people by that name and saying, ‘I think you’re my dad.’ It’s not something to take lightly.”

As it turned out, Vanek isn’t actually a third cousin of his 102 year-old match. Rather, they’re first cousins, three times removed, with a half relationship because the cousin descends from the target ancestor’s subsequent marriage. But the genetic distance was accurate enough to point him to closer relatives.

Now what? Vanek’s unsettled concern returned once he had his biological father’s name and contact information. “Having information and having a relationship are two separate things,” he says. “I already had a family and”—he’s only half-joking—“it’s hard enough now to get to all the family functions.”

He spent weeks drafting a nine-page letter. “I told him about myself and my background; I think I sent a picture. I let him know that I wasn’t after his money and didn’t need a father figure. I told him how I found him and who our ancestors were.” He shared his hope that Olmscheid would verify he’d been a sperm donor at that clinic and would share his family medical history. He didn’t ask to meet, or mention his baby daughter.

Vanek sent the letter to Olmscheid’s office. “I didn’t want to mess up his life and shock his family by sending it to his house. I included a cover letter in case someone else opened his mail.” He wanted to respect Olmscheid’s privacy—which Olmscheid later said he appreciated.

THE MAN BEHIND THE DONATION

Olmscheid grew up in rural Minnesota with the dream of becoming a doctor. “In 1983, I started medical school after I got divorced and came out as a gay man,” he says. A flyer posted at the school asked for sperm donors for couples struggling with infertility.

“I needed the money. But also, I liked the idea that I could anonymously help someone have a family. Back then, gays didn’t have kids. I knew it would give me a lot of satisfaction to make a difference in the lives of a couple.”

Vanek thinks he donated about a dozen times, but received no follow-up report on the success of the inseminations. “For years I joked with my friends, ‘What would I do if a kid ever found me?’ And then one day it happened.”

“I was in my office in Beverly Hills,” he recalls. “My husband, Eric, and I were leaving the next day for a two-week trip to the Holy Land. While finishing up all the last-minute details, I opened this thick envelope. The first paragraph said something like, ‘Hi, Dr. Olmscheid, My name is John Vanek, and I’m quite certain I’m your biological son. I just want you to know I exist and I want to thank you.’”

His initial reaction was joyful. “It worked! At least one of the times I donated was successful.” He read the letter privately at home before sharing it with Eric. They told their families via text.

Olmscheid carried Vanek’s letter to Israel. He read it repeatedly, discussed it with Eric and spent several hours composing his response. “Essentially I said, ‘I’m really thankful you tracked me down. I’m happy to hear that your life is good, that you’ve brought such joy to your parents.’ I told him about my family and medical history. I was so happy to hear from him.”

The letter went off in early November and Olmscheid watched for an answer every day. But Vanek didn’t reply until after the New Year. He apologized for the delay, explaining that he hadn’t wanted to disrupt the holidays. “I really respected that,” Olmscheid says. “He didn’t want it to upset his family or mine.” They began emailing, and Olmscheid suggested a meeting. Vanek agreed and then revealed that he had a little daughter.

“I was even more thrilled!” Olmscheid says. “I told my brother and my friends and they immediately started calling me Grandpa.”

in the shop

John Vanek shares his research strategies in depth in our video class, *Finding Biological Family: A DNA Case Study* <familytreemagazine.com/store/finding-biological-family-a-dna-case-study-3346>.

Olmscheid and Eric flew to Minnesota and met Vanek at a restaurant. The reunion went beautifully, inspiring an even bolder idea: On the spot, Olmscheid invited Vanek and the baby on a road trip to visit his grandmother—Vanek’s biological great-grandmother—who was just shy of 99 years old and still lived in Minnesota.

“It gave us 100 miles in the car together,” Olmscheid recalls. “It felt surreal, as if I was watching us from a television camera. We talked about growing up and school and hobbies, and what it was like to learn about me. I was thinking, ‘Someday we’ll wish we had recorded this conversation.’”

Olmscheid and Eric returned to meet Vanek’s parents. The potentially anxiety-producing get-together went smoothly. “Though they never thought they’d be in that position,” Vanek says, “my parents were eager to thank the man who had helped them have a child.”

His great-grandma’s 101st birthday party gave Vanek’s family the opportunity to meet more Olmscheids. “My aunt said, ‘I’m so thrilled that you and Eric have your own family,’” Olmscheid recalls. “There’s nothing better than family.”

Most recently, Vanek’s family flew to California to stay with Olmscheid and Eric for several days. “It was both wonderful and exhausting, especially with a 2½ year-old,” Olmscheid says. “It felt like a really long date. I wish we lived in Minnesota. It would be much easier to have this relationship develop if we could just pop over for Sunday dinner. But the time together also made this thing more real.”

