



Genealogy News

Savannah Area Genealogical Association

119 Bowman Ave., Garden City, GA 31408-1338

Without genealogy, the study of history is comparatively lifeless. (John Fiske)

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MEETING

DATE Mar. 27, 2023
TIME **10:30 a.m.**
PLACE John Knox Room of First Presbyterian Church; 520 E. Washington Ave.
SPEAKER Elizabeth Shown Mills (via web)
TOPIC "Smiths & Joneses: Success With Families of Common Names"

ABOUT THE MEETING

Randy will present a webinar by Elizabeth Shown Mills. She is a well-known genealogy speaker- and her topic could help anyone with common surnames in their family tree- that's all of us! **Given Randy's time restraint,** we will begin the meeting promptly at 10:30 a.m.!

DUES ARE DUE !! PLEASE, if you have not paid your dues for 2023, do so NOW! Dues are: \$20.00 for members; \$5.00 for associate members (spouse). Make checks payable to SAGA, and mail to Vivian Roberts (our Treasurer) at 119 Bowman Avenue; Garden City, GA 31408-1338. This is the final reminder- if your Dues are not paid by March 31, you will be dropped from membership & the newsletter.

The SAVANNAH AREA GENEALOGICAL ASSOCIATION was founded in 1983. First year dues are \$25.00; thereafter, \$20.00. Meetings: held every fourth Monday of the month, except December; 10:30 a.m.; John Knox Room (ADA accessible) of First Presbyterian Church; 520 E. Washington Ave. (corner of Washington Ave. and Paulsen St.- entrance on Washington Ave. side); Savannah, GA. Monthly newsletter included in the dues.

on FACEBOOK at Savannah Area Genealogical Association

SAGA MINUTES- Feb. 27, 2023

President Carol Thompson called the meeting to order at 10:40 a.m. Six people were in attendance. Vivian Roberts moved to accept the January Minutes; Terry Page seconded. Vivian did not give a Treasurer's Report (due to her internet being down). President Carol Thompson presented Part 3 of "Researching Your Ancestor's Military Service"

PROGRAM- RESEARCHING YOUR ANCESTOR'S MILITARY SERVICE (Part Three)

An eight-page Hand-Out was distributed, which covered the material addressed in Part Three: The War Between the States; the Spanish-American War (and Philippine Insurrection); WWI; WWII; and the Korean War.

Because "Researching Your Ancestor's Military Service" took three sessions, there are Hand-outs from each one. If you missed any of the programs, but would like a hardcopy, please email Carol. Let her know if you need Part 1 (Colonial times through the Revolutionary War); Part 2 (War of 1812, Texas Revolution, and Mexican War); or Part 3 (as stated above). She will send them to you, via email (PDF, so you shouldn't have a problem opening them and/or copying them). The Handouts are just way too long to include, as a recap, in the newsletter. They were condensed, as much as possible, for the Hand-out! Carol's email address is Lcsthompson@bellsouth.net [PLEASE NOTE that the second letter in the email is a "C" as in CAROL! Many people enter it as an "E"!! Also, if you send me a request, via an email, and do not receive a reply within several days please give me a call (912) 925-7919 home- and (912) 398-5668 cell. A lot of times emails go to the SPAM folder, too- and I may miss it! Also, note- I DO NOT text!!!! Carol]

A quick review of what was covered in the third session:

Several good websites and research recommendations/suggestions were given, concerning the War Between the States.

Land bounty wasn't offered on either side, during the War. However, the Homestead Act, which the U.S. Congress passed on May 20, 1862 offered 160 acres of land with 5 years of continuous residency on the land and a minimal filing fee. Title could also be had after a 6-month residency and payment of \$1.25 per acre. After the war, soldiers could deduct their time served from the residency requirement. The Homestead Act did not apply to Confederate soldiers or anyone who had given "aid and comfort" to the Confederacy.

