

Genealogical Society of Okaloosa County (GSOC) Meeting Minutes, 22 September 2018

President Jon Sheperd introduced himself and welcomed everyone to the September GSOC meeting. There were 20 members, including Ginny Trawick, a life member, and one visitor present. Jon warmly welcomed our guest speaker, Ms. Virginia Shelby.

OLD BUSINESS

Minutes from August GSOC meeting were in the September Newsletter (thank you Ed Crosby). As there were no changes or additions, the minutes were approved.

2018 Journal: Most of you know, the GSOC 2018 Journal was published! A special thanks to Cindy Barber, her editing assistants Hilma Jenus and Marvin Cochrane, and all the contributors. There were very interesting stories about how we or our ancestors came to NW Florida. Jon also was amazed to learn that two of our members were born in the same small hospital in DeFuniak Springs. If you haven't already gotten your copy, contact Cindy.

West Florida Genealogical Society 2018 Seminar: As mentioned at the two last meetings, The West Florida Genealogical Society is holding an all-day seminar with guest speaker, Dr. John Colletta, author of the popular book, "They Came in Ships" on October 27th from 9am to 4pm with continental breakfast and lunch. The deadline for registering is Sept 30th and the cost is \$35 for members or \$40 for non-members. Go to their website to register/download a registration form. <https://wfgsi.org/eventListings.php?nm=34> (Note: this is the same date as our regularly scheduled meeting.)

CLL Classes: The Center for Lifelong Learning started its 8-week fall semester. There are four genealogy classes being taught by GSOC members. They are: Beginning Genealogy taught by Hilma Jenus and Tom Sajwaj, Family History on the Internet taught by Jon Sheperd, Genealogy Forum being led by Hilma and Tom, and Genealogy DNA Testing for Dummies taught by Cindy Barber and Tom. The next offering of genealogy classes will be in January. Contact the CLL office at 863-6548 or talk to Tom, Hilma, Cindy or Jon for more information.

NEW BUSINESS

Door Prizes Winners: Jerry Rush (Val Moreland's homemade fig jam), Elizabeth Mangum (Cowboy Candy made by Val Moreland) and Barbara Bethea (Jar of Ed Crosby's local honey).

GSIG: The Genealogy Special Interest Group is starting back up after a summer break. However, they will now be meeting right after our GSOC meeting on the fourth Saturday of the month. Today they meet in the media lab. After that they will meet in here. All are welcome! For further information, reach out to Cindy Barber.

2019 Elections: In accordance with our GSOC By-laws, we need to elect a slate of officers for 2019 at the November meeting. Jon asked Jim Young to be in charge of the nominating committee again and he graciously accepted. He already sent an email about this to all the members. The committee's job is going to be more difficult this year as there are three openings that need to be filled. These include President, 1st VP for Programs, and Recording Secretary. So please consider running for one of these positions and let Jim know. Even new members can do these jobs and new interaction and leadership keeps our group interesting.

Pensacola Field Trip: We are planning a field trip to the West Florida Genealogy Branch Library, Pensacola on Saturday, Nov 10th. We will car-pool and leave mid-morning, drive to Pensacola and eat at a restaurant near Pensacola State College, and then spend the afternoon doing research at the Library, which is open from 10am to 6pm. Additional details will be given at the October meeting and via e-mail.

Lunch at local restaurant: GSOC members went to McAlister's Deli in FWB.

REPORTS:

1st VP: Upcoming presenters. At our October meeting we will do our annual "Show, Share, or Tell" program. Members, or visitors, can volunteer by:

- Bringing in a family heirloom and talk about it.
- Talking about a fascinating or interesting ancestor.
- Talking about a genealogy research trip and what you learned.
- Talking about how you broke through a "brick wall" for an ancestor.
- Talking about family history that people will find informative, funny or helpful.

Talks and presentations are limited to 5-10 minutes.

Use of a Power Point presentation is fine, but let Jon know in advance.

A sign-up list was passed around. If you didn't sign up and wish to present, email Jon with your name, topic, estimated length, and if you need computer support. We will also allow other "last minute" presentations on meeting day, time permitting.

IMPORTANT: The November meeting will be a week earlier than normal to avoid a possible Thanksgiving weekend closure like last year. The date is **November 17th**. The program will be the second half of the Journey of Man. Using genetics, this DVD presentation examines how the human race populated the world. We saw the first half in November 2016 when Charlene Grafton introduced it. We will also do elections for 2019.

