



THE SEARCHER

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WIGS NEWSLETTER –Summer 2018 - Vol. XXVIII No. 2

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WHIDBEY ISLAND GENEALOGICAL SEARCHERS (WIGS)

Bringing together the generations to strengthen and support the family bond!

WIGS meets the second Tuesday of each month, September through June at 1:00 PM in the fire station at 2720 Heller Road, Oak Harbor, WA.

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OFFICERS and COMMITTEES

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- President: Jackie Vannice
- Vice-Pres.: Barbara Green
- Secretary: vacant
- Treasurer: Joyce Boster
- Auditor: vacant
- Historian: Jeanan Richter
- Library Custodian: Bob Keough
- Membership: Judy Wagner
- Parliamentarian: Betty Leitch
- Programs: Bobby O’Neal
- Education & trips: Pat Gardner
- The Searcher: John Richter
- Refreshments: Eleanore Grieg
- Sound: David Flomerfelt
- Ways & Means Charlotte Santos
- Webmaster: Janice Keough

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VISIT OUR WEBSITE

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For a quick check on what is happening with WIGS, visit <http://www.whidbeyensearchers.org>

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

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How I Met Queen Victoria

Those of you who know me fairly well are aware of my love of travel. On a recent RV trip to Santa Fe, my husband and I stopped at an RV campsite in a fairly small town in Utah for the night. Since it is my job to be the reservation-ist/navigator/check-in person, I proceeded to the office to complete paperwork while my husband parked in our preassigned spot.

When finished, I began to look around the room at many old items displayed on the shelves which I learned had been obtained through the purchase of a storage unit in the neighboring town. The owner, who turned out to be the local mayor, also inherited two large photos along with the purchase which caught my eye. After looking them over closely, we discovered some names scribbled on the back of the picture which showed a man and what looked to be his four boys. The other picture was of a woman. After removing the back covering of the second picture, we

discovered a typed sheet with included three generations.

Long story short - I was able to construct the family tree the best I could and after rewriting my notes, I plan on sending the results back to the mayor in hopes that he will be able to contact living family members (two of which are on Facebook). So you see, you never know when your genealogy skills will come in handy.

I forgot one thing. It turns out that one of the little boys in the photo eventually married the lady in the other picture. Her name was Queen Victoria.

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WIGS COMING ATTRACTIONS
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June 12, 2018 Debbie Wallin will share with us information on Scandinavian Genealogy research. This should be interesting because it presents different challenges because of the way surnames are established.

July and August 2018 No meetings, time for our onsite research throughout the US and elsewhere. Enjoy your summer vacations.

September 11, 2018 George Lawson, a firefighter and former military member, will discuss 9-11 from the military and firefighter standpoints.

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WHAT'S HAPPENING ELSEWHERE
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Genealogy Society of South Whidbey. Meets in Freeland at Trinity Lutheran Church in their Chapel & community building. Meetings start at 12:45 PM.

Monday, June 11, 2018.

Monday June 11th: Monthly Program, 12:45 p.m.

Finding your Ancestors in Swedish Records, Jill Morelli, presenter.

Know your Swedish parish of birth, but are intimidated about accessing records where you don't know the language? We will review basic Swedish genealogy "rules," and identify some indexes that are regionally or nation-wide to enable finding your parish of birth. Most of this presentation, however, will be using the parish records of birth, marriage and death and the household examination records of a typical parish. Swedish records are generally complete, and easy to use with a little practice and about 100 words of the language. I don't speak the language, so if I can do it, so can you!

2018 Northwest Genealogy Conference

August 15 – 18, 2018 Byrnes Performing Arts Center 18821 Crown Ridge Blvd. Arlington WA.

Topic is **Beyond Your Family Tree.** The featured speakers are Beth Foulk, Cece Moore, Peggy Lauritzen and Amie Bowser Tennant giving a Beginners Free Class on the 15th.

See <https://stillygen.org/cpage.php?pt=50> for details.

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Genealogy Symbols
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Genealogists were using symbols long before they were using computers. Handwritten documents could use any symbol the author cared to draw, including ♂, the male sign, and ♀, the female sign.

