

The USGenWeb Project

NEWS

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EDITOR NEEDED!

Isaiah Harrison

When I took on the production of this newsletter, it was a temporary assignment. I intended to edit the newsletter only long enough to get it off the ground. That has happened and it's time to find a more permanent editor. The editor is responsible for soliciting articles of interest to USGenWeb Project members and combining them into a brief newsletter each month. Writing, editing, layout and leadership skills are all necessary. Circulation is handled by the Election Committee via the project membership list. Applicants may contact [the editor](#).

FROM THE ELECTION COMMITTEE

Ellen Pack, Chair

Important reminder: The USGenWeb National Election is right around the corner. The nomination period will be June 1-14, 2004, and the voting period will be July 1-31, 2004.

In order to vote in this election you [must be Registered](#) with the Election Committee no later than May 31, 2004. New registrations will not be accepted after May 31 until the end of the election period.

Please visit the [EC WebSite](#) for more information, particularly the [National 2004 Election Pages](#). If you have a question, please take a few moments to read the [Election FAQ](#).

The EC encourages everyone to Register and Vote!

YEARBOOKS, QUICK & SIMPLE

Darilee Bednar, owner of the largest yearbook collection west of the Mississippi

Eighteen years ago I used to buy 20 to 50 high school or college yearbooks a month from a big thrift store in Seattle, WA at 98 cents each. The store was happy I was purchasing the books because for years they were throwing them away.

Yep, throwing away the single best way to locate a portrait picture of a young grandparent born around the turn of the century outside of raiding an attic. OK, so the pictures are small but those pictures can be scanned. If done correctly and with a little luck luck, you can have a photo ready to be framed.

A little history of yearbooks. School yearbooks have been published in the US since 1806 when Yale College put out a book. These early books were

usually biographical sketches of alumni instead of pictures. In 1845 the first high school yearbook was published for Waterville NY. In the 1880's halftone printing and letterhead presses made affordable yearbooks with pictures possible.

Around the turn of the century there were two types of yearbooks besides the alumni directories. These yearbooks were the consolidated one and the quarterly magazine type. These books covered most of the same material with an emphasis on sports, an alumni list, and the graduating Seniors. Senior calendar, Senior activities, and Senior prophecies.

I mentioned two important items in the above paragraph: 1. The Alumni Lists were very common up to the 1930's. The list usually gave the current residence and occupation of the alumni and the women's maiden and married names. These lists also covered the pre-yearbook period. 2. The School Calendars reflected school and home life. In an 1896 Duluth, MN high school yearbook there is a Memorium for 5 students who died during the year. The calendar includes a reference to the Scarlet Fever Club for all those students who lost hair during their battle with the disease.

Around the 1930's most schools were including group pictures of underclassmen. Some of these pictures actually identified the students by surnames. Club pictures are available with identifying surnames.

The magazine type yearbooks with their paper covers had generally been replaced by the single hard cover.

Around the 1950's schools began including identified portrait pictures of all students in alphabetical order by class. These books were still in black and white. Colored glamor shots for the Seniors started to appear in the late 1960's.

Where to find yearbooks. Usually yearbooks come on the market because of some catastrophic event such as a death, move, or loss of a storage shed. Very few people intentionally give away these books. Thrift and antique stores are still my main shopping area although I do buy occasionally online at auction. In 18 years I have only bought 4 books at a yard sale. I can no longer buy a book for a buck.

What to do with them. Scan them and put them on-line. I had started a project a few years ago to put older yearbooks online. I intended to scan 1920 and earlier books so I wouldn't have to worry about copyright issues although I hold to the belief that yearbooks for public schools are paid for with public funds and should not be copyrightable.

Of course, I ran into problems with scanning these pages. I am not going to pretend I'm a professional or a techie so my explanation is going to be a 101 level.

The halftone printing process requires that the surface of a glossy picture be broken up into dots by a screen so when scanned the yearbook picture looks blocky or has a moire pattern.. The producers of scanners know this and

created software to deal with the problem. For example, in advanced mode my scanner has a "descreen" option. I'm very untechish, so I use the default setting. When I tell my scanner I'm scanning an "Art Magazine" and it will automatically descreen the picture for me. Descreening is a process to use nearby color tones to fill in the blanks.

