

## Have you re-newed your dues?

Volume 23 Number 6

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November-December 2010

### President's Message

I think that fall is finally here. The trees have changed their leaves to brilliant colors. It is the time of the year when we think of being Thankful for our families and many other things. We should always be thankful, but during this time of the year it comes out more.

Our genealogy section of the Burlington Library is growing more and more. If you have never been there or haven't visited in a while you should come and check it out. We have acquired many more books thru donations as well as buying some. Remember on Mondays from 11-1:00 there is usually someone there to assist anyone with questions or to help show them sources. We always need volunteers to help out. Let one of the officers know and we will direct you to the right person.

The general meeting in January will be on Saturday, January 29<sup>th</sup> at the Burlington Library from 12:30 to 2:30. The topic will be brick walls.

I would like to congratulate a few of our members on receiving awards this year from the Washington State Genealogical Society. Shirley Christenson was recognized for her support of the goals and operations of the Skagit Valley Genealogical Society. They recognized Sylvia Ammons for her efforts in the preservation of important records of genealogical value to SVGS and other researchers interested in Washington State. A Certificate of Appreciation was given to Hazel Rasar for her many years of service to genealogist and family historians of Washington State. She has served as a board member of WSGS and SVGS for many years in different capacities. Thank you to all of you for making the Societies a success with your help. I know it may only be a small part, but it takes many small parts to make a machine run well.

We had our 2<sup>nd</sup> open house on Nov 6 at the library and I am hearing it was a success. I hope everyone attending was able to take some knowledge home with you that will help in your research. I am sorry I was not there, but when you have a job, you must be a team member and go where needed. I was sure that all of the people volunteering were very capable and knowledgeable in helping everyone to make it enjoyable and fun for all. Thank you to all of the volunteers. I hear you did a great job. Good team work.

Dottie Chandler, President



Thank You top Karen Prasse of the Burlington Public Library for her assistance and presentation at our Open House in Nov.

### SVGS Upcoming Programs

**November 23:** Jim Johnson of Heritage Quest will discuss *Researching the Heritage Quest Library in Sumner*. There will be lots of books, many different titles, subjects, etc, to peruse and purchase.

**November 25:**



**No Meeting in December**

**Feb 22:** Video from familysearch.org – Newspaper Research in the United States. Learn how to find your ancestors in old newspapers.

**Meeting Change !! January 29, 2011** Per request of many members the board will try a Saturday daytime meeting at the Burlington Library Hillside Room, 12:30 to 3:00 PM. Hope to see those who have made this request! Do you have a **Brick Wall**? Gather your information and let our members help you go over or around that stumbling block.

**Mar 22:** Laura Sparr: NARA in Seattle – What You Can't Find on the Web. Not all genealogy research can be done on the Internet. Laura will tell us what you can find just down the Interstate in Seattle.

**Apr 26:** Margaret Robe Summit: Quilts and Genealogy— Margaret will share with us information on interpreting antique quilts and ideas for present day genealogy quilts. Al Udd has donated a quilt that belonged to his wife Joan, a former member. This quilt was made by Ione Raney, also a former member. Tickets will be available for \$1 each with a drawing to be held at the April meeting. Buy your tickets and invite your friends and neighbors to purchase tickets as well for this beautiful quilt. *Thank You All!*

**May 24:** Robert Lopresti from WWU – Census Enumeration Districts at Western Washington University. If you have Pacific Northwest ancestors, this is the place to be. Robert will

**Without a volunteer this may be your last newsletter! Can you help?**



We meet from 7:00-9:00 pm on 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of the month at Burlington Senior Center, 1011 Greenleaf Avenue, Burlington, Washington. Except January 2011 meeting.

### SVGS Board of Directors 2010

**President:** Dottie Chandler

360-757-0966 dotcom10@frontier.com

**Vice President:** Barbara Johnson

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**Secretary:** Muriel Neely

360-424-7109 muriel\_neely@comcast.net

**Treasurer:** Portia Stacey

360-826-4838 portianstacey@msn.com

**Past President:** Hazel Rasar

hrasar@gmail.com

**Archivist:** Dan Royal

360-826-6141 dmoroyal@earthlink.net

**Education:** Shirley Christenson

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**Genealogist:** Diane Partington

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**Librarian:** Margie Wilson

