

The USGenWeb Project

NEWS

Volume 3, Number 2 April 2006

Notes From The Editor

Denise Wells

Welcome to the April issue from your new editor. We have reluctantly accepted Sharon Rhodes' resignation as editor of the Newsletter. Sharon has provided leadership and commitment to the USGenWeb Newsletter, but the staff understands and applauds her desire to put more time into her other USGenWeb commitments and her own family research. With Sharon's stepping down, other changes have taken place on the staff, as you will note below. I look forward to hearing from all of our state, county and project coordinators and hope you will submit articles for consideration. Please continue to enjoy each issue.

Notes From The N.C.

Linda Haas Davenport

10th Anniversary

2006 marks the 10th Anniversary of the USGenWeb Project, and I have been looking back over those past 10 years. When the USGenWeb Project began it was one of the few (if not the only) centralized places on the Internet to find genealogy information and post a query. Those early state and county sites began with links to the small amount of online information of interest to a family historian and a query page. The only Special Project was the Archives. How far the Project has come during the past 10 years! Now there are several special projects, and the states, counties and special projects sites of the Project not only contain links, they are also filled with information and transcribed records. More is being added every day by our wonderful, dedicated and hard working volunteers.

Ten years ago the Internet, as we know it today, was in its infancy. The things we take for granted today - e-mail, PCs, cell phones, digital cameras, etc., were not in the average person's world. Family historians and professional genealogists not only didn't use the Internet, most had never heard of it. Over the past 10 years the Internet has gone from obscurity to commonplace.

As the Internet became an everyday tool for millions of people, it changed the way family historians do research. The availability of online, easily accessible genealogy and historical information has fueled the phenomenal growth of genealogy as a hobby, and, I'm proud to say, the Project has been right there every step of the way.

Everywhere we look we see genealogy reported as the fastest growing hobby in the country. Now the Internet is the first stop for beginning family historians, and it is used extensively by experienced researchers. New "How To" genealogy books devote chapters on how to use the Internet, and it is a rare book that does not recommend the USGenWeb Project as one of the first places to visit.

While subscription sites have popped up everywhere on the Internet, the Project has continued to offer free access to its vast wealth of information.

The USGenWeb Project is recognized as the premier site of free information, and we have every reason in the world to be proud of our accomplishments.

The Project is where it is today thanks to the thousands of volunteers, both past and present, who cared enough to devote, collectively, millions of hours gathering, transcribing and uploading information. Sometimes as we labor by ourselves during the early morning and late night hours we ask ourselves if anyone appreciates or even uses the information we put online. I can assure you they do, and whether visitors take the time to say thanks or not, a look at the total number of visitors (well over a million) to the Project sites each day proves that your hard work is appreciated.

Thanks to every volunteer, past and present, because it is YOU who have made the Project the fabulous resource it is today.

New Advisory Board Members

The Advisory Board seated two new members to fill the seats left vacant by Mike St.Clair and David Morgan. Scott Burow is your new Representative-at-Large, and Phyllis Rippee is the new SWSC CC Regional Representative. Your Advisory Board members' names and e-mail addresses are found at:

<http://www.usgenweb.com/about/advisoryboard.shtml>

Bylaws Committee

It is not at all unusual for a company or organization, as it grows and changes, to reach a point where its bylaws need to be changed to accommodate those changes. The Project's bylaws were put into place nine years ago, and during those nine years the Project and our volunteers have grown and changed.. It is time to look at replacing our existing bylaws with a set that more accurately reflects who, what and where the Project is today.

I appointed a bylaws revision committee to come up with a new set of bylaws. Once the committee has a rough draft it will be put online and the membership (you) will be asked for questions, comments, suggestions and input. Once a final draft is complete, the new bylaws will be submitted to the membership to approve or reject.

I will keep you updated as to the progress of the committee and will let you know when the rough draft is online.

Until next time ...

Linda Haas Davenport
NC USGenWeb Project

Notes From The E.C.

Shirley Cullum - E.C. Publicist/Secretary

Election Committee Home Page:

<http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~usgwelections/>

The Election Committee regrets the loss of Donna Allen, Betsy Mills, and Lori Thornton and wishes all of them the best in their endeavors. The EC welcomes replacement members LaRae Halsey-Brooks, Cristy Fisher, and Ellen Pack.

The EC would like to express our thanks to the SC's who have responded to the 2nd Quarter request for updated membership lists and to remind the others to please send your updates ASAP.

Site Spotlights

Annette Bame Peebles

Bosque County, TX

<http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~txbosqu2/>

This site has just about everything you need to do a search in a county. Are you looking for a school? What about the location of a historical marker? Do you need to know who the county commissioner was in 1854? Well, this site has all that information and much, much more. Bettie Wood is the volunteer coordinator for the site.

Here is a comment from the ASC of Texas, Shirley Cullum: I think the Bosque County website would be an excellent county to include in the spotlight because it is one of the best in TXGenWeb. Having been selected as the County of the Month three times, Bosque is one of only six counties in the TXGenWeb Hall of Fame. The website contains a great deal of genealogical information and is always kept up to date. One of the unique features of the Bosque County website is a Cattle Drive Diary that documents the daily activity and hardships of an actual trail drive in 1866.

