



Kith and Kin

Volume ²²20 Number ²12 July-August, 2005 Page 1

PRESIDENTS COLUMN

From Downeast Maine--A very successful trip searching for ancestors and eating lobster. Met many helpful people and had a great deal of "dumb luck" as a friend of mine says I have. Learned once again "Talk to the locals, ask questions and write down everything even if it doesn't seem to fit for once you get home its a long way back." Hope you are all enjoying your summer and will join us for or annual Madison trip in August and what promises to be an exciting speaker in September. Until next time, happy hunting."

Ken Wood, President MAGG

UPCOMING EVENTS -

MAGG MEETINGS FOR THE UP COMING YEAR:

July 28, 2005

August 25, 2005-Trip to Madison, Wisconsin

September 22, 2005

October 27, 2005

All meetings will be held in the General Meeting Room of the Marshfield Public Library at 7:00 pm.

IN LOVING MEMORY: Dr. Gerald Porter, a MAGG member and longtime pediatrician for the Marshfield Clinic. Our condolences go out to his family and loved ones.

FGS/UGA Conference in Salt Lake City-"Reminders of the Past-Visions for the Future" September 7-10. There is an early bird registration deadline to receive a discount: July 26th. Visit the FGS website www.fgs.org, or email the office at fgs-office@fgs.org for a registration brochure, or call 1-888-FGS-1500

Central and Eastern European Family History Comes to Minnesota 11th International Conference August 19-21, 2005. Held at the Four Points by



Sheraton in Saint Paul, MN.

WEB SITES OF THE MONTH-

www.jewishgen.org/databases/EIDB/ellis.html-Searching the Ellis Island Database in One Step

<http://freebmd.rootsweb.com/FreeBMD> is an ongoing project whose aim is to transcribe the Civil Registration index of births, marriages, and deaths for England and Wales and to provide free Internet access to the transcribed records. RootsWeb is the proud host of this project.

WISCONSIN, MICHIGAN (Upper Peninsula). Courthouse hours, rules, statistics on completion of vital records, directions to courthouses, hints on quick index scanning, indexes in various Wisconsin and Michigan counties, what to take to the courthouse and what to expect.

<http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com/~jharr/court.html>

The Board of Commissioners of Public Lands has made the original General Land Office survey plat maps available on-line. These are the first maps of each township as defined by the original land survey from 1832 to 1866. These historically important maps and notes are valuable in the world of land surveys and also provide an interesting look at the beginnings of settlement in Wisconsin. These maps can be found as part of the Wisconsin Public Land Survey Records website at

<http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/SurveyNotes/>

THE HOW TO COLUMN-

Organizing Oral History Information

by Genealogy.com

What to Do with All Those Great Stories

Visiting with Great-aunt Wilhelmina was always a hoot. When we were little kids, we'd play hide-the-thimble and she'd sometimes put it on top of her head, concealing it amongst the snow white curls.

Years later, there was less play and more talk, but it was still great fun. Born

in 1902 and living most of her life on a ranch in Starr Valley, Nevada, she would tell us about the prize-winning apple orchard, the animals, the family, and the neighbors. On one occasion, we drove her out to see the house on the ranch, which was no longer owned by the family. Standing on the dirt road and looking up at the two-story house, I asked which room had been hers. She pointed to one of the upper story windows, saying "That one on the corner. "And then she pointed to the fresh concrete slab and new basketball hoop in the yard and said with a twinkle in her eye "and that's where we played basketball." Oh, Billie, I do miss you.

From Family Story to Family Tree

Clearly Aunt Billie was joking about the basketball games, but the episode illustrates an important point. When you get an oral history from a family member, what do you do with the information after the visit is over? And how do you keep the family legends separate from the facts?

First, let's back up a few steps. When you decided to visit one of your relatives for the purpose of getting an oral history, let's say your great aunt, hopefully you made an appointment with her in advance, came prepared with a number of interesting questions, perhaps some old photos to jog memories, and even a plate of cookies. You also, of course, brought your best smile and attitude, and remembered that this was a social visit, not a grill session at the police station.

Just Like Santa: Make Your List, Check It Twice

Now, given that the visit went smoothly, you heard quite a few interesting stories, and found answers to several, but perhaps not quite all of your questions, you have a whole new pile of data to put into your family history, right? Well, maybe not. Before you rush headlong into adding the information to your master database there are a few things that you should address.

