

The USGenWeb Project

NEWS

Volume 3, Number 6 August 2006

Notes From The Editor

Denise Wells

The June issue of the News spot lighted Alachua County, FL. We were inadvertently provided the incorrect url for the link to Alachua County, FL as <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~flalachu>. The CC maintains two sites with the same look and feel. The correct url is <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~flalachu/Alachua.html>, which displays the FLGenWeb and USGenWeb hot-linked logos (at the bottom of the page).

We apologize for any confusion as to the News featuring non-USGenWeb web sites.

Notes From The N.C.

Linda Haas Davenport

My term as your National Coordinator is drawing to a close and come September 1st you will have a new NC. My year as NC was a major learning experience and I feel that I am a better person for having served. This year gave me so many opportunities I would not have had otherwise.

I attended local state CC meetings where I met, in person, some of the great CCs of the Project (and I'm looking forward to meeting many more at the FGS convention in Boston, see below). I had a chance to get to know many CCs this year as we worked together on a myriad of problems. I was constantly amazed at your willingness to go the extra mile and your dedication to the Project. I also had the opportunity to work with many SCs as they handled problems brought to me by visitors and CCs. I found that the majority of the SCs are great people who work hard and care about their CCs and visitors.

I came to know and appreciate the difficult work of the Advisory Board members, and I, along with those members, struggled with the difficulties of attempting to work under bylaws that have not kept up with the growth of the Project. At times we were frustrated trying to work with parliamentary procedures that were not written for our cyberspace environment. But, through it all, I watched a group of people striving to reach the best, most fair decision possible for all of the problems brought before us.

I gained an understanding of the good and bad sides of the Project. An understanding that cannot be gained by tending to my county sites and reading the postings on the Project lists. I leave office wishing there was a way to give you the same understanding.

I would be less than truthful if I didn't say my term didn't include frustrations, disappointments and, at times, anger, but that is always true of any undertaking.

I've enjoyed serving you as NC this year. I wish you the best in all that you do and, from the bottom of my heart, I thank you for your hard work and dedication to the Project.

Linda Haas Davenport
USGenWeb Project National Coordinator

Notes From The E.C.

Important Reminder from the USGenWeb Election Committee

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

USGenWeb N.C. and R.A.L. 2006 Election Results

National Coordinator -- One Year Term Ending 31 August 2007

Total Votes 374 -- The EC declares a Run-Off between candidates Scott Burrow and Bill Oliver.

Scott Burrow.....186 - 49.733%
Paulette Carpenter... 80 - 21.39%
Bill Oliver..... 108 - 28.877%

Representative At Large -- To complete Two Year Term Ending 8/31/2007

Total Votes 371 -- The EC declares a Run-Off between candidates Michael A. Peterson and Fred Smoot.

Bobbie Dunn..... 88 - 23.720%
Michael A. Peterson....149 - 40.162%
Fred Smoot.....134 - 36.118%

For the other elections results and information about the run-offs see
<http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~usgwelections/national-2006/results-2006.htm>

USGenWeb 2006 National Run-off Election

Voting will begin Tuesday August 22, 2006 (12:01 am) CST, and will end Monday August 28, 2006 (11:59 pm) CST.

Registered USGenWeb members as defined in the USGenWeb Project Bylaws and the Election Committee Procedures are eligible to vote for candidates in their respective region/area/role.

There are three seats in the Run Off Election. All members may vote for National Coordinator and Representative At Large. Only SEMA (Southeast Mid-Atlantic) SCs and ASCs may vote for the SEMA SC Representative.

Names of the candidates can be found here:
<http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~usgwelections/national-2006/results-2006.htm>

More information about each candidate may be found here:
<http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~usgwelections/national-2006/meet.htm>

You will receive (via email) a password for this election, with the URL where the voting form may be found. You must enter the number of the election, and then correctly enter the password to continue voting. We suggest copying the password from that email message and pasting it into the entry box.

If you have not received a voting password by Wednesday morning, August 23rd, please notify the EC immediately:
<http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~usgwelections/current.htm>

Site Spotlights

Lewis County, WAGenWeb
<http://www.drizzle.com/~jtenlen/walewis/walewis.html>

This site by CC Jenny Tenlen loads fast and opens with a colorful map of Washington showing where Lewis County is located, and a short explanation of how to use the site. These features may seem over simplified for experienced researchers, but are nice for beginners. The site is best viewed at 1024x768 screen resolution, but the font is large and easy to read.

