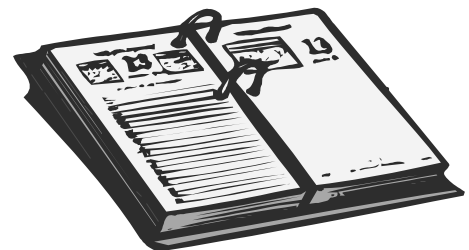# Larimer County Genealogical Society Newsletter

COMING EVENTS CALENDAR

Regular meetings are usually held the 4th Thursday of the month at 7:00 p.m. in the Ben Delatour Room of the Fort Collins Public Library–Main Branch, 201 Peterson Street

May 8: Colorado Genealogy Society Training Class - 10:30 am to 2:30 pm; Denver Public Library, Gates Conference Room, Fifth Level, 4 hours – Beginner's Genealogy Class. Registration begins at 10:00 a.m. (free)

May 11: The Jewish Genealogical Society, Denver, CO - 6:30 pm; Congregation Emanuel Church, 51 Grape Street. Program: "Sephardic Genealogy" by Dr. Jeffrey Malka, 3 hours, Fee: $25. For more info call 303-756-6028 or visit http://www.jewishgen.org/jgs-colorado.

May 12: Longmont Genealogical Society, Longmont – 1:00 pm; Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 1000 Fifteenth Street. Program: Early Settlement of New England, A Genealogical Gold Mine by Paul Kilburn

May 13: LCGS Board Meeting, Mary Joy Hauk's residence – 7:00 pm; Please call her at 226-2586 for directions. Members are always welcome to attend, but please let her know in advance for seating.

May 13: Cheyenne Genealogical Society Meeting, Laramie Co. College - 6:30 pm Annual Meeting Dinner with Keynote Speaker, $14.00 per person

May 15: Colorado Genealogy Society Training Class - 10:30 am to 2:30 pm; Denver Public Library, Gates Conference Rm, 5th Level, 4 hrs. (free). Program: Tax records by Carol Darrow. Registration starts at 10 am

May 19-22: 2004 Annual NGS Conference, Sacramento, CA. You can register online at: http://www.ngsgenealogy.org

May 27: LCGS Meeting, Fort Collins - 7 pm; Main Public Library, 201 Peterson Street, Ben Delatour Meeting Room. Program: Methods of Finding a Wife's Maiden Name, Part II. Hosted by David Dearborn and Ken Goldsberry

June 9: Longmont Genealogical Society, Longmont – 1:00 pm; Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 1000 Fifteenth Street. Program: Genealogy, More Than Just a Name by Ruth Christian

June 10: LCGS Board Meeting, location to be specified via email – 7:00 pm Members are always welcome to attend, but let the host know in advance.

June 12: Colorado Genealogy Society Training Class - 10:30 am to 2:30 pm; Denver Public Library, Gates Conference Room, Fifth Level. (free). Beginner's Genealogy Class. Registration begins at 10:00 am

June 18: Colorado Genealogy Society Meeting, Glendale - 7 to 9 pm; Glendale Community Center, 999 So. Clermont Street, in Glendale. Program: "Dating and Identifying Heritage Photos" presented by Pat Roberts, President, Boulder Genealogical Society.

June 24: LCGS Meeting, Fort Collins – 7:00 pm; Main Public Library, 201 Peterson Street, Ben Delatour Meeting Room. Program: A Search for a Lost Dutchman, Mine! By Harry Ross, CCGS VP

LCGS HIGHLIGHTS

May 27: Methods of Finding a Wife's Maiden Name, Part II Hosted by David Dearborn and Ken Goldsberry. This presentation extends Part I with discussions on finding aids and other helpful resources in locating a maiden name, plus clues to look for in your research.

June 24: A Search for a Lost Dutchman, Mine! By Harry Ross, CCGS VP
This program presents a case study of tracing Harry's Rikhoff ancestors from Denver through Indiana and Ohio and finally locating the birth of his great-great grandfather in the Netherlands. It discusses the records our migrating ancestors created and the importance of "whole family" research.