Scott County, Iowa

<http://www.celticcousins.net/scott/index.htm>

Do you need to find out how Buttermilk Road got its name? Or find out what pioneer life was really like? Well, you can find out at Scott County, Iowa. Visit a little bit of the Irish in Scott County, Iowa. Cathy Joynt Labath is the volunteer coordinator, and Debbie Clough Gerischer and Elaine Hanson Rathmann are assistant coordinators.

Here is a comment from the ACC of Scott County, Iowa, Debbie Clough Gerischer: Cathy LaBath has been with the USGenWeb almost from the start. She never stops but keeps adding counties and special projects to her agenda. I work for her. She is the best boss.

The Scott County site has a wealth of information online. We have put up volumes and volumes for the Scott County site. People can not see the whole site in one day.

She has a guest book and so many have been helped because of the years of service Cathy has put into the site.

I only help out with Scott County and the Iowa History Site. Cathy has many counties and many other websites for the USGenWeb Project, and all of her projects have a wealth of information online.

Wisconsin Tombstone Photograph Pages

<http://usgwarchives.net/wi/cemetery/>

Larry and Linda Kopet have submitted over 50,000 tombstone photos, and they just keep on going! Larry photographs, and Linda catalogs. Due to their combined efforts WIGenWeb has over 600 cemeteries online!

Here is a comment from the SC of Wisconsin, Tina Vickery: There are not words enough to describe the extraordinary resources the Kopets have provided the WIGenWeb Project, Wisconsin researchers and the USGenWeb Project community!

When they first contacted me about a year ago, they expressed an interest in sending a "few photos." Those few photos have metamorphosed into the Tombstone Photograph Pages -- 72,000+ photos, 51 counties [of 72], 788 cemeteries and growing daily!

"Few" in the dictionary is defined as... "Being more than one but indefinitely small in number." The Kopets have certainly given a whole new meaning to the word "few!"

Because of their contributions, many WIGenWeb Project volunteers and visitors have also contributed! The Kopets certainly exemplify a true example of the USGenWeb Project and the WIGenWeb Project as genealogy at its very best!

Researching Civil War Ancestors

Anne J. Mitchell - Records Reporter

The Internet is a good place to find background information about Civil War ancestors. The USGenWeb Project has several good websites where you can find information. Here are a few:

USGenWeb Pension Project

<http://usgwarchives.net/pensions/civilwar/index.htm>

Illinois in the Civil War

<http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~ilcivilw/>

North Carolina and the Civil War

<http://www.inmyattic.com/roots/ncrebel.htm>

Tennessee and the Civil War

<http://www.tngenweb.org/civilwar/>

Civil War Research in Arkansas

<http://www.argenweb.net/civilwar.htm>

Kansas in the Civil War

<http://skyways.lib.ks.us/genweb/civilwar/index.html>

Iowa in the Civil War

<http://iagenweb.org/civilwar/>

Missouri in the Civil War

<http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~mocivwar/mocwindex.html>

The CAGenWeb Archives Project, California Civil War Rosters Transcription Project
<http://www.cagenweb.com/archives/ccwr/index.htm>

If you would like to do research to obtain the actual records, decide exactly what information is needed to file a request for military and pension records by looking at the order forms. (See NATF-85 for pension records and NATF-86 for military service records.) Forms can be ordered here: <http://www.archives.gov/contact/inquire-form.html>

The National Park Service (NPS) has free indexes where information can be searched about the soldiers and sailors who fought in the Civil War. The name, side for which the soldier fought, regiment or unit number, state, and job or function are available on the site: <http://cwar.nps.gov/civilwar/civilwar.htm>

Military and pension records can be ordered from the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) or from the State Archive. If NARA is unable to locate the record, try writing the State Archive. See NARA's website for more detailed information about Civil War records: <http://www.archives.gov/research/civil-war/>

Confederate pension records should be researched in the state where the Confederate soldier lived. <http://www.archives.gov/genealogy/military/civil-war/confederate/pension.html>

When researching Civil War ancestors who lived in Confederate states, do not assume that they were soldiers on the Confederate side. There were some Union regiments in Confederate states. Take a close look at the NATF-86 form.

Civil War research is not limited to military and pension records. Other good resources to consider are record of events, regimental history, photographs and maps, and military cemetery records:
<http://www.archives.gov/research/civil-war/http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/cwphtml/cwphome.html>
<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/pp/cwphtml/cwpabt.html>

Focus on Special Projects - African American Griots

Daryl Lytton - Assistant Editor

How many of you are familiar with the wealth of USGenWeb Special Projects and Sub-Projects? They are linked to from the USGenWeb Special Projects page at: <http://www.usgenweb.org/projects/index.shtml>

The News will be taking a look at these, starting with the USGenWeb African American Griots Project, located at <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~afamer/> and a review by Coordinator Charee Harvey who adds, "Most of the AAG group participated in the writing of the article."

