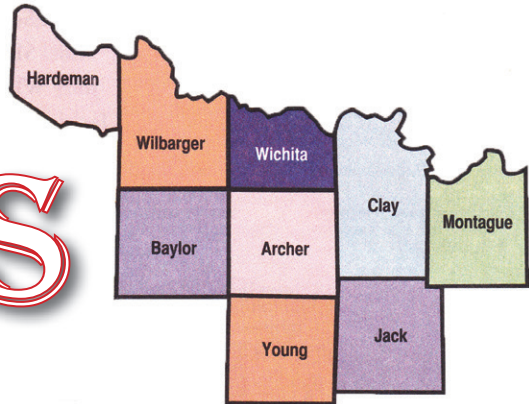


NORTH TEXAS

TRAIL TRACERS



INFORMATION ABOUT THE NORTH TEXAS GENEALOGICAL ASSOCIATION

PURPOSE: The purpose of the North Texas Genealogy Association is to promote and preserve genealogical and historical data of Wichita Falls and the surrounding area.

*MEETINGS: Regular meetings are held the first Thursday of each month, January through December (excluding July). Social time starts at 6:30 P.M., and the business meeting begins at 7:00 P.M., with the program following the business meeting. **Meetings are currently held at the Museum of North Texas History, located at 720 Indiana Avenue, Wichita Falls, Texas.***

MEMBERSHIP: Membership is open to all persons or institutions who are interested in family records, family history, general and local history.

PUBLICATIONS: The North Texas Trail Tracers, published in March, June, September, and covers the North Texas area with major emphasis on Archer, Baylor, Clay, Hardeman, Jack, Montague, Wichita, Wilbarger, and Young Counties. Each issue is indexed. A journal will be published annually, in accordance with TSGS guide-lines, and will be printed, bound, and distributed to all paying members in December of each year.

EDITORIAL POLICY OF THE NORTH TEXAS TRAIL TRACERS: Neither the editor nor the North Texas Genealogy Association and/or the members of the editorial staff assumes any responsibility for error of fact or opinion expressed by the contributors. Correction of proven errors will be published. All subscribers are invited to submit material for publication. When submitting materials, send to ATTN: EDITOR.

QUERIES: Queries will be published as space allows, and the Editor reserves the right to edit the copy.

BOOK REVIEW: Donated publications or books sent for review will become the property of the Association for donation to the Wichita Falls Public Library. The Association maintains a close relationship with the Wichita Falls Public Library Genealogy Department.

SEMINARS: Seminars are held annually. Every other year, an experienced genealogy speaker will present the seminar, and on alternating years, club members will present the seminar.

PROGRAMS: Programs are given at regular monthly meetings, and are informative, interesting, thought provoking and fun. Our speakers share their knowledge of genealogy research and other historical information.

Please visit our website
www.ntgaTrailTracers.org

*North Texas Genealogical Association
Mike Moody, President; Gil Allison, Vice President; Cheri Rix, Treasurer;
Sue Ramser, Secretary; Marilyn Meador, Membership; Chris Chandler, Programs
Directors, John Yates, Joan Gray, Judy Brunson
Paula Ballard - TSGS District 9 Representative*

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From the President

NTGA members,

Hope all of you have had a great summer! I think most of the really hot weather is behind us. We've had some fun and informative meetings but now our attention turns to the seminar. I hope all of you are planning to attend! Lisa Louise Cooke is a terrific speaker and it would be a shame to have anything less than a sellout.

I want to personally thank all of you who have put so much time and effort into making this seminar a success! It seems like at least half of the membership has contributed and I am truly grateful for all of you.

There is one person I want to single out for her amazing work, Paula Ballard. I cannot tell her enough how much I appreciate her. When you see her, thank her!



Mike Moody, NTGA President

6 Military Records For Genealogy That You Might Not Know About

Genealogists and family historians get excited about finding veteran ancestors because this means there will be many sources available for research and potential clues. My time spent at the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) has certainly exposed me to the sheer size of possibilities for records relating to military research and genealogy. At times, it can be complicated to conduct this type of research. The more I've learned about it, the more I realize how challenging it is for beginners to sort out the administrative hierarchy and record groupings at NARA.

In the genealogy world, most of us have been introduced to the Compiled Military Service Records (CMSR), Pensions, and Bounty Land Warrant Applications. Even as these important collections are bountiful in number and usefulness for genealogists, this two-part post intends to shed light on other original records that are not talked about as much to help with military research. This post is themed around medical records and records related to disabled veterans. In all, it demonstrates the enormous possibilities for mining genealogical information in military records.

Carded Medical Records – The National Archives holds a separate series of hospitalization records for regular and volunteer soldiers. They look a lot like the cards used in CMSRs. Only in some cases has this information been extracted by the War Department and included on a soldier's CMSR, so these should be consulted for additional information about your ancestor's experience while serving. These medical cards include the hospital or station where they were admitted, cause of admission, and treatment. They are filed with Records of the Adjutant General's Office, RG 94 and are dated 1821-84 and 1894-1912. These are only available at the National Archives building in Washington, D.C. and can be requested if you know the soldier's name, company, and regiment.