CHARTING A FUTURE

Not every birth parent search story is as happy as Vanek’s. He credits slow steps toward a relationship and setting realistic expectations. “The most challenging part has been figuring out what sort of relationship it is and how it affects the other relationships we already have,” Vanek says. “I’ve tried not to upset my parents, or to create jealousy, because that’s not what this is about. My parents have been nothing but supportive.”

His new bond with Bruce has only strengthened those existing relationships. “The whole thing has made me more aware of how important relationships are. Not only have I formed a new, positive relationship with Bruce, but it’s made me revisit the great relationship I have with my dad.

I understand and appreciate him in a whole new way now.”

At nearly 60, Olmscheid’s sense of self has changed. “I’ve always just been Bruce. Now I’m potentially—ok, I’m going to use the word—Bruce the *father*, the *dad*, the *grandpa*. It’s leading me to a place I didn’t anticipate I’d focus on at this time of life. I have a new sense of the trajectory of time, of getting older, of generations.” He values more time with his brothers and has forged new connections with a brother who has children.

Olmscheid acknowledges that the revelations genetic genealogy enables affect more than just the people directly involved. “What about our spouses?” he asks. “I’m the one who’s feeling the excitement and creating a new relationship. I have the blood connection. It’s different for Eric. He’s protective of me and of us. Something like this affects a lot of people’s lives, not just mine and John’s.”

It’s Vanek’s daughter—and his newborn second child—who triggers Olmscheid’s deepest response. “I want to spend more time with her and I want to see her grow up. As far as I’m concerned, that little girl cannot have too many people loving her. Am I going someday to be ‘grandpa’ or will I always be ‘Bruce’ [to my biological grandchildren]? Every time I feel the excitement of ‘I’m a grandpa,’ I remind myself I’m really not. But I am. But I’m not. I’m not quite sure what my role or title is.”

So for both men, the story is a work in progress. “I have a dad and I am not looking to replace him,” Vanek says. “Because of that, it’s been hard for me to create a new paternal relationship when it didn’t exist for the first 30 years of my life. Bruce and I get along well, and I’ve enjoyed every minute we’ve spent together. But is it a paternal relationship? No. At least not yet. However, my daughter is little. I think her relationship with Bruce and Eric can be something more.”

“I’ve learned to take it one day at a time and move it in a direction it feels like it should be that day,” says Olmscheid. “I can’t control what it will be in 10 years, but I hope ... Eric and I can come into their lives in a way that doesn’t take away anything from what they already have.” ●

Contributing editor **Sunny Jane Morton** is the author of *Story of My Life: A Workbook for Preserving Your Legacy* <familytreemagazine.com/store/story-of-my-life>.

Not long before this issue went to press, Vanek’s DNA research led him to a half-brother, also donor-conceived. “We’ve met and were surprised at how many similarities we share,” Vanek says.

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IN APRIL, MILITARY HISTORY ENTHUSIAST Antonin DeHays was sentenced to prison, followed by probation and community service, for theft of records from the National Archives. Among the items he stole were 300 ID tags from American military whose planes were shot down in Europe during World War II. Some bore bloodstains and burn marks, which DeHays highlighted in online auction listings. About 95 percent of the stolen records and mementos have been recovered, though DeHays permanently damaged several in removing National Archives markings. Read about the archives' efforts to prevent theft and locate missing items at archives.gov/research/recover. ●

Q Two women in my family became nuns. How should I research them?

A Roman Catholic religious communities of women typically kept thorough records, including a nun's birthplace, parents' names and sometimes even the parents' birthplaces.

Keep in mind that "nuns" are typically cloistered and contemplative, whereas "sisters" do good works in the world.

The key to tapping the available information is identifying the religious communities to which your relatives belonged. Check obituaries and home sources such as letters. An abbreviation after a woman's name, as in "Sister Mary Benedict, OCD," indicates her religious community, Order of Discalced Carmelites. Find a guide to many of these abbreviations at <www.catholic-hierarchy.org/country/xrel.html> or in *The Official Catholic Directory* (P.J. Kenedy & Sons). The directory also provides addresses for each community's national (or provincial, for large orders) motherhouse or headquarters. These institutions have archivists to whom you can address your questions.

Many religious communities now have websites. Search for the community online, then look for a link to contact the archives. The Discalced Carmelites, for example, have a form at <www.carmelitaniscalzi.com/en/general-curia/archivist-fr-angelo-lanfranchi>.

If you run into roadblocks researching nuns, try the census. Note that women typically adopt new names when joining religious communities.

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A census listing might name the community as part of the nun's residence data. You might also find clues in histories of churches and religious communities where your ancestor lived. (Women religious, cloistered or otherwise, have always have been quite independent, so don't be discouraged if a local parish knows nothing about them.)