The National Archives has service/pension records for Union soldiers. It has some service records for Confederate soldiers; but it does NOT hold pension records for Confederate soldiers. Each state of the former Confederacy paid pensions. Your ancestor's pension, if he got one, would have been issued in the state he FILED for it in- not necessarily the state he fought under. The National Archives does have a finding aid- they list Confederate Pension records' depositories by each state!

Georgia's Virtual Vault (<https://vault.georgiaarchives.org>) has Georgia Confederate Enlistment Oaths and Discharges, 1861-1864; Confederate Pension applications (and Supplements- separately); and Muster Rolls [all on "page 2"]; and, Militia Enrollment Lists, 1864 [on "page 4"].

[**Note (not included in the Handout)**. Don't forget to check out state archives, historical societies, lineage societies connected to an ancestor's Civil War service, etc. Check out old newspapers for lists of men in a company, an account of a battle, a casualty list after a battle, a published letter from a soldier, etc. Later on, many newspapers published accounts of veterans' reunions, etc. Also, you might want to check out historical sites connected to the Civil War (museums, battlefields, etc.)- and cemeteries with Civil War soldiers buried in them. You might want to "search" for Civil War prisons- a particular one, if you had an ancestor who was a prisoner of war (North or South!). Some websites publish lists of prisoners, lists of deaths, etc.

If you know your ancestor's company, regiment, etc., search for it online. Many people create great websites on all kinds of military history- and especially the Civil War! If you can find copies of the Confederate Veterans Magazine (published from 1893 to 1932) you may get real lucky. They were "collected" and published as huge volumes, years ago. All kinds of interesting articles were included concerning the war. Queries were sent in- looking for people, or info about a particular person, battle, prison, etc. Even if you don't find your ancestor mentioned there, it is very interesting to read, for "background" material.]

A lot of the Handout has to do with the Spanish-American War: research websites; explanations of different kinds of records [many kinds that had never before been generated in an American war]; examples of what will be found in those records; locating the various records [many of which seem to be distributed throughout various branches/departments of government]; and, a few "history lessons"!

Program Cont'd

As a result of the Spanish-American War, Cuba became a U.S. "protectorate", whose civil government gained independence on May 20, 1902. The U.S. established a de facto perpetual lease of Guantanamo Bay. The islands of Puerto Rico, Guam and the Philippines became U.S. Territories, as a result of the war, ceded to the U.S. by Spain in the 1898 Treaty of Paris. The U.S. paid Spain \$20 million dollars, in consideration of the infrastructure Spain had built in the Philippines. During the war in Cuba, the 2,061 deaths from "other causes" [heat stroke, malaria and other diseases] far outnumbered the fatalities from actual battle conflicts.

While American soldiers first landed in Cuba on June 10, 1898, the first battle (Manila Bay) of the Spanish-American War took place in the Philippines, on May 1, 1898- when U.S. Commodore George Dewey defeated the Spanish squadron! The Philippines had been fighting a war for their independence from Spain, for several years! On June 2, 1899, the First Philippine Republic declared war on the "occupying" United States! The U.S. won the war, and the Philippines became an unincorporated territory (later, a U.S. Commonwealth) of the U.S. Full independence was granted by the U.S. in 1946. The war in the Philippines cost 4,200 American lives. "The Philippine Insurrection", a result of the war in Cuba and the Treaty of Paris in 1898, and American "occupation" in the Philippines, is an almost "unknown" war, in our history. Many people believe the Spanish-American War was a short one- in Cuba, in 1898, and do not know about the longer war in the Philippines!

As a result of the Spanish-American War, the Marines came to be thought of as an elite unit of fighting men, and the VFW was formed. Congress imposed an excise tax on long-distance phone service to help pay for the war. It mostly affected wealthy Americans who owned phones (most couldn't afford them at the time). Congress forgot to repeal the tax- and it wasn't ended until Aug. 1, 2006!!

