The USGenWeb Project

N E W S

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Notes From The Editor
Denise Wells

Here we are closing October with Halloween and fast approaching Thanksgiving. It seems every month I find something for which I am thankful. This month I'm thankful for my family and those who have become part of my family, even without a blood or marital connection. I realized how much those we come to love and care for mean to us. How? I have a client who is in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and, at a recent concert, he shared with the entire audience how much I mean to him and to his wife, and how I have become a part of his life and his family and how thankful he is to have me in their lives. I thought about how truly blessed I am with all of my family - even with the good, the bad and the difficult. Take a look around you and see who you are grateful to have in your life.

Moving forward with the Newsletter has been exciting and fun. We are truly enjoying the opportunity to provide assistance and information to all of our Newsletter subscribers. We are currently seeking additional member(s) to work with us on the Newsletter. If you are interested, please send me a private email and let me know. You can reach me at dawells2@aol.com and please reference "USGenWeb Newsletter" in the subject line. Thank you, and I hope you enjoy this issue.

Notes From The N.C.
Scott Burow - USGenWeb Project National Coordinator

As I write these NC Notes, I'm at 20,000 feet, winging my way west for some non-Project work. Like most volunteers in our Project, I also have a real-life job. The pilot has just announced that the plane has crossed the Rocky Mountains and I am somewhere over northwestern Wyoming. It is a clear afternoon, and down below I can see the landscape from an incredibly beautiful perspective. I'm still amazed at the sheer size and breadth of our nation, and I have been thinking about the trials of our ancestors as they crossed this land for the first time. From this vantage point, it is easy to see how one person or one family could be lost in this vast expanse and disappear into history.

While it may seem like idle musing on my part, my thoughts relate to an email I received before I took off this afternoon. Like many messages I receive, it was one of thanks and gratitude to a volunteer in a county project. A volunteer who posted a simple tidbit of information that probably meant nothing to the person who posted it. An old gravestone in an old plot of ground in the middle of nowhere with the name Silas McCune and a date of death from 1874 carved into it. But to one person, it was a large brick wall. Silas headed to California in the gold rush and was never heard from again. A researcher found that gravestone record and began looking for more information. From that connection came land records and a spouse's name. Then a daughter's birth record, and much later a marriage record. From city directories came the name of a grandchild of Silas, and a subsequent marriage record for that child. Ultimately, a researcher found the obituary of that grandchild showing not only two great grandchildren, but two great-great grandchildren of Silas McCune - one of which is still alive in the same county. A family found ... a friendship made ... and a simple thank you that means so much.

Every connection and every link from Silas to his surviving great-great granddaughter was found through the data compiled and the links on a single county web site of the USGenWeb Project. This is only one of many connections that are made because of the commitment and detailed work of volunteers placing this data on the Internet for free. It is this that makes this Project unique in scope and action.

Each of our volunteers has much to be proud of - a history of helping people find their roots and future additional connections like Silas McCune's descendants. Thank you all for everything you do.

Notes From The E.C.
http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~usgwelections/

The Election Committee is looking for replacement volunteers to fill seats currently vacant, or which will become vacant on 1 January 2007.

The "job" includes: Developing a working relationship with SCs and/or ASCs to maintain a current Project membership list, and assisting in all polls and elections, especially during the months of June and part of July to host the USGenWeb Project's Annual Election.

Volunteers will have the satisfaction of working with an excellent group of people to handle an important responsibility that allows our members to have a voice in our elections.

Any member of the project who is eligible to vote is eligible for membership in the EC, the exception being that no Advisory Board member may serve as a working member of the EC.

If interested, please send Email to Ellen Pack e.j.pack@speakeasy.net with your full name and a word about where you currently are a volunteer, including the URL of your site(s). The following positions are currently open:

1. Representative at Large. Vacant - Term ending 31 December 2006. Need replacement for term ending 31 December 2008

2. Northeast/North Central (Connecticut, Indiana, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Wisconsin). Vacant - Term ending December 31, 2006. Need replacement for term ending 31 December 2008.

3. Northwest/Plains (Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oregon, Washington, Wyoming). Current: Ellen Pack - Term ending 31 December 2006. Need replacement for term ending 31 December 2008.

4. Southeast/Mid-Atlantic (D.C., Delaware, Kentucky, Maryland, North Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia). Current: Nola Duffy - Term ending 31 December 2006. Need replacement for term ending 31 December 2008.

5. Southwest/South Central (Missouri, Nevada, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas, Utah). Current: Shirley Cullum - Term ending 31 December 2006. Need replacement for term ending 31 December 2008.

