

# Volusia County Genealogical Society

N E W S L E T T E R

FEBRUARY 2011

## 35TH YEAR SERVING DAYTONA BEACH GENEALOGY

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**Next VCGS Meeting** will be **February 17, 2011**  
**6pm Auditorium City Island Library Daytona**

Kathleen Jones Stickney will be speaking on "Researching Your  
Confederate Soldier"

### January Meeting From the Minutes of the Society *by Kitty Consalvo*

#### Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance:

Michael Williams, President, called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. He asked that everyone stand for the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag. There were 36 members present and 8 guests.

**Treasurer's Report:** The balance as of January 20, 2011 is \$1,587.75.

#### Dues and Refreshment Assist:

Ruth Patrignani reminded members that dues need to be paid. She also asked that members contact Nancy Wills, Refreshment Chair, to offer to bring refreshments to one of our meetings.

#### Program:

Michael introduced William Cummins who has written several books who would discuss interview techniques he uses and teaches. Mr. Cummins, while very young, was a performer known as Smiling Bill and His Horse King. He then studied to become an engineer and was Chief Engineer at Lake County for 30 years. His next career move was as an instructor at Embry Riddle. He is now a writer, publisher and instructor on writing and interviewing techniques. His first book was "Life Is Sexually Transmitted" and the second was "The Forgotten" which contained actual interviews and letters of Korean War Veterans. He originally started the veterans' project by asking them how they would feel knowing their stories would be published in a book. He then read some of the responses he had received. He started out by asking them 6 questions. In order to interview an individual ask open-ended rather than "yes" and "no" questions, i.e. "what scared you the most?" as compared to "were you scared?"

Mr. Cummins recommended that if you're going to publish you should go through a professional editor. He then opened the floor to questions. One question was how to make the person feel comfortable. Mr. Cummins responded that you take one of their answers and go in sequence from there. Let them lead you and give them plenty of time to organize their thoughts.

#### Adjournment of Meeting:

On motion by Ruth Patrignani and second by Kitty Consalvo, the meeting was adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

**VCGS Society Calendar**

**Thursday February 17 5pm Board meeting**

6pm Program Speaker will be Kathleen Jones Stickney whose topic will be "Researching Your Confederate Soldier"

**Volusia -Flagler Sister Societies**

**HGS Ormond Library Feb 10 at 1:30 pm**

**R&B DeLand Library, January 20 .**

**GSSVC NSB Library, January 14**

**GSFC Palm Coast Flagler Library - January 24**  
5:30pm Program TBA

**\$\$ Report by Treasurer Tom Peake \$\$**

January Balance \$1,587.75,

Book Fund now has \$491.00,

**Upcoming Genealogy Seminars**

**1st Annual North Florida Genealogy Conference,—Saturday, March 12, 2011, Jacksonville Public Library, Jacksonville, FL.** General Thomas Lee Jessee is the Keynote Speaker. Presenters include Denice Mortorff, Lisa Thurman, Miles Meyer, Lori Miranda, C Ann Staley, Karen Rhodes, Darrius Gray, Margaret B Young, Elmer Spear, Michael Clinansmith, Gaylor Findley, Beth Wilson, and Nephi Watt. Pre-Event Registration is \$10.00 At the Door Registration is \$20.00 Box Lunch is \$5.00.

**"Who Do You Think You Are",** TV series will return on Friday, February 4, 2011 at 8 pm on NBC. Some of the people being highlighted are Ashley Judd, Gwyneth Paltrow, Kim Cattrall, Lionel Ritchie, Tim McGraw, Rosie O'Donnell, Steve Buscemi and Vanessa Williams.

**Seminar—January 22, 2011**

The seminar at the Halifax Plantation Club was very well attended. Ten members of our Society were there and enjoyed the day. The luncheon was good and the speaker Apryl Cox was fantastic. She stated you need to think creatively about difficult research problems. Consider why you are at a roadblock. Some potential reasons are standard assumptions are being made by the researcher, information relied upon to create a research plan is incorrect, something occurred in the ancestor's life that the researcher is not expecting or necessary records are incomplete, non-existent or unavailable.

Some of the strategies for finding elusive ancestors are conducting a home survey (your home plus those of distant cousins), check published family trees and other compiled sources (for clues only) and examine major record types that are pertinent for the area and time period.