Be aware that many communities of women religious have disappeared or gotten smaller in recent years. Even if your ancestor's community is no longer active in the area, try reaching out to the motherhouse. Communities have merged or changed names, and many have similar names. If your first effort draws a blank, try asking, "Are there other communities that people sometimes confuse with yours? May I have their names?"

Another caution is that communities may be reluctant to share information for privacy reasons, even about a nun who died years ago. Such reluctance also may stem from the belief that women religious gave up contact with the outside world and their lives there—as symbolized by adopting a new name.

Q Can you recommend an online source for understanding handwriting, particularly old German letters and records?



A Yours is actually a two-part challenge: first, deciphering old handwriting, and second, translating what you decode. Help is available for each, although we aren't aware of a digital solution where you could upload an image of foreign handwriting and click for an English translation. You can find genealogy translation experts for hire by searching for "old German script translation services."

For general help with old handwriting, see <www.familysearch.org/indexing/help/handwriting>. The tutorials at <script.byu.edu/Pages/home.aspx> specifically cover German handwriting, as well as English, French, Spanish, Dutch, Italian, Portuguese and Latin. Find guides focused on hard-to-read old German handwriting at <www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Germany_Handwriting> and in the links at our article on the topic <www.familytreemagazine.com/premium/7-websites-for-deciphering-old-german-script>.

Once you've successfully transcribed a handwritten document, of course, many sites can help you translate it into English. Both Google <translate.google.com> and Bing <www.bing.com/translator> offer powerful, free translation tools for many languages. Google even lets you upload a text file for translation; follow the instructions at <support.google.com/translator/toolkit/answer/6306383>. Search for genealogy translation groups on Facebook as well, and take care to follow posting guidelines. ●



David A. Fryxell
is the founding editor of
Family Tree Magazine. He
now writes and researches
his family tree in Tucson.



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Dog License

1 **2** **3** **4** **5** **6** **7**

DOG LICENSE.

Cavendish Vermont. Registered No. 8

This Certifies That Joseph V. Atherton the owner or keeper of a Dog kept in this town, and described as follows, viz.:

Size, 80 pounds age, 1 yr. color, Black breed, St. Bernard sex, Male Further description,

has paid the sum of One DOLLAR and caused the said Dog to be registered, numbered and described as above stated, and the same is hereby LICENSED for one year from April 1st, 1885.

Dated the 31 day of March A. D. 1885.

Elliott C. White - Town Clerk.

The Dog must wear around its neck a collar distinctly marked with its owner's name and its registered number.

1 Counties and towns issued dog licenses to regulate ownership and identify lost and stray dogs. Ireland's first dog license law dates to 1865. In the United States, sources give credit for the first dog licenses to both Fredericksburg, Va., in 1853, and New York City, in 1894.

2 Dog licenses are little-used resources that can help you pinpoint an ancestor's location on a given date. Joseph Atherton applied for this license March 31, 1885, in Cavendish, Windsor County, Vt. Five years prior, the 1880 US census lists him in Cavendish with his mother, Roxana I. Atherton.

3 This control number identified the dog's owner in the event of loss or violation of animal control laws.

4 Most places recorded the dog's size, age, color, breed and gender. This form has space for further identifying information.

5 Joseph paid \$1 for a license in effect for one year. Annual renewal records provide a yearly timeline for the ancestor (and the dog), a good substitute for missing census, city directory and other records.

6 Like most places, Cavendish required each dog to wear a collar with the owner's name and the registration number. Localities later issued metal tags with this information and rabies inoculation details. You might find collars, tags and veterinary records among home sources.

7 Surviving licenses or registers are usually among city or county court or clerk records. The New York Public Library holds the city's dog license registers from 1894 to 1904 <archives.nypl.org/mss/92>. FamilySearch <www.familysearch.org> has some licenses on microfilm; search the online catalog for the keywords *dog license*. ●



George G. Morgan is a genealogy speaker and author. He also cohosts the Genealogy Guys podcast with Drew Smith <www.genealogyguys.com>.

WHAT'S NEW

Genetic Genealogy Catches a Killer



During an April 25 news conference, Sacramento sheriff Scott Jones and District Attorney Anne Marie Schubert announced an arrest in the Golden State Killer case. After genetic genealogy research led police to DeAngelo, they matched DNA he'd discarded to crime scene DNA.

POLICE IN CALIFORNIA used genetic genealogy website GEDmatch <www.gedmatch.com> to identify a suspect in the notorious Golden State Killer cases. Joseph James DeAngelo, now 72, is accused of a series of rapes, murders and other crimes across California from 1976 to 1984.