One of the reasons given for America's entry into war with Spain was the sinking of the *U.S.S. Maine*, in Havana Harbor. What and/or who actually caused the explosion that sunk the *Maine*, and claimed 3/4ths of the lives of the 355 sailors, officers and Marines aboard her, has never been definitely determined. On March 16th, 1912 (after two years of work to refloat what was left of the *Maine*), she was towed out of Havana Harbor and (re)sunk- with honors. Her ship's stern mast was salvaged and used in the *Maine Memorial* in Arlington National Cemetery, where the remains of 229 men of the *Maine* are buried. Sixty-six bodies were recovered during the raising of the *Maine*. One was identified and returned to his family. Several websites are given in reference to the explosion, the men who manned the *Maine*, and the salvage operations of the *Maine*!

Because the U.S. Army, in 1898, was about 25,000 men, volunteers were called for. Many men responded, were trained, and some served in the brief war in Cuba, and the longer war in the Philippines. Teddy Roosevelt's Rough Riders are probably the most famous. All four of the Army's "Colored" Buffalo Soldiers regiments served, along with some Native American volunteers. Women served in the U.S. Army Nurses Corps. There were four former *Confederate* generals, appointed by ex-Union veteran, President William McKinley, who served as generals of volunteer units during the Spanish-American war-: Fitzhugh Lee [nephew of Robert E. Lee, and former governor of Virginia] was appointed to train a cavalry unit; Matthew C. Butler, who was elected to the South Carolina Senate in 1876 and served 3 terms, was appointed Major General of Volunteers; Thomas Rosser, who had become the chief engineer for the Northern Pacific and Canadian Pacific Railroads, was appointed to train cavalry units for the War- which he did, on the Chickamauga Battlefield, in Georgia!; and, Joseph "Fighting Joe" Wheeler, who was a Major General of a Volunteer unit in Cuba, and a Brigadier General of the Regular Army in the Philippines!

Several websites were given, collectively and separately, for WWI, WWII and the Korean War [for research info for Vietnam, consult some of the websites given for the other wars]. Although many military records were lost in the fire, in 1973, at the National Personnel Records Center, in St. Louis, employees there are very helpful in assisting anyone with military service records requests for veterans. More info about the fire, the records lost, how to contact the Records Center, etc., is included in the Handout.

At the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency website, an account of the Johnnie Johnson List is given- and the list of men is at the site [Korean War]! Johnson was among 700 American prisoners taken in October of 1950. By August of 1953, only 262 men were still alive. Throughout the ordeal, Johnson kept a list of every man who died in captivity, which he turned over to the federal government when he was released after the war.

[All of the items, in this article, are more fully explained in the Handout. Don't forget, if you want a copy of the Hand-outs (total of 20 pages, in three parts), please contact Carol.]

KEN THOMAS' GENEALOGY COLUMNS

February 26, 2023

CENSUS DATA VS. FAMILY MEMORY, WHAT TO BELIEVE?

We all use census data in our genealogy work and often take the information recorded as the true facts for our family tree. But what does one do when the family couldn't make up their minds in the old days as to what the facts were? A case in point is my Thomas step-ancestors from Charlotte, North Carolina. Their origins before 1860 were illusive. While they were in the 1860 Census of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina from 1860 until their deaths in the early 20th century, I had never found them before 1860. Then a chance email produced the answer. They were in the 1850 Census of Murray County, Georgia. There, they said the parents were born in North Carolina, five children were born c. 1836 to 1842 in Tennessee, and the two youngest c. 1844-1846 in Georgia. After the family relocated to Charlotte in 1860 they forgot all about Georgia. By the end of the 19th century, they had even added South Carolina to the places of birth. For those early censuses, we have no idea who the census taker actually spoke to, the mother or the oldest child? Did they have so many kids they just forgot? Or did they think it didn't really matter, although it matters a lot to us. So, the moral of the story is if you are stuck trying to unravel your genealogy based on census clues, maybe just take them with a grain of salt and widen your research area.