Links include a nice bibliography page of Lewis County-specific publications cited throughout the site, and of interest for further research. A link leads to about 100 biographies, transcribed from various sources or written by contributors. Census Records links are of a nice variety from 1847 to 1930 and include images and transcriptions. A Databases link has many cemetery transcriptions, family histories and other items.

The Town Histories link leads to extensive historical information and links to other resources compiled from a number of sources. Lewis County in Pictures offers about 160 of pictures, most of which are on site, with links to many more images. The Researchers link is quite nice and transports you to three long pages of a Registry of Lewis County, WA. Researchers with an incredible amount of information.

Oconee County, SCGenWeb

<http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~scoconee/oconee.html>

Paul M. Kankula became the CC of this site on January 1, 1999, which reports to have had 139,135 visitors since that date. Gary L. Flynn assists Paul with this county site, which is best viewed at 800x600 screen resolution. The page lay-out is logical, and the font and colors make it easy to view. Due to how the county was formed, the CC refers to the site as the "GoldenCorner Homestead," and includes many links that also represent neighboring current-day Anderson and Pickens counties, also managed by Paul with the assistance of Gary.

One of the featured links is "GEDCOM - OPDGS" which leads to the "Old Pendleton District Genealogical Society GEDCOM Database Project." This page has a large Database Submittals index, and a link to the "OPDGS GEDCOM Database Download Website," where one can download the latest database containing 379,000 individuals and more than 128,000 families as of August 1, 2006.

Another featured link is "GPS - Cemetery Finding," leading to a "GPS Satellite Latitude x Longitude Mapping Values" page with links to Anderson and Pickens counties data also. It is beyond the scope of this article to describe the GPS pages, but you can learn all about this process and the value of it by visiting the site, which has many other graves and cemetery links.

Demystifying the Social Security Death Index

Anne J Mitchell - Records Reporter

The Social Security Death Index (SSDI) is a large database which contains vital information for over 64 million people. The SSDI is an index of the names of people whose deaths were reported to the Social Security Administration after 1962, when the records were computerized. The records contain the names of each person who had a survivor requesting benefits, in addition to the names of the person who collected those benefits. The SSDI is a useful tool which can be used to fill in the blanks of a family tree. It can be searched for free at <http://ssdi.rootsweb.ancestry.com/>

The search results of a typical record on the SSDI usually contains the last name, first name, social security number, state of issuance, birth date, death date, location of last residence and last benefit information. This information can be helpful in locating other genealogical data, such as birth and death dates. It can assist in identifying the last place of residence in order to locate an obituary, death certificate or will. It can also assist in identifying an area where other relatives may live. Often, the state of issuance and place of last residence may differ, providing another geographical area to research.

A search can be accomplished with just a surname. If too many results are produced, try including additional information, such as a first name or the first initial of the first name. Keep in mind that some ancestors may be listed under a nickname, a middle name or even a maiden name. More information about your ancestor will provide additional options for searching by using the advanced search option. An advanced search can be conducted by searching: a social security number; city; county or zip code; year of birth or death; and birth or death dates. A search can also be performed by using a wild card. For example, Ann* would find Anne, Annie, Anna, etc.

Before it is determined that all search options have been exhausted, try a Soundex* or a Metaphone search. Soundex and Metaphone searches will return sound-alike names by the way they are pronounced. These types of searches should be used when you are not sure of the spelling of the last name. The Soundex uses a four digit code, while the Metaphone uses up to a sixteen digit code. The Metaphone is the more accurate of the two because the Soundex can code similar sounding names differently. For instance, if you calculate the Soundex codes for Corrigan and Korrigan, you would end up with C625 and K625. However, the Metaphone code for the two names would be the same, allowing you to search for both names.

<http://www.searchforancestors.com/utility/metaphone.php>
<http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~kywolfe/srule.htm>

There are several reasons why an ancestor may not be found in the SSDI. The person who computerized the information may have made a typographical error, or the transcriber could have made a mistake. Perhaps incorrect information was provided for the ancestor, or the ancestor collected benefits prior to 1962, when the records were computerized. Finally, the ancestor may never have had a social security number, or the death may not have been reported.

