



# THE GSOC NEWSLETTER

THE GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF OKALOOSA COUNTY,  
FLORIDA  
SEPTEMBER 15, 2017

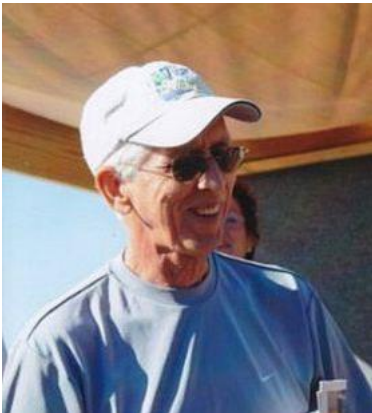
## Contents of This Issue

September 2017 GSOC Program	1
October 2017 GSOC Program	1
Disasters & Genealogy	2
Where Did They Go?	2
Minutes of Aug 26, 2017 Meeting	4
Odds & Ends	7
Events & Info of GSOC Interest	8
Membership Application	9

## Next scheduled GSOC meeting:

**September 23, 10:30 AM**

Fort Walton Beach Library  
185 Miracle Strip Parkway SE  
Fort Walton Beach, FL



## September's Feature Speaker is Mr. Thomas Sajwaj

Presenting:

"Fact and Fancy in Oral Family History:  
A Psychological Perspective."

In October of last year Mr. Sajwaj was GSOC's quest speaker who gave a very informative presentation about ethics in genealogy.

Dr. Thomas Sajwaj is a Ph.D. psychologist, now retired, was active in clinical research with children and their behavioral therapies, and directed an urban mental health center in Nashville.

Dr. Sajwaj has been involved with genealogy since 1999. He taught Beginning Genealogy for three years, published two articles in genealogical journals, and completed a biography of one of his great-grandfathers.

## *October's Feature Speaker will be:*

*Mr. Bruce Cosson*

*Walton County Heritage Center*

*board of director's member*

# Disasters and Genealogy:

Editor's Comment: Jerry Rush's presentation last month mentioned how a disaster may have affected his family research. He mentioned a web site that provides excellent information: <http://www.gendisasters.com>. Another source is <https://www.cyndislist.com/disasters/>.

The following is from another web site that may help in your research. Article is edited. For full article see the web site: <https://lialouisecooke.com/2017/04/researching-disasters/>

## 5 Tips for Researching Disasters in Your Family History

- 1. Start with Google.** The world's leading search engine, [Google.com](http://www.google.com) can lead to rich resources you may never find in a local library or archive.
- 2. Next, we go to [Google Books](http://www.google.com/books),** where Google takes you deeper and more specifically into historical books and *Free Google eBooks*
- 3. Keep checking back!** New things come online every moment of every day. But of course, it's impossible to rerun the same searches every day looking for new and updated material. The answer: set up a Google Alert for your search query. That way Google will do the searching for you, and you will receive an email only when Google finds new and updated items that match your search terms. Read my article on [How to Set-up Google Alerts](#) for step by step instructions on how to set up your own Google Alerts. Then read [How to get the Most out of your Google Alerts for Genealogy](#).
- 4. Search [YouTube](http://www.youtube.com) separately.** YouTube has video clips of disasters and short video documentaries.
- 5. Explore [Gendisasters.com](http://www.gendisasters.com).** This site compiles information on all kinds of tragedies from the past: tornadoes, fires, floods, and buggy-related disasters are just a small sampling of what they cover. You can search by type of disaster, but if you're not quite sure how it might be filed (like was it a drowning or a ship disaster?), then search by year or place.

**NOTE:** Some of the disasters you are researching may have a website dedicated to it.

## WHERE DID THEY GO?

Submitted by: [Jim Young](#)



*"People of my generation, and perhaps even some of you a bit younger, can remember the days before indoor plumbing. One of the most necessary things for families in those days, and now too, is a place to "go" to eliminate bodily waste (to put it nicely).*

*In Mother's young days, her family, and others of her generation I've talked to who also lived on farms or in rural areas, "went" to a designated area off in the edge of the nearby woods. I don't know the details of how they cleaned*

*themselves. There was no such thing as toilet paper, but I've heard some mention that a supply of corn cobs was kept soaking in a little bucket of water and one or two of these were taken on the little journey. I suppose catalogs were also available, although my grandparents used the paper from the catalogs to cushion the eggs that they sold in town.*