2nd VP Jerry Rush: Jerry is updating our GSOC surname research list and passed the latest version around. If you have surname additions to the list, let him know.

Treasurer Phil Hoge: The balance in our bank account is \$2021.17. We have collected (from Blue Box donations) \$925.08 - to be spent on genealogy library resources.

Recording Secretary Kathie Sheperd: The FWB Library has catalogued all the GSOC donated books over the years donated to the Fort Walton Beach Library. They will remain as reference books. However, without people using the genealogy books, this section might be reduced in number the way the Valparaiso Public Library has reduced their holdings. We will be placing a large order of books soon. Please support the FWB Public Library by reviewing them.

Help! Our GSOC book, Family Tree Maker 2017 (donated by Jerry Rush), has not been returned. Whoever borrowed the book, please return it at the next meeting.

Corresponding Secretary Val Moreland: If your email address has changed, please let Val know so you can receive the GSOC minutes and correspondence.

Newsletter, Ed Crosby: If you have articles which might be of interest to the GSOC membership, please send them to Ed.

Webmaster, Jim Young: Our GSOC website is back on line at RootsWeb. Be sure to go to the new website. There was a discussion about registering the new website, so Cindy will check and coordinate with Jim.

Genealogist, Margaret Harris: Margaret is still trying to get better. Please keep her in your thoughts and prayers.

There was no other old business.

PRESENTATION: Jon introduced Virginia Shelby as our guest speaker. Virginia was born and raised in Escambia County Florida and graduated from the University of West Florida. She then moved to Atlanta, GA where she resided for 20 years. While living in the Metro Atlanta area, Virginia attended Kennesaw State University where she received her qualifications to become a CPA. She has over 20 years' experience in tax return preparation and has worked in Georgia, Alabama and Florida.

In January 2013, Virginia received the prestigious designation of Certified Tax Coach. She is one of about 200 Certified Tax Coaches across the US and the only one in the Northwest Florida Panhandle and South Alabama. As a Certified Tax Coach Virginia works proactively to find all possible legal deductions to reduce client's tax burden. Virginia has owned her own CPA and tax planning firm "Shelby's Tax Consultants," for the last nine years.

When not working on tax planning, Virginia loves genealogy and the study of American History. She has written several articles on family and American history that were published in the "History of Escambia County" Volumes 1 and 2 and she also wrote and published the book "Shelby's of Dixie" and "The History of Beulah Baptist Church and Community." She is a member of the West Florida Genealogical Society and the Mid-County Historical Society in Molino, FL as well as the Florida Genealogical Society and the South Carolina Genealogical Society. She is also a member of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) and Daughter of War of 1812.

Her presentation was about Native American genealogy research
Ms Shelby:

There are over 562 Federal recognized tribes and millions of Americans claim ties to America's first people. There are 4.3M American Indians and Alaskan Natives and

3.1M tribe members. In the 2000 US Federal Census, 4M people claimed Native American descendants.

In 1850 and 1860, the US government set aside lands for tribes who signed treaties and the Department of the Interior now oversees over 310 reservations. Each tribe is self-governing and not all tribal members live on reservations. Not everyone with American Indian heritage is a tribal member; people must have a certain percentage of “Indian Blood.” Of the 562 Federally Recognized Tribes, each kept different records. The US Government has many records for Native Americans, and although there are more records than any other ethnic group, they are not easy to find. Most records begin after 1860.

To start searching, you would have to start with these questions: What tribes were in an area with your ancestors? What migrations (both forced and voluntary) took place around the time your ancestors lived in a location? What reservations were in the area, and when? Consider Indian Territory: tribes from the Indian Removal Act of 1830 were placed in Indian Territory which is now present day Oklahoma.

Know the terminology of Alaska Native, Native American, American Indian, First Nations, Tribe, Band, Community and Clan. Labels vary by location, time and by tribes. If the tribe wasn’t recognized by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, there may just be a few records. Look for other documents: Newspaper, traditional census, etc. In 1870, the US Federal Census used the word “Indian” as a race class. Before that time, Native Americans were classified in the general population by various race categories. Beginning in 1885, there was a separate census for many American Indian tribes and the purpose ranged from collecting money to distributing supplies. The 1900 and 1910 censuses have separate Native American schedules. Not all Native Americans claimed this heritage because of the stigma still associated with being “Indians.”