GERMAN GENEALOGY CONFERENCE

The International German Genealogy Partnership (IGGP) Conference will be held June 9-11 in Fort Wayne, Indiana and is a physical/hybrid event. For more, check iggp.org

March 5, 2023

THE GOLDEN RULES OF GENEALOGY

Recently, I discovered GotGenealogy.com's twelve "Golden Rules of Genealogy," (permission to share).

1. "Spelling Doesn't Count"- since many people couldn't write, they relied on phonetics, so don't get hung up on spelling, especially a surname.
2. "Don't Assume Anything"- you should verify everything [even if you find it online, by someone who has supposedly done the research]
3. "Use Discretion"- meaning don't lie, but be sensitive when providing some information to living people, or about them.
4. "Document Your Sources"- even if they contradict each other; so anyone who is using your research as their guide can retrace your footsteps!
5. "Most Dates Are Approximate"- since most of our ancestors didn't leave exact records.
6. "If Unsure, Say So"- honesty being the best policy, admit if the information is your conjecture or analysis.
7. "You Cannot Do It All Online"- as you still need things that are not digitized, or is in libraries, court-houses, archives, family hands, etc.
8. "Just Because It's Online Doesn't Mean It's True"- use what you find online as a guide; do your own research and find documentation for any "facts" others have posted.
9. "Pass Along Your Research"- You could publish a book, create a website, or donate your research to an appropriate place, if they will take your materials. Many people have no family member who cares about their materials, so you can't leave it to them.
10. "Don't Die With Your Stories Still In You"- If you haven't included family stories in other materials, leave a memo containing said stories with next of kin, who might hold on to them.
11. "DNA"- use it as one of your tools in your research quiver, along with your actual research.
12. "Anything You Post Online Will Be 'Borrowed' "

FAMILYTREEDNA ANNOUNCES NEW FEATURES

FamilyTreeDNA.com has added three features; a Group Time Tree, a FTDNATIP report for Y-DNA, and most importantly a "Multi-Kit Management" plan if you are managing more than one DNA kit.

NATIONAL GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY MEETING IN MAY IN RICHMOND

Don't forget the National Genealogical Society meets May 31-June 3 in Richmond. See ngsgenealogy.org for details.

March 12, 2023

GENEALOGY SOFTWARE PROGRAMS COMPARED

Genealogists should always compile their genealogy when they can in a genealogy software program, mainly to keep track of various kinfolk and how they are related to each other. The January/February issue of Family Tree Magazine includes “Data Entry”, by Rick Crume, covering several topics related to putting your data into a genealogy program, including style, consistency for names, dates, places, and foreign languages. He included a chart that compares what he considers the five major Genealogy Software programs by price and his comments. The five are, in alphabetical order: 1) Ancestral Quest 16 (**ancquest.com**) \$34.95, which he says is very similar to the old PAF (Personal Ancestry File) program that many liked. There is also a free basic version. 2) Family Tree Builder (**MyHeritage.com**) is free but I guess one has to be on MyHeritage.com to use it. He says it automatically searches for matches on MyHeritage and **FamilySearch.org**, and syncs with trees on MyHeritage. 3) Family Tree Maker 2019 (**mackiev.com/ftm**) at \$79.95 and is the favorite of a lot of my friends. Mr. Crume points out that it offers hints from **Ancestry.com**, syncs with family trees on that site, and has lots of good charts and reports built in. 4) Legacy Family Tree 9.0 (**legacyfamilytree.com**) at \$34.95. There is also a free standard edition. This program searches for data through a number of sites including Find-A-Grave, Findmypast, GenealogyBank, and MyHeritage. 5) Roots Magic 8 (**rootsmagic.com**) at \$39.95, which has easy editing and navigating and offers hints from various places as do the others above. It can share family tree data with Ancestry.com and FamilySearch.org. There is also a free “essentials” version.

In my view, you should beware of any sharing, keep control over your data, have your information on a stand-alone program that you control, and a backup.