GEDmatch is a free site where you upload your raw DNA data from a testing service such as 23andMe or AncestryDNA, then find matches and perform advanced analyses. Police uploaded a profile generated from crime scene DNA and researched matches, much as any genealogist would do. They identified a set of third-great-grandparents and created 25 family trees of descendants, eventually leading to DeAngelo.

The news shone an unexpected limelight on GEDmatch. The site's co-founder Curtis Rogers said in a statement that he wasn't aware of its use in the investigation, adding, "It has always been GEDmatch's policy to inform users that the database could be used for other uses, as set forth in the Site Policy."

The case raises new privacy questions for genetic genealogists. If genetic genealogy can help identify a criminal, what else could it be used for? Does your DNA profile subject your relatives to as-yet-unknown risks? Will people stop testing?

As always, you should understand the terms of service when you use a genetic genealogy site. Don't upload someone's DNA results to any service without his OK. And don't take a DNA test if you're concerned about privacy risks.

REUNITING BIRTH FAMILIES WITH DNA

As part of its DNA Quest initiative <www.dnaquest.org>, MyHeritage has given away 15,000 free DNA kits to adoptees and those looking for relatives put up for adoption.

Applicants received the 15,000 kits, worth more than \$1 million in total, on a first-come, first-served basis, although MyHeritage also considered financial need. Their results are due starting in July.

The project is being developed with an advisory board of genetic genealogy and adoption search experts including Blaine Bettinger, author of *The Family Tree Guide to DNA Testing and Genetic Genealogy* (Family Tree Books); CeCe Moore founder of DNA Detectives <thednadetectives.com> and consultant on "Finding Your Roots with Henry Louis Gates Jr.," and Susan Friel-Williams, vice president of the American Adoption Congress <www.americanadoptioncongress.org>. According to MyHeritage DNA, "Future phases may include other countries as well as additional circumstances, such as children of sperm donors and non-paternity events."



Through DNAQuest, MyHeritage is donating 15,000 DNA kits to birth family searchers.

WHAT'S NEW continued

LIVING DNA BUILDS FAMILY NETWORKS

Living DNA <www.livingdna.com>, the genetic genealogy company that rolled out genetic matching for customers earlier this year, will introduce a public beta version of Family Networks later in 2018. This DNA-driven matching system, in private beta at press time, reconstructs test-takers' family trees based on genetic information, sex and age—no prior genealogy research required.

The company can provide matches for users who upload DNA data from other testing sites, and claims its tools can predict relationships with more specificity than those sites. "The technology behind Family Networks runs through millions of ways in which users in the network are related," says Living DNA founder David Nicholson, "and automatically works out which genetic trees are possible."



David Nicholson and Hannah Morden are founders of British-based Living DNA.

National Trust Shares Success Stories

EACH YEAR SINCE 1988, the National Trust for Historic Preservation has issued a list of America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places. The listing can shed light on a problem and spur preservation efforts. On the 30th anniversary of the list, the trust shared the stories of once-endangered sites that are now thriving and telling their part of American history:

- The Antietam battlefield in Maryland appeared on the first endangered places list in 1988, when developers wanted to build a shopping mall there. It's now one of the best-preserved Civil War battlefields.
- The Penn School, which educated African-American students from 1862 through the 1950s, was listed in 1990. It's now a museum and part of the Reconstruction Era National Monument.
- Little Rock Central High School, where nine African-American students were denied entry in 1957, in defiance of the 1954 *Brown vs. Board of Education* Supreme Court ruling, was declared endangered in 1996 and repaired in 1998.



Arkansas' Little Rock Central High School was a focal point of school integration in 1957.

- The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Los Angeles almost demolished the Cathedral of St. Vibiana. After it was listed as endangered in 1997, it was renovated into an event center and restaurant.
- The trust listed Utah's Nine Mile Canyon in 2004, when heavy industrial traffic on dirt roads produced dust damaging to ancient cultures' pictographs and petroglyphs. The road was paved in 2014.

Read more preservation stories at <savingplaces.org/guides/11-most-endangered-retrospective-guide>.

FINDMYPAST ACQUIRES TWILE

Genealogy website Findmypast <www.findmypast.com> has acquired the timeline-creating website Twile <www.twile.com>. The latter, winner of an innovation award at the 2016 RootsTech genealogy conference, lets you upload your family tree and create an interactive timeline of family events and set them against the context of world history. Twile's storytelling features will become available on Findmypast, enabling you to automatically display your family history research in a media-rich timeline. The Twile team will continue to develop and maintain Twile and there are no plans to change the features and services Twile users currently enjoy. Twile co-founder Paul Brooks will be overseeing all future integration work and regular updates will be shared with Twile subscribers.

