THE GSOC NEWSLETTER

THE GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF OKALOOSA COUNTY, FLORIDA

AUGUST 5, 2016

Next GSOC Meeting
**August 13, 2016 10:00 a.m. at the Destin Library, 150 Siebert Ave. Destin, Florida**

Early Destin History and The Marler Family Presence
by Kathy Marler Blue

Kathy Marler Blue is the Associate Director of the Destin Fishing and History Museum. She will discuss early Destin history and the Marler family presence in Destin and the contributions that family made to the development of Destin and the fishing industry that grew up there.

This meeting will be held in the **Destin Library**.
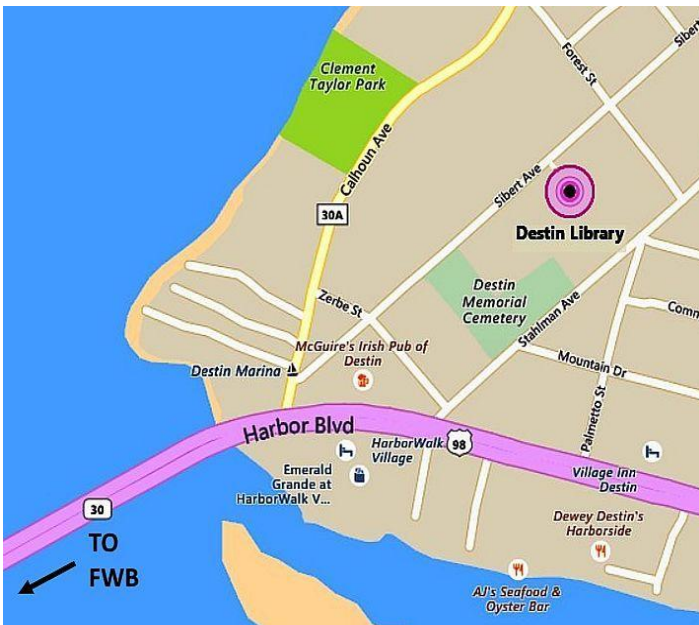
From Fort Walton Beach, take the first left to Calhoun Avenue after crossing the Marler Bridge; and then, very quickly, take the right fork in the road which is Sibert Avenue. The library is located at 150 Sibert Avenue.

A Note to My Ancestors

If you guys can just stop using the same name for son-father-grandfather-etc, that would great.

On a similar note, there are more girls' names to choose from than just Mary, Ann, Elizabeth or Sarah. No, Mary Ann and Sarah Ann don't count!

Cousin on cousin?!! Guys, you're making me feel icky AND you're messing up my pedigree chart!

Thanks for having 12-16 kids between 3-4 wives.

What's with the death stare? You don't have to smile on photos but try not to look like you're about to be shot.

Cursive. It's stylish and all I admit, but maybe you can spare a passing thought for those poor souls who have to read it? Seriously, my doctor's prescriptions are more legible than your marriage banns.

When picking the particular parish priest who's going to write down your births, deaths and marriages, could you pick someone without Parkinson's disease? See that young kid in the corner with fabulous penmanship? Yeah, get him over here.

You know that drunk census taker that gets everyone's names wrong, and then when he gets home accidentally sets fire to half the town's records? Stop hiring him.

Finally, thanks for giving me a hobby that simultaneously makes me the family geek and the family archivist.

Reddit.

SKELETONS IN THE CLOSET
BY DENNIS YANCEY

"Down by the Riverside" was the 2016 annual theatrical production of Walton County's Grit & Grace. It was written by Ronnie McBrayer and was presented on July 15-17 in the Walton High School Auditorium in DeFuniak Springs. It featured the lives and times of the tough-skinned, hard working men, women, and children who occupied the banks of the Choctawhatchee River which they relied on for transportation, commerce, and daily life for centuries. Before them the "River of the Choctaw" did the same for the local tribe of the same name.

Before Walton County had a tourist-filled Emerald Coast or a railroad there was only the back-breaking labor of timbering, the slow chugging of paddle-driven riverboats, hardscrabble living in the county's small villages, and subsistence farming and fishing along the waterways of the Choctawhatchee River.

Grit & Grace, Inc., is the official folk life production group of Walton County which was organized in 1998 by a small group of residents who became excited about recording the oral history of the county and translating it to the stage in the form of a folk-life production. Stories were gathered from local citizens and the stories came to life with music and song.

The first production garnered wide support and became a reality in October 2000. The Ark of Damascus church offered use of its new sanctuary for the first production. For the next six years the production was held at Freeport High School and is currently presented at Walton High School.

Grit & Grace, Inc. collects stories and legends about the people of Walton County, some of these stories may be sad or tragic, some serious, and some humorous. It secures a playwright to put the stories together, hires a director for the show; and then auditions local actors, singers, and musicians to help bring the stories to life; always keeping in mind that these are true stories about real people, passed down from generation to generation. Interested musicians volunteer to play in the production and/or write the original music. Volunteers are enlisted to help with the staging, advertising, set construction, costuming, and much more. And then the show begins!