LARIMER COUNTY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OFFICERS

President	Tyler Curtis	207-1154
Vice President	Ken Goldsberry	669-8766
Treasurer	Mary Joy Hauk	226-2586
Recording Secretary	**Position Available**	
Corresponding Sec.	Marilyn Rudd	484-1197

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

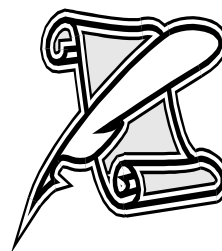|		
Council Rep.	Al Boswell	669-8766
Publicity/Newsltr Editor	Robert Larson	225-0491
LDS Contact	Pat Johnson	482-3385
Membership	Lyn Rubenthaler	493-3084
Newsletter Distribution	Julia Hillen	482-5957
Newsletter Layout	Gerri Becher	207-1612
Publications	**Frances Ek**	**207-0609**
Research-Ft. Collins	Ceil Damschroder	226-2164
Research-Loveland	Al Boswell	669-8766
Refreshments	Suzanne Enman	484-4565

Larimer County Genealogical Society meets at 7:00 p.m. on the fourth Thursday of the month at the Ft Collins Public Library, Ben Delatour Meeting Room, 201 Peterson St., Ft Collins, CO. During November the meeting is on the third Thursday; no meeting in December. Dues are $12/year for an individual or $18/year for a family.

The newsletter is published six times a year. Please submit all articles and announcements to the newsletter committee at *ralarson100@msn.com* by the following deadlines.

Issue	Deadline
Jan/Feb	Dec. 15
Mar/Apr	Feb. 15
May/Jun	Apr. 15
Jul/Aug	June 15
Sep/Oct	Aug. 15
Nov/Dec	Oct. 15

Mailing Address: Larimer County Genealogical Society, P.O. Box 9502, Fort Collins, CO 80525-9502
Web page: http://www.jymis.com/~lcgs/

A Note from Ty...

Hi, If you run into anyone that thinks you've got too much around your study or desk, just tell them what Richard Eastman does: "I'm not a packrat, I'm an archivist!"

We may have one of those past packrats soon if we're lucky! I've got some boxes of old papers that I fell heir to when I became the Prez. With Bob and his committee working away at our 30th anniversary celebration we need some of those "old papers." If you have any records around your favorite piles of info please transfer them to our soon to be announced archivist/historian for safekeeping. Your spouse may be as happy as mine!

In April some of us attended the regular meeting of the Cheyenne Genealogical Society in the Cheyenne Library and then their Scottish Workshop on April 17th. I understand that we have had a number of workshops in the past and some want to venture into that area again. Sounds exciting.

There are a number of things happening and all you have to do is to read the other pages of our journal to learn about them. It's a great time to be a member! I especially like the question and answer time that we have at each meeting. We've already had time saving answers to some of our member and visitor's questions. Why, I even learned something new. Imagine that!

Hope we see you at our meetings, and bring those questions along with you.

Happy hunting! Ty Curtis

News From The Fort Collins Family History Center
by Pat Johnson

The Fort Collins Family History recently acquired a Minolta 6000 Film/Fiche Copier. It is very easy to use and far surpasses the old faithful PC 80 that served for so many years. The new copier will make paper copies, burn to a new CD, or copy to a new floppy disc. Paper copies are now 10¢. You may make as many free copies as you want to download on a new CD or new floppy disc. The only expense is to buy a new CD for 50¢ or a new floppy for 25¢.
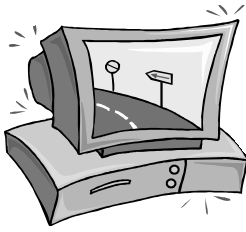
Of course, copyright laws apply to the amount of a document or book that can be copied. A good guide to that issue is to copy no more than 10% of a book. Stop in at Stover and Swallow from 10-4 and 6:30-9:30 on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays.

Membership Memos

The complete membership list included in this issue. Please keep this list handy, as this will be the only time that the entire list will be printed. As new members join their information will be printed here so that you can add it to your list.

If you haven't been to a meeting in a while, you are missing out on some wonderful speakers, friendly members, helpful tips, and tasty munchies. We all hope to see you at the next meeting!

Lyn Rubenthaler,
Membership Chair

LET'S GO SITE-SEEING!

Quaker Records

by Pat Johnson

For some of us, the term "Quaker Records" stirs up visions of complicated abbreviations, strange date format and a bit of mystery. I am sharing this information with the permission of Karen Campbell. She is the Genealogy Librarian at the M.L. Cook Library in Waynesville, Warren Co., Ohio. Karen's description of these records and of the *Encyclopedia of American Quaker Genealogy* by William Wade Hinshaw (six volumes, the seventh volume being an index to the other six) is as follows:

"These volumes contain abstracts of Quaker Meeting minutes from North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Tennessee, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York City, and Long Island, Southwestern Pennsylvania, Ohio and Virginia. Hinshaw's Encyclopedia is an unfinished work. You should also check the card index of Hinshaw's unpublished work at Swarthemore College in Philadelphia.

This collection is titled *William Wade Hinshaw Index to Quaker Meeting Records*. It includes more Pennsylvania and New Jersey Meeting records, as well as, records from California, Iowa, Kansas and Indiana. This index has also been microfilmed by the Family History Library in Salt Lake City and is available for ordering through LDS Family History Centers.