Transcribe Your Notes Clearly and Neatly

This is something that you want to do not long after the interview, while the conversation is fresh in your memory. If you took notes by hand or on a laptop computer, read them over carefully, checking to ensure that they make sense to you and that you can clearly read all names and dates. Wherever anything is unclear, be sure to verify it with the person you interviewed.

If you recorded or video taped the interview, play the tape to verify that the conversation is clear at all points in time. Make a transcription of the tape, as notes written on paper are more likely to survive the test of time than a tape,

particularly if the transcription is stored properly. Anyone will be able to pick up the notes and read them years from now, but who knows if an appropriate tape player will be available to play back the recorded version?

Compare Your Notes to the Information You Already Have

Information that you learned during the interview will fall into three categories:

- Completely new data.
- Data that matches information you already have.
- Data that contradicts information you already have.

Hopefully your interview produced lots of information that falls into the first two categories, and not much that fell into the third category.

Update Sources for Information That Was Confirmed

The general rule in genealogy is "the more sources the better." So, if your interview confirmed a birth date or occupation or any other information that you already had, it certainly doesn't hurt to add a note in your sources such as "Joanna Hudson Smith, granddaughter of Robert John Hudson, noted in an interview on July 10th, 2000, that Robert John Hudson's birthday was April 5, 1850."

You may not want to do this for every single fact that you picked up during the interview, particularly if you are planning to interview several family members. However, for those pieces of information where you haven't been able to find primary sources, such as birth certificates for birth dates, it isn't a bad idea.

Check for Confirmation of New Data

If you learned new names, dates, and locations during your interview, that's great. Look at them carefully and decide what you need to do to verify them. An easy possibility is to check with other family members, but if they learned their family history from the same source as the person that you interviewed, then they are likely to give you the same information. A better solution is to check for outside sources: birth certificates for birth dates and birthplaces, marriage certificates for marriage information, and so forth.

Weigh the Facts on Conflicting Data

Sometimes during an interview you will find that one relative's idea of when or how a particular event took place is different from another relative's idea.

As in the previous point, you need to weigh the information, and then decide what you can do to help clear up the facts. Sometimes it won't be possible to determine which interpretation is correct, but in other cases you will be able to check outside sources.

Decide Who You Want to Talk to Next

With your interview complete, you've hopefully learned quite a bit, but probably still have many questions. You will want to spend some time researching those questions with records and other traditional written resources, but there are most likely other family members or friends who would also be willing to share a story with you. Start considering who you would like to speak with next.

But What About the Stories?

Names and dates are great, and they have been the main focus of our discussion thus far, but what about Aunt Billie's tales of the apple orchards and day-to-day life on the ranch? These are some of the best ways to make our family histories come alive and perhaps interest other family members in genealogy.

Be sure that transcriptions or taped versions are circulated among your family members. If there is a family newsletter or Web site, it is the perfect location to include an account of how past family members celebrated the 4th of July. Stories such as these don't have to be long, so are relatively easy to put out. You can also gather the stories into a family book, or, at the next family reunion, even have the kids create a play based on some of the family stories — just don't let them take *too* much poetic license.

Oral histories are always worthwhile, because they let you escape from your computer and dusty books for a short time and interact with someone who played a role in your family history. Once you have had the pleasure of doing this, be sure to spend some time taking advantage of all that you have learned.

Another Sort of A to Z: Your Genealogy Filing System


by Donna Przech



How to Store and Catalog Your Research

Do you want to organize your research informally (like a grocery

store) or precisely (like a library)? Experience researcher Donna Przecha encourages you to start organizing your information so that you can make the most of your time. With these tips, you can get started today!



Genealogists are always buried under stacks of paper. While the copy machine can be a great benefit to genealogical research, it can also be a curse as it is a temptation to copy *everything*. However, once you get home with all this wonderful material, something eventually has to be done with it.

Make no mistake — the ultimate organizer for your research is a genealogy program. However, a "paperless society" is a great fiction. You really don't want to record and then destroy that copy of the 1850 census or your grandfather's death certificate or even the photocopy of the description of the Midwestern town where your great grandparents settled. Something has to be done with the paper detritus.