I've recently been looking into a branch of the family where there were three or four suicides of different members of the family - totally independent of each other. One wonders if this is a possible genetic trait such as depression being passed down in the family.

Family research can often result in some very interesting discoveries in the family tree, but sometimes one comes upon findings that are not so pleasant to learn about. Sometimes we find out about events and experiences of deceased members of our extended family that may be upsetting, sad and at times downright ugly and horrible.

My question to all /any of you - is how should we as researchers handle the discovery, documentation and sharing of such info as we sometimes find it.?

I mean I am one that believes that everyone who has ever lived deserves to be remembered - and that none of us are in a position to be over judgmental. I leave God to Judge any and all of us - He who knows the intent and mind of us all.

On the other hand I think it important we learn from the past and ensure that, as best as we can, we don't repeat the ugly things in our family history.

I believe we need to have tact, respect, and empathy for members of the family who have made mistakes and maybe weren't the best or nicest people - and especially for the descendants of such people. On the other hand - I don't think I'm someone to leave everything "in the closet" as if it never happened.

Just wondering what feelings any of you have as you encounter "skeletons" in the "family closet" and how we as family researchers should respond. Things like:

children born out of wedlock
physical, emotional and sexual abuse
criminal allegations, convictions and jail and prison time
dysfunctional relationships, immoral / unethical activities
suicide, bigotry, family abandonment
alcoholism & drug abuse
mental sickness and affected activities
activities with social or religious taboos

Dennis Yancey
the Yancey Family Surname Rersource Center
http://yanceyfamilygenealogy.org/

The Dog Tag

"**Dog tag**" is what the identification tag worn by military personnel is usually called. Despite the nickname, dog tags have a very serious function. They are primarily intended for the identification of the dead and wounded. The identification function is accomplished by having the name and service number on the tag and the aid for the wounded by having essential basic medical information, such as blood type and, in some cases, other data such as severe allergies. The tags often indicate religious preference as well.

Modern dog tags are made from a corrosion-resistant metal and commonly contain two copies of the information, either in the form of a single tag that can be broken in half or two identical tags on the same chain. This duplication allows one tag (or half-tag) to be collected from a body for notification and the second to remain with the corpse when conditions prevent it from being immediately recovered.

History

As far back as the Roman legions, a kind of dog tag was issued. It was a lead disk on a leather string worn around the neck with the name of the recruit and his legion inscribed on it.

In more recent times dog tags were provided to Chinese soldiers as early as the mid-19th century. In the mid-1800s, this consisted of a wooden dog tag at the belt, bearing the soldier's name, age, birthplace, unit, and date of enlistment.

During the American Civil War, some soldiers pinned paper notes with their name and home address to the backs of their coats. Other soldiers stenciled identification on their knapsacks or scratched it in the soft lead backing of their army belt buckle. Manufacturers of identification badges recognized a market and began advertising in periodicals. Their pins were usually shaped to suggest a

branch of service, and engraved with the soldier's name and unit. Machine-stamped tags were also made of metal with a hole and usually had (on one side) an eagle or shield, and such phrases as "War for the Union" or "Liberty, Union, and Equality". The other side had the

soldier's name and unit, and sometimes a list of battles in which he had participated.

The U.S. Army first authorized identification tags in 1906. An aluminum identification tag the size of a silver half dollar and of suitable thickness was stamped with the name, rank, company, regiment, or corps of the wearer. It was prescribed as a part of the uniform and when not worn it was supposed to be kept in the possession of the owner. The tag was a free issue to enlisted and sold at cost price to officers.

In 1916 a change was made so that all soldiers were issued two tags: one to stay with the body and the other to go to the person in charge of the burial for record-keeping purposes. In 1918, the army adopted and allotted serial numbers to all soldiers and these were stamped on the tags.

United States

The U.S. Armed Forces typically carry two identical oval dog tags. The format of the tags differs slightly depending on the branch of service. The Marine Corps tag, for example, usually includes the gas mask size and the Corps issues red tags for marines with medical allergies.

During World War II, an American dog tag could indicate only one of three religions through the inclusion of one letter: "P" for Protestant, "C" for Catholic, or "H" for Jewish (from the word "Hebrew"), or "NO" to indicate no religious preference. Later Army regulations included X and Y in addition to P, C, and H: the X indicating any religion not included in the first three, and the Y indicating either no religion or a choice not to list religion.   By the time of the Vietnam War, some dog tags spelled out the broad religious choices such as PROTESTANT and CATHOLIC, rather than using initials, and also began to show individual denominations such as "METHODIST" or "BAPTIST."