Records of United States National Homes for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers – The National Homes for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers were established by Congress in 1866 [14 Stat.10] to provide residence to needy veterans. The National Archives has records of homes from 1866-1938 in Records of The Veterans Administration, RG 15. Most of the historical home registers survive which include a lot of genealogical information including birth place, physical description, religion, residence subsequent to discharge, name and address of nearest relative, medical history, date of death, place of burial, military service, and remarks by the administration. These records are indexed and can be viewed on FamilySearch.org.

Records of the U.S. Soldier's Home – Before National Homes for Disabled Volunteers in 1866, Congress established the first institution for taking care of needy veterans of the regular army in 1851 with the United States Military Asylum, later known as the U.S. Soldier's and Airmen's Home. Records of these homes are grouped under Records of the Armed Forces Retirement Home, RG 231. Amongst the sources that hold the most genealogical value are case files for deceased inmates, death records, hospital records, burial registers and admission registers. Most records are dated from the establishment of the Soldier's Home in 1851 up to 1943. These are only available for

research at the National Archives building in Washington, D.C. When researching records of veteran homes, researchers should know the soldier's name, home to which they were admitted and approximate date of admission or discharge.

Records of Artificial Limbs Provided To Civil War and Later Veterans – The Civil War would result in the performance of amputations on about 60,000 soldiers. In 1862, Congress authorized the Army's Surgeon General to purchase artificial limbs for soldiers and seamen. Records related to artificial limbs for veterans are in Records of the Veteran's Administration, RG 15 and include registers of persons furnished artificial limbs and commutation, as well as letters sent to veterans, physicians, and manufacturers. Most series are self-indexed and date from 1862-1927. These records are not online and only available at the National Archives building in Washington, D.C.

Medical Registers of Examinations of Recruits and Substitutes – In 1862, the U.S. War Department established the post of Provost Marshal General, a year later becoming a separate government bureau. The Provost Marshal was responsible for making sure the Union met enlistment quotas for the armed forces. To make sure recruits were fit for service, each person underwent a medical examination and these results were recorded by the Provost Marshal. You may have searched Civil War Draft Registrations on Ancestry.com, but these medical examinations are actually a separate series and not available in this online collection. Most are still in original form at branches of the National Archives. The most interesting pieces of information are found under the Provost Marshal's remarks for each recruit who described any illnesses or physical ailments and would subsequently note if the recruit was accepted or rejected. The medical examinations are in Records of the Provost Marshal's General Bureau, RG 110 and volumes are organized by congressional district. To find what congressional district your ancestor's county belonged to, consult the Congressional Directory for the Second Session of the Thirty-eighth Congress of the United States of America. Draft registrations and medical examinations for the Civil War are dispersed throughout NARA's regional facilities. For ancestor's who served after the Civil War, Records of the Adjutant General, RG 94, contains a separate collection with reports of medical examination of recruits, 1884-1912.

1890 U.S. Census of Union Veterans and Widows of the Civil War – The regular population schedule of the 1890 U.S. Census was destroyed by fire, but if your ancestor served in the Union, you may be able to bridge the gap. The government fortunately did a special population schedule for Union veterans and widows, which survived in the states of Kentucky through Wyoming.[1] The census questions include name and service information such as company, unit, time of enlistment, time of discharge, length of service, Post Office address, and disabilities incurred, which can be helpful in understanding your ancestor's life post-war. This particular source was helpful in proving the kinship of my second great-grandparents because both their fathers appear next to each other on this particular census. The 1890 Union Veterans Census is fully available on FamilySearch.org.

10 Common 19th Century Occupations That You're Not Likely to See Today

Occupations are one of the most coveted gems of genealogy research — they give us a glimpse in to the daily lives of our ancestors in a way that few other raw details can. But if you've spent some time digging through old records you've probably come across jobs that you have never heard of, most likely because their necessity has faded away with time. You've probably even found yourself frantically googling some of these positions to gain a better understanding of what your ancestor actually did to earn a living.

We've pulled together a fascinating list of 10 fairly common occupations from the 1880 census that you'd be pretty unlikely to see someone performing today (although many do still exist in some form or another). Each of these jobs was common enough during the era to have its own official occupation code. You can see them here.

1. Hostler (ostler in England) – Staying at an inn during your travels and bringing your horse? Then you'll be thankful for the hostler, who will care for your four legged friend in the stable. The term hostler does refer to several modern occupations as well, but the original position of “a man employed to look after the horses of people staying at an inn” is one you're not likely to find in abundance in our motorized world.

2. Livery-Stable Keeper – Like the hostler, the livery-stable keeper's bread and butter depended on the care of horses who were used in everyday tasks and transportation – by boarding and renting them – making it clear why this job is also nearly extinct.

3. Whitewasher – A somewhat hazardous job thanks to the dusty lime concoction used to create the whitewash, the common 19th century occupation of whitewashing buildings to improve their appearance and repel rot is not something we see today.