Online viewing only requires 72 dpi (dots per inch) These jpgs are manageable in size but they don't print out well. To get printable pages I needed to scan about 300 dpi, which gave me huge files—often times into mgs—not counting the fact that online these pictures were huge also. I did discover a program by XAT that allows me to resize, crop, and optimize my jpgs into manageable files.

When I am scanning a small individual picture, I crop to the shot and then I use a dpi setting up to 1200 dpi and then pray the "screening" process didn't take out something important.

Website formating. This is truly a matter of taste. The way I like is using thumbnails and a clickable index. Thumbnails with a clickable link allow the researcher a quick view of the pages and an index page allows search engines to locate the name of the student and book.

All my pages are jpgs and I've been asked about pdfs and the answer is I understand jpgs better than I understand pdfs. I recently did a talk for the Whatcom Genealogical Society and that talk with illustrations is available [here](#).

ONE WORLD TREE

Greta Thompson

Perhaps because USGenWeb is committed to making genealogical records available to everyone at no cost, we are sensitive to any project that charges fees for access to those records. Sometimes our bias against fee-based services can even lead us to suspect the worst of them. That has happened recently in response to a new project from Ancestry.com called OneWorldTree (OWT).

OWT is a tool for searching family history records beginning with the huge Ancestry World Tree database made up of files submitted by family historians like you and me. These family trees are in the form we submitted them. We can add, change, or delete sections or even the entire file, but Ancestry.com does not edit the contents of files (except to remove data about any individuals they consider to be living). Many files have no sources listed for the information in them. Many contain errors and guesses ranging from educated to wild. Many incorporate copies, not always accurate and always with permission, of other people's research. In other words, these family trees provide preliminary information that has to be carefully verified before it's accepted as true. An analogous product is WorldConnect, developed by RootsWeb, "the oldest and largest FREE genealogy site," which is now financed by Ancestry.com.

Both Ancestry World Tree and RW's World Connect have been available

to everyone to search without a fee. Some GenWeb participants fear that what was free may not continue to be free for long and to object that information submitted in the belief that it would always be freely accessible should not be used to make a profit. They are urging everyone who submitted family trees to delete them.

In response to these concerns and rapidly-spreading rumors Ancestry.com assures everyone that OWT is only "an exciting new tool that searches across our site to find and combine records on individuals making your family history work faster and more rewarding." Everyone can continue to search both Ancestry World Tree and World Connect for free, and modify, delete, or comment on them (with Post-ems). In addition, with a paid subscription people will now be able to use this new tool (OWT) that will link records that appear to be related. Over time the records to be searched will include others, such as census records and birth, marriage, and death records. According to Joan Young, who administers a number of mail lists and has multiple ties with RootsWeb, "what is being sold is CONVENIENCE and not the trees."

For a family tree to be included in the new OWT it must meet some conditions: it must include at least three generations; it cannot contain loops; and it should not have a large percentage of entries with no names nor dates. The deadline for submitting changes to your family tree or for deleting it if you do not want it included in OWT was set tentatively for May 21. Instructions for submitting and deleting trees will be found on the Ancestry.com page.

KEEP YOUR EYES PEELED

A new webMaster and assistant webMaster have been chosen and are hard at work revamping the [Project's website](#). Keep checking--a visually and technically-improved site will be on-line shortly.

Mike Jarvis, the new webmaster, is on leave as webmaster for the University of Arizona and is SC for [AZGenWeb](#).

Julie McGrew-Ayers, assistant webmaster, is head of the Internet Marketing/Search Engine Optimization department for beyondemail.com and is CC for [Monroe](#), [Putnam](#) and [Fayette](#) counties in WVGenWeb.

THE PROJECT LOGO

In response to the many members who wrote in supporting our current logo, the Advisory Board has cancelled its efforts to find a new one. Many thanks to the members who submitted new logo ideas.

You are receiving this newsletter because you are a member of The USGenWeb Project. For address changes, or to be added to or removed from the mailing list visit the [EC WebSite](#) and contact your EC Rep. To submit

articles, letters and ideas, write to USGenWebNews@cox.net The
USGenWeb NEWS is archived at www.rootsweb.com/~usgwpub/

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