Although American dog tags include the recipient's religion as a way of ensuring that religious needs will be met, some personnel have them reissued without religious affiliation listed—or keep two sets, one with the designation and one without—out of fear that identification as a member of a particular religion could increase the danger to their welfare or their lives if they fell into enemy hands. Some Jewish personnel avoided flying over German lines during WWII with ID tags that indicated their religion, and some Jewish personnel avoid the religious designation today out of concern that they could be captured by extremists who are anti-Semitic. Additionally, when American troops were first sent to Saudi Arabia during the Gulf War were allegations that some U.S. military authorities were pressuring Jewish military personnel to avoid listing their religions on their ID tags.

American dog tags of the 1930s through 1970s were produced using a process in which the characters are debossed. Current dog tags are made with either debossed (depressed) or embossed (raised) characters.

The "Notched" dog tags

There is a recurring myth about the notch situated in one

end of the dog tags issued to United States Army personnel during World War II and up until the Vietnam War era. It was rumored that the notch's purpose was that, if a soldier found a body on the battlefield, he could stick one tag between the teeth of the corpse to ensure that the tag would remain with the body and then take the other tag to the commanding officer.

In reality, the notch was there because of the pistol-type imprinter used primarily by the Medical Department during World War II. This imprinter could rapidly print all of the information from a soldier's dogtag directly onto medical and personnel forms, with a single squeeze of the trigger. However, this required that the tag had to be inserted with the stamped characters facing down. It was believed that battlefield stress could lead to errors, so to force proper orientation, the tags wee produced with a notch which prevented the printer from operating if the tag is inserted upside down.

This feature was not as useful in the field as had been hoped, however, due to adverse conditions such as weather, dirt and dust, water, etc. In addition, the imprinter resembled a pistol, and thus attracting the attention of snipers (who might assume that a man carrying a pistol was an officer). As a result, use of the hand imprinter by field medics was rapidly abandoned and eventually the requirement that tags include the locator notch was removed.

Apparently, it appears instructions that would confirm the notch's mythical use were issued at least unofficially by some Graves Registration Service briefings to Army troops headed overseas during the Vietnam War.
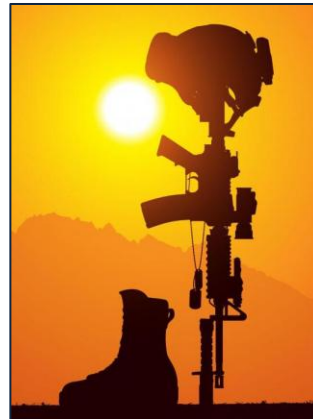
Dog tags are traditionally part of the makeshift battlefield memorials that soldiers created for their fallen comrades. The casualty's rifle with bayonet affixed is stood vertically atop the empty boots, with the helmet over the rifle's stock. The dog tags hang from the rifle's handle or trigger guard.

The "Break Apart" dog tags

Denmark, Canada, and some other countries use identity discs that are designed to be broken in two in the case of fatality; the lower half is returned to headquarters with the member's personal documents, while the upper half remains on the body.

An identity disk from Denmark is shown here.

Silencers

Not until the Vietnam War did the use of silencers come into practice to help disguise the noise made by the two tags. The silencer is a rubber grommet that goes around the dog tag to keep it from making noise or rattling. While some of the soldiers used these silencers, others were known to tape the tags together or wear one around their neck and attach the second to their shoe laces.

Eventually, dog tags would transcend the practical military boundaries and find their way into civilian life both as a means of emulating the military use for identification, but also as a personal fashion statement.

Events and Information of GSOC Interest

GSOC INFORMATION

Officers for 2016
President, Sue Basch
1st Vice President (Programs), Charlene Grafton
2nd Vice President (Membership), Jon Sheperd
Treasurer, Phil Hoge
Recording Secretary, Kathie Sheperd
Corresponding Secretary, Val Moreland
Immediate Past President, James Young
Journal Editor, Kathie Sheperd; Historian, TBD
Genealogist, Margaret Harris
Publicity Chairperson, Val Moreland
Webmaster & Newsletter Editor, Jim Young

Addresses

P.O. Box 1175, Fort Walton Beach, FL 32549-1175
Email: gsocokaloosa@yahoo.com
Newsletter Editor: **youngjmy@cox.net**

Meetings and Membership

Regular meetings of the GSOC are usually held at the Heritage Museum of Northwest Florida, 115 Westview Avenue, Valparaiso, FL, at 10 AM on the second Saturday of each month. There is no admission charge and all are welcome. The meetings are usually followed by an optional Dutch treat lunch at a nearby restaurant.

Annual membership dues are $24 for an individual and $35 for an individual and spouse at the same address. If you would like to become a member, want to renew your membership, or want to update your membership record, please go to the GSOC web site and download the membership form.

The Newsletter

The GSOC Newsletter is usually published on or before the first Friday of each month. Suggestions for articles are welcome. The editor, Jim Young, can be contacted by phone at (850) 862-8642 or by email at youngjmy@cox.net. Letters to the editor are welcome and may be published.