In Britain and Ireland, whitewash was used historically, both externally and internally, in workers' cottages, and still retains something of this association with rural poverty. In the United States, a similar attitude is expressed in the old saying: “Too proud to whitewash and too poor to paint”, with the connotation that whitewash is a cheap imitation of “real” paint.

4. Newspaper Crier – The social media gurus of a bygone era, newspaper criers made all the noise they could to deliver the headlines and sell the daily paper. More than one town law was enacted to limit where and when they could do their loud and important work.

5. Artificial Flower Maker – Most often a woman's occupation – one which required long hours and much skill – the profession of creating artificial flowers for decoration would eventually be overtaken by mass production. However, the desire for this specialized product – which was hard to replicate in a factory – meant that the profitability of this craft held strong longer than many other handiworks.

In the making of a flower the hand worker has no mechan-

ical rival. No inventor has been able to harness electricity or steam to any instrument which can reproduce the deft twist of the skilled rose maker's fingers, or the discriminating touch of the worker who tastefully groups together leaves and finished flowers. The nature of the product, the absence of machinery, and as a result the lack of change in fundamental processes, make this industry unique among the important wage-earning pursuits of women. From *Artificial Flower Makers*, a study, 1913

6. Telegraph Company Employee – No big surprises here. Once a technology that changed the way we communicate and spread information, the use of the telegraph is now limited to specialized applications only. In 1880, on the other hand, a job as a telegraph operator was a fairly common skilled profession that paid well. The companies that operated them provided a wealth of other jobs as well.

7. Corset Maker – If you haven't been wearing your corset lately than it will probably come as no big surprise why this job is not one you're likely to see advertised in the local want ads. However corset makers do still exist for costume design and, like their historical counterparts, they must be extremely skilled tailors to complete their craft.

8. Rag Picker – Still a widespread occupation in developing nations, rag picking is no longer considered a profession in our throw away society. In the 19th century on the other hand, rag pickers were responsible for digging through refuse to find materials to be reused. They would then sell the materials to those who could recycle them.

Although it was solely a job for the lowest of the working classes, rag-picking was considered an honest occupation, more on the level of street sweeper than of a beggar. In Paris, for instance, rag-pickers were regulated by law: Their operations were restricted to certain times of night, and they were required to return any unusually valuable items to the owner or to the authorities. [Read more.](#)

9. Turpentine Farmer or Laborer – Like petroleum today, turpentine was a universal manufacturing component in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Used in everything from paints and varnishes to patent leather and crayons, it's produced from the resin of pine trees and many earned their living in its production and sale. Farmers who owned enough pine rich land could make a huge profit, while laborers often found seasonal work to support their families.

And last, but certainly not least...

10. Gentleman – Yes, this actually had an occupation code in the 1880 US census. Just go ahead and try to get that job today.

Other common occupations from this time period that are in much less demand today are galloon, gimp, and tassel makers, carriage and wagon craftsmen, nail makers, flax dressers, trunk, valise and carpet-bag makers, coopers, draymen, sawyers and hucksters.

Pioneers Remember

Memories from area pioneers recorded for the 50th Anniversary of Wichita Falls.

Transcribed by NTGA member, Mary Kearby

Name: John Green Ayers and wife
[Rebecca J. Langston Ayers (1851 - 1936)]

Address: Chillicothe, TX

Place of Birth: Phillips Co., ARK

Date of Birth: 19 Mar 1848

Place of residence prior to coming to Wichita Falls territory:
Fannin Co., where we married. Moved to Brown Co., on
Blanket Creek

Date of arrival in Wichita Falls territory: Sep 1882

Place of residence on arrival in Wichita Falls territory: On
Bear Creek, five miles NE of Wichita Falls

Remarks: Moved to Wilbarger Co., 1883, lived on same
ranch we settled on. Been married 62 years, have 4 boys
and 3 girls. Arrived in Wilbarger Co., with 100 head of cattle
and 1000 head of sheep. Still in the cattle business, 4 1/2
miles N.E. of Chillicothe. First school we had north of Pease
River; hired Miss Gabie Betts to teach private school in
dugout with 6 pupils. My oldest boy Walter, attended school
and herded sheep at the same time. First Sunday School
and Sermon held under Elm tree at Jackson Springs. We
pulled logs out of Wanderers Creek to make the seats. On
opening up Sunday School and Church, Captain Bill Mc-
Donald and Rangers rode up looking for desperadoes and
wanted to know what this meant. I replied, we were going to
have Sunday School and Church, invited him down to take
part with us, he dismounted and dropped his bridle and took
part with us and proved to be a good singer; met him years
afterwards and we had a conversation with him talking over
old times and this particular occasion. He never forgot that
day and was greatly surprised that Reverend C. T. Neece
preached the first sermon, north of the Pease River, and this
was the first Sunday School north of the river.