Building a case when direct evidence is missing is often difficult is not impossible. Family relationships may still be established with varying degrees of certainty by using multiple pieces of indirect evidence from multiple sources. Just as an attorney must be prepared to defend a case in a court of law, a genealogist prepares to support his/her genealogical conclusions. The conclusions must be based on reliable evidence which has been correctly interpreted and properly analyzed.

## History of St Valentine's Day

The history of Valentine's Day — and its patron saint — is shrouded in mystery. But we do know that February has long been a month of romance. St. Valentine's Day, as we know it today, contains vestiges of both Christian and ancient Roman tradition. So, who was Saint Valentine and how did he become associated with this ancient rite? Today, the Catholic Church recognizes at least three different saints named Valentine or Valentinus, all of whom were martyred.

One legend contends that Valentine was a priest who served during the third century in [Rome](#). When Emperor Claudius II decided that single men made better soldiers than those with wives and families, he outlawed marriage for young men — his crop of potential soldiers. Valentine, realizing the injustice of the decree, defied Claudius and continued to perform marriages for young lovers in secret. When Valentine's actions were discovered, Claudius ordered that he be put to death.

Other stories suggest that Valentine may have been killed for attempting to help Christians escape harsh Roman prisons where they were often beaten and tortured.

According to one legend, Valentine actually sent the first "valentine" greeting himself. While in prison, it is believed that Valentine fell in love with a young girl — who may have been his jailor's daughter — who visited him during his confinement. Before his death, it is alleged that he wrote her a letter, which he signed "From your Valentine," an expression that is still in use today. Although the truth behind the Valentine legends is murky, the stories certainly emphasize his appeal as a sympathetic, heroic, and, most importantly, romantic figure. It's no surprise that by the [Middle Ages](#), Valentine was one of the most popular saints in England and [France](#).

While some believe that Valentine's Day is celebrated in the middle of February to commemorate the anniversary of Valentine's death or burial — which probably occurred around 270 A.D. — others claim that the Christian church may have decided to celebrate Valentine's feast day in the middle of February in an effort to "christianize" celebrations of the pagan Lupercalia festival. In [ancient Rome](#), February was the official beginning of spring and was considered a time for purification. Houses were ritually cleansed by sweeping them out and then sprinkling salt and a type of wheat called spelt throughout their interiors. Lupercalia, which began at the ides of February, February 15, was a fertility festival dedicated to Faunus, the Roman god of agriculture, as well as to the Roman founders Romulus and Remus.

To begin the festival, members of the Luperci, an order of Roman priests, would gather at the sacred cave where the infants Romulus and Remus, the founders of Rome, were believed to have been cared for by a she-wolf or lupa. The priests would then sacrifice a goat, for fertility, and a dog, for purification.

The boys then sliced the goat's hide into strips, dipped them in the sacrificial blood and took to the streets, gently slapping both women and fields of crops with the goathide strips. Far from being fearful, Roman women welcomed being touched with the hides because it was believed the strips would make them more fertile in the coming year. Later in the day, according to legend, all the young women in the city would place their names in a big urn. The city's bachelors would then each choose a name out of the urn and become paired for the year with his chosen woman. These matches often ended in marriage. Pope Gelasius declared February 14 St. Valentine's Day around 498 A.D. The Roman "lottery" system for romantic pairing was deemed un-Christian and outlawed. Later, during the Middle Ages, it was commonly believed in France and England that February 14 was the beginning of birds' mating season, which added to the idea that the middle of February — Valentine's Day — should be a day for romance. The oldest known valentine still in existence today was a poem written by Charles, Duke of Orleans to his wife while he was imprisoned in the Tower of London following his capture at the [Battle of Agincourt](#). The greeting, which was written in 1415, is part of the manuscript collection of the British Library in London, England. Several years later, it is believed that King [Henry V](#) hired a writer named John Lydgate to compose a valentine note to Catherine of Valois. (continued on page 4)

**Volusia County Genealogical Society, Inc** Founded 1976, is the oldest Genealogy Society in Volusia County. Meeting City Island Library Daytona Beach, 3rd. Thursday, monthly at 6pm. Sept—June

**Mission:** Encourage Society Members and the community to find their ancestors and connect with the past. Provide enlightening speakers at the monthly meetings on relative topics to aid, assist and better our research. Promote the use of and growth of our genealogy research room, develop our resources and grow the collection in the Genealogy and History Room at City Island Library.