360-798-1681 wilsongm@frontier.com

**Membership:** Christine Cooper

360-202-3451 cooper2chris@yahoo.com

**Newsletter:** OPEN

**Webmaster:** Kevin Osborne

360-540-0241 webmaster@skagitvalleygs.org

**Projects:** OPEN

**Publications:** Sylvia Ammons

360-766-4030 sylvammns@hotmail.com

**Ways & Means:** OPEN

**Publicity:** George Ridgeway

360-424-4427 4george30@comcast.net

### Special Committees

**Telephone/Email Communication:**

svgstree@hotmail.com

**FGS Delegate:** Rita M. Schulze

360-856-2826 No email

**Audit/Budget:** Sharon Johnson

360-445-5483 johnson@sos.net

**Bylaws/ Standing Rules:** Hazel Rasar

hrasar@gmail.com

**Refreshments:** OPEN

**Raffles/Door Prizes:** Sharon Johnson

360-445-5483 johnson@sos.net

**Obituary Index:** Nancy Bonafede

Dottie Chandler

Sylvia Ammons

Donna Stone

**Fund Raiser for Special Projects:** OPEN

**Special History Project:**

Dan Royal 360-826-6141 dmoroyal@earthlink.net

### Openings for Board Positions

We are currently in need of persons to fill the following positions on the Board of Directors which meet once a month EXCEPT July and August.

#### NEWSLETTER EDITOR:

Gather, compose and produce a bi-monthly newsletter with information relevant to members of the genealogical community.

Mail and/or submit to webmaster for posting on the society website

#### PROJECTS CHAIR:

Be responsible for the coordination of records and preservation projects undertaken by members of the Society;

Instruct membership in the procedure for the collection of primary source data;

Serve as clearing house for data collection;

Advise Board of Directors of all preservation projects being conducted;

Maintain a permanent record of data preserved by the Society.

#### WAYS & MEANS CHAIR:

Submit plans for fund raising projects to the Board of Directors

#### SUNSHINE PERSON:

Mail cards of condolence and be contact person for events involving members

**Note some Email changes above:**

**Affiliated Membership Opportunity:** The SVGS Board has discussed SVGS participation in the Washington State Genealogical Society's Affiliated Membership Program. Under this program, individuals or families who join or renew their SVGS membership may also join or renew their membership in the Washington State Society, and they will pay \$2 less than if they pay the memberships separately. At the same time SVGS will earn a \$2 processing fee for each membership. Plus, if SVGS processes ten or more WSGS affiliated memberships each year, SVGS will get their institutional membership in the State Society (\$10) at no cost.

The affiliated membership in WSGS costs \$10 for individuals or \$11 for a household. Members of the State Society receive six WSGS Newsletters electronically each year. (There is an \$8 surcharge for newsletters if printed and mailed.) Along with informative articles gleaned from other publications and blogs, these newsletters describe monthly programs, seminars and other events put on by genealogical societies and groups throughout Washington State and some bordering areas. Our annual seminars and monthly meetings have been listed in the WSGS Newsletter. WSGS members usually receive a reduced registration fee for the annual WSGS Conference. Members also may submit up to five free queries to be published in the WSGS Newsletter.

Membership in the State Society also helps to provide the financial backing which allows smaller societies to host the annual WSGS conference featuring a nationally known speaker, such as the 2008 conference in Mount Vernon. It also supports WSGS programs which produce Pioneer and First Citizen Certificates and provide state-wide recognition of the Outstanding Volunteers being honored by their local societies.

*Thank You to Bob Witherspoon, from the Whatcom Society Newsletter, for this excellent explanation of this new program supported by the Washington State Genealogical Society.* **Contact our local Membership person if you are interested in this program.**

### Library Acquisitions - August to November 2010

The SVGS Genealogy Library continues to grow thanks to the recent donations of Bruce and Lee Matson, Jean Hubler and the Mount Vernon Library. Several periodicals were also donated. You'll find new additions to the magazines in the genealogy section's lateral file drawer on the bottom, right hand side.

Please note: In the table below the books in bold-italic have not been cataloged yet, so please give the library volunteers a couple of weeks to get these new books on the shelves. But to pique your curiosity, here is a list of the recent August to November new book additions.

~ Margie Wilson, SVGS Librarian

<u>CODE</u>	<u>TITLE</u>	<u>AUTHOR</u>
		J.H. French
KY	Kentucky Ancestor Charts from Ancestral Tails Historical Society	Judy Nache
VA	History of Shenandoah County, VA	John W. Wayland
<b>CT</b>	<b>Genealogical Notes: First Settlers of Connecticut and Massachusetts</b>	<b>Nathaniel Goodwin</b>
<b>SCOT</b>	<b>Scottish American Wills: 1650-1900</b>	<b>David Dobson</b>
<b>SCAN</b>	<b>History of the Scandianavians and Successful Scandinavians in the United States Vol. II</b>	<b>O.N. Nelson</b>
<b>SCAN</b>	<b>History of the Scandianavians and Successful Scandinavians in the United States Vol. I</b>	<b>O.N. Nelson</b>
<b>REF</b>	<b>U.S. Catholic Sources</b>	<b>Virginia Humling</b>
<b>REF</b>	<b>Organizing &amp; Preserving Your Heirloom Documents</b>	<b>Katherine S Sturdevant</b>
<b>REF</b>	<b>Searching on Location: Planning a Research Trip</b>	<b>Anne Ross Balhuizen</b>
<b>REF</b>	<b>American &amp; British Genealogy &amp; Heraldry: A Selected List of Books, 2nd Ed.</b>	<b>P. William Filby</b>
<b>REF</b>	<b>How To Trace Your African-American Roots</b>	<b>Barbara Thompson Howell</b>
<b>REF</b>	<b>Finding a Place Called Home: A Guide to African-American Genealogy &amp; Historical Identity</b>	<b>Dee Parmer-Woodtor, PhD</b>