*I was born in a town, Vardaman, and we had an outdoor "toilet" behind the house as did most people there. There were two different types of these. Ours was one of the more modern types that the depression-era Works Project Administration (WPA) had helped folks build. It had a concrete floor with an opening built up so that you could sit and do what you needed to do and the waste would drop down into a pit beneath. The other, simpler, type also had a built-up seat but the waste dropped directly on the ground. There was no pit.*

*The pit type that I remember were all designed for one user at a time, but the drawing here shows a two-seater and I remember some of the no-pit types with two openings/seats.*

*Some of the no-pit type were designed to be dragged to a new location periodically while others of this type were open to the outside at the lower back and the owner would periodically shovel the accumulated waste into something and haul it away. Some had a bucket of lime inside with a little scoop and you were expected to throw a little lime on what you had just deposited.*

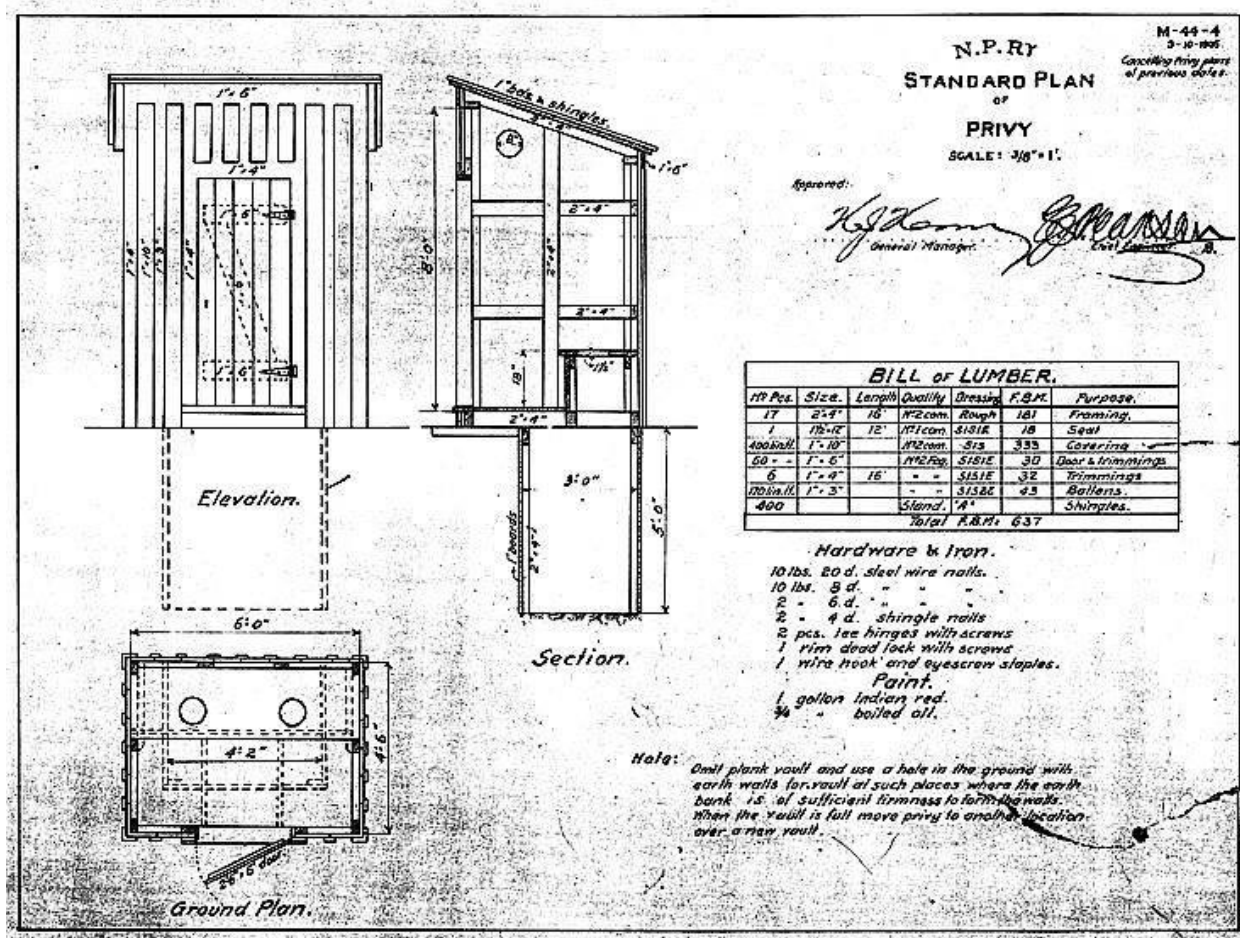
*The danger of the pit type was that the pit usually had water in it. During rainy times, the water level would get quite high. As you released your waste, you often had to quickly move off the hole so that the resulting splash didn't hit you.*