The Journal

The GSOC Journal, *A Journal of Northwest Florida*, is published once each year. The 2015 issue, was published and distributed in October 2015.

The Web Site
http://www.rootsweb.com/~flocgs

The site is updated frequently and contains information about future GSOC meetings, minutes of past meetings, copies of the newsletters, articles and items of genealogical and historical interest, and much more.

Free history lecture
Work Done as if by Magic: Arcadia Mill Industrial Complex
Presented by Adrianne Walker

August 12, 12 PM
Heritage Museum of Northwest Florida
115 Westview Ave., Valparaiso, FL

Example of the type of sawmill that was used at the Arcadia sawmill and cotton mill complex near Milton, Florida

Recent archaeological research provides details about daily life of those who inhabited the uplands surrounding the mill complex.

Arcadia Mill Site Manager, Adrianne Walker, MA, RPA, will discuss the site's industrial past with an emphasis on the community who lived and worked there and the site's historical significance.

Bring a sandwich and take your lunch break at the Heritage Museum of Northwest Florida for *History Sandwiched-In*, an informal lunch-time education program.

This lecture is free and open to the public. SPACE IS LIMITED. Please call to reserve a seat. **(850) 678-2615**.

I Can't See Their Graves
by Jim Young

Please bear with me. I need to tell you something first about two of my paternal great-great grandfathers so you'll understand why I can't see their graves.

They were Thomas Jefferson Young and Daniel Blue.

After moving west from north Alabama into north Mississippi in 1842, Thomas Jefferson Young and his family settled in an area which later came to be known as Ellzey Town and eventually just Ellzey. My great grandfather, Thomas Wilson Young (Tom), was four years old at the time of the move.

Their neighbor on the adjoining farm to the south was my great-great grandfather Daniel Blue who had migrated from the east about 1839 into this area. Both families grew and were engaged in the relatively small-scale farming that was common in that area.

Thomas J was also a local Methodist preacher – one of those who worked on their farms during the week and preached on some Sundays. His son Tom was blessed (or not) by being the only boy in a family that had seven girls. In those days, farm families consisting of mainly daughters weren't unusual, and the girls often worked in the fields like everyone else.

By 1860 the two families had settled into a comfortable but hard-working life of farming. There were other friendly neighbors, too, and the children in the various families came to know each other well.
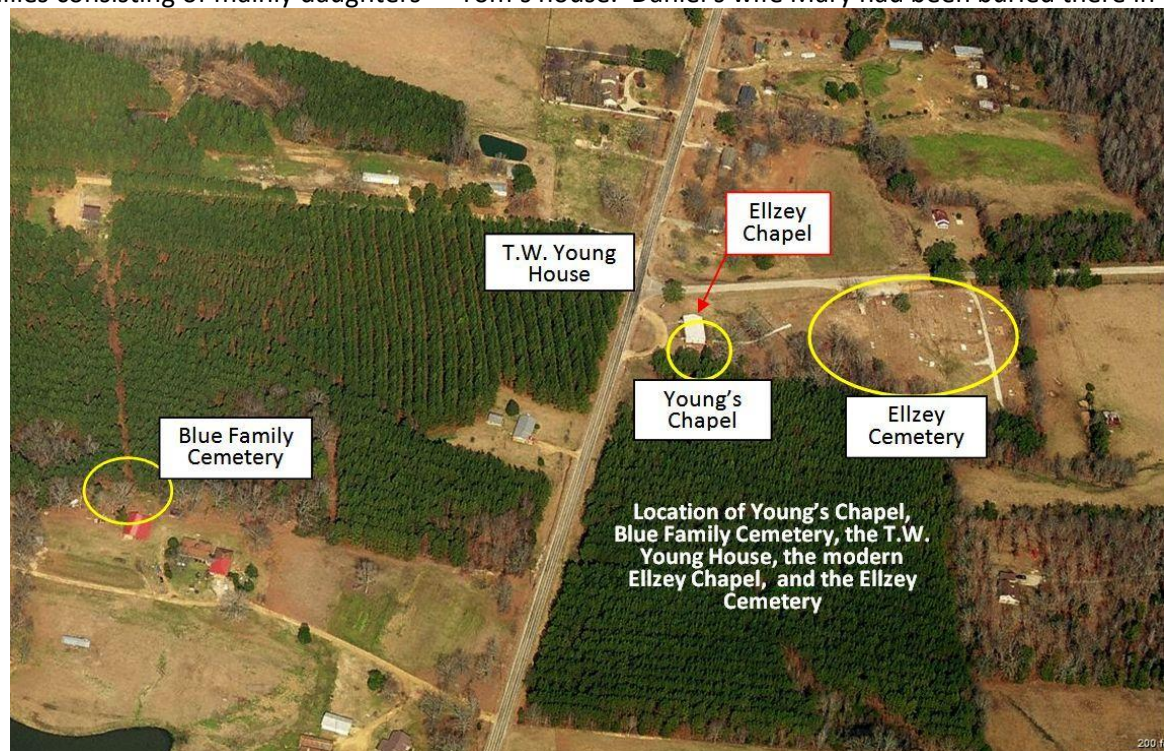
Another of these families was that of James Sebron Mosley who had married Tom's sister Mary Louise. In fact, Tom, who was then 22 years old, was helping James Sebron to do spring planting when the 1860 census taker came around and he was listed in the Mosley household.