GENEALOGY INSIDER NEWSLETTER

You can get a free weekly email newsletter, The Genealogy Insider, from **FamilyTreeMagazine.com**. Written by the editors, it includes links to free how-to articles, advice, and discounts. They have several newsletter options on their site.

SHIP INDEX DATABASE

Shipindex.org is a vessel research database that has over 150,000 entries; so, it might be worth checking out.

March 19, 2023-03-18

GEORGIA ARCHIVES SYMPOSIUM APRIL 1, NATURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

The Georgia Archives will host a free symposium on April 1 from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m. at the Archives in Morrow. The topic is “Georgia, Nature, and the Environment.” Scholars will lecture on conservation efforts over the years, environmental changes, and various stimulants to the Georgia economy. After welcomes, the first lecture starts at 9:15 and relates to the Blue Ridge Parkway by Richelle Brown. Next follows a panel on “Conservation and Old Growth Forests” with discussions of early conservation efforts starting in colonial times, and the later protecting of old growth forests. At 11:00 a second panel covers “Race, Class and Recreation”, with speakers addressing Hard Labor Creek State Park as a case study in discriminatory recreation, and then Angela Hronek on “Under the Surface of Lake Lanier”, presumably covering the lake’s extinction of towns and flooding burial grounds. Then Sadie Ingram will speak on the Georgia Oyster Industry from the 1880s to the 1940s. After lunch for a cash donation, or lunch elsewhere, at 1 p.m. they resume with “Bamboo in Georgia’s Landscape: From Native Americans to the USDA”. “Nature at Home” is another panel at 2 p.m. covering a non-native spider’s introduction; then “How the Landscapes Can Fight Climate Change and Grow Green Jobs”; and last, “Rethinking Informal Urbanism in Metro-Atlanta.” The last lecture at 3 p.m. covers the Georgia marble industry and human impact on the land. For further information on the program, bios of the speakers, and directions, check **GeorgiaArchives.org**

WITNESSES AND THEIR VALUE

Always note the names of witnesses in deeds or wills, as they are usually someone who lived nearby, was a friend or kinsman of the people creating the document, and perhaps your own kin. Usually a witness was [at least] either 18 or 21, although I have read that in some cases they could be [as young as] 14. If they sign with an “X”, or some other mark, it means they could not write at the time. Some people can be traced by their use of an unusual mark.

GENEALOGY RESOURCE FAIR
14 April 2023

Hosted by the Statesboro-Bulloch County Library

The Statesboro-Bulloch County Library will hold a Genealogy Resource Fair on April 14th, 2023, that will be a day long, library take-over event. This will be a chance for various genealogical and historical organizations from across Georgia to share information on what they are currently doing and what services are available to the public. For many, this will be the first opportunity to meet with others in person since Covid restrictions.

Those participating are welcome to have a booth set up with information about their organization and to answer questions. The library will provide tables for booths. You are also welcome to give a short presentation on what your organization specializes in and resources available to the public. Please feel free to bring promotional items. If your organization would like to have information displayed, but are unable to attend in person, a booth can be set up.

The tentative schedule is as follows:

- 9:45 - 10:15 Registration for participating organizations. Coffee and refreshments will be provided.
- 10:15 - 11:30 Meet in the Community Room for introductions and an overview of the day. Booths can be set up afterwards.
- 11:30 - 12:00 Set up booths and tour the Statesboro Genealogy Department.
- 12:00 - 1:00 Lunch will be provided in the Community Room, for registered participants.
- 1:00 - 5:00 Presentations will begin after lunch. The Computer Lab and Kids Activity Room will be available for short digital presentations. Talks can also be given in two other areas of the library. There will be a program listing when the different presentations are, and their locations.

Lunch will be provided only to those who are registered and participating in the Genealogy Resource Fair. The Library will be open to visitors to the Fair from 1:00 – 5:00; but they will be on their own for lunch. Directly across the street from the Library is the Beaver House Restaurant that serves family style lunch- and a Pizza Hut. The Library will have a list of other food vendors that are nearby. The event is free to visitors.

END