Filing Systems

One could classify amateur genealogists' filing systems in three broad categories:

1. **Haphazard.** "I know I have that document somewhere." (The pile under the window is from my trip to Salt Lake City. The pile on the corner of my desk has printouts from the IGI. The box on top of the filing cabinet is correspondence from my cousin in Tennessee.)
2. **Informal.** "I can probably lay my hands on that document in 5 or 10 minutes." (Grouping information into categories that are meaningful to the user.)
3. **Precision.** "I will consult my index and find the exact location of the document in a minute." (Each document is numbered, indexed and filed by number.)

Each researcher has to come up with a system that is comfortable for him or her. Hopefully everyone will move beyond method #1, but

many will never be comfortable with #3. Since every family is different, it is impossible to devise a ready-made, one-size-fits-all system that everyone should follow.

Files or Notebooks?

The first thing you need to decide is the basic physical form for your filing (the shoe box under your bed is out) — filing cabinet and folders, notebooks or boxes. You can accomplish the same thing with notebooks or folders, but notebooks have several advantages because the pages are firmly held in place. If you drop a folder, you usually have to start all over. A dropped notebook seldom opens and even when it does the papers usually stay in order. When working with a file, the natural thing to do is physically remove a sheet you need to consult. Then it can be laid anywhere and easily mixed in with other papers and files. In a notebook it can be consulted without being removed. You can have several notebooks open at once and nothing will be misplaced, but if you open several files, chances are some of the papers will end up in the wrong file. Papers in files can be kept under better control by using a two hole punch and metal fasteners. Different groups of papers can be! kept together in a file using these or clamps.

You will probably use a combination of storage methods; while most of your work is in notebooks, you might want to keep forms, correspondence or general information in file folders. Then special original documents that you don't want to punch holes in or fold, are probably be best stored in an archive box. You can also put your original documents in scrapbooks using acid free plastic protectors and envelopes. With scanners and copy machines it is very easy to make copies and, if necessary, reduce the sizes so they fit conveniently in your working notebooks or files.

First Step: Decide on the Primary Classification

There are descriptions of several genealogy filing systems on the Internet. Your first step when choosing a system is to decide whether you want to organize your material by surname, geographical location or type of document (census, certificates, maps, land documents, correspondence, etc.) Any type of breakdown can have subdivisions from another category — i.e., file by surname, then

place or file by place, then type of document.

Most people seem to feel that the first logical division of material is by surname. Some start off with notebooks or files with the surnames of four grandparents. Others make up notebooks for all major surnames plus another notebook with miscellaneous surnames on which little material has been gathered. Your initial organizing approach will depend on how much material you already have accumulated. If you have several boxes, you will need several notebooks to start. However, if you are just beginning, one small notebook is sufficient.

If you have several families who lived in one area for several generations, you may find the surname system is not the most efficient. When I did my husband's Polish line, I examined several parish records and each had several family surnames which I recorded all together. I ended up dividing this research by parish rather than surname. I don't think I will find any other records on these people and being able to see all family names and how they interacted with each other was more helpful than isolated each surname.

Informal vs. Precision

The systems described so far are what I call "informal." The difference between informal and precision is similar to the difference in how a grocery store displays its wares as opposed to how a library stores books. If you go into a library to find a specific book, the quickest way to find it is to go to a catalog so you can find the unique number under which it is kept. Then you can go directly to the shelf for that number and find the book. If you go to a grocery store to buy chicken bouillon or cauliflower, even if you have never been in that store before, you will be able to find these products within a few minutes. If a grocery store were organized like a library, using a precision system, all the items would probably be arranged on the shelves by their UPC numbers.

The precision system involves numbering each document. William Dollarhide describes this system in detail. He separates information by surname, then geographically by the place where the event occurred. This can be broken down as needed — country, state,

county or even township. The material is filed randomly within a section and is numbered as it is added. So page 24 of material relating to the Johnson family in Ohio would be Johnson/OH/24. On the back of the family group sheet of the applicable person, you would note the source of the information as being Johnson/OH/24.

Professional researcher Joan Lowrey uses a similar system for her correspondence. Each correspondent is coded according to the first letter of the last name, then a number — B001 would be the first person with a surname beginning with B, etc. Each sheet of each piece of correspondence from that person is then numbered in order.