To the right of the search results is a tools option. The tools option allows a researcher to validate the research by adding a Post-em note for other Rootsweb SSDI researchers to view a comment. The tools option also allows one to

automatically prepare and print an SS-5 request letter. The SS-5 is the application that was processed for the ancestor to obtain a social security number. In most cases, the person applying for a social security number, or a parent, was the informant for the information on the SS-5 application. A request for an SS-5 can be made for an ancestor as long as the ancestor is deceased.

The SS-5 application usually provides the full name, maiden name, present mailing address, age at last birthday, date and place of birth, father's and mother's full names, including the mother's maiden name, sex, race, current employer, date signed and the applicant's signature.

Remember, the SSDI is only an index. It is a tool, but it may not provide you with all the information you are seeking. It can provide clues for further research. For more information about the Rootsweb SSDI, see Rootsweb's Guide to Tracing Family Trees at <http://rootsweb.com/~rwguide/lesson10.htm>

* The Rootsweb SSDI uses the rules of the Russell Soundex Coding System. The Russell Soundex Coding System may not work for people who are doing Jewish genealogy. The Daitch-Mokotoff Soundex is designed specifically for Jewish genealogy because of the more complex pronunciations of the surnames. See <http://www.jewishgen.org/InfoFiles/soundex.html#DM> for more details about the Russell and Daitch-Mokotoff Soundexes.

Focus on Special Projects

Daryl Lytton - Assistant Editor

Mississippi Slave Narratives by Ann Allen Geoghegan

In the late 1930s, Federal Writers, as part of the Works Project Administration (WPA), recorded the life stories of more than 10,000 men and women from a variety of regions, occupations and ethnic groups. An important part of this project was the interviews of the surviving ex-slaves.

The MSGenWeb Project has attempted to collect as many of the interviews done of Mississippi residents who were born in slavery as possible. Ann Allen Geoghegan, along with several other Mississippi CCs and one of MSGenWeb's best African-American Researchers, Linda Durr Rudd, did the transcriptions.

The Slave Narratives Project has its own search engine and is receiving about 100 hits a week since the Project began. We have already received many great comments about it. Check it out!
<http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~msgenweb/xslaves/xslave-index.htm>

Meyersdale, PA Public Library Donates 28,000 Obituary Records for Online Genealogy Research by Joe Patterson

The Meyersdale Public Library graciously donated over 28,000 obituary records to the Somerset County, Pennsylvania, USGenWeb project, see <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~pasomers/>

The obituary records were donated as part of an ongoing records transcription project initiated by the Meyersdale Public Library. "The library has been encouraged to place records online as part of its overall Internet database policy but was unable to perform such a task on its own. Their resources were limited, and they just didn't have enough manpower to transcribe the records for online storage," said Carol Hepburn. The project was initiated by Cynthia Mason, Research Librarian and resident Genealogist with the Meyersdale Public Library and began last August with an email asking for assistance. Miss Hepburn, USGenWeb Archives and Somerset County website co-coordinator, was contacted by the library staff and asked if there was any way the website project could handle transcribing and placing the obituary records online. Her reply was, "We have had great success getting other records transcribed, most notably, the U.S. Census Schedules. Our team coordinator, April Phillips, has done an outstanding job coordinating volunteers and overseeing the Census Project for several years now. I knew with her help we could recruit transcribers and get these obituaries placed online."

The USGenWeb Archives was selected as the online storage location as its policy of free access was in keeping with the library's goals and not dependent on any one person maintaining this large collection. Placement in the Archives makes the data available to the USGenWeb Archives' county, state-wide and national search engine, as well. The collection, originally in tif format on CD-ROM, was converted to smaller gif files, and uploaded to a temporary directory, where transcribers and proofreaders could view them as they typed in Notepad, using Windows split screen, a system much faster and economical than sending out paper copies to transcribers.

Over the course of the past eight months, 50 volunteers were involved in scanning, typing and proofing the 28,000 obituaries. Continued support from the Meyersdale Library was essential in resolving questions on obituaries which were partially unreadable or caused other questions. The Project is nearly complete, thanks to the dedicated efforts of the volunteers.