From 1885 to 1940, the Bureau of Indian Affairs took a census, but not always annually, and these are not digitized. There are over 892 rolls of census records at the NARA in record group 75, film M595. Information included name of tribe, nearest post office, number of people per household, English names, Indian names and relationships, type of dwelling, percentage of Indian blood, occupation, health, education, marital status, land ownership and BIA agency.

In 1838, five tribes were forcibly moved to Indian Territory during the Trail of Tears and the Indian Removal Act of 1830: Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek & Seminole (known collectively as the Five Civilized Tribes).

The Dawes Rolls or the Final Rolls of the Five Civilization were collected by a commission headed by Henry L. Dawes. More than 101,000 tribal members were enrolled. NARA has the original documents, including affidavits, correspondence and the evidence of eligibility. More than 200,000 applicants were rejected. The rolls include cards with each enrollee's tribe, blood percentage inherited from ancestors, name, age, and sometimes family members. Each person on the card was assigned a tribal roll number. Enrollment packets include transcriptions of interviews, application forms and other documentation. Land allotment packets contained land records the enrollee received, enrollment number & name of applicant, family members, land location and legal description, etc. Rejected applications are not part of the Dawes Rolls but can be found at NARA microfilm 7RA147 at the Ft Worth TX facility.

The Guion Miller Rolls, 1906-1911, is another source of information as about 90,000 applications are named in these rolls. They can be found on NARA and Footnote in a searchable database index, and also on Fold3. The Baker Roll (1924-1929) has rejected applications (that were trying to get approved), records Cherokee families in tribes, and contains lots of genealogy information. The Baker Roll is found on Ancestry.com. Other rolls include the Wallace Roll (1890-1893), found at Ancestry.com, and the 1867 Kern Clifton roll (found at NARA), may contain information. Check sources such as newspapers that carried information on Native Americans and church records if there is a marriage. Missionary Records (out west) document births, christenings, deaths, and marriage. Look for trading companies that did business with tribes and search tribal histories. Canada has many of these. Our area had the Leslie Patton Trading Company. Settlers, farmers, storekeepers, BIA agents and others filed letters and diaries with references to American Indians. Look for these records at local museums, universities and historical societies.

Military Records: Native Americans who fought in wars can be found in the same location as other military records. These include Army Scouts and WWII Code Talkers. These records are located at Fold3 and NARA.

Bureau of Indian Affairs files has millions of correspondence and other papers in the files, including BIA agent reports. Unfortunately, these are not digitalized or indexed

or even microfilmed, so genealogy researchers must have to research the records in person or hire a local researcher. But letters received from 1824 and 1881 are available on microfilm series M234. Letters received from 1881 to 1907 are in paper form but are indexed in Publication P2187. After 1900, the BIA stopped filing chronologically and started filing by subject matter using decimal codes. School census on Reservations began in 1906, and these censuses are located in local NARA facilities close to tribes.

Research is difficult, so have a research plan. Create a timeline of the ancestor's life. Research those who appear in the records along with your ancestors. Neighbors may be your ancestor's fellow migrants (look for their names in census and land records, and then search their origins). Confirm or disprove circumstantial evidence of Indian heritage by studying tribal histories and consulting experts when necessary. Interview family members: Where did they think the story came from about Native American Heritage? Did they know of known tribes in the area or Native Americans living there? Does a family photo show high cheekbones? It is vital to know the tribe they may be associated with in order to research. Once you discover a tribal connection, make sure the movements of the family coincide with tribal movements.

DNA testing may reveal you have Native American Ancestry (or not – if too far back may be diluted). DNA tests will not reveal specific tribes, but may give hints as to location of tribe. It is best used as a clue, not proof.

In summary, you never know when some small piece of the puzzle turns up and breaks down brick walls. Your research will familiarize you with Native American records even if you don't locate your family and it can help you with your entire tree.

Virginia handed out a list of Native American Research Resources with web links. A copy will be posted in the Members Only section of the GSOC web page.

CLOSING:

Jon thanked Virginia Shelby for her excellent presentation and thanked everyone for coming. The next meeting will be here on October 27th at 10:30 am when we will do "Show, Share, or Tell."

/S/

Kathie Sheperd
Recording Secretary
Genealogy Society of Okaloosa County