The African American Griots Project began after a chance meeting with Jerry Taylor. We were both researching Kentucky and while doing so became good friends. During our conversations we both expressed a desire to help others and talked about starting a project that would include as much African American genealogical and historical resources for Kentucky as possible. The project started in one Kentucky County and within days had expanded to all of its counties. We decided to name the project Kentucky African American Griots and proudly joined the USGenWeb Special Projects soon afterwards.

The goal of the project was and still is to become a centralized location for African American researchers to research and store genealogical and historical data.

Once Kentucky was proven to be a success, we discussed a nationwide project that would include all states. This project was appropriately named African American Griots. We proudly joined USGenWeb Special Projects soon after launching AAG.

Researchers nationwide have contributed to the project with resources covering all facets of African American genealogy and history. A researcher in Africa submitted an article defining the word "griots." A researcher from Canada was instrumental in the development of the Underground Railroad and Canada because of his link to both by way of a slave owner in his family who helped slaves escape to Canada. Researchers from different states have donated wills, probate records, descendants reports, created family webpages, slave birth records, Bible records, census transcriptions and more which have been greatly appreciated.

As of now there are four State Coordinators who have proven to be committed to the project. Jana Webre is the Coordinator for Louisiana <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~laafamer/>. She realized a need for African American genealogy and history to be shared as well as her knowledge and resources in Louisiana.

Jerry Taylor has been researching since 1983 and has spent countless hours on the Kentucky African American Griots website <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~kyafamer/>. She is her family's historian and has published her family heritage. Jerry is the Coordinator of the KYGenWeb Kentucky Kids Project, the Assistant Coordinator of the African American Griots Project and designed all of the project's logos.

Charles Barnum is the Coordinator for New Mexico <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~nmafamer/> and in his own words, "I started serious researching in 1992 on both mine and my wife's family lines, tracing both families to Ireland and England. I joined NMGGenWeb in 1996. In 2005 I joined COGenWeb, the NM Digital Maps Project and NMAAG.

"When I joined AAG, I wanted to build a web site to recognize the contributions that African Americans made to New Mexico. Many people do not realize that New Mexico had Buffalo soldiers, African American soldiers who helped provide security in the west. New Mexico did not become a state until 1912. African American Soldiers were in New Mexico military forts prior to statehood. It was these facts that motivated me to join the AAG project."

Amy Batton is the State Coordinator for Tennessee <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~tnafamer/> and is working on her genealogy certification. In her own words: "African American Genealogy is one of the most understudied areas of history, even with the increased interest. Because of this I praise Charee Harvey and Jerry Taylor for their hard work and dedication in creating the African American Griots Project. They are pioneers in placing Black Genealogy exclusively on the web. It is the only means for those of us studying our own Black Genealogy to find resources and information in one stop. With my own Tennessee African American Griots page, I try to imitate their standards, while using my own research experiences, in hopes that my site will be half of their own sites and that I can honor their vision."

I have been researching since 1992. I have written and published an article on cemetery surveying in Reunions Magazine, researched my maternal and paternal lineages with an estimated 3700 African American family members with citations. For the past seven years I have been the coordinator of the family reunion in my hometown and been deemed the family historian. As the National Coordinator for the African American Griots Project, I have the responsibility of maintaining all states that have not been adopted.

As a project we follow the guidelines of the USGenWeb Project and work as a family to allow each other the opportunity to develop individually as well as collectively as researchers. The most basic requirement at AAG is to serve the African American researcher in their quest to store, research and develop their family heritage. In doing so we gain gratification in knowing we have done our part in the quest for knowledge that every researcher has.

Charee Harvey
Jerry Taylor
Charles Barnum
Janice Webre
Amy Batton

Why Go to FGS?

Joshua Taylor - USGenWeb Parliamentarian

As genealogists and webmasters, most of us continually seek to find new information for our websites, working alone in front of our computers sometimes into the wee hours of the morning. The Federation of Genealogical Societies Conference in Boston this year is an opportunity to meet other coordinators and learn from them. With speakers from Canada, Ireland, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and England as well as from the United States, new ideas for researching will be abundant.

There will be classes available you won't find any where else. Classes that were designed with county coordinators in mind will include, "Working Together: Managing a Website with a Partner" and "Successful Partnerships Between USGenWeb and Genealogical Societies." If you are looking for information on how to have a successful website, check out, "Secrets of Easy Website Maintenance," "Putting Data Online: Getting it from Here to There" and "Quick and Easy Webpage Creation for Genealogists."

Don't miss the luncheons and other social times at the conference. The sharing of ideas and research tips during the social events can be just as valuable as those learned during the lectures. The excitement from meeting other coordinators and genealogists will reenergize you which in turn will reenergize your websites. So make some business cards, pack your bags, and meet us in Boston, August 30th through September 2nd.

The views expressed in this newsletter are those of the contributors, including newsletter staff, and are not necessarily those of the USGenWeb Project.

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