6. Archives/Special Projects. Current: Denise Wells - Term ending 31 December 2006. Need replacement for term ending 31 December 2008.

Special Announcement
Ellen Pack - List Admin
USGW-HelpPages List, Members helping members
You are invited to join your fellow USGenWeb members on the new USGW-HelpPages mail list. The purpose of this list is to provide a friendly and helpful means of communication across state and project lines for USGenWeb members seeking and willing to give assistance in all technical aspects of building and improving USGenWeb pages, including the creation and use of graphics, as well as assistance in attracting and displaying submissions, meeting researcher needs, utilizing our special projects, and so forth, in pursuance of the Project goals.

Have a question about table creation?
Need suggestions on a good FTP client?
Have a graphic that keeps disappearing?
Interested in helping other members with their web sites?
New to USGenWeb and not sure how to get started?
Subscribe to the USGW-HELPPAGES List!

To Subscribe send a message to:
USGW-HELPPAGES-request@rootsweb.com
Put the word .. Subscribe .. in the subject line, and in the body of the message.

Hope to see you soon!

[Political discussion and announcements, off-topic notes, and/or flaming and rude, sarcastic or offensive language is strictly prohibited on this list]

USGenWeb at the 2006 FGS Convention - Part II
Linda Haas Davenport - Roving Reporter
[Ed. Continued from our September issue]

Day Three:

Yesterday was another busy day. The USGenWeb presentations were well attended, as was the panel discussion. Most at the panel discussion were people who wanted to know more about the Project, how it worked, how much time was involved for a volunteer and how to adopt a county.

The highlight at the booth yesterday was the man who stopped by and sang us the Iowa state song (and did a good job of it). We had more people new to the Project stopping by because they heard about the Project from a fellow attendee or in one of the sessions. The people manning the computers were kept busy all day. We also had several return visitors who had logged on the night before and stopped by to praise the Project or to tell us about something they found.

The list of people who want to volunteer, in one way or another, continues to grow.

Once again I'm passing on the many, many "thank you" messages from the people who stopped by.

Tina and I stopped by the recording booth yesterday to find out how you can order tapes from the sessions. We found you can order packages for $25.00 or individual sessions for $1.99. A list of the recorded sessions can be found at: http://www.lulu.com/FGS2006.

Day Four:
Lots of exciting news today, besides the fact I was stuck in an elevator around the 23rd floor for a good 20 minutes until Ellen managed to get me rescued.

Genealogy Helper magazine wants to feature the Project in its Jan/Feb issue.

The November 2006 issue of Internet Genealogy will have an article on the Project entitled "The USGenWeb Project - The Land of the Free"

A young man (aged 15), Brad Jencks, received the FGS Youth Genealogy Award for his outstanding contribution to preserving our history. He and his mother made a special trip to the booth because he wanted to meet me and tell me that he won this award because Josh Taylor and the CC of the Salt Lake Co, UT site encouraged him to map a cemetery and place it on line at the county site for his Eagle Scout project. To understand the extent of his project, please visit the Salt Lake County website and click on Cemeteries Bingham. There will be more on this later.

There has been so much going on that the time has passed in a whirlwind. People can't say enough good things about the Project.

The people who so aptly represented the Project on your behalf were: Ellen Pack, CC of MS (Chair of the EC); Tina Vickery, SC of MA & WI; Joy Fisher, Archives & SC of SD; Betsy Mills, SC of AR; Lori Thornton, SC of MS; Lela Evans, CC in MS & TX; Scott Fritzgerald, CC in TX; Josh Taylor, CC in WI; George Waller, SC of CT; Linda Davenport, CC in AR; and special thanks to Joy's husband, Frank Fisher, who did whatever needed to be done.

We all paid our own expenses, from first to last, and feel every penny we spent was well worth it. To everyone who donated money for the booth, and everyone who spent the time and money for the brochures and handouts - I can tell you that for every dollar spent, the Project received a hundred dollars worth of wonderful PR.

Follow Up:
When I sent my "exciting news" message last night we didn't have the final tally on how many people had signed up as volunteers during the conference. The final tally is 20 new volunteers for the Project.

Tina will be forwarding the information to the appropriate SCs or archive managers in the next couple of days.

These daily reports do not begin to convey the excitement and gratitude of the hundreds of visitors who stopped by the Project's booth, stopped one of us in the halls, at lunch or in sessions, to tell us how much they appreciate the people in the Project and what we do.