When using Hinshaw, always remember that it is an index to Quaker Meeting records; truly a great one, but still it is only an index and a secondary source. The next step in the process is to search through the primary source; your ancestor's Meeting's records. Like all printed works, the index itself is not perfect. It is a collaborative work and Hinshaw did not do all of the indexing himself. Numerous librarians at the Quaker repositories did it for him. Also keep in mind that although Quakers were meticulous record keepers, they were also human and could make mistakes in their record keeping."

The following URLs were checked and they worked in March 2004. If one doesn't work, check the spelling of the URL you input and try again, or try at another time, as some sites close down for various reasons at various times.
For general information about Quaker records go to:
www.rootsweb.com/~quakers/
For info on the date format used by Quakers go to:
www.illuminatrix.com/andria/quaker.html or
http://www.quaker.org.uk/library/guides/libqcal.html
For Quaker marriage information and list of abbreviations go to: www.rootsweb.com/~quakers/quakmarr.htm.

BLM Offers Online Land Records

by Bob Larson

The Bureau of Land Management website offers land patent records for homesteaders and military veterans for all states except the original 13 colonies. The site includes information on who, what, where, when, and why on the grantee with even the original document signed by the President in Adobe's pdf or other popular formats. Ken Goldsberry related to me that he copied his relative's document copy onto parchment paper for a more authentic look and framed it.

The BLM website is www.glorecords.blm.gov/. If you feel your relative acquired a U.S. land grant, go to this website, type in the surname or full name and select which state to get the information. It will tell you which Quadrant, Section, Township, and Range and the acreage received. Not bad for a government sponsored site.

May Update: A Federal judge shut down the BLM land patent and other related government websites in early March, but BLM is back online.

Labeling Genealogy Files With Surnames

by Deborah Cook (Freemantle, Australia)

I'm fairly new to family genealogy but have quickly found many family lines. Sometimes when I pick up a file with a particular family name I can't remember where this came into the family line. I solved the problem by labeling my files as follows:

"Focus: Jessie A. Smith" and then (Cook<=Arndell<=Holbrook<=Buckman<=Smith) after it.

Focus is the last person with this name in my line and I can see what name married into what line by what is in the brackets. Now I can pick up a file and know at a glance how this family relates to me -- a Cook. It all lessens the brain strain!

Source: Ancestry.com Quick Tip

LCGS Editor Notes: This article seemed too obvious to me at first, since I've been using a file system for every surname. My first file overflowed in 2000 with many collected documents and pictures from relatives, libraries, etc. I have about 30 full files using given names per file for each surname, due to the amount of documents. However you file your family history, these methods keep your information organized and easy to find.

THANKS ALL-AROUND!

Special Thanks to Our Speakers!

Ken Goldsberry, our LCGS VP, gave a brief presentation on searching for surnames in the Rootsweb/Mailing Lists webpage at our February meeting. Ken found several relatives using this research method.

Barbara Henritze, Professional Genealogist, gave a lecture on "Genealogical Surfing & Researching on the Internet" at our February meeting. She emphasized the power of today's Internet search engines that literally find thousands of entries on popular surnames. Some of her key points in using search engines to narrow the entries to a manageable number:

- Use specific genealogy terms, ie, births, deaths, daughter of, etc.
- Use special operators, ie, +, -, "…" to narrow the search.
- Use the Internet white pages, ie 411.com, DexOnline.com, or Search Engine White Pages to find living relatives.
- Use past Polk and city directories to find past relatives.
- For unlisted people, use Mypeoplefinder.com or USSearch.com.
- Paid databases, ie, Ancestry.com and Genealogy.com, are great primary and secondary sources for relatives.
- Be aware of some databases, ie, World FamilyTree or LDS Familysearch.com have errors in their unsubstantiated IGI or BMGI databases.

Birdie Monk Holsclaw, Certified Genealogist, gave a lecture on "Turning Hypothesis into Proof: A Case Study" at our March meeting. She emphasized making an informed hypothesis (unproved theory) based upon indirect facts. Her lecture focused on finding the maiden name of a 6th generation relative and her parents.

Birdie's Key Points:

- Mathematically if 80% if your facts are known of your parents, then only 21% of your 6th generation will be accurate. If 99% of your facts are known, then 92% of your 6th generation will be accurate.
- Start with the known facts, then research for unknowns, including church records in a wide area previous to 1850s, land and tax records, bible records, census prior to 1850 (unlisted spouse and children) and mortality schedules after 1850s, early history books, etc. Don't stop looking is the key!
- Base your hypothesis on naming patterns, relatives, and localities
- Base your hypothesis on repetition of known evidence, whether primary, secondary, or indirect.
- After evaluating the evidence, either confirm or disprove your hypothesis. Remember the mathematics equation.
- How convinced are you the evidence is a fact? Enough to share, publish with or without explanation or as a proven certainty?