Early typewritten documents were limited by the repertoire of the typewriter

meaning symbol name
 birth * Asterisk
 baptismation, christening ~ Tilde
 death † Dagger
 death + Plus Sign
 burial [] Square Brackets
 stillborn †* Dagger, Asterisk
 born illegitimately (*) Left Parenthesis, Asterisk, Right Parenthesis
 killed in action x Small Letter X
 this line extinct ++ Plus Sign, Plus Sign
 this line extinct ‡ Double Dagger
 approximate(ly) ± Plus-Minus Sign
 before < Less-Than Sign
 after > Greater-Than Sign
 engaged o Small Letter O
 married oo Small Letter O, Small Letter O
 divorced o|o Small Letter O, Vertical Line, Small Letter O
 divorced o/o Small Letter O, back slash, Letter O
 . divorced o/ Small Letter O, backslash, Small Letter O
 divorced % Percent Sign
 divorced ÷ Division Sign
 unmarried o-o Small Letter O, Hyphen-Minus, Small Letter O

Handwritten documents could use any symbol the author cared to draw, including ♂, the male sign, and ♀, the female sign.

- 1C - first cousin (2c, second cousin, etc.)
- 1R - once removed (2r, twice removed, etc.)

Use the source to see a very long list of abbreviations.

Source:
<https://www.geni.com/projects/Abbreviations-Acronyms-for-Genealogy-The-Accepted/3096>

AVOIDABLE: What a bullfighter tries to do.

LEFT BANK: What the bank robbers did when their bag was full of money.

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Are You a Family Historian or a Name Collector?

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The following is a post by Dick Eastman in his Blog <https://blog.eogn.com>

I have a question. None of my living relatives knows the answer to this question. I have not found the answer to this question in any public records, nor have I been able to find the answer in cemeteries. I have read a few magazine articles and Internet pages about the topic, but none of them have directly answered the question.

The question is... “Why do we study genealogy?”

What makes anyone so curious about his or her family tree? What drives us to dedicate time, effort, and sometimes expenses to go find dead people?

What is it inside of us that makes us spend hours and hours cranking reels of microfilm, then we go home and report to our family members what a great day we had?

I must admit that I have asked that question of many people and have received several answers. Some people report that it is simple curiosity... and I tend to believe that is a part of the answer. Others report that it is part of an intriguing puzzle that they wish to solve.

The theory on the puzzle bothers me. First of all, I am devoted to genealogy, but I could care less about other puzzles. I don't do the daily crosswords in the newspaper, I don't put together those picture puzzles, and I do not seem very interested in any other form of puzzles. If genealogy is solely a puzzle, why would I be attracted to it and yet not to other puzzles? That doesn't make sense to me. In

short, I think there is more to genealogy than there is to a crossword puzzle.

The simplest and most direct answer for many people is because it is a religious requirement. Indeed, members of the LDS Church are encouraged to find information about their ancestry for religious purposes. And yet, of all the LDS members that I meet at most genealogy conferences, most met their religious requirements years ago but continue to look further and further back. In fact, many of them become so addicted that they help others do the same.

Yes, I can accept that religion is a major motivator, but I believe there is still more. I constantly meet people, LDS members and non-members alike, who keep searching and searching, further and further back. Why?

I do not have all the answers, but I do have an observation or two. I believe that most all humans have a natural curiosity. We are curious about many things, but for now, I will focus on our curiosity about our origins and ourselves.

It seems to me that we are all curious about who we are. When I say, “who we are,” that includes questions about our origins. Where did I come from? How did I end up being born where I was? What trials and tribulations did my parents go through in order to give birth to me and my siblings and to raise a family? What did their parents go through to do the same for them? And how about their parents?

All of this is an inverted pyramid. It all comes down to me. Each of us is walking around with an invisible inverted pyramid on our heads. Each of us is visible but each of us is also the result of the many people in the invisible inverted pyramid. After all, each of us is the product of our ancestors.

I will point out that there are two different kinds of genealogists. There are name gatherers, and then there are family historians. Let me tell you a story about an acquaintance of mine. This is a true story; I couldn't possibly make this up.