One comment we heard over and over was - "Thanks for keeping the USGenWeb information free." So many people told us they can't afford Ancestry or other paid sites and that they depend on the USGenWeb Project's wealth of

information in their research. Although I've known for years that offering free information is a good thing (after all I'm a family historian and I use the Project sites for my own research), it took the hundreds of face to face conversations to make me realize just how incredibly invaluable our hard work is to a vast number of people.

Site Spotlights
Dukes County, MAGenWeb
http://history.vineyard.net/dukes/

This site, hosted by Chris Baer, loads fast with an easy-to-use format, including several finding aids and a site map. Although Dukes County is hosted by the ISP Vineyard.net, the pages have no commercial advertising.

The title of this wonderful site is "Historical Records of Dukes County, Mass.," with a "Site Guide" revealing more than 300 links to sub-pages of transcribed historical and genealogical information, including Censuses, three volumes of "The History of Martha's Vineyard," Genealogies, Vital Records, Gravestones and Cemeteries, Histories, and Oral History sections, with a Maps and Photographs section.

Another of the featured sections is, "The Portuguese Genealogy Project of Martha's Vineyard."

As with some of the other smaller USGenWeb states where counties are further sub-divided into towns, Dukes County has pages for Tisbury, West Tisbury, Chilmark, Nomans Land, Edgartown, Oak Bluffs, Gosnold, and Gay Head, each with information specific to that town and area.

The "Search" feature uses FreeFind, which includes its own site map. You can get a FreeFind search for your site at http://www.freefind.com/ which will index about 3,000 pages, or about 32MB of data.

Kalamazoo County, MIGenWeb
http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~mikalama/

The Kalamzoo County, MI site is overseen by Dick Branch. Mr. Branch has been responsible for Kalamazoo County for about 6 years, first taking over in the year 2000, at which time he reports the site had "only a few pages." Antique postcards illustrate this site from a collection of images he has acquired over the years. Dick is also an amateur photographer and has taken photos of Kalamazoo since the 1960's.

This county site uses tables to display the extremely varied information located here, as well as links to other web sites containing history of the community, photographs and vital record information. The county history pages are Dick's favorite, and he reports that the Kalamazoo Mall and Theater Views are garnering many hits at this site. As Mr. Branch is constantly revising and adding to the site, his mission is to consistently "improve the download times and readability of the image rich pages." For Dick, it is very rewarding to build a site and assist his visitors with their genealogy research. This is a site well worth visiting, cram packed with wonderful data about Kalamazoo. It is easy to see that he loves this county.

Evaluating Internet Resources
Anne J Mitchell - Records Reporter

Internet resources should be evaluated to avoid relying on incorrect and outdated information. How many times have you seen incorrect information listed on an Internet family tree and seen others rely on this incorrect information? There are several good Internet tools that are very helpful in evaluating information found on the Internet.

First, look at the domain name. Government web sites usually end with .gov, .mil and ..us. Web sites for colleges, universities and other educational entities usually end in .edu. Web sites for nonprofit organizations usually end in .org. Commercial web sites end in .com and networks end in .net. Sometimes you will find web sites from other countries. For instance, .co.uk for the United Kingdom, .de for Germany and .fr for France, etc.

The wayback machine is a very useful tool for researchers. The wayback machine can be used to determine if the information on a web site is current.

To use the wayback machine, go to the Internet archive at http://www.archive.org/index.php. Copy and paste the URL into the wayback machine window and click "take me back." The search results will consist of a list of dates. By clicking on a date, a web site can be viewed as it appeared on that date. Hence, a researcher can determine how current the information is on a web site. It is also important to note that many pages which are no longer available

can be accessed using the wayback machine. This is because a researcher can click on a date prior to the page not being available. (*I always remove http:// from the wayback machine window before pasting).

Before relying on information on a web site, it is important to determine who wrote the information. Examine the web site to see if an author, publisher or owner's name is listed. Usually an email address will be provided. If that information is not available, there are various web sites that can be accessed to determine who owns the web site. To determine the owner of the domain name, here is one of several tools that can be helpful: http://www.networksolutions.com/whois/index.jsp. Type the URL into the search window without the www.

Another important step to evaluate a web site is to do a link search. A link search will provide a list of other web sites that link to the web site you are evaluating. A link search can be conducted on most major search engines. Type link: and the full URL in the search window with no spaces. A link search for USGenWeb would look like this: link:www.usgenweb.com. The search results show that 9,830 websites link to www.usgenweb.com.

I cannot emphasize how important it is to evaluate the information found on the Internet. Doing so would help avoid relying on incorrect information for your genealogical project. Finally, always remember to cite your sources.