*Eventually, the pit would fill. If possible, the structure was moved to a new pit dug nearby and the old one was filled in, often with household waste like tin cans. It was hard to move the WPA designs with the heavy concrete floors.*

*Most men didn't bother to go to the outhouse if they just had to pee. There were plenty of places where one could duck out of sight for that.*

*The proverbial Sears Roebuck catalog was usually found in both types of outhouses. There were two kinds of paper in the catalog: regular paper and the slick paper with color pictures. The regular paper was preferred since the slick paper had to be crumpled and crumpled before it would effectively clean anything. My grandmother Morgan kept their outhouse spotlessly clean – no spider dared try to build a web in her outhouse. It was swept daily and a wire clothes hanger had been modified to hold the catalog at a convenient spot.*

*Outhouses were not convenient. Unless you REALLY had to go, you didn't want to dash out in the rain. You certainly didn't want to have to go at night, even if there was a flashlight by the back door you could take or, in earlier times, a kerosene lantern. The Lord only knew what deadly snakes lay in wait on the path to the outhouse at night or, God forbid, in the outhouse itself. Nighttime is when the chamber pot came in handy for liquid waste, and (very rarely) for solid waste."*



#### Editors Note:



The moon that is often found on the outhouse door stands for the ancient sign- luna- or womanhood. When the outhouse was first invented people needed these signs to discern which was the men's or women's bathroom-for most people couldn't read. Soon, however, the men's became rundown or was very unkempt and not maintained. So everybody just used the women's bathroom, and the men's sunburst or sol sign was forgotten. The moon sign was kept and is also used as a vent.

## MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 26, 2017 MEETING

#### OPENING:

Jon Shepard, President of the Genealogical Society of Okaloosa County, welcomed members and two visitors to the August meeting.

#### OLD BUSINESS:

Minutes: There were no suggested changes to the meeting minutes from the July meeting. The minutes were subsequently approved by acclamation

Journal: The Journal is coming along very well. A draft has been done and it is currently being reviewed. Jon thanked editor Cindy Barber and all the article contributors for their great efforts.

Somerby Retirement Center: Jerry Rush and Margaret Harris did a genealogy presentation at the Somerby Retirement Center in Santa Rosa Beach on Aug 9<sup>th</sup>. About 15 people heard the presentation and there was good feedback from the residents. Thanks to Jerry and Margaret for doing this presentation on behalf of the GSOC. This is the kind of community promotion we need to do to help others and to spread the news about our organization.

Family History Fair: As covered in the last meeting, the local LDS Church is sponsoring a “Family History Fair” on March 3, 2018 at the FWB LDS church building. John Ward, who was at our last meeting and one of the organizers of the fair, informed Jon that most of the topics and speakers are lined up – to include Margaret Harris, Cindy Barber and Jon. There may be other ways the GSOC can help. Margaret Harris suggested we develop a GSOC display board. Jon will keep us informed.

Fundamentals of Genealogy Book: At our last meeting we passed around a book entitled Fundamentals of Genealogy: The Most Helpful Tools You’ve Never Used. It was a complimentary copy from the author. Many expressed an interest in getting a copy so we had a sign-up list and also sent out an email to members for those that wanted a copy at a reduced price of \$20. Phil Hoge served as our point of contact and 23 copies were ordered. They arrived, so if you ordered a copy, see Phil with your payment.

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

Door Prize: Frances Hoge was selected as the door prize recipient and received a jar of Val Moreland’s homemade jam. Thank you Val!

Lunch at local restaurant: After the meeting, the group went to AJs on the Bayou, Mariner Shopping Center in Fort Walton Beach. This was another good restaurant for us to visit.

Newsletter: The August edition of the GSOC Newsletter was sent out August 15<sup>th</sup>. It was a very informative edition and Jon thanked Ed Crosby for his efforts.

#### **REPORTS:**

1st VP and Genealogist Margaret Harris: August 31<sup>st</sup> is the last day microfilm can be ordered from the Family Search site. The only other option now is to go to Salt Lake City or wait 2-3 years for on-line digitization. We may see the catalogue at the FamilySearch website. When you click on it, it will change to read if digitized. Our September speaker will be Dr Tom Sajwaj who will present “Fact and Fancy in Family History: A Psychological Perspective.” The Center for Lifelong Learning will offer 3 genealogy classes. They are all on Fridays at the FWB college campus.

2nd VP Jerry Rush: We have 67 paid members.