Chillicothe Cemetery, Chillicothe, Hardeman County Texas

Maintained by: MrsT

Originally Created by: Paula

Record added: May 25, 2009

Find A Grave Memorial# 37482407

Wichita Falls Area Obituaries

Are you looking for an announcement of death of a person in Wichita Falls, Texas? If so, Carol Ellis a recent member who joined North Texas Genealogical Association, has completed copying and putting in a note book the write-ups and pictures of all the people who have died from 9 August 2015 through 31 December 2015, and January through March 2016. These copies will be held at the Archives Department of the Museum of North Texas History, located on 720 Indiana Ave. Wichita Falls, TX. Telephone number (940) 322 7628

Birthdate Calculator Tips for Usage

Calculated dates should only be considered approximate due to possible errors or possible different methodology used in the original calculation (found on the tombstone, obituary or death certificate). Be sure to note in your records that your date was calculated.

This calculator can use either the exact month method or the 30 day month method to compute a birth date. While you may think the exact calendar month method may be more reliable, be aware that many of the headstone and obituary ages at death appear to have been computed using the 30-day-month method. (The 30-day-month method assumes that all months have 30 days even February. It's an approximation which agrees with the exact calendar month method about 2/3 of the time and is the most likely the method used many years ago to calculate the birth date found on the old tombstone if the birth date was unknown.)

A tombstone or death certificate is not considered a primary source for a birthday, but it can give you an approximate date of birth to help in further research.

The calculator could also be used to calculate birth year from census data or birthdate from wedding date and age.

The calculator allows Julian calendar dates, but you cannot mix Julian and Gregorian dates or ages in the same calculation.

Because of the change from the Julian to the Gregorian Calendar, the calculator may not work for anyone born between Sept. 2, 1752 and Sept. 14, 1752 (or when days were lost at the calendar changeover).

Be aware of when the calendar was changed from Julian to Gregorian in the country for which you are performing the calculation. See the change from Julian to Gregorian calendar by country.

To do this calculation by hand when the online calculator is not available, use the 8870 formula. (the calculator calls this the 30 day month length)

If a person died May 6, 1889 at age 71 years, 7 months and 9 days:

18890506 Year, day, month of death (yyyymmdd)

-710709 Subtract age at death (yymmdd)

18179797

-8870 Subtract constant 8870

18170927 Born 27 Sept. 1817 (yyyymmdd)

This person was born on September 27, 1817

Burned County Courthouses

Before starting on burned county research, be sure you have these five tools ready and working for you.

1. A positive “track ‘em down” attitude is important.[2] Avoid discouragement or thinking that genealogical research in a “burned county” is hopeless. The first and most important step to finding ancestors who lived in a burned county is creating a relentless “track ‘em down” mindset no matter how hard it is, and no matter how long it takes.

2. Research logs are a must. Burned county research is not easy. The more difficult or complex a research problem becomes, the more valuable good research logs are. They are a cornerstone to good research and filing systems. Research logs show what has, and (just as importantly) has not worked. Also, use logs to explain in written comments your thinking about search strategies and what you are trying to accomplish—why you turned to that set of records.[3]

3. A well-documented family group record is your research road map. Get ready to research a burned county family by preparing a family group record that has source footnotes for EVERY event. Be sure to cite every known source that mentions a member of that family. If a document mentions more than one event in an ancestor’s life, source footnote each event.

Don’t stop with just the birth, marriage, and death events for the family. Add ALL events like census, land purchases and sales, military service, witnessing another person’s document, or when a will was probated. A well-documented family group bristles with clues hinting where to research for more.

4. A commitment to document AS YOU GO! [4] This means keeping your research logs and family group record up-to-date. Fill out the purpose (person and event you want) for each search, and the source data on the research log BEFORE you look at the source. Complete the research log by filling in the results and (if you find something) file number of the photocopy. Documenting AS YOU GO means if you find a new source you do these things before you lay your head on the pillow:

- a. Photocopy the new source document.
- b. Identify the source (footnote information) on the front of the photocopy.
- c. Write your own document filing number on the back of each photocopy.
- d. Log the document number, and summarize events-people you found on all appropriate logs.
- e. Transfer new family data from the source to appropriate family group records.
- f. Enter new source footnotes for every piece of data on a source, even if that event already has a footnote.
- g. Add a preliminary assessment of the data and its reliability to each source footnote.
- h. Print the updated family group record.
- j. File the new family group and photocopy.

5. Write out a thoughtful master research plan.[5] Part of the overall goal should involve sharing your research on one or more families in a cluster. Within that goal work on one family at a time. Avoid skipping to a different family until work on this main family is nearly finished.

Plan to research substitutes for the missing records—research substitute record types, substitute jurisdictions, and substitute repositories. Look for family members in previous and subsequent (hopefully unburned) places they settled using the family group record as a guide. If you still are not finding what you need, study the relatives, and associates to determine who were most closely associated with your ancestor. Be prepared to research those people as substitute kin or associates to find clues about your ancestor.

Concentrate on documenting one event in one person’s life at a time (for example, Ethel’s marriage). Research the easiest to find events (sources) first. Stick with that event even if you do not find it on the first few searches. Keep looking for some source that will document that event. Don’t move on to another event in the family until you find it, or until all possible documents, jurisdictions, and repositories for that event have been tried.

Plan to share your research as a way of reaching out for contacts and help.

Find ways to collaborate with other genealogists, archivists, and librarians on solving the problem. Get help where ever you can.