<http://usgwarchives.net/pa/somerset/mdale.html>

This Special Obituary Collection (primarily 1970-2004) contains not only Somerset residents but many from nearby Pennsylvania and Maryland counties and former residents who migrated. The obituary project management team members are dually county coordinators for PAgenWeb and file managers for the PAgenWeb Archives. Anyone interested in additional details for organizing a project of this scope, please contact Joe Patterson, File Manager for PAgenWeb Archives, at jpatter@comcast.net

Call for Brochures for the FGS Conference

Tina Vickery

The USGenWeb Project is proud to announce that in its celebration of our 10th anniversary, we are sponsoring a track at the 2006 Federation of Genealogical Societies (FGS) Conference. The conference will be held in Boston, Massachusetts, home of the oldest genealogical society in the United States and local host for the 2006 Federation of Genealogical Societies - the New England Historic Genealogical Society, August 30 through September 2, 2006.

See <http://www.usgenweb.com/volunteers/FGS.shtml>

We hope all of you will play a role. Our goal is that each State/County/Special Project within the USGenWeb will provide a brochure of its resources for the USGenWeb Project booth!

If you wish to produce a brochure to share, please send electronic copies to me at tsvickery@adelphia.net. If you wish to forward hard copies, I will provide my mailing address.

If you are planning to attend, we would love to hear from you! A call for booth volunteers will be forthcoming! We look forward to meeting many USGenWeb Project volunteers, visitors and contributors in celebration of our 10th anniversary!

[Ed. Note: Also see <http://www.natchezbelle.org/fgs/> to learn more about USGenWeb Project member participation]

Last minute notes on the upcoming FGS/NEHGS Conference

Paula Stuart-Warren

National Publicity Chair, FGS/NEHGS 2006

- 1. If you still need to register, you can do that online at www.FGS.org. You may also register at the door, but it will be a faster check-in if you have already registered.**
- 2. If you would like to add a luncheon or two (or the cool banquet) to the registration you already have, check out the instructions on the conference blog at <http://fgsconference.blogspot.com/2006/07/already-registered-need-to-add.html>**
- 3. The conference grid was recently updated. Additional Irish tracks were added and some lecture times were adjusted. Go to <http://www.fgs.org/2006conf/FGS-2006.htm> and click on **?Download Grid Brochure.?****
- 4. Once you arrive at the Hynes Convention Center for the conference, you will have to pick up your conference materials which includes a name tag, tote bag, syllabus (one volume for each day totaling 1200+ pages), layout maps of the convention**

center and hotel, luncheon and banquet tickets, the chart of which lecture is at what time (and in what lecture room), and other items.

5. Hours for on-site registration and pick up of materials (signs in the Hynes will point the way) are:
 - Tuesday, Aug. 29 3:00-7:00 p.m.
 - Wednesday, Aug. 30 - Sept. 2, opens each day at 7:00 a.m.
6. Don't forget to visit the Exhibit Hall that will be open during the day on Thursday-Saturday. To see the long list of exhibitors check out <http://www.fgs.org/2006conf/conf-exhibitors.asp>. You do not have to be registered for the conference to visit the Exhibit Hall.

Prose & Poetry

Dwight Latham came up with the idea for this song after reading a book of sayings by Mark Twain, where he proved it was possible to be 'my own grandpa,' and turned it into a song in 1947 along with Moe Jaffe. It has been sung by many artists over the years since then, including Ray Stevens in the 50's and Jerry Garcia in the early 70's.

"I am my own Grandpa"

**Many, many years ago
When I was twenty three,
I got married to a widow,
Pretty as could be.
This widow had a grown-up daughter
With flowing hair of red.
My father fell in love with her,
And soon the two were wed.
This made my dad my son-in-law
And changed my very life.
Now my daughter was my mother,
For she was my father's wife.
To complicate the matters worse,
Although it brought me joy.
I soon became the father
Of a bouncing baby boy.
My little baby then became
A brother-in-law to dad.
And so became my uncle,
Though it made me very sad.
For if he was my uncle,
Then that also made him brother
To the widow's grown-up-daughter
Who, of course, was my step-mother.**

**Father's wife then had a son,
Who kept them on the run.
And he became my grandson,
For he was my daughter's son.
My wife is now my mother's mother
And it makes me blue.
Because, although she is my wife,
She's my grandma too.
If my wife is my grandmother,
Then I am her grandchild.
And every time I think of it,
It simply drives me wild.
For now I have become
The strangest case you ever saw.
As the husband of my grandmother,
I am my own grandpa!**

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