Birdie revealed the Looking Glass Test created by Robert Anderson, a past famous genealogist, who indicated by turning a glass upside down, have we considered all conclusions, ie, what would I have to believe for this not to be true? In other words, prove your hypothesis until you're satisfied!

LCGS Editor's Note: *Christine Rose, CG lecturer and writer, has written a 2001 booklet, "Genealogical Proof Standard," on using hypothesis to build a case as approved by the Board for Certification of Genealogists. Basically, it states indirect evidence can be used as the proof if all exhaustive research indicates any opposing research has been negated or as explained by Robert Anderson's Looking Glass Test. See Al Boswell's article in the following pages that supplements Barbara's lecture on search engines.*

VA Seeks Volunteers to Inventory Memorials

The Dept. of Veteran Affairs (VA) is seeking volunteers to research and photograph monuments in its 120 national cemeteries and 33 soldier lots. To date, nearly 800 memorials have been identified with help from over 200 volunteers. About 300 memorials in 20 states remain unidentified.

Volunteers take measurements and photos, record inscriptions, note monument's condition, and conduct historical research of each monument. For more information or to volunteer, please contact Darlene Richardson at (202) 565-5426 or email nca.memorials@email.va.gov.

Source: U.S. Army Echoes Newsletter January 2004

LCGS Editor's Note: *Try this VA website to locate military personnel: http://cem.va.gov Most of the 120 Department of Veterans Affairs' national cemeteries may be searched for burial locations. There are six cemeteries that have not completed their records. They include: Long Island; Los Angeles; Ft. Rosecrans; Golden Gate; San Francisco; and the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific. Some interments may not be listed.*

Basement Bookshelf

I could really use some more books/tapes/CD's etc. for this column. Please pick up a form at the meeting or call and I will mail one to you. Thanks!

Book Title: Uncovering Your Ancestry Through Family Photographs
Author: Maureen Taylor
Publisher/Copyright: Betterway Books, 2000
Summary of Book: This book teaches you to: Indentify and verify the people in photos using details such as poses, props, and print material to determine dates and places; locate additional family photos to build your own visual history collection; create worksheets for every photo that confirms and validates your findings; and expand your genealogical skills to include a working knowledge of the resources related to photo research.
Member's Name: Malanie Tafaro
Phone/Email: 970-587-7020   mel9711@yahoo.com
Member is willing to: do lookups and loan out

Congratulations
to the Willards on their
50th Wedding Anniversary!

Jim and Donna Willard, 1954

Jim and **Donna Willard** are celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary on May 22nd. They both worked for the U.S. Government and met in the Washington, D.C. area, where they enjoyed hiking and other activities there. They married in Arlington, VA in 1954.

They cordially invite LCGS members to a reception at the first United Methodist Church at 1005 Stover in Fort Collins on May 23 from noon until 3 pm. No presents are required.

Colorado Council of Genealogy Societies Promoting Family Recognition Program

CCGS is promoting their family recognition program that highlights families that contributed to the early settlements and growth of Colorado. If your application is approved, a nice certificate is issued by CCGS. Eligibility requirements are simple and three categories are recognized:

1) First Family status where your ancestor was born or settled in Colorado prior to February 28, 1861,
2) Territorial Family status where your ancestor was born or settled in Colorado prior to August 1, 1876, and
3) Centennial Family status where your ancestor was born or settled in Colorado at least 100 years prior to date of application.

A $10 fee is required before application will be accepted. Contact CCGS via their website www.rootsweb.com/~coccgs/index.htm and select the Website Contents, then the Family Recognition Program to print the application and instructions.

Source: CCGS Website

Need Some Help on Those Brick Walls?

U.S. Research from Salt Lake City

Do you still need help on brick walls after talking with our members? My Ancestors of Salt Lake City can help you either with free consultation via email or professional research for a fee. They have access to the greatest library in the world (aka Family History Library, FHL) for their research. If interested, please contact them for a free consultation at their website:

www.myancestorsfound.com/.

They also provide Research Retreats at the FHL in Salt Lake that last 5 days several times per year. Visit their website for more details.

Laramie County Library in Cheyenne Offers Unique Genealogy Section

by Pat Johnson & Bob Larson

We are so fortunate to be within driving distance of wonderful Libraries. The Denver Public Library is outstanding and the Fort Collins Public Library is acquiring more and more genealogical information.   NARA is also conveniently located in Denver. We would like to tell you about another Library that is close to home, and has great resources. This is the Laramie County Library in Cheyenne, Wyoming.