## St Valentine's Day (continued)

In Great Britain, Valentine's Day began to be popularly celebrated around the seventeenth century. By the middle of the eighteenth century, it was common for friends and lovers in all social classes to exchange small tokens of affection or handwritten notes. By the end of the century, printed cards began to replace written letters due to improvements in printing technology. Ready-made cards were an easy way for people to express their emotions in a time when direct expression of one's feelings was discouraged. Cheaper postage rates also contributed to an increase in the popularity of sending Valentine's Day greetings. Americans probably began exchanging hand-made valentines in the early 1700s. In the 1840s, Esther A. Howland began to sell the first mass-produced valentines in America.

According to the Greeting Card Association, an estimated one billion valentine cards are sent each year, making Valentine's Day the second largest card-sending holiday of the year. (An estimated 2.6 billion cards are sent for [Christmas](#).)

Approximately 85 percent of all valentines are purchased by women. In addition to the United States, Valentine's Day is celebrated in Canada, [Mexico](#), the United Kingdom, France, and Australia.

Valentine greetings were popular as far back as the Middle Ages (written Valentine's didn't begin to appear until after 1400), and the oldest known Valentine card is on display at the British Museum. The first commercial Valentine's Day greeting cards produced in the U.S. were created in the 1840s by Esther A. Howland. Howland, known as the Mother of the Valentine, made elaborate creations with real lace, ribbons and colorful pictures known as "scrap

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Have you been watching  
"Who Do You Think You Are?"

If so how do you think it compares to last year's program? How would you like to see it changed? Do you think you will ever be so lucky as to find pictures as Vanessa Williams did?

## Membership Corner

By Ruth Patrignani

A new year is upon us and along with changing time comes new name tags for those that have renewed their membership or for new members. Renewals are due at the beginning of the year so if you don't find a name tag with your name on it, it simply means that you have not renewed your membership. At present we have 33 members. Please remember to sign in at the meeting as we need to keep attendance records. Thank you for your support

## 3 Genealogy Tips

1. To find an elusive ancestor, follow the finances. Buying property, working and paying taxes all produced a paper trail.
2. Use your digital camera to electronically "copy" microfilmed records at the library (ask permission first.)
3. When posting your family tree online, choose settings that hide information about living people in order to respect your relatives privacy.

## Digital Age by Maureen A Taylor

Turn your digital camera into a handy research tool. Camera's bells and whistles let you take great pictures of the grandkids and your favorite vacation spots—but they are also handy for shooting genealogical subject matter such as historical documents, relatives gravestones, ancestral homes, and family heirlooms.

**Gravestones** - Photography offers a way to capture images of gravestones and their inscriptions without damaging the stone. Here are some of the shots you would want to take while there.

- Cemetery entrance
- Whole Cemetery
- Stones of interest, with nearby stones
- The whole gravestones, showing the inscription and carving.
- Close-up of the inscription and carvings
- Creative Shots

**Ancestral Homes** - If your ancestral homes are still standing, consider photographing them as part of your family's story. Get permission from the homeowner before you take a picture. It's polite, you'll avoid arousing suspicion and you might get some of the house history. If no one is home, you can still take the picture, but don't trespass. Some of the shots you might take are:

- The entrance to the street (One that your ancestor would have seen every day)
- The house with neighboring buildings
- The whole house
- As many sides of the house as you can capture
- Interesting architectural details.
- The yard
- Features mentioned in family stories (suck as the tree Grandpa fell out of as a boy)

**Heirlooms** - Documenting your family treasures—such as jewelry, dishes, furniture and cases photographs is a good idea not just for insure coverage but to preserve them for future generations. Combine the photo with a story about the original owner and why the item is important and you've created a family history memento. Some shots you might take are:

- Full view of the heirloom
- Heirloom with a ruler to show size
- All sides of heirloom item
- Close-up of interesting detail, such as carving or painting
- Close-up of manufacturer's marks
- Close-up of damages or other features affecting value.

**Records and Documents** — You can use your camera to capture documents and photographs - even those on microfilm—at the library or at home if you don't have a scanner. First ask the librarian if this type of copying is permitted. Some facilities don't permit photographs. Some of the shots would be:

- Title page of film roll or book
- Full Record (Be sure to get each page)
- Close-up of hard to read areas

**Family and Friends** — Don't forget to include your relatives in your family photo collections. Some of the shots to include are:

- Portraits of individuals
- Group shots of families and multiple generations
- Candid shots of get-togethers