DNA Q&A

Half Mom, Half Dad



Q Why do siblings with the exact same biological parents have a different genetic makeup?

A You and your siblings each received exactly half of your DNA from your mother and half from your father. But which half of each parent's DNA you got is completely random.

Think about your DNA in terms of genealogical records. You might have a binder with birth certificates, marriage licenses, wills and other records, neatly arranged by surname or record type. We all carry a similar genetic record of our ancestors in our chromosomes.

But when that genetic history is passed to the next generation, it's not in nicely tabulated binders. Instead, before creating you, your mom popped open the rings on her genetic binder, dumped all the documents into a big garbage bag, and shook it up. Then she closed her eyes and dipped into that mixed-up bag, pulled out half the documents, copied them, and put them in a binder for you. Your dad then completed your binder with half of his own DNA documents, randomly chosen.

This same process happens for each offspring. So while you might get the 1900 Tennessee census and your maternal great-grandparents' marriage record, your sister received the 1912 passenger list for the ship *Elizabeth* and your paternal grandparents' listing in the 1940 census. But maybe you both inherited your grandmother's christening record and the WWI draft registration card for your grandfather. Chances are, you and your sister have about half of the same records, and the other half of your records is different. Your siblings are genetically half the same as you are. Just half!

When you and your partner go through the process of mixing up each of your records and randomly giving half to your children, each child will end up with about a quarter of the same records as each grandparent.

This is one reason genetic genealogists test multiple family members. They're trying to collect as much of the genetic record as possible to essentially reconstruct ancestors' "DNA binders" from each relative's assortment of passed-down records.

Diahan Southard

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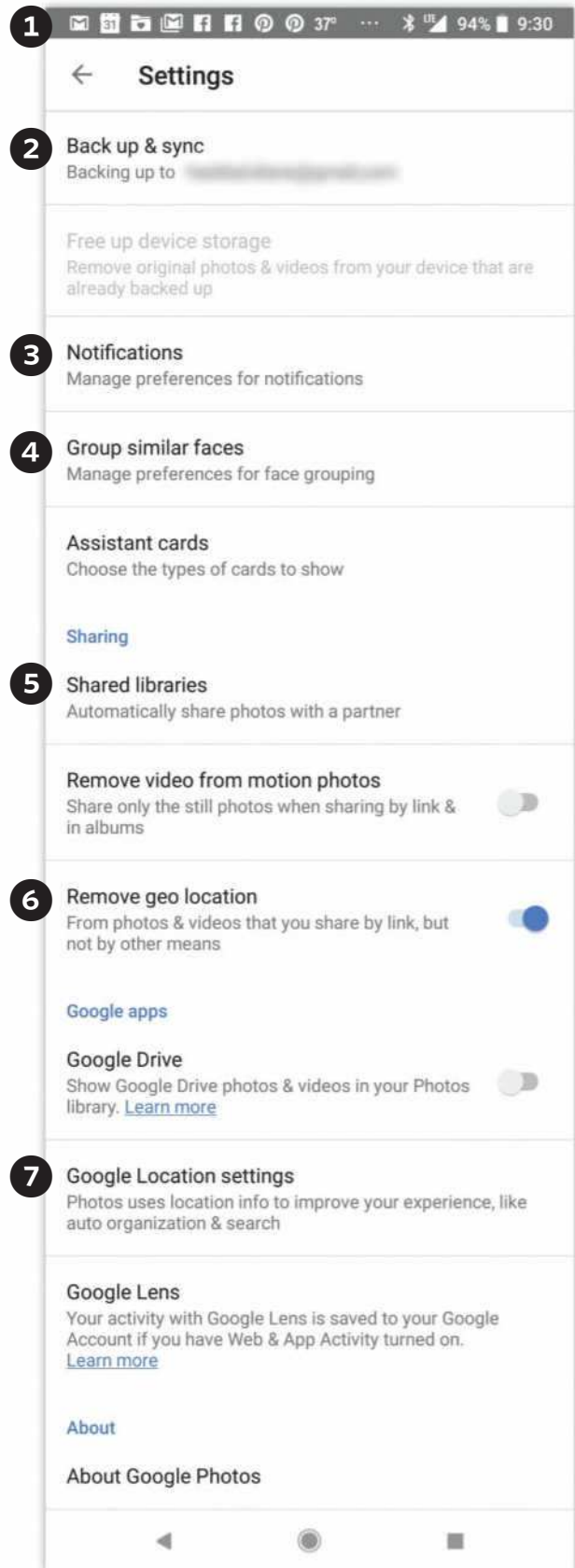
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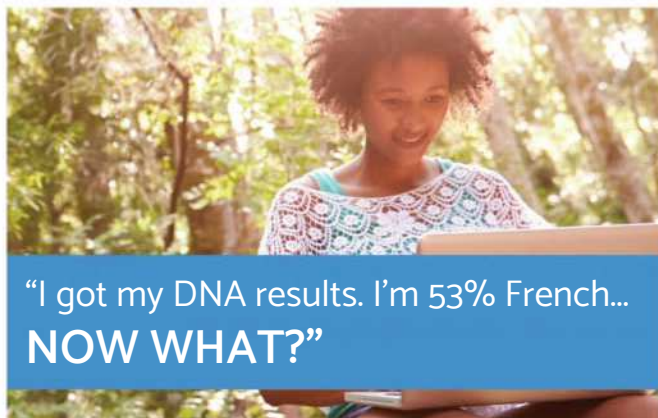
HOW TO