Find Alternatives

When a record goes missing, there may be some other records available with the same information.

Record Type Alternatives

Stay focused on one person and event in that person’s life, but change the record type you search to find the event. Here are some ideas to help you find good substitutes for missing burned county records.

Record Selection Tables. Use the United States Record Selection Table on the Wiki to identify alternative record types you could use to find documentation for various events.

Death records. More records result from death than any other event. Perhaps the event you want to document will be mentioned in a record created at the time of death.

Land records. These records are so important they are usually the first to be re-recorded after a disaster. Local title companies, the state, and feds may have land records too.

Local histories and biographies may be based on sources that were not destroyed in the disaster.

Censuses (federal and state) were rarely stored at the burned courthouse. They show family changes over time.

Tax records show residence and neighbors. If they were not stored at the burned courthouse they may be a source of information about your family.

Newspapers mention our ancestors, and a copy somewhere usually survives a disaster. First see if nearby newspapers have been digitized and are available on the Internet. If not, you can get a microfilm copy of almost any newspaper through inter-library loan at college or public libraries. Use the U.S. Newspapers Program (www.neh.gov/projects/usnp.html) will help you find newspapers and obtain newspaper microfilms.

Legislative petitions were sent to the state capitol and show residence and neighbors.

Collections. Search this Wiki for the Genealogy article of a

state to identify important collections in that state to re-search for your ancestors.

Jurisdiction Alternatives

The county records may have burned, but the town, state, or federal governments may have similar records. Do not forget to check in neighboring towns and counties too. Try an area search. Draw a circle around the home of your family and search all the jurisdictions with the circle. Slowly expand the circle searching the area farther and farther from home.

Repository Alternatives

Make friends with librarians and archivists at local repositories and ask where various kinds of records ended up. When hunting down documentation for an event look for it in each of these kinds of repositories;

neighboring county repositories

2nd courthouses (or other repository) in the same county
county clerk's office

county historical library

county genealogical society

state genealogical society

state library and archives

law libraries

government documents library (usually at a prominent university in the state)

land offices

National Archives branches

Kin or Associate Alternatives

If research on the main family members fails to produce results, try studying relatives and associates. Make a list of people who show up in records of the family and study how closely and frequently they were in contact with the family. [6] If necessary, track down the kin and associates to learn more about your family.

Study the family in community context.[7] Get to know the neighbors and relatives. This means you use the census and land records to:

extract full information on people in the area with the same surname

extract full information on people by another surname living in same household

identify census neighbors, at least 12 before/after—note who owned land

if near a state or county line, study people with the same surname in nearby areas

comb the neighbors for families with similar naming patterns, origins, or occupations

Think About Burned County Research in New Ways

Be innovative. Break out of the box. Force your brain to break old connections and make new ones.

Create a time line and/or map. This helps clarify thinking, identify gaps, and raises questions that may help resolve the problem.

Organize, review, and re-evaluate the evidence. Summarize the problem. Rearrange relevant documents in a different logical order. Review old sources for overlooked clues. Separate what you assume from what you know. Sort and weigh the evidence. Analyze information for relevance, directness of the evidence, and consistency with other facts.

Write a formal research report (as if you were hired as a

professional genealogist) to clarify your thinking. For this formal report:

1. Create a well-documented family group record.
2. Write a narrative report explaining:
 - a. Why did you search where you did?
 - b. What did you find or not find?
 - c. What do your findings, or lack of findings mean?
 - d. What sources should be searched next?
 - e. How long will it take to search those sources?
 - f. What is the likelihood those sources will work?

Create and fill-in new forms to make new brain connections and raise questions:[8]

1. Follow the family in ALL census years
 2. In-Out list to help track each piece of land
 3. Holes to fill in an ancestor's life
 4. Source citations that need completing
 5. Facts that need better evidence
 6. Ancestral associates and their roles
- Use logic, deduction, inference, and inspiration.

1. Correlate records of neighbors to infer relationships.
2. Study migration patterns to infer where the family's place of origin.
3. Try to disprove uncertain connections.

Continue Your Education and Follow-Up

Get an education.

Read about the area your ancestors settled. Study its history and local genealogical periodicals.

Take classes, conferences, and institutes.

Go on a research trip to visit their communities to learn about the local way of life and repositories .

Get help. Reach out to others and collaborate to get help and learn more. Place queries. Hire a professional. Pray for help.

Share and collaborate. Give in order to receive. Share your genealogy and pedigree with one or more sites such as FamilySearch Family Tree, FamilySearch Pedigree Resource File, Ancestry.com Family Trees, RootsWeb WorldConnect, or OneGreatFamily.com. Share your genealogy on social media like Facebook. Test your DNA, and share the results with public DNA databases. Leave some family history, or a query, on an Internet genealogy message board—and repeat for several months. Contribute to the Family History Research Wiki. Send a copy of your ancestor John Doe's family history (include your address) to each county library and to each state and county genealogical society where John Doe lived. Publish an article on the family in their local genealogical periodical. Register your address in directories of members of genealogical Internet web sites and submit your genealogy to their libraries. Put your genealogy on a web page and register your site with major search engines and lists (Cyndi's List). Other researchers will start to contact you and share added details.

