



Irving Genealogical Society

February, 2007

Irving, Texas

Volume 15, Number 2

Officers:

President: Joe Sissom

Vice President: Jeanne Mantooth

Secretary: Norma Childers

Treasurer: Erle Kellogg

Message from the President

There are a number of things demanding the attention of our organization. Foremost among them is membership. GenSocs across the country have been reporting membership losses. Most seem to think that too many are doing their "research" only on the web. We have been dropping 10%-15% annually for several years, and at this moment have only 18 PAID members, which is the same number we had at the same time as last year. We wound up with 38. We will discuss this to some degree during the business meeting Monday.

In the meantime, bring a friend with you Monday.

It has been proposed by the city management to do some remodeling at the library. Under consideration is moving Genealogy & Local History to the 2nd floor where the staff area is now. Details are not available yet, but may I suggest you drop by this space prior to the membership meeting. I can think of several pluses to this arrangement and maybe some minuses. We need your evaluation.

We have several vacancies on our own board, among them membership chair, hospitality chair, newsletter editor, and secretary. Beat a path to my door with your excitement over fulfilling one of these slots.

Don't forget that dues for 2007 are due! Please bring your check or money to the Monday night meeting or mail them to the society.

Mark your Calendars

February 19, Kelvin Meyers will be speaking about "How to find your Scandalous Ancestors". Please join us at the library at 7 p.m. for an interesting talk.

March 19, Marynell Bryant will be speaking about "Genetealogy - Using DNA to identify your Family Lineage". The new technology provides an interesting way to find your family lineage.

Have you heard a good speaker that you think our society might like to hear? Please let Jeanne Mantooth know and she might be able to get the speaker for us.

NEW GENEALOGY TITLES Local History & Genealogy, Irving Public Library FEBRUARY 2007

Stop by the Genealogy section and check out all the new books. These are just a few of the new books for February at the library.

Courthouse Indexes Illustrated. Christine Rose Publications. 2006.

**Family Skeletons: Exploring the Lives of Our Disreputable Ancestors.
Ruth Paley and Simon Fowler. The National Archives, UK. 2005**

**Guide to South Carolina Genealogical Research and Records. Brent Holcomb.
2001.**

Hardin County, Tennessee: A Pictorial History. Turner Publishing. 1994.

Hollick, Martin E. New Englanders in the 1600s: A Guide to Genealogical Research Between 1980 and 2005. New England Historic Genealogical Society. 2006

MacFarland, K.T.H. Hollidaysburg Records. Marriages, Deaths & Partitions from Weekly Newspapers of Hollidaysburg Huntingdon/Blair Counties, Pa. Closson Press.

1994.

Marriages of Some Virginia Residents 1607-1800. series 1, vols. 1-7. Dorothy Ford Wulfeck. 1961.

No Land...Only Slaves! vol. 10, Slave Records Abstracted from the Deed Books of Fannin County, Texas. Edith Smith & Vivian Lehman. 2005.

No Land...Only Slaves! vol. 11, Abstracts from the Deed Books of Upshur & Ellis Counties in Texas. Edith Smith & Vivan Lehman. 2005.

Oklahoma Rural Settlers in Woodward County, Oklahoma 1893-1910. Nandine Young Billingsley. 2006

Old St. Stephen's Land Office Records & American State Papers Public Lands. vol.1, 1768-1888. Marilyn Davis Hahn. Southern Historical Press. 1983

On the Trail of the Buffalo Soldier II. Irene and Frank Schubert. Scarecrow Press.

2004.

Orphan Train Riders: A Brief History of the Orphan Trail Era (1854-1929) With Entrance Records from the American Female Guardian Society's Home For the Friendless in New York. Tom Riley. Heritage Books. 2005

Stricklin, Dawn C. Cherokee Reserves Letters. Picton Press. 2005

Tracing Your Army Ancestors. Sam Fowler. Pen & Sword Military. 2006

University of Dallas. 50 Years of Vision & Courage, 1956-2006. University of Dallas. 2006

Wayne County, Tennessee History and Families. Turner Publishing. 1995.

Love and Marriage

by Juliana Smith from Ancestry.com

If we're lucky, we have photographs of the happy couple on their wedding day--the smiling faces, the beautiful dress, the dapper suit. As they peer out at us from faded old photographs, we can't help but wonder what was going through their heads at that moment. As the curious descendants who are tracing their lives back in history, we know more about the course their lives were to take from that day forward. As they stood and posed for the photographs they probably hadn't a clue as to what life would have in store for them.

Learning more about our ancestors at this pivotal time in their lives adds romance and can really enrich our family histories. And information found in records created around the event can generate great leads in our family history.

Finding Marriage Records

A growing number of marriage indexes can be found online. At Ancestry, a search of the [Card Catalog](#) using the keyword "marriage" turns up 346 databases that include marriages from the U.S. and beyond. Among these are statewide indexes and large collections from England and Wales (also know as [Free BMD](#)).