Back Up Your Pics to Google Photos

- 1** Download the Google Photos app from the Play store. Open the app and sign into your Google account if prompted. Tap the three lines at the top left, then Settings, and you'll see these options.
- 2** Tap to turn on "Back up & sync," and you can view your mobile photos in your Google account on your computer. New photos will be automatically added to Google photos. You can set upload file size and opt to use cellular data or just wireless for syncing.
- 3** Get reminders about photo sharing, sales on printed photo books and more.
- 4** Manage Google's facial recognition efforts, which identifies photos with similar faces.
- 5** Designate one or more people with whom all your images on Google Photos will be shared.
- 6** Opt to delete embedded location data when you share Google photos via a link.
- 7** Decide whether to let Google automatically tag your photos with locations.

➤ Google Photos gives you free, unlimited storage for photos up to 16 megapixels. Higher-resolution photos count against your 15mb free Google storage limit—that is, unless you have a Pixel phone or pay to upgrade.





“I got my DNA results. I’m 53% French...
NOW WHAT?”

RECEIVING YOUR DNA RESULTS IS EXCITING, but...

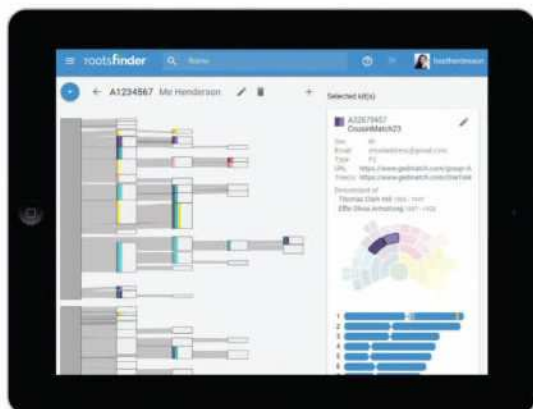
you soon discover ethnicity estimates aren’t that useful for research. But your DNA can tell you more about your family history than ethnicity. Happily, pursuing your research with DNA isn’t about spreadsheets, complicated formulae and complex software anymore. **RootsFinder.com**, a new FREE website, makes researching family history with DNA data easy.

Import your GEDCOM or FamilySearch tree

The first thing you’ll notice is RootsFinder’s clean, user-friendly workspace. To import your DNA, first prep your data with GEDmatch.com Tier 1. Now, you can compare results from Ancestry, 23andMe, FamilyTreeDNA, and other testing companies.

Color code matching kits

Click on a kit number to open the Kit View. You can import a Mini-tree for your matches, then use a navigational fan chart to easily access your tree. Choose from 8 colors (great for color blind users) to tag matches and color code them in your tree.



Analyze segment matches with color coding

Analyze segment matches

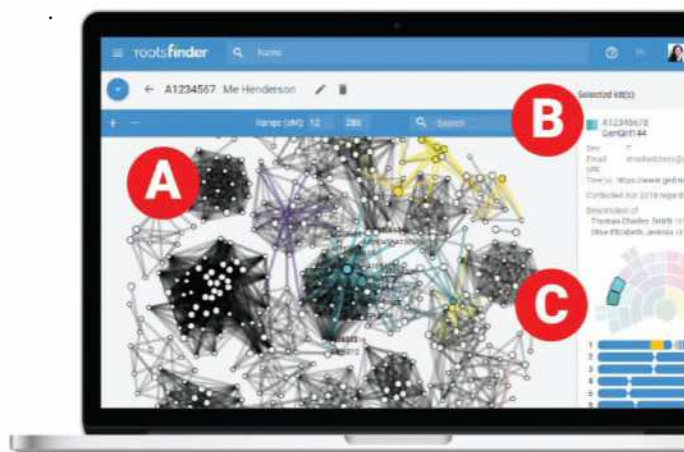
Did you know one chromosome could have segments from all your ancestors? Color coding in the Segment View lets you see which segments are shared by which branches of the family.