Treasurer Phil Hoge: There is roughly \$1900 in the GSOC account. *(Note: Phil’s GSOC treasury records are packed away due to flooding, damage, and repair work in his home (broken pipe)).*

Recording Secretary Kathie Sheperd: Nothing sufficient to report

Corresponding Secretary Val Moreland: Val sent in GSOC program information to all libraries, museums and the newspapers two weeks in advance of the meeting. The Daily News did not publish anything.

Newsletter, Ed Crosby: Nothing sufficient to report

Webmaster, Jim Young: Nothing sufficient to report

**GUEST SPEAKER:**

With no other new business, Jon turned the meeting over to 1<sup>st</sup> VP Margaret Harris who introduced our own Jerry Rush as the guest speaker. Margaret introduced Jerry as a fun person who spent 22 years in federal service. He retired from the Air Force in 1979 and has a Master of Science degree in counseling and psychology. He is a widower with 3 sons and 4 grandchildren and has about 30 years of genealogy experience. With this, Jerry has worked on 45 families and has 22 family trees on line. He calls himself a “genealogy promoter” and speaker and his favorite aspect is to collect family stories.

Jerry began by telling the audience that in ten years they would probably be able to order their family tree from Amazon because of all the family trees that have been completed and the advent of computer technology. Jerry quoted one of Garrison Keillor’s sayings: *“I have so many questions and no one left to ask!”* And Jerry went on to talk about the importance of family stories. *Genealogy has high points and low points.* After much research, Jerry learned that Benjamin Rush, one of America’s founding fathers and a signer of the Declaration of Independence, is one of his ancestors. He traced the entire family line trying to connect the dots and found evidence that Benjamin Rush was related to his family as 3<sup>rd</sup> cousins. Sometimes, you aren’t as successful with your research, but it is always a learning experience. Since Jerry has made significant progress on his family line, he enjoys assisting others. Consequently, Jerry has met and made friends with all kinds of people. He met a lady through his volunteer work at the regional airport USO lounge. She was one of the police personnel assigned and he helped her trace a family line with Hungarian ancestry.

On another family line, he helped trace the steps of a Jewish divorcee and her son who escaped out of Galatia. Their homeland was near the Belzec Concentration Death Camp, built by the Nazis in southeastern Poland. He found good Jewish heritage sites, and the Stephen P. Morse website has very good immigration data and records. It also has a great converter for census enumeration districts.

Charles “Buster” Donnell was a WWII veteran born in 1921. Donnell joined the National Guard in 1937 and was assigned to Camp Blanding, Florida on 7 Dec 1941. Pearl Harbor was attacked and Donnell very soon found himself in the Solomon Islands Campaign and later was one of Merrill’s Marauders in Burma. Through talking with Donnell, Jerry learned that he had never been awarded military medals for his service. Jerry traced Donnell’s family history and worked with the local Purple Heart Association to help Donnell receive the military medals due for his participation in WWII. Congressman Jeff Miller presented Donnell with the Bronze Star and Purple Heart medals.

Jerry helps people through difficult “brick walls” in their family history. For one of those, he helped a 32-year-old woman who was raised in New York, find her birth father. Her mother had no idea who the father was and Jerry helped this young lady connect with her birth father, and another man who she grew very fond of thinking he might have been her birth father.

Another friend asked Jerry to help him learn what his father did in World War II. All he had was a picture of his dad with a B-25 airplane and its aircrew. Jerry could just make out the aircraft’s paint job which said, “Spirit of Sparks”. From that, Jerry found out the airplane was part of the 428<sup>th</sup> Bomb Squadron in Corsica and was able to find the unit’s history through Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama.

Before he closed, Jerry repeated his favorite part of genealogy: learning the family stories. They are all part of the fabric of American history and it’s these stories which make our country great.



### CLOSING FROM JON:

*"Thanks for coming, especially to Jerry and our visitors. The next meeting will be at the Fort Walton Beach Library on Sep 23rd at 10:30 am when another GSOC member, Tom Sajwaj will give a presentation on "Fact and Fancy in Family History: A Psychological Perspective"."*

The meeting adjourned.

*Kathie Sheperd,*

Recording Secretary, Genealogy Society of Okaloosa County

## ODDS AND ENDS

### Hilarious Observations about Genealogists

- Genealogists don't get Alzheimer's, they just lose their census.
- Eventually, all genealogists come to their census.
- Housework avoidance strategy: Genealogy!
- There's a fine line between a packrat and a serious family historian.
- A home with everything in its place, and a place for everything, means you're not well suited for genealogy!
- Can't find enough ancestors? No problem. Let me adopt you. I've got more than enough to share.
- Does your family coat of arms have too many or too few sleeves?
- Taking your children to meet family at a reunion is often an effective form of birth control.
- Genealogical pay dirt is discovering the ancestor who was the family packrat!
- Heredity might be better spelled as heir-edity.
- I can't find my ancestors, so they must have been in a witness protection program!
- Motivated genealogists scan once—and then share across the Internet!
- A genealogist's bad heir day is when you can't find what you are looking for.
- A genealogist's filing system usually incorporates the floor.