Even though we've reported this library in past editions, we decided to promote this library's genealogy section again for our members. For a growing city of about 60,000 people, Cheyenne has a public county library with a 1500 square foot glass-enclosed room dedicated entirely to genealogy.

Library Genealogy Section

What makes this library interesting and probably one of a kind in the West is the Church of Jesus Christ has their Family History Center located inside the library's genealogy section. The other caveat is the genealogy section and FHC are open seven days a week except on occasional Sundays in the summer.

The genealogy section has over 10,000 reference books in eight aisles, that include sections on Federal Census books on various states and years, various research books, military and individual states histories and cemeteries, individual family histories, DAR, American Genealogy Biographical Indexes, New England Historical Registers back to 1845, many different genealogy society newsletters, multiple biography references, and a large dedicated section on Wyoming genealogy and history including college yearbooks and different city directories. Wow, actually too much to list!

Besides having the popular family history magazines, the library's genealogy section and FHC have two computers to research library databases or CDs, two computers for dedicated Internet genealogy databases, five Microfilm readers, two microfiche readers, and one Microfilm printer and a copier. The FHC genealogy computers and printer can be used only when library or FHC volunteers are present, which is almost daily and nightly. Please call to verify this using the telephone numbers listed at the end.

Of course, the FHC has many drawers of microfilm and microfiche that the public is welcome to research. New microfilm can be ordered daily with the library staff. In addition, the library has 21 computers and more copiers located in another area, just for Internet access and sometimes must be reserved in advance.

What started the genealogy craze in Cheyenne anyway? According to Sue Seniawski, the county librarian's genealogist specialist, Cheyenne has a state library that began over 50 years ago. The state librarian had an interest in genealogy and purchased many of the books that are now located in the county library. The state library expanded so much that the genealogy books were transferred to the new Laramie County Library during the 1970s. Incidentally, Cheyenne Genealogical Society was founded 52 years ago.

Genealogy Research Room

The library is located at 2800 Central Avenue in Cheyenne. They have a parking lot in the rear for your convenience. Call for their hours and directions at (307) 634-3561 option 5 or extension 144 for their genealogy department. Enjoy your researching there!

LCGS Editor's Note: *Cheyenne Genealogical Society ran an article in their January issue about the voters passing a ballot for a new four story Cheyenne library. The genealogy section will expand from its current 1500 square feet to 5,000 square feet, similar to Denver's Public Library Genealogy Section. Tentatively planned, more computers, increased workspace, books, and extended hours in their genealogy section and even more meeting rooms in the new library, which should be completed in several years.*

MEMBERSHIP MAILING LIST GOES ON THIS PAGE

L C G S -- E-MAIL ADDRESSES

(updated April 17, 2004)

Please identify your subject and name when sending an email, or the info. may be deleted before it is opened. Thank you for this courtesy!