Map your matches

Seeing matches in the same geographic area as your ancestors helps shed light on how you may be related. Once you import a Mini-tree for a match, their locations will show up alongside your own.

Use the Triangulation View to see related clusters

Color coded clusters of matching kits show how kits are related to each other.



- A. Lines between nodes show relationships. Closer relatives are connected to several clusters.
- B. Clicking on a node opens the Kit View with kit information, notes, common ancestors and a Chromosome browser.
- C. Distinguish between paternal and maternal lines of the same branch.

Do more research

There are many reasons you might share DNA segments with others. You need to document those relationships. **RootsFinder.com’s** research tools make your research faster and smarter. The WebClipper turns 30 minutes of data entry into less than five by instantly copying records to everyone. With built-in Research Logs, To-Do’s, GenSmarts, hints to FamilySearch, FindMyPast, AmericanAncestors, and others, search hints for Ancestry and MyHeritage, RootsFinder puts real power in your research. You can even sync with FamilySearch but control what information is copied or imported.

ROUNDUP Six Tools to Do More with Your DNA



1 DNA.Land <www.dna.land>

Upload your raw DNA from 23andMe <www.23andme.com>, AncestryDNA <ancestry.com/dna> or Family Tree DNA <www.familytreedna.com> and take a survey about your ancestry and family health history. You'll get free reports on your ethnic breakdown, shared segments with matches (called Relative Finder), and physical and wellness traits. In return, your DNA data will be used for lifesaving medical research.



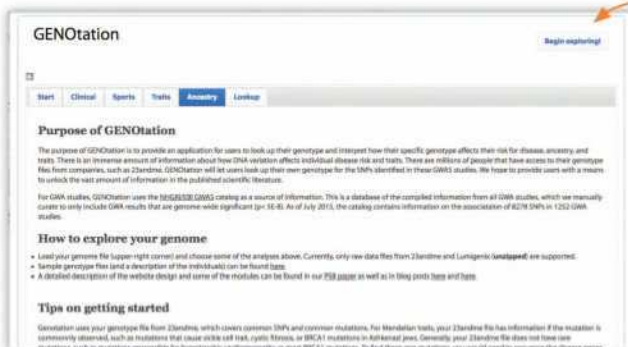
2 DNA Painter <www.dnapainter.com>

This free tool lets you color-code DNA segments on a profile of your chromosomes. For example, Family Tree DNA's chromosome browser shows that a match and I share significant DNA segments on chromosomes 1, 4, 6 and 15. I "painted" those segments and labeled them with the names of my match and our shared ancestors. This makes it easier to tell if other matches share these same segments—which probably means they're descended from the same people.



4 Genome Link <www.genomelink.io>

Testers with 23andMe, AncestryDNA or MyHeritage DNA can get a free report here on more than 30 physical and personality traits. My results were highly accurate. For example, the report says I'm unlikely to have red or black hair (mine is brown) or to be heavy (I'm thin). It also guesses I'm agreeable, conscientious and not easily neurotic. Who am I to argue? A \$39 premium version adds 40 more traits.



5 GENOration <genotation.stanford.edu>

This free tool uses 23andMe data to show how your genes affect your physical traits and disease risk. Your report is organized into clinical, sports and traits categories. It's not easy to interpret, but may give you insights into your genetic risks for conditions such as celiac disease.

6 Promethease <www.promethease.com>

Using data from any major genetic genealogy testing company, Promethease produces a report on physical traits and health risks (such as cancer or reactions to medicines) for \$10. Hover over any item in the report for an explanation and link to related scientific findings in the SNPedia <www.snpedia.com> human genetics wiki. ●

Rick Crume

WEBSITE

Access Genealogy

A mix of databases, how-to articles and links to other family history websites, Access Genealogy <www.accessgenealogy.com> is among the least-known but richest free genealogy websites. It's especially notable for its American Indian resources, but you'll also find help for every US state and a range of record types. We'll show the way to the resources you need.

Diane Haddad



A Click to follow Access Genealogy on social media sites you frequent—an easy way to keep up with newly added resources.

B Find searchable databases hosted on Access Genealogy, including Indian rolls and the 1840 Revolutionary War pensioners census. The site's general search doesn't search inside these datasets; you must click a title to search each one individually.

C Find helpful articles about American Indian groups and records that document them.

D Click here, then on a state name, to learn about official vital record-keeping in that state and link to online resources.

E Run a Google search of the site for a topic such as *criminal* or *Civil War*, or a place, such as *Sacramento*. This can help you find posts about resources that aren't linked on the category pages.

F This is a good place to start if you're just browsing to see what's available. Scroll down and click a state for a categorized list of links to genealogy information and resources in that state.