The advantage of this system is you can put this reference number on the event to which it applies and be able to instantly find the supporting paperwork. The disadvantage is you need to maintain some sort of index system. If you are looking for the birth date of Martin Smith you probably don't remember it was in a letter from Ann Jones. A program such as Clooz could be used to index material filed by number. Research Data filer (RDF), an old DOS program that came with earlier versions of PAF, also is well suited to this task. If your computer program stores sources in a separate area that can be printed and searched, you could probably devise a system for keeping track of your reference numbers there.

These systems were devised before computers and, in my opinion, are more complex than we need now. If you correctly document your information in your database, most items do not need further references. If your source is the 1910 U.S. Census with the state, county and page number or enumeration district, it really isn't too important that your photocopy is Johnson/OH/24. Numbering documents, especially original material, does make it easier to locate and under any filing system you can add document numbers where they would be helpful.

Getting Started

No matter what concept appeals to you, the important thing is to get started and organize your material in some way. How many times do you really want to spend an hour or two looking for a piece of paper that has suddenly become very important in your research? Any system is better than no system and any system can be revised.

NEWS FROM THE PAST- Marshfield Times-January 1916-Submitted by Lorraine Markee

Brain Workers Live Longest

In a recent discussion of senility and longevity, Dr. H. M. Friedman reviews the biological, physical and mental aspects of old age and notes that brain workers live longer than muscle workers and that clergymen are the longest lived of professional individuals. Women live longer than men in spite of the morbidity of childbearing. Marriage tends to favor longevity and so does religious life. Heredity is an important factor in both senility and longevity.

Marshfield News Herald-October 2, 1928, page 4 column 2.

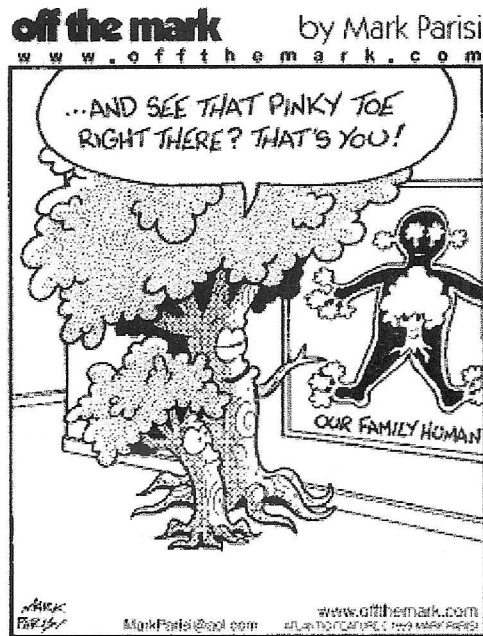
Court grants Citizen Papers to 10 Monday-

In circuit court at Wisconsin Rapids Monday afternoon 11 petitions for naturalization were heard, the petitioners being examined by C. R. Berg, St. Paul, federal naturalization examiner, and papers were granted to 10. The petition of Fred August Baartz, Bethel, was continued over until the March term of court. Those who answered questions of the examiner were passed including the following: Paul Zvolena, Milladore; Mary Wolf, Marshfield; Johan Albert Juliussen, Pittsville,; Salvatore Amorelli, Wisconsin Rapids; Thomas Poulas, Wisconsin Rapids; Joseph Pac, Wisconsin Rapids; Carl Ever Johnson, Marshfield; Gerrie William Smith, Arpin, and Augusta Janz, Wisconsin Rapids.

Marshfield Times Page 1 Column 1 Wednesday April 11, 1917

Naturalization Papers Given Three- Three candidates from this city seeking their naturalization papers through, the regular court procedure, succeeded in passing the test given them at Grand Rapids Monday. Anton Schmidt, Carl May and August Smith, all well known in this city, were the candidates seeking the rights to become American citizens. City Clerk John Seubert and Alderman John Juno accompanied the men to the Rapids, and acted as their witnesses. Judge Parks presided over the court. A total of seventeen men were at Grand Rapids Monday, from various parts of the county, taking the test.

HUMOR IS THE SPICE OF GENEALOGY



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