Abrahams, Nancy	scubanancy269@aol.com	Marshall, J.C.	jody.marshall@xcelenergy.com
Abrames, Marge	MARCMT@aol.com	Mason, Annie & George	almason@jymis.com
Becher, Gerri	whirledpeas41@msn.com	Mehaffey, Sonja	Grngln@aol.com
Boswell, Al	boz@verinet.com	Nettleton, Helen	hnettrockie@msn.com
Bradley, Karen	KFCB1@comcast.net	Parsons, John & Ikuko	jonpar@msn.com
Britton, Charles C.	cmbriton@lamar.colostate.edu	Ralph, Reta	operapronto@comcast.net
Carmody, Sareta	scarmody@lamar.colostate.edu	Ray, Leonard & Dolores	lrfamilyco@comcast.net
Carter, Jacqueline E.	jecarter@verinet.com	Renfroe, Katherine	renfroe@webaccess.net
Corey, Arthur & Vera	artcorey@lamar.colostate.edu	Rinne, Rudi	rudiusmc@bewellnet.com
Curtis, Ty & Joyce	TyCCurtis@aol.com	Rinne, John	johnusmc@bewellnet.com
Damschroder, Cecilia	ccdam@frii.com	Rubenthaler, Lyn	drubenth@cs.com
Devers, Erma	eldev@netzero.net	Rudd, Marilyn	marirudd@verinet.com
DuQuoin, Kathy	kduquoin@lamar.colostate.edu	Ryder, Audrey T.	atryder@juno.com
Ek, Frances	fmwalker2001@yahoo.com	Shaw, David	davshaw@qwest.net
Enman, Suzanne	s.enman@comcast.net	Shepard, John	jcshepard@yahoo.com
Eriksen, C. Dale	dalmar14@msn.com	Shoop, Marvin	marvshoop@comcast.com
Feagler, Ginny	gfeagler1@mindspring.com	Shopnitz, Melissa	mashopz@att.net
Flook, Karla	danflook@aol.com	Smith, Catherine E.	phsmith@intergate.com
Goldsberry, Kenneth	goldsdlf@lamar.colostate.edu	Stetser, Carol	hstetser@direcway.com
Graham, Barbara J.	nzvjg@frii.com	Sullivan, Barbara	sullbarb@msn.com
Goodwin, Jane & Carolyn	gcarolyn@frii.com	Summers, Betty	bettysummers@msn.com
Habel, Linda	lmanley21@aol.com	Tafaro, Melanie	mel9711@yahoo.com
Harper, Jane & Walter	walkerharper@comcast.net	Thierstein, Gerry	thierstn@frii.com
Hauk, Mary Joy	mjhauk@comcast.net	Treaster, Melba L.	mtreaster@aol.com
Haynes, Evelyn	ehaynes@lamar.colostate.edu	Van Velson, Tod	Brule57@aol.com
Hildebrand, Dora	dmhildebrand@frii.com	Waggoner, Janet	jcwaggoner@comcast.net
Helt, Karen	khelt@comcast.net	Watkins, Ken	Kenneth.Watkins@Colostate.edu
Hillen, Julia	jmhillen@webaccess.net	Weinmeister, Rosamary	drweinm@frii.com
Hygh, Relliford & Janice	hygh@comcast.net	Wente, Karen	PrarieLady@aol.com
Johnson, Patricia	busterb@frii.net	Whatley, Kareen D.	KinColorado@msn.com
King, Irene	irenek@frii.com	Willard, Jim & Donna	jwillard@jymis.com
Larson, Robert A.	ralarson100@msn.com	Winberg, Betty	bettywinberg@frii.com
McReynolds, Mary	mmcrey4349@aol.com	Yost, Jeannette	dglvr@frii.com

Using Google to Search For Ancestors *by Al Boswell*

The genesis of the article came from a talk by Barbara Henritze "Genealogical Surfing & Researching on the Internet." I have tried to use Google and have not been overly successful. I decided to do the unthinkable, I read the Help file.

I went to http://www.google.com/, another way that may be easier, is to skip most of the garbage and just type Google for the address. It worked with the first thing that shows up is the link to Google. Try it and see if it works for you. If you use Microsoft Internet Explorer latest Version 6 you can usually leave off http://www.

Some points to remember:

- Goggle is not case sensitive so you don't have to worry about capitalization.
- If you click on a link and you get a message that the page is not found click on the back button and try the cached page as shown below
- Google will search the WEB and user groups

You will find a title bar similar to below. WEB is highlighted so you will be searching the WEB. If you click on Groups you will search the user groups. Be sure to search both places for information

Following are some example search strategies:

If you search for information on a surname, eg, Orr you may get 1,200,000 hits, among these are links to sites about Bobby Orr a hockey player. Since I am not interested in him lets search for Orr –Bobby; no space between the – and Bobby. This reduces the hits to 963,000. I notice Wendy Orr, an author so lets try Orr –Bobby –Wendy; this reduces the number of hits even further. You could continue this process until you get a reasonable number of sites to look at.

Another Strategy – Looking for information on my Abraham Straight who was also known as Abram Straight.

1. **Straight**. Google found 23,200,00 hits, way to many for me to look at.
2. **Straight Family**, results 6,380,00 still too many.
3. **Straight Genealogy**, results 153,000. That's getting the number down but after looking at the first result, I found it was an audiotape, "The Internet for Genealogy: Setting Straight the Myths and Misconceptions," very nice but not what I wanted.
4. **Straight Abraham genealogy** got the hits down to 9,280 hits but the first one was **Genealogy**: Other Lockwood Family Trees

LOCKWOOD FAMILY **GENEALOGY**. **...** 1745 Freeman of RI +Sara **Straight** m: 1734: 3 Ann [579] Lockwood, b **...** 3 **Abraham** [581] Lockwood, b: 1738; 3 Hannah [582] Lockwood, b: 1740

This is not what I wanted so what is going on? Google found all three of my keywords but did not find Abraham Straight. Google uses what is called an implied AND, meaning that it is searching for "Straight AND Abraham AND genealogy not quite what I had in mind.

Lets try adding quotes around Straight Abraham, this reduced my hits to 3, two of which were relevant but after thinking for a minute I noticed that the sites have Straight, Abraham what would happen if I used "Abraham Straight" genealogy? No matches. Well maybe nobody has a web site with Abraham Straight on it but is there any mention of Abraham Straight in history.