I have known my friend for years. I'll call her Linda, although that is not her true name. I knew Linda before she became interested in genealogy and even helped coach her a bit when she first started. This was many years ago, when I was just beginning my family tree searches as well. At that time, I only knew a little bit more about genealogy than she did.

I only see Linda once every few years. Every time that we meet, the conversation quickly turns to genealogy as we bring each other up to speed on our latest triumphs and failures. I always enjoy talking with Linda. She is bright, articulate, and very enthused about genealogy.

The last time I saw Linda, she proudly announced, “I have almost finished my genealogy!”

I was speechless. I am sure I stood there with my mouth hanging open, blinking my eyes. I don't recall anyone else every saying they were “finished” with their genealogy searches. How can you be finished? Every time you find one new ancestor, you immediately gain two new puzzles to be solved.

Linda and I had a rather extended conversation. I'll skip all the details and simply give the bottom line: Some years earlier Linda had purchased a blank pedigree chart that had room to write in eight generations of ancestors, including names, dates and places of birth, marriage, and death.

I suspect you know what a blank pedigree form is. Typically, on the extreme

left there is room to write in your own name plus dates and places of your own birth and marriage. (Hopefully, you won't be filling in data about your own death.)

Just to the right of the space for your entry, there is room for data entry for two more people: your parents. To the right of that, there is space for data about your four grandparents. Moving further to the right, there is room for information about eight great-grandparents, sixteen great-great-grandparents and so forth. In the case of the chart that Linda had obtained, there was room for eight generations, a total of 255 individuals.

At the time I was talking with Linda, she only had two blanks left to be filled on her form, both in the eighth generation. She had found all of her ancestors through seven generations and even all the eighth generation ancestors except for two. She was working diligently to find those last two.

Apparently Linda's goal was to fill in the eight generations. That was her definition of "finished." I asked her, "What about the people in the ninth generation or even earlier?" She replied, "Oh, I don't care about them."

I was speechless for a moment.

I recovered and then probed a bit further. Linda's ancestry is French-Canadian, and so is much of my own. Most people with French-Canadian ancestry are related. Any two French-Canadians usually can find common ancestors in their pedigree charts. As I looked over Linda's pedigree chart, I found several of my own ancestors as well as those of Celine Dion, Madonna, and probably half of the players in the National Hockey League. Since I was familiar with some of these ancestors and their history, I started commenting on their lives.

"Oh, here is the man who was killed in bed by a jealous husband who returned home unexpectedly and found his wife and our ancestor in an indelicate position."

Linda said, "Really?"

I said, "Here is an ancestor who was captured by the Mohawk Indians and tortured unmercifully."

Linda said, "How do you know that?"

OK, here is the next bottom line: Linda had expended hundreds, possibly thousands, of hours and a significant amount of expense traveling to various libraries and repositories. She even took a couple of trips to Quebec province. Along the way she collected eight generations of her ancestors' names, places, and dates, and NOTHING ELSE.

She did not know anything about the lives of these people; their triumphs, their sorrows, the trials and tribulations they endured to raise families that eventually resulted in the births of Linda, me, and many others. She did not know their occupations, the causes of their deaths, or even how many children each had

I ask you: Is Linda a family historian or a name collector?

If asked, she probably would protest that she is a genealogist. The term "genealogist" isn't terribly specific, so perhaps that is a true statement. But I will suggest that she is not a family historian. She also does not know how she "fits in" with the rest of the world.

Now for my next question: Which side of the fence do you fall on? Are you merely collecting names, or are you studying family history?

The fact that you are reading this article suggests to me that you are probably a family historian, not a name gatherer.

In fact, I believe that most family historians are motivated by a desire to understand how we are ALL related to each other. We all can see the “big picture” in various history books: the Pilgrims, the Mayflower, Jamestown in Virginia, the Dutch in New York City, the waves of immigration from Europe in the eighteenth, nineteenth, and well into the twentieth centuries, the wars, the politicians, the movement westward opening up new lands, and all that. Pick up any good history book and you can learn about the history of our people.

But that book will not answer one question: How do I fit into all of this?

Studying history is a very useful thing, but it is only half the story. The second half is defining where you and your ancestors were involved. Was your family one of the early colonial settlers? Did your ancestors arrive in the waves of later immigration? If so, which wave? Did your ancestors cover the plains in a covered wagon and fight off Indians? Did that result in your being alive today? What would have happened if only one Indian had better aim?