Summary. Burned counties do not have to be end of the line research situations if you prepare well, look for alternatives, search a variety of jurisdictions and repositories for the family, kin, and associates, approach such research problems in innovative ways, and follow-up well.

15 (Genealogy) Quotes We Love

Every man is a quotation from all his ancestors. – Ralph Waldo Emerson

If you are lucky enough to be a genealogist, you are lucky enough. – Ruth Padilla

Friends come and go, but relatives tend to accumulate. – Unknown

The past is not dead. It isn't even past. – William Faulkner

Genealogy: Where you confuse the dead and irritate the living. – Unknown

There is no king who has not had a slave among his ancestors, and no slave who has not had a king among his. – Helen Keller

We inherit from our ancestors gifts so often taken for granted. Each of us contains within this inheritance of soul. We are links between the ages, containing past and present expectations, sacred memories and future promise. – Edward Sellner

Do You Follow These “Rules” of Genealogy Research?

1. Always Cite Your Sources. Always.
2. Never, Ever Assume Another Researcher's Information is 100% Correct
3. Remember That Every Name Has Variations, Check Them All
4. Never Copy Another Person's Public Tree, Use it Only as a Helpful Aid
5. Share Freely With Others and They Will Share With You
6. Don't Trust Your Assumptions, Only Sources
7. Check and Double Check Your Facts Before Recording or Sharing
8. Take a Second Look at Records, Your Answer May Be Right in Front of You
9. Don't Limit Yourself to Only One or Two Research Sites, Look for Options
10. Go Offline or Order Hard Copies to Expand Your Research
11. Back Up Your Files Monthly, Keep at Least Two Copies of Your Research
12. Never Give Up: you may not find what you're looking for but the journey is always worth the effort

Seven Reasons You Are Not Finding Your Ancestors

Genealogy research can be quite challenging when you are not able to find documentation on your ancestor. Before you get too stressed or throw in the towel, go through the following reasons that could be standing in your way:

1. You have not thoroughly researched the descendants of your ancestor.

Too often, researchers are bound and determined to get as far back on a line as they can, and they do not concern themselves with researching as much as they can on one person. They miss records that could give important details and even mention the names of parents or birth places.

You should start with yourself, as Jan Edwards suggests in "Why Me?" In the post, Jan explains, "You start with yourself; work each generation including direct line siblings and spouses." You should research everything you can about parents, siblings and spouses for each ancestor. Following a paper trail will help keep you verify that each person is related to you, and the next generation will be mentioned on records. There is no place for assumptions when you are researching your ancestor.

2. You are looking in the wrong location.

Some ancestors moved around and did not stay in one place. When you research them, start with the most recent place that you knew them to be. If you get to the point that you run out of records for them, be sure you research their place of death and the birth places of their children. Look for marriage records, probate records, and land records for clues.

Sometimes ancestors never moved, but they are not found among the records in the area where they used to live. The boundaries where they were living changed. They were in one county, but they became part of another county or parish. That means you have to search the parent county or parish that they were a part of before being redistricted.

A great place to learn about boundary changes is at the Wiki. Search for an article on the county or parish where you know your ancestor was living. Then read the section on the parent county or parish to learn about resources in that area.

3. You are using some else's findings.

If you are using information that another researcher shared and they did not share the sources they used, the research could be flawed. If they made mistakes with names, dates, or places, you will not be able to check the original records they used. So what good is the information they put together? Not much. It could be a pure waste of time for you to build your tree from their assumptions.

Every once in a while a tree can be helpful in providing clues or identifying details that you are having trouble finding elsewhere, but be sure to check original sources to confirm or learn more. If sources, are missing then you will need to prove their work, or start fresh yourself.

4. You are searching a database that does not cover the years your ancestor lived or the area where your ancestor lived.

Have you ever searched and searched a database and wondered why you could not find your ancestor who you knew should have been there? One explanation for this is

that the collections you are searching may have a cut off point and only cover certain years. Also, sometimes collections are missing records for a particular area, and it just so happens the county or parish that your ancestor was in has not been included.

For example, if you were searching FamilySearch for Alabama Births and Christenings, 1881-1930 for an ancestor born in Jefferson County, you would not find that ancestor today because no records have been added for that county yet. Always study the contents of a collection that you are searching.

5. You need to vary your search criteria.

Putting too much information in the search field of a database could keep you from getting results for records that do exist. For example, if you ancestor's name is Josiah James Anderson, do not start searching the census on both his first name and his middle name. Chances are a census taker did not even record his middle name. You will be lucky if it was not recorded as J. J. Anderson,

Do not search using the name of the local area if you are not absolutely sure that is where your ancestor is and that is what the area was called at the time. If your ancestor lived near the city of Lafayette, Parish, search using the area Lafayette Parish, Louisiana. Do not search using Lafayette, Lafayette, Louisiana because you will not find your ancestor if they lived in a town near the city of Lafayette.