When you search Access Genealogy using the Google custom search box, the first several results will be sponsored links, not matches on Access Genealogy.

the rest is **history**



“We have to celebrate
and honor our past. Our past is
the foundation for everything that
comes after it. Without our past,
our present has no meaning, and
our future is worthless.”

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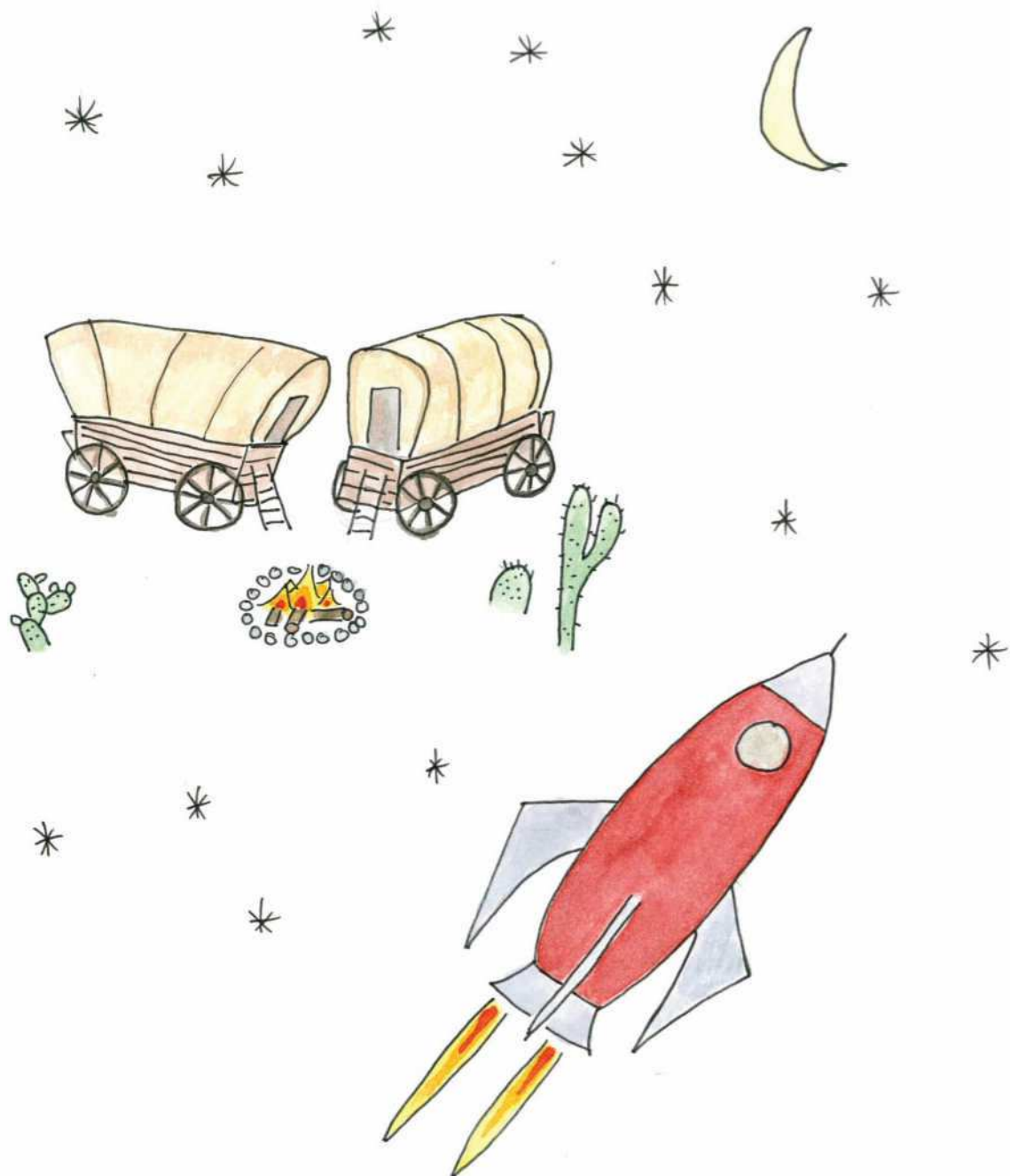
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RAVE REVIEWS

"Every subject that was put into this [2018 Spring] conference is very pertinent, no matter what kind of genealogy is practiced." Grace W.

"The [2018 Spring Virtual Conference] was wonderful! Live webinars were easy to attend including listening on my phone while out running a few errands. The courses were full of so many helpful tidbits that I can't wait to incorporate into my research plans. Thanks again!!" J.B.

"There were several topics I knew little or nothing about that were fascinating. Looking forward to exploring further. Loved the diversity of the topics." Theresa D.



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