However, Tom had a bigger interest over at the Daniel Blue farm than just being a friendly neighbor: Daniel's daughter, Sarah Frances (Sallie). She was the same age as Tom.

Location of Young's Chapel, Blue Family Cemetery, the T.W. Young House, the modern Ellzey Chapel, and the Ellzey Cemetery

When the Civil War began, Tom enlisted in a Confederate company of local men. His unit was one of those who fought in the Battle of Shiloh in early April 1862 with horrific casualties. Tom survived that battle, though, and managed to get home in December 1862 when he and Sallie were married at the Daniel Blue home. Daniel's wedding gift to Sallie and Tom was a parcel of land, part of which was located directly across the road that ran north-south through their farms.

Tom survived the war and returned to Ellzey Town and began farming. As the community grew, he and some of his sons formed a business to take advantage of the abundant supply of hickory wood in the area. Their company produced spokes in great numbers for wagon and buggy wheels and shipped them all over the country. Tom was also successful at farming and also apparently good with people as his later election to various public offices indicates.

Time takes its toll, though. There was no church or graveyard in the immediate area, but Daniel Blue had started a cemetery on his property between his house and Tom's house. Daniel's wife Mary had been buried there in 1876 and when Tom's father Thomas J died in 1877 he was buried there as well. Daniel died in 1889 and he, too, was buried there. There were other burials, but we don't know who they were.

In the meantime, the need for a church in their community led Tom and Mary to donate part of the land which had been their wedding gift from Daniel as the site for a Methodist church. That church was build and was

named Young's Chapel Methodist Church. An area just east of the church began to be used as a public cemetery. Although the cemetery had existed when Daniel died, he had asked to be buried in the old Blue family cemetery on his property where his wife and other kin and Thomas J. Young were buried. Daniel Blue's burial is the last one that we know of in the Blue family cemetery. Tom Young and many of his children are buried in the Ellzey Cemetery as are many of the Blue family.

By the 1960's the land where the Blue family cemetery was located had changed hands several times. It was owned by Dewitt Wright. Mr. Wright was commonly known to be a bootlegger, and he was also known for having a bad temper. At some time while he owned the land, he decided for unknown reasons to take his bulldozer, crush the monuments (what few there were), scrape the cemetery flat, and push all the fragments and a little of the topsoil into the edge of the nearby woods. There was some muttering in the community when people heard about this, but nothing was ever done about it. Mr. Wright has long since died and the land has passed to other owners.

 In the late 1990s, Robert Young (great-great grandson of both Thomas J. Young and Daniel Blue) and Frances Blue Cox (great granddaughter of Daniel Blue) got permission from the current owner of the land to search in the wooded area where Mr. Wright had pushed the crushed monuments and topsoil. They were able to recover fragments of the monuments of Daniel Blue and his wife Mary Blue. The other few fragments they found were too small to identify.

Daniel and Mary Blue's monuments have been reassembled as much as possible and have been placed in the Ellzey Cemetery. They lie flat between the monuments of Sallie Blue Young and Tom Young, their daughter and son-in-law.

I have been to the location of the old cemetery. It is behind a modern home and is now a flat grassy area. The graves are still there but there is nothing to show where exactly each one is.

All I can do is pay a silent tribute to my ancestors still lying there and hope that they know they aren't forgotten.

My name is Heather. I'm 26 years old and live in Idaho. I personally knew two of my great grandmothers. After I wrote my first pedigree chart in my journal at age 13, my fascination with genealogy became a lifelong passion. I consider myself an advanced non-professional. I'm a paperless genealogist and do the vast majority of my research online. I have also never joined a historical or genealogical society. I have nothing against them, but have never come across one that was interested in the communities I research and which also has much to offer as I have to give. I've had recent experiences with societies, both good and bad, which indicate that these societies may struggle to find their place in the future. Here are some things I'm thinking about:

Updates. If a genealogical society is still spending money sending paper newsletters through the mail, their organization is trapped in 1998. And if their website hasn't had any sort of major overhaul since then, I rest my case. Social media, blogging, and email will take the place of paper newsletters in the societies of the future.

Collaboration.   Preserving local history requires inter-action between organizations of all kinds. The society of the future knows how to be the bridge between these organizations and also knows the need to look beyond immediate geography. Many historical records are no longer kept in the places that created them and some of the most passionate genealogists do not live anywhere near the places they study.

Meetings are Old News. Gone will be days where the only way to attend meetings of these organizations is to actually *live* nearby. Future societies will accept that the newest generation has become one of the most transient in history. The thought of a society meeting that cannot be attended remotely will be incomprehensible, because hardly any of us live in the communities where our ancestors lived.