Lets search for "Abraham Straight" history, all I got, appeared to be references to the Biblical Abraham. How about "Abram Straight" History, there he is. Somebody has put a Gedcom file on Rootsweb's genealogy forum on "My Abram Straight." But is that the only reference to Abram? Lets try "abram straight" genealogy.

Searching for "Abram Straight" yields references to only Abram Straight not Straight Abram. Adding "genealogy" eliminates both some irrelevant hits but also some relevant ones.

Adding his wives first name Eunice adds some interesting hits "Abraham Straight" Eunice. Adding dates such as birth, marriage or death; be careful if you add the exact day month year you may eliminate relevant links.

Yet another method is "Abraham Straight OR "Straight Abraham" OR "Abram Straight" OR "Straight Abram" This search looks for each of the four names and returns links to any of the names.

Summary – There is no correct way to search the Internet using Google, just different strategies that may help you find the kind of information that you want.

A suggested method is to use your ancestors given name surname enclosed in quotes, eg, **"Abraham Straight"** OR **"Straight Abraham"** You can reduce the number of hits by adding a date, wife's name, place. **Remember, as you eliminate hits you may be eliminating relevant hits.**

If you have comments on this article email boz@verinet.com   **© 2004 by Al Boswell**

FOCUS ON...

RESEARCH: Opening up Dead Ends

by Juliana Smith

Dead ends are frustrating. But, if we accept the given definition of a dead end as "leading to nothing further" or "without an exit," we may be tempted to just shelve our family history project and find something else to do.

When I actually get time to sit down and do some work on my family history, for some perverse reason I am typically drawn to those dead ends. It's almost like they are taunting me--challenging me to find them. And when I do manage to find a way past a dead end--well, let's just say that this is the stuff obsessions are made of. (Yes, I know there is therapy for people like me, but rather than "obsessive traits," I like to think of them as "persevering qualities.")

Let's take a look at some ways we may be able to deal with these so-called "dead ends."

Shortcut?

When you think about it, it's easy to understand why we keep running into so many dead ends. After all, we're trying to navigate unfamiliar territory. Last week I decided to take a shortcut through a neighborhood that I wasn't very familiar with. Huge mistake! Every street had twists and turns and eventually led to a dead end. My shortcut ended up with me taking twice as long to get where I was going. (What ever happened to those good old-fashioned grid-like neighborhoods? Now those I can navigate.)

Shortcuts in our research can often have the same consequences. When we take what may seem like the easy way, like only using index entries and not going after original records--or not verifying information found in any kind of secondary source for that matter--we may find ourselves facing unnecessary dead ends.

It may not even be intentional; it may be one of those things you have been intending to do, but haven't quite had time. Well, if you're stuck at a dead end, now is the time. This is when you want to play devil's advocate with your own research. Review every detail, pick it apart and make sure you've gathered enough proof to warrant a conclusion.

Use Checklists

Sometimes a dead end isn't really a dead end. Maybe we've just overlooked something. Here's a little exercise:

Make a list of every record type you can think of that is available for the area you are researching. Include all applicable census years, vital records (birth, marriage, death, plus any related records like baptism, divorce, cemetery, obituaries, and probates) immigration records (passenger lists, passports, and naturalization records), directories, voting and tax lists, military records, land records, occupational and organizational records, court records, local histories, and any other records that may be unique to that area. To jog your memory, look in reference books (tables of contents and indexes are good for this), or on websites.

If there are a number of possible locations for your ancestor, create a list for each location. For example, I have a number of ancestors who moved back and forth between New York County and Kings County, New York. I will specify both of these counties, as well as any other nearby possibilities.

Although I tend to overlook the other boroughs because I haven't found any ancestors living in them yet, I have to remind myself that because of their proximity, I need to keep my mind open to the possibilities, particularly in years where some of my ancestors have seemingly "disappeared."

Now that you have a complete list (or lists), go through and check off which records you have obtained for this dead end ancestor.

Take a look at what's left. If you have a valid reason why an ancestor will not have left a particular record, make a note of it. For example, if an ancestor was age five at the time of the Civil War, he probably won't have any military records relating to that conflict. He or she may have been born before vital records were kept or during a time period for which the records have been destroyed by fire or some other disaster. These are valid reasons.

On the other hand, "But he's always lived in _____, I just don't think he'll be there," "He didn't have much money, so he probably didn't leave a will," "Those records are too hard to work with," or "I'll get to those someday," are not valid reasons.