### *GENEALOGY*

*Genealogy begins as an interest,  
Becomes a hobby;  
Continues as an avocation,  
Takes over as an obsession,  
And in its last stages,  
Is an incurable disease.  
--Author Unknown*

# Events and Information of GSOC Interest

## GSOC INFORMATION

### Officers for 2017

President, Jon Sheperd  
1st Vice President (Programs), Margaret Harris  
2nd Vice President (Membership), Jerry Rush  
Treasurer, Phil Hoge  
Recording Secretary, Kathie Sheperd  
Corresponding Secretary, Val Moreland

Immediate Past President, Sue Basch  
Journal Editor, TBD  
Genealogist, Margaret Harris  
Publicity Chairperson, Val Moreland  
Newsletter Editor, Edward Crosby  
Webmaster, Jim Young

### Addresses

P.O. Box 1175, Fort Walton Beach, FL 32549-1175  
Email: [gsocokaloosa@yahoo.com](mailto:gsocokaloosa@yahoo.com)  
Newsletter Editor: [edcrosby@valp.net](mailto:edcrosby@valp.net)

### Membership

Annual membership dues are \$24 for an individual and \$35 for an individual and spouse at the same address.

You can obtain a revised membership form from our web site or use the copy that is included in this newsletter.

### The Newsletter

The GSOC Newsletter is now published on or before the third Friday of each month.

Suggestions for articles are welcome. The editor, Edward Crosby, can be contacted by phone at (850) 678-5423 or by email at [edcrosby@valp.net](mailto:edcrosby@valp.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 2016 issue, was published and distributed in October 2016 and has been mailed to all GSOC members.** The theme of the 2016 issue is the Vietnam War. If you are a member and didn't receive your copy, please contact us.

## 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.

## GSOC on Facebook

<http://www.facebook.com/okaloosagsoc>

The shortcut address to the official **page** of the Genealogical Society of Okaloosa County is shown above; or you can go to your Facebook account and search for **Genealogical Society of Okaloosa County**. This page will provide the latest information about our future meetings and other news that is important to members or prospective members.

There is also a Facebook **group**. It is useful for exchanging information about your research and getting help with questions you may have about the Society or resources available to you. You can find it by going to your Facebook account and searching for **Friends of the GSOC**.

## The GSOC Books

The five GSOC cemetery, marriage, and funeral books are all out of print, but are now available on the GSOC web site for reading on line and for downloading as searchable PDF files at no charge.

**Please note that all these GSOC books are copyrighted by The Genealogical Society of Okaloosa County and may be only used for personal use. Reproduction is prohibited without the permission of the GSOC.**

Go to the web site, scroll down and click on the **GSOC Books** link, click on the name of the book to access, and read it on line. Save it to your computer to download it.

Because of the size of these books, it may take them a few minutes to display (depending on the speed of your internet connection.)







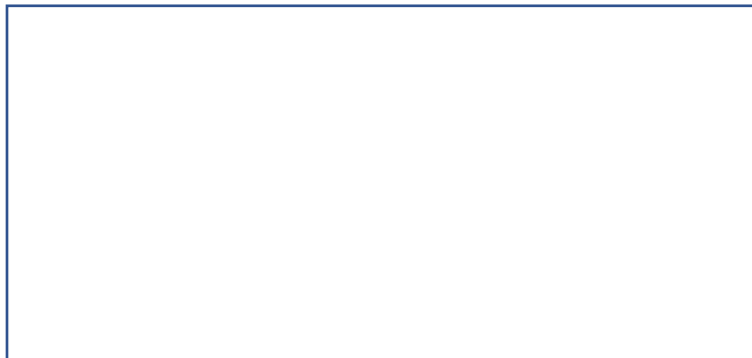
GENEALOGICAL  
SOCIETY OF  
OKALOOSA  
COUNTY

Our October 28, meeting  
will begin at 10:30 am

**Presented by:** Bruce Cosson a member of the  
board of directors for the Heritage Center.

**Fort Walton Beach Library  
185 Miracle Strip Parkway SE,  
Fort Walton Beach, Florida 32548**

*"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