Generational Culture Clash. Societies of the future will understand that reaching my generation is crucial to their survival. Our voices need to be heard, and have an impact.

Pay Walls. Inclusiveness will fail most often for societies of the future because of pay walls which are making their way into the genealogical society community.   My generation hates pay walls. We hate them because they exclude people from information and services based on their ability to pay. That doesn't mean our generation isn't willing to part with money, but we prefer to donate and give based on the value of what we feel we've received.

Responses to this were mixed. Here's an extract from one of those: "I am a very digital and up to date person of an older generation than yours and I continue to belong to both local and distant genealogy societies. I don't disagree with most of what you've said but I would be hesitant to call you an advanced researcher. Yes, we are very fortunate to have millions of records online. However, going to a courthouse, historical society or library to look for records is a joyful part of searching for our ancestors. I hope you understand that most records are not online and millions will never be…."

A FAMILY PHOTO WITH NOTHING WRITTEN ON THE BACK IS WORTHLESS

by Jim Young

The title is a strong statement, but it is often true. Many of the photos I have now, however, are digital images. So how do you write on the "back" of a digital image? Impossible, you say? Not at all. It is actually relatively easy to do that.

Metadata is a fancy term that means "data about data". Many digital images contain hidden metadata, data about the image itself. Most modern digital cameras, including many cell phone cameras, automatically add information such as size, date taken, etc., to the metadata that is stored along with the photo. Whether or not the camera added data, the metadata capability is still there.

A feature of metadata that is especially useful to us who study and treasure family history is that we can edit and add information to the metadata on a photograph. This article is a brief introduction to how you can do that with your own digital images.
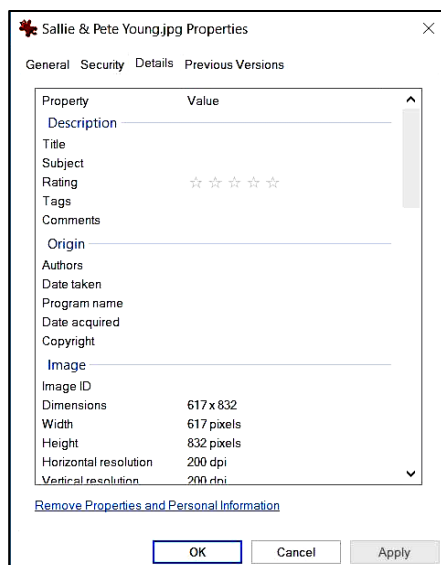
Let's take an example. Here is a photo that I have. It shows a woman holding a baby. Now I know that the woman is my grandmother Young and that the baby is my uncle Pete. I don't have the original photo, just the digital image that my cousin sent me after scanning the original. I want to annotate this photo with what I know about it.

The computers I have use the Windows operating system. I'm sure that the Apple computers have similar capabilities for viewing and editing metadata on photographs, but I don't know how they do it.

On my computer, I display the folder that includes the file containing the photo I'm interested in and then I right-click on the name of the file (this brings up a menu which has "properties" at the bottom.) I then left-click on "properties" (this brings up another menu). Near the top of this new menu is a submenu named "details". I left-click on "details" and this brings up the metadata menu. I can then scroll down and see all the various categories of information that can be included in the metadata. Most of these categories will probably be blank. Some may contain information about the size of the image, etc.

The neat thing is that you can edit these categories! The first group of the data is the "Description" group and this is where I put in the information that I'd like to write on the "back" of the photo. Left click on any of these areas to highlight it and then type in your information. Be sure to click "OK" at the bottom be-fore you leave the menu in order to save your changes to the metadata.

Here is what I added to the metadata in the "Title", "Subject", and "Comments" fields. Note that if I click on "Subject" I'll see the entire entry that I made.