6. You are only searching for records online.

If you limit your research to online databases, you may have difficulty finding records as you move further back in time. Many resources are not indexed or even online yet. You must research the records that were generated locally in repositories to be sure that you are not missing records that could fill in the missing details that you are seeking.

There is a collection for Illinois Probate Records, 1819-1970 at FamilySearch, however, an ancestor born in Iroquois County, Illinois would not be found in this collection today because that county is not covered. Probate records do exist for Iroquois County in offline resources. One place that you can find probate records for Iroquois would be in the Family History Library Catalog among microfilm that would need to be ordered. You could also check with the Iroquois County Courthouse to see if they have additional probate records.

7. Your family is withholding details from you.

Sometimes family members may choose to withhold information that would help you document an ancestor. They may do this for selfish reasons or they may do it to avoid discussing a painful experience that happened in the past. Either way, exercise caution and patience. Do not push them. It is more difficult to start your search this way, however, it is not impossible.

Interview extended family, neighbors and friends to see what they know. Search records in the local history section at the library. Research newspapers from the time and place that your ancestor lived to learn about schools, events, and organizations. Be certain that your research starts with you so that you can identify more people who can possibly share what they know.

The Grumpy Genealogist: 4 Things That Really Bug Me About Family History Research

By Susan Wallin Mosey

I try to be a cheerful and upbeat genealogist—but once in a while, even a real peach of a human being like myself just has to let off some steam. Lately, four old and familiar issues in particular are really getting on my nerves, genealogically speaking...

1. The missing 1890 census. Honestly, nearly an entire census lost? How did this happen? In all the United States of America in 1921, from sea to shining sea, there wasn't one safe and fire-resistant building with a fireproof vault in which they could store the census records? It wasn't worth the price of one night watchman to make sure everything was okay? And the worst part of it is, I've read that most of the records survived the fire (with water damage)—and they were kept for many years, while discussions went on about what to do next, before someone decided one day that the best thing to do was to just throw them all away. Incredible! When I think of all the loose ends I could tie up, all the mysteries I could solve, all the gaps I could fill in... all those missing children... sigh...

2. Those blurry, badly microfilmed World War I draft cards. (see image above) I've read that after the cards were microfilmed (obviously by workers who were looking out the window most of the time), the original cards were discarded. They threw them away! Without anyone checking to see if the microfilm images were properly done before destroying the originals? What I would like to know is this: Who was the clueless government bureaucrat who made that decision? I think his/her name should live on in infamy, like the person who threw away the damaged 1890 census.

3. Census takers with bad penmanship. Seriously, who was the genius who came up with the guidelines for selecting these people? Did they not have to give a handwriting sample, perhaps write down a practice family or two? I would think the ability to write legibly would have been a primary requirement for the job of census taker, but apparently no one thought of that during the hiring process. I suppose some of the census takers just got sloppy as time went on and didn't care anymore. Or maybe some of them got hired because they were some politician's nephew—I suppose then as now, when it comes to obtaining gainful employment, it isn't always what you know, it's who you know.

4. Relatives who say "I really don't have anything to share" when it's pretty obvious that they do. In this day and age of cheap Priority Mail and FedEx shipping, and scanners in practically every genealogist's home or office, there's no excuse for not sharing what we've got... (Calm down, Aunt Emma, I'm not asking you to give it to me, just loan it to me!) Yet I've had to ask some relatives five or six times, over a period of years, if I could borrow their box of family photos or papers. Some are just too lazy to take the box down out of the attic or dig it out of the guest room closet, but some seem to be exhibiting strange territorial behavior. Most eventually say yes—but a few hold out, as if "whoever dies with the most stuff wins." But everyone ends up losing that game.

Why Your AncestryDNA Matches Aren't Responding!

DNA has unlocked countless genealogical mysteries. Whether it's a woman learning she has two half sisters or finding a match that helps break down a brick wall, the potential of DNA as a genealogical tool cannot be overstated. So why is it that when we take an AncestryDNA test, our matches don't respond when we reach out to them?

Your Match Only Wanted the Ethnicity Estimate

Just like people start doing genealogy for a variety of reasons, people take DNA tests for different reasons. Some people who take an AncestryDNA test are only interested in the ethnicity estimate. They aren't interested in meeting genetic cousins. They're just curious to get a general idea of where they came from.

Your Match Is an Adoptee

DNA has reunited countless adoptees with birth families. This doesn't mean that all adoptees want to respond to every genetic match they get. If your estimated relationship is 3rd cousin, but they don't know who their parents are, they may not see the point in communicating.

Even if your relationship is closer, they may not be ready to communicate. Making contact with members of a birth family is really big deal. They might need some time to work up to responding.

The Match Is a Surprise

If testing shows a relationship that your match doesn't think is possible — what do you mean Grandpa had a family before marrying Grandma?! — they might not want to deal with it right now.

Your Relationship Isn't Close Enough

"Distant cousin" doesn't excite everyone, especially if you don't give any clues in your message how you think you might be related.

Your Match Didn't Get the Message

Ancestry's messaging system has been known to have its quirks. It's possible that your match didn't receive the message. They might also not have noticed the icon that shows they have a message. And, yes, it is possible that they haven't been on the site for awhile. (Believe it or not, not everyone goes on Ancestry every day!)