(*Dead Ends...continued from page 10*)

For those records you have searched for and been unable to locate an ancestor in, make a list of possible reasons why you have been unable to locate them and see if there is an alternative route you can take to bypass the dead end. For example:

1. *Index error.* Are there other indexes available? Is it possible to search the record group by location or in some other way?
2. *Misspelled or wrong name.* Did your ancestor go by any other name--possibly a maiden name, an anglicized or non-anglicized name, a phonetic spelling, a name with dropped or added prefixes? Make another list of all the possibilities and re-check that resource.
3. *He or she wasn't in the area at the time.* Make a timeline and try to determine where he should have been at the time that record was created.

Develop a research plan for each possible record type that is left and go after it. If acquiring that record will entail some costs, possibly hiring a researcher onsite or purchasing a new product, or start a fund.

You've Heard It before, and Here It Is Again . . .

Whole-family research and researching neighbors and associates are the way to go. Your ancestor wasn't stranded on Gilligan's Island. When the trail of your ancestor is cold, research those around them. If he or she was on Gilligan's Island, start investigating Gilligan, the skipper, Mary Ann, the professor, Ginger, and the Howells. There may be a connection.

Siblings are particularly helpful since they share the same parentage, but cousins, in-laws, sponsors, and witnesses shouldn't be overlooked either.

Wishing You a Wide Open Road

Well, hopefully this has inspired you to reopen some of your dead-end cases and I hope you find a wide new avenue for your research to proceed. Now that I've finished my column for this week, it's time to dust off some of my toughest problems. Dead ends? Nope, I just see challenges.

Juliana Smith is the editor of the *Ancestry Daily News* and author of *The Ancestry Family Historian's Address Book.* She has written for *Ancestry* Magazine and *Genealogical Computing.*

Source: Ancestry Daily News: April 12, 2004

LCGS Editor's Note: Juliana's tips on using a checklist hits home since I use a comprehensive checklist on each relative. I have two dead ends, but I'm still searching. Checklists verify all sources have been checked plus prevent wasted time from rechecking old sources. And don't forget to use a reference log to list all your research with dates for reference. This saves time especially when you visit a major research facility like NARA or the LDS FHL.

In Memory of...

Gerald Smelker

Another Fort Collins member, Lela Smelker, has lost her husband Gerald, after 43 years of marriage. Gerald passed away suddenly on March 28, 2004 at age 65. He was born in Stratton, CO in 1939 and graduated from Stratton High School in 1957. He had served in the military for six years and had full military honors by the All Veterans Honor Guard.

Gerald and Lela lived in Fort Collins for 29 years. He is survived by his wife, Lela, their sons, Curtis of Fort Collins and Christopher of Borger, TX, and daughters, Katherine Dohan of Fort Collins, and Cynthia Savage of Pocasset, OK, and their seven grandchildren. Our deepest sympathy to Lela and her family.

Marion Boley Steade

One of our members, Marion (Boley) Steade died on December 19, 2003 at age 65. She was born in Alhambra, CA in 1938 and graduated from high school in Long Beach, CA. She lived in Ft. Collins since 1969 with her husband, Dick of 45 years. Marion volunteered as a leader for the Girl Scouts and at the Larimer Humane Society. Her interest in animals came from her work at the Veterinarian College at CSU.

Marion joined our Society in 2000, being a member for four wonderful years. She had a passion for genealogy and accumulated histories on many family members according to her husband that will be saved for their children. She also enjoyed sewing, crafts, camping, and motorcycle touring. She is survived by her husband, Dick of Fort Collins, one son, Glenn of Kettering, Ohio, two daughters, Suzanne Steade of Redwood City, CA, and Molly Wolf of Fort Collins, and her three grandchildren. The Society will miss Marion and her passion for genealogy.

Last-minute Estate Planning!!!

On June 8, 1948, Cecil George Harris, a Saskatchewan (Canada) farmer, was repairing his tractor when he inadvertently put the vehicle into reverse, pinning his left leg underneath one of the rear wheels.

Believing no one would come to his rescue, he used his jackknife to scratch onto the tractor's fender:

"In case I die in this mess, I leave all to the wife.
Cecil Geo. Harris."

Although his neighbors eventually found him 10 hours later, Harris died of his injuries two days later. Soon after, the etched fender was admitted to probate as a valid holograph will. The fender and knife remained "on file" at the local Kerrobet courthouse until it closed in 1996. The fender and knife are now on permanent display in the University of Saskatchewan's Law Library.
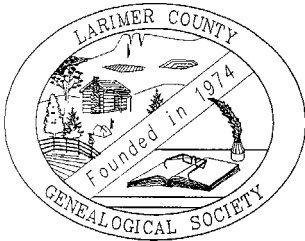
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