Not only is this information embedded with your copy of the photo, if you send a copy to anyone else, the data will go along with it.
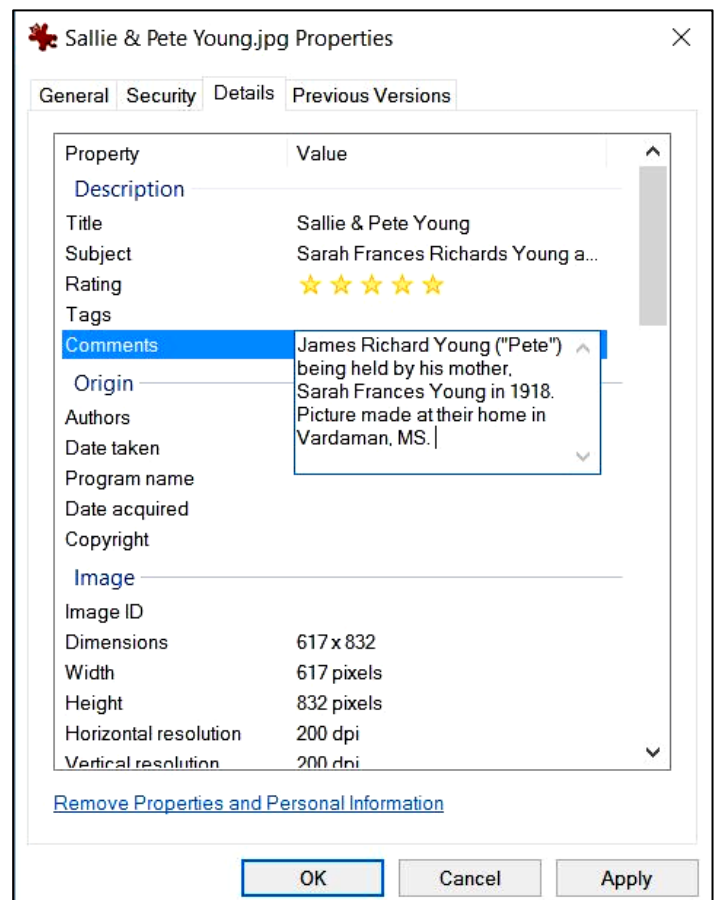
You can find specialized metadata editors that can do other things, but the tool that comes with Windows gives me the power to write on the "back" of my digital photos and that's all I need.

A low-tech way I also use to label digital photos is described by Amy Johnson Crow in her column at: http://goo.gl/Hkw1MW

It involves using your scanner to simultaneously scan the photo and a written label that identifies it.

MINUTES OF THE 9 JULY 2016 GSOC MEETING

Genealogical Society of Okaloosa County (GSOC)
Heritage Museum, Valparaiso, FL, 9 July 2016

President Sue Basch called the July meeting to order and welcomed members and visitors. She introduced our meeting guest speaker, Dr Brian Rucker, a faculty associate of the University of West Florida. Dr Rucker would be speaking about West Florida's Unionists during the Civil War.

OLD BUSINESS

Last month, our speaker was Margaret Nichols who spoke about how she arrived to NW Florida and how she traced her Lane family roots to Jamestown, VA.

Jim Young gave a presentation yesterday at the Heritage Museum and spoke about the first hundred years of Okaloosa County. It was very well attended and several members of GSOC were in attendance.

Minutes: The GSOC meeting minutes from June had no corrections and were approved.

NEW BUSINESS

Two door prizes were awarded: Val Moreland and Jon & Kathie Sheperd donated a jar of delicious home made jam and a container of chocolates, respectively.

Lunch was to be held at Ruby Tuesday.

Two members were out sick: Charlene Grafton and Hilma Jenus.

The next GSOC Board meeting will meet on 16 July at 10:00, at the ValP Senior Center.

REPORTS:

1st Vice President, Charlene Grafton: Not Present. However, Sue reminded everyone that the August meeting would be at the Destin Library, 150 Sibert Ave, Destin, FL 32541. The speaker will be Kathy Marler Blue, speaking on Early Destin History and the Marler Family Presence. This time of year, traffic can be rough but if you come through Fort Walton Beach and take the Destin bridge, the library is just a couple of blocks to the left. We will send out a notice and map separately.

2nd Vice President, Jon Sheperd: Asked if everyone received his email with the member and family surname list. If not, please contact him at shepfam@cox.net. Jon announced that Dave Gordon joined as a membe.

Treasurer, Phil Hoge: GSOC has $2,378 in the bank. The next big upcoming expense will be for the publication and mailing of the Journal.

Recording Secretary: Kathie Sheperd: The last GSOC newsletter on file at the Valparaiso Community Library is dated 14 October, 2015. Can someone look into this?

Corresponding Secretary, Val Moreland: Nothing sufficient to report.

Publicity, Val Moreland: She is still trying to get our meeting announcements in the local paper.

Newsletter, Jim Young: Copies of all the newsletters since 2010 are now on the website.

Genealogist, Margaret Harris: No recent inquieries. The FWB Family History Center is closed until July 20th. Scrapbooks will go in August to Dean Debolt, where they will be scanned for free. Margaret announced that "World Indexing Day" will be July 15-17. For more information, go to familysearch.org to volunteer. They especially need bilingual people (as well as English speaking people) to help index. Ancestry.com also has indexing projects.

Journal, Kathie Sheperd. Kathie gave an update on the status of the 2016 Journal, This year's theme is the Vietnam war. We still need articles from the general membership for the Journal! Articles can be military related events or NW Florida events during the time period of 1960 to 1975/6. All articles need to be received before the 30th of August, (the sooner, the better as Kathie will be out of town for 4 weeks prior to publication in October -- Thank you!). Kathie read the list of articles currently under development.