Your Message Didn't Say Enough

What message did you send to your match? A message like "Hi! We're genetic cousins. Let's talk" doesn't instill a lot of enthusiasm to respond. Introduce yourself, tell the estimated relationship, and the name of the common ancestors (if shown). If the match doesn't show the common ancestors, give a general idea of where your research is. (For example, tell where your great-great-grandparents lived to give the other person a starting point.)

Bottom Line

Don't take it personally if a match doesn't respond. Don't let it raise your blood pressure. Just because the person is a genetic cousin doesn't mean that they have to respond to your message, even if they received it. And remember: It could be that they haven't responded yet. It doesn't mean that they never will.

GENEALOGY SEMINAR

Presented by the

North Texas Genealogical Association

September 10, 2016

First United Methodist Church • Tenth and Travis St.

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Registration 9:00 am • Seminar 9:30 am - 3:30 pm

Pre-registration (before August 19) - \$45.00

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Lisa Louise Cooke • Speaker



Lisa Louise Cooke is the owner of Genealogy Gems, a genealogy and family history multi-media company. She is Producer and Host of the Genealogy Gems Podcast, the popular online genealogy audio show available at www.GenealogyGems.com, in

iTunes, and through the Genealogy Gems app. Her podcast brings genealogy news, research strategies, expert interviews and inspiration to genealogists in 75 countries around the world, and recently celebrated 1.5 million downloads!

Lisa is the author of a variety of multi-media materials including the Genealogy Gems Premium website subscription, and four books: Turn Your iPad into a Genealogy Powerhouse, How to Find Your Family History in Newspapers, The Genealogist's Google Toolbox, and Genealogy Gems: Ultimate Research Strategies, and the video series Google Earth for Genealogy.

In addition to Genealogy Gems, Lisa works closely with Family Tree Magazine as producer and host of the Family Tree Magazine Podcast, a regular article author for the magazine, and curriculum developer and instructor for Family Tree University.

Lisa's offerings are not limited to online. She is a sought after international genealogy speaker. Whether in person or online, Lisa strives to dig through the myriad of genealogy news, questions and resources to deliver the gems that can unlock each genealogist's own family history treasure trove!

Family is not just a priority professionally. Lisa is a doting wife to Bill, the proud mom of three daughters, and has added the role of Grandma to her resume. She counts her blessings every day for the love, fulfillment and laughter that family brings to every aspect of her life.

Don't Overwhelm the Newbies

If you are fortunate enough to help someone new to family history research, try not to overwhelm them with suggestions, every source you can think of, or citation advice. Sometimes too much new material, new information, and new family members can add to the confusion “new” people sometimes feel.

If anything, try and encourage them to work initially on a family that doesn't seem too difficult to research. There's time later for them to become totally confused and frustrated with brick walls.

Give a suggestion or two of what to try next and suggest that they ask you again when they've tried those suggestions. And go from there.

Ideally you want to keep the person's interest and let it grow slowly.

Do Non-Kin Hold Kin Clues?

A high school classmate and I were baptized on the same day. I happened to mention it and shared with her a copy of the church bulletin that mentioned our baptism. She didn't have it.

Remember that others besides your family may have copies of materials related to your family history. County genealogy groups, both in the real world and online can be one way to with these people.

But your family aren't the only people who may have personal papers that could help your research.

Intention Does Not Guarantee It Happened

Some records were created before an event took place, usually in preparation for the event itself. The issuance of a marriage license does not guarantee that the marriage ever took place. The announcement of marriage banns also is not evidence of the actual marriage.

Even a church bulletin announcing a baptism does not guarantee it took place. It does indicate the event was planned and scheduled for that day. And, in all likelihood, it did take place.

But if one document said something was going to happen and other reliable information indicated that event did not happen, remind yourself that not every

event intended to be actually comes to pass.

Search for the Living in Obituaries

When searching databases that contain full text of obituaries, make certain to search for the names of living family members who may have been listed as survivors in the obituary.

Don't just search obituaries for the dead.

What You Cite Should Be In Your Sight

Never cite a source unless it was actually in your sight.

If you saw a tombstone's picture on FindAGrave, cite that website—do not indicate you were in the cemetery yourself or took the picture yourself.

If you saw a transcription of a will in a published book, cite the book and that book's transcription—do not cite the will itself.

If your Mother told you something about her mother, cite your mother as the source—do not cite Grandma as you didn't hear Grandma actually say that something.

Whether the source is accurate is another story. We just want our citations to accurately reflect what used.

Letting Go of that First Conclusion

Never be so stuck on an initial conclusion that you avoid other reasonable scenarios or avoid looking for records because the person you need to find “simply cannot be in that location.”

A relative concluded a family member returned to Germany for a visit and returned to the United States simply because the ancestor could not be located in the 1870 census. The story of the trip was repeated enough that it became an accepted fact.

It's easy to jump to conclusions when we are first starting out. We can sometimes “break brick walls” by going back and reviewing those initial conclusions.