Even closer to the “real you,” what values did these ancestors bring with them and then pass on to their descendants? Are you a religious person today because of the strong spiritual upbringing that you had? Are you politically conservative or liberal because of your parents’ and grandparents’ ideals and morals that they passed on to you?

Are you devoted to education or music or the arts or to homemaking or to other personal interests because of the morals given by your great-great-great-

grandparents to their children, then passed on to their children, and so on and so on?

I believe that much of America’s work ethic, religion, and respect for the rights of others is based upon ideals brought to this country centuries ago, and then passed on over the dinner tables and in front of fireplaces for generations.

I believe this is the answer to the question: many of us who are true family historians study our family heritage in order to not only learn about our ancestors, but also to learn more about ourselves.

What motivates your family search?

*Dick Eastman · June 6, 2018 ·
Genealogy Basics*

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HOMESTEADS

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The US Congress, during the Civil War years with the departure of members from the Southern States, adopted the Homestead Law of 1862. This action would provide a method to give land to Union soldiers when they returned from the battlefields.

In fact, as soon as January 1, 1863 people could begin filing for their own homestead land. The law, with a few modifications would remain in place from 1863 to 1917, although it was not completely abolished until 1976.

E. Wade Hone estimated about 285 million acres of land were ultimately disbursed by the program, which was equal to about 10% of the entire United States territory. He also suggested that about 783,000 citizens became homesteaders under the program. Nearly 2 million people applied for homesteads, but 60.2% of these “entries” were ultimately canceled before

completion of the full set of tasks required by the law to warrant receipt of the land.

The law was very clear: you had to reside on the property, you had to build a structure or structures on the property, and you had to cultivate it actively for five years before you could "claim" your title as the actual owner of the land. The 1862 law limited your land holdings to 160 acres. If you already "owned" forty acres, you could get only 120 acres more under the homestead law.

When fully cultivated, 160 acres could support a normal family of four to six persons, if the land was in the Mississippi Valley where normal weather conditions would provide sufficient water for raising crops. However, as homesteaders began to move further west into the Great Plains, the land became drier and crop yields diminished. With limited access to water, the land would not support a family and an increasing number of farms began to fail and families had to give up their claims.

In 1909, a new Homestead Act was adopted by Congress and increased the allotment of land to 320 acres. This was of particular value to lands being entered in the western plains and the Pacific Northwestern states. The additional acreage allowed farming on a larger scale and families could be sustained successfully.

The General Land Office in the Department of Interior published a short booklet entitled "Suggestions to Homesteaders and Persons desiring to make Homestead entries" in April 1909. A digital copy can be found at the South Dakota digital archives at the link

<https://sddigitalarchives.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/manuscript/id/420/rec/326>

This offers an excellent description of the many steps required to find available homestead land, how to apply for homesteader status, and then how to ultimately prove your success on the land and make a final claim and submit the necessary paperwork to get title to the land. When all of the paperwork has been submitted, it often took another year or more for the owner to receive the actual title document. The booklet can be downloaded or read on line. After the first fifteen pages of details about the homestead process, there is a lengthy appendix which spells out the legal language of each requirement.

Even if 60% of all started homesteads fail to last through the five years, there are records kept at each step of the way. There is information in every application about the homesteader family and everyone who dropped along the way will have details of when and why they are giving up their effort to gain the land.

Further resources may be found at:

E. Wade Hone, "Land and Property Research in the United States," published by Ancestry, 1997. [CS49 .H66 1997]

James C. Barsi, "The basic researcher's guide to Homesteads and other Federal Land Records." [CS49 .B36 1994]

Robert King, BLM Archivist, "The Homestead Act of 1862 - coming to an end" - a short You-tube video found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ASu-LkkDvqc>

*Contributed by Gary A Zimmerman
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Homestead National Monument of America
Beatrice, Nebraska

The reliefs in these photos resent the relative area of each state was land grant or homestead land.



Alaska, Washington, & Oregon



California, Nevada & Idaho

Visit this Monument online at:

<https://www.nps.gov/home/index.htm>