GUEST SPEAKER, DR BRIAN RUCKER

Dr Rucker warmly greeted the GSCOC members in attendance and asked if anyone had seen the recently released movie, "The Free State of Jones" which is based on a true incident during the Civil War in which a Confederate soldier led an armed rebellion against the Confederacy in Jones County, Mississippi. He went on to say this was not the only rebellion against the Confederacy. There were 5 other places: West Virginia, Scott County Tennessee, Winston County, Alabama and Searcy County, Arkansas. One of the most Unionist areas in the Civil War was the Florida Panhandle.

When Florida succeeded from the Union in 1861, it was the decision of the Tallahassee legislature led by the Florida governor. The majority of citizens in northwest Florida, which was a less populated area of Florida, did not support the succession. Northwest Florida businesses were not heavily invested in the cotton industry and did not have slaves. Instead of cotton, the industry was primarily brick, lumber, etc. The Whig party was strong in NW Florida.

To go back in history, Abraham Lincoln was not on the southern ballots in 1860. The major political parties were the Whigs, the Democrats, and a 3rd party, the Constitution Union Party. The Constitution Union Party were moderates who supported the Union and they nominated John Bell from Tennessee for President. Escambia, Santa Rosa and Walton counties overwhelmingly supported Bell. There were many Unionist meetings and the majority of the NW Florida (male) citizens (8000 to 5000 votes) said "NO" to succession. When Lincoln was elected President of the United States, the South went into a crisis of fear and the southern media outlets stired them up. The voices of reason in the Panhandle were shot down. Not all Florida representatives signed the Florida Articles of Succession; 2 men from Walton County refused.

In the spring of 1862, Florida had 6000 confederate troops around the Pensacola Bay. U.S. Grant surprised and launched an attack going deep into the Tennessee river and into Alabama and Mississippi. The Confederacy was shocked and pulled out their troops to fight in Shiloh. When they pulled out, the Confederate's "Scorched Earth Policy" went into effect. In March 1862, the CSA troops burned all the lumber mills, small cotton farms, brick manufacturing, and other manufacturing businesses in the Florida Panhandle. They rationalized this was needed to prevent the Union army from acquiring any services or goods from the businesses in the Panhandle. Of course, leaving nothing for the North to use also meant they destroyed all the livelyhood of the residents in the area. The destruction was so callous that residents could not rescue their own possessions.

The action left a bad taste in the Panhandle and Confederate taxes made it worse because they were outrageously high. People developed even more Unionist sympathies. Prior to the war, Pensacola had a population of 3000. After the Confederate's "Scorched Earth" implementation, Pensacola became nearly a ghost town; only 40 people stayed. The Confederacy also used impressment and conscription of citizens to robust the army. Soon, soldiers started to desert the Confederacy. They cared more for their families than the southern cause. Union sympathizers developed a great animosity with Rebel sympathizers as the war progressed and violent outbreaks grew. The head of one of the first families here, Jesse Rogers, was a drover who sold to both the Union and Confederacy. He was a pure businessman.

By the spring of 1863, there were over 1000 deserters and sympathizers in Pensacola. The Union army which had taken up residence there, had to figure out what do do with them. Refugees and deserters swarmed in Walton County. Rebel sympathizers and the CSA shot them as traitors. Captain Leonard Destin was put under house arrest. In December 1863, the Union Army created the 1st Florida Cavalry US and eventually 500 men mustered in. This unit was 6 companies strong but had no horses and no weapons. But they had a bargaining chip: the men were familiar with the NW Florida area and the

areas in Alabama and Georgia. They asked for horses and arms. Their request went up the Union chain of command and surprisingly, was granted. These Unionist received arms, sabers and horses and they participated in raids. They were a benefit to the Union.

When the war ended in 1865, the Unionists had to go home and live along their other southern neighbors. There was much resentment, and a lot of lawlessness and bushwhacking ensued. The "bad blood" continued throughout the 1870s.

Dr Rucker concluded his presentation by saying that a check of the Florida Panhandle cemeteries will show many Unionist soldier graves, reading: "1FL CAV US". Now we will understand that these are the graves of the Unionists of the Civil War. There are few books about Southern Unionists in the Civil War. He has a good reference book called "The Civil War in the Panhandle" and it has eye witness accounts with descriptions not in official records. He said some of the recollections were "iffy" and some had great detail.

Conclusion: After the presentation, the meeting was turned back to President Sue Basch who reminded members that the August meeting would be at the Destin library.

Kathie Sheperd
Recording Secretary
Genealogical Society of Okaloosa County

Our August program will be "Early Destin History and The Marler Family Presence" by Kathy Blue

Kathy Marler Blue is the Associate Director of the Destin Fishing and History Museum. She will discuss early Destin history and the Marler family presence in Destin and the contributions that family made to the development of Destin and the fishing industry that grew up there.

This meeting will be held at the Destin Library, 150 Siebert Avenue, Destin.

"Whatever you know, whatever you learn – Pass it On!"

Genealogical Society of Okaloosa County (GSOC)
P.O. Box 1175
Fort Walton Beach, FL 32549-1175