Here is one of my favorite web sites to learn more about evaluating Internet resources: "Finding Information on the Internet: A Tutorial" from the University of California at Berkeley
http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/TeachingLib/Guides/Internet/Evaluate.html

Research the Website Traffic Rankings: www.alexa.com

Evaluating Web Pages (Part I) ~ Greta Thompson
http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/newsletter/NL-10-2004.shtml

Evaluating Web Pages (Part II) ~ Greta Thompson
http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/newsletter/NL-11-2004.shtml

Online Library
Daryl Lytton - Assistant Editor

The North Carolina History and Fiction Digital Library, by the East Carolina University Joyner Library. You didn't have ancestors in North Carolina? Well, don't judge a library by its name, there is more than just North Carolina history, as we will see in this review...

Most of the items in the North Carolina History and Fiction Digital Library are presented in both digital image format and plain text format, with links to images. There is a nice, easy-to-use "tree" navigation system for each item, allowing you to select which part of the item to view. While viewing a particular page, you can switch between the digital and text formats. For the text format, you have the option to view the entire item on one web page, which is really nice if you want to copy/paste the item.

The main page is at http://digital.lib.ecu.edu/historyfiction/ where you will find a fancy, interesting clickable map of counties, as well as a list and a Search button. The Search page allows you to not only search, but also to show lists of the books by subject, title, or author. The search box itself performs full text searches, not just keywords. Search also has a powerful set of optional operators to limit or control your search.

Items are online now for 29 North Carolina counties, including extinct ones, with "coming soon" plans for more counties. Perhaps the best was to get an idea of the scope of this library is to browse the titles of the items, at http://digital.lib.ecu.edu/historyfiction/index_files/titleList.html

You will find a full range of historical items including: reward posters for run-away slaves; an indexed abstract of North Carolina wills published in 1910; books about family life, and autobiographies including the daughter of Virginia Dare; several military-specific items, including Confederate War papers; a 1916 book on early flight; a book about Blackbeard the pirate published in 1847, and one about Buccaneers published in 1898; several religion-specific items, including a history of the First Christian Church; books about early expeditions into and around North Carolina.

Sometimes our interest in old books is not to read about specific areas or events, but rather to gain an understanding of how life was in the old days. This library has many items to help us with that understanding: "The First English

Settlement In America" published 1904 by the NC DAR; "The Lost Colony of Roanoke" published 1891; "A General History of the Pyrates" published 1724; "The Monitor and the Merrimac" published 1890 by the Rhode Island Soldiers and Sailors Historical Society; "Norfolk the Marine Metropolis of Virginia" published 1888; "The office and authority of a justice of peace, and also, the duty of sheriffs, coroners, constables, church-wardens, overseers of roads, and other officers. Together with precedents of warrants, judgments, executions, and other legal process....." published 1774; "Plantation Sketches" published 1906; "Some Social Traits of the Quakers" published 1908-09; "Teacher's handbook, 1926-1927" by the Halifax County Board of Education, are some examples.

Prose & Poetry

If Tuesday Weld married Hal March III, she'd be Tuesday March 3.

If Bo Derek married Don Ho, she'd be Bo Ho.

If Sondra Locke married Elliott Ness, then divorced him to marry Herman Munster, she'd become Sondra Locke Ness Munster.

If Bea Arthur married Sting, she'd be Bea Sting.

If Woody Allen married Natalie Wood, divorced her and married Gregory Peck, divorced him and married Ben Hur, he'd be Woody Wood Peck Hur.

If Dolly Parton married Salvador Dali, she'd be Dolly Dali.

If Liv Ullman married Judge Lance Ito, then divorced him and married Jerry Mathers, she'd be Liv Ito Beaver.

If Yoko Ono married Sonny Bono, she'd be Yoko Ono Bono.

If Oprah Winfrey married Depak Chopra, she'd be Oprah Chopra.

If Olivia Newton-John married Wayne Newton, then divorced him to marry Elton John, she'd be Olivia Newton-John Newton John.

If Ella Fitzgerald married Darth Vader, she'd be Ella Vader.

If Ivana Trump married, in succession, Orson Bean (actor), King Oscar (of Norway), Louis B. Mayer (of MGM), and Norbert Wiener (mathematician), she would then be Ivana Bean Oscar Mayer Wiener.

Nog (Related to Quark on "Star Trek: Deep Space Nine") has no other name, so he uses it twice when getting a marriage license. If he married Howard Hughes, and then Pamela Dare, he'd be Nog Nog Hughes Dare.