A search for "marriage index" turned up a surprisingly large number of municipal websites sporting online searchable indexes including the following:

[City of Indianapolis, Marion County, Indiana, 1925-present](#)

[City of Rochester, New York, 1876-1932](#)

[Probate Court of Cuyahoga County, Ohio, 1810-April 1998](#)

There are also a number of states with state-level projects available including [Illinois](#), [Maine](#), and [Washington](#).

Check local libraries and societies, and include ethnic sources, even if your ancestors weren't of the same ethnicity. The [Italian Genealogical Group](#), based in the New York metropolitan area, hosts a [New York City Grooms Index](#) for Kings and New York Counties for various years ranging from 1866-1936.

For more resources, check out the latest version of [The Source: A Guidebook to American Genealogy](#) (2006). Pages 612-617 include tables of "Searchable Marriage Record Databases Online as of March 2006," "Birth, Marriage and Death Records Published on CD-ROM as of March 2006," and "Statewide Marriage Indexes and Records from the Family History Library's Vital Records Collection as of March 2006."

Once you locate the record in an index, be sure to follow up by ordering a copy of the original. Marriage records can be rich in information that will help you in your family history research.

Where Were They Married?

While there are exceptions to the rule, most marriages took place in the bride's home, town, or church. Perhaps your ancestors aren't turning up in marriage records for the area in which you expect they were married? Do a little digging and see if there was a local "Gretna Green" or marriage mill where they may have gone to marry.

The Nevada Marriage and Divorce Collection added this past week to Ancestry.com are testament to this theory. According to [the press release](#), "Nevada's reputation as a 'marriage Mecca' dates back to Prohibition days, when California's three-day waiting period on marriage licenses pushed impulsive couples over the Nevada border--where marriage licenses could be obtained immediately."

Similarly, many Chicagoans were married in nearby [Crown Point, Indiana](#). According to [Chicago and Cook County: A Guide to Research](#) (by Loretto Dennis Szucs, 1996), "An estimated 175,000 marriages, many of them couples from Chicago and environs, took place in Crown Point, Indiana during the period from 1915 to 1940. Four justices of the peace in Crown Point. . . advertised 'quick, painless marriages' at minimal costs. They advertised in Chicago and other Midwest city newspapers, and on the Pathe New Service newsreels."

The "Vital Records" chapter of *The Source* (by Johni Cerny, BS, FUGA) also mentions that "Cincinnati, like many American cities, was a "Gretna Green" (a no-questions-asked marriage locale in Scotland) for couples from up and down the Ohio River and from a wide circle of counties in Indiana and Kentucky, as well as Ohio." It also mentions that many records were lost in a courthouse fire, but that some records have been reconstructed by local genealogists and the DAR through other resources--another great reason to consult organizations in the area for locality-specific information on vital record resources.

Incidentally, there is an [index of marriages from the original Gretna Green](#) in Scotland available online covering 1795-1895. The index search is free, but the full details come with a price tag.

Where indices aren't available, begin your search on a local level. The [USGenWeb page](#) for your county of interest may contain addresses and links to information on requesting records via snail mail, or in some cases online using a credit card.

Church Records

Depending on your ancestor's religious affiliation and where they were married, you may also be able to locate a record of their nuptials through the church. These records can predate civil registrations and may be the only record you find for earlier ancestors. Churches open during the time period you are interested in can be identified through phone books, and for some denominations, through church archives.

You may find indexes to church records online as well. The [Kendall County, Illinois, USGenWeb site](#) includes indexes to Norwegian Lutheran Church records from ten congregations in the area.

In addition to the church marriage record, photographs and other images of the church itself can add interest to your family history.

If you're not certain of the church with which your ancestor may have been affiliated, check local histories for clues. In Henry R. Stiles' [History of Brooklyn](#), Vol III, (p. 726), in a passage quoting an address by Archbishop McClosky, he reminisces that prior to the establishment of a Catholic Church in Brooklyn, "as a youth, when Sunday morning came, he, as one of a happy group, wended his way along the shore to what was then called Hicks' ferry, to cross the river, not in elegant and graceful steamers as now, but in an old and dingy horse boat; going, led by the hand of tender and loving parents, to assist at the sacrifice of mass in the old brick church of St. Peter's, in Barclay street."

Newspapers

Local newspapers may also include announcements of marriages. In cases like those mentioned above, where the happy couple traveled to a place with fewer restriction, or perhaps to be married amongst family in another area, wedding announcements found in newspapers may provide that critical information.

A Final Tip: Honeymoons and Anniversary Trips

You may also find couples traveling overseas for either a honeymoon or on an anniversary trip. I found a record of my grandparents returning from England in 1952 in the [New York Passenger Arrival database](#)--the year that marked their twenty-fifth wedding anniversary. Check local

newspapers for announcements of anniversary trips like this one as well.

Even if we don't have that photograph portraying our ancestors on their wedding day, by delving into the records pertaining to their marriage, we can still get a glimpse into this very special day in their lives.

Juliana Smith has been the editor of Ancestry.com newsletters for more than eight years and is author of *The Ancestry Family Historian's Address Book*.