**New Passenger Arrival Databases at NARA**

The National Archives now has four separate databases for identifying passenger arrivals in the United States by nationality. Joining the previously offered Famine Irish database, new searches are now possible for arrivals to the U.S. of Russians during the years 1834 to 1897, Germans between 1850 and 1897, and Italians between 1855 and 1900.

The starting point for this kind of search is in the AAD section of the National Archives website: go to <http://aad.archives.gov/aad/series-list.jsp?cat=GP44> to find links to all four categories of passenger lists.

*Editor's note: You may read the entire article in the Fiske Library Foundation newsletter on page 3 at <http://www.fiskelibrary.org/NewsLetter/Spring-Fall2010Newsletter.pdf>*

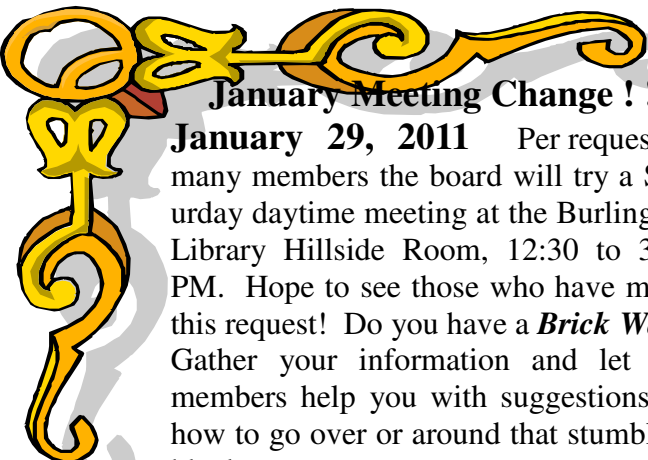
**Search Wisconsin Vital Records**

A free search engine for identifying time and place of key vital records in Wisconsin is available at <http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/genealogy/>. The Wisconsin Genealogy Index of the Wisconsin Historical Society currently searches birth records from 1850 to 1907, marriage records from 1836 to 1907, and death records from 1850 to 1907. This

index contains 1 million births, 1 million marriages, and about 400,000 deaths, all of which were registered prior to September 1907. The search engine also screens more than 150,000 obituaries and biographical sketches published prior to 1999

**Eastman's Online Genealogy Newsletter**

PROVO, UTAH, Nov 10, 2010 - Ancestry.com, which has the largest online collection of historical military records, today added more than 115,000 U.S. Military Academy Cadet Application Papers from West Point to its online collection of military records to commemorate Veterans Day. [http://blog.eogn.com/eastmans\\_online\\_genealogy/2010/11/ancestrycom-releases-west-point-us-military-cadet-application-papers.html](http://blog.eogn.com/eastmans_online_genealogy/2010/11/ancestrycom-releases-west-point-us-military-cadet-application-papers.html) to read entire article.

**January Meeting Change !!**

**January 29, 2011** Per request of many members the board will try a Saturday daytime meeting at the Burlington Library Hillside Room, 12:30 to 3:00 PM. Hope to see those who have made this request! Do you have a **Brick Wall**? Gather your information and let our members help you with suggestions on how to go over or around that stumbling block.



Are you missing your coffee & juice?  
**YOU CAN HELP**

Contact Diane Partington or Dottie Chandler to volunteer to bring refreshments or drinks during general meetings. Without your help there will be no refreshments.

**Familypedia: the Biggest Genealogy Site You Probably Never Heard Of November 11, 2010**

Eastman's Online Genealogy Newsletter

Are you familiar with Familypedia, a web site with 84,983 online articles about deceased individuals plus another 106,312 genealogy-related pages?

Familypedia is a wiki, part of the commercial Wikia site. It is a place where **YOU** can create articles about your ancestors and easily link them to other articles about where and when they lived. The site is primarily text-based with biographical pages about deceased individuals. In some cases, you can find pictures of individuals as well as pedigree charts, maps, and other graphics. In most cases, each deceased person has a separate web page giving details about his or her life and also containing hyperlinks to other web pages that contain information about the person's relatives. Entire families can be hyperlinked together.

Familypedia can be used alone as a separate service, or it can be linked via hyperlinks to other online services, such as Ancestry.com, FamilySearch.org, or independent web pages created by individuals. Because the Familypedia web site has a wiki format, you can work collaboratively with others to create a network of articles about your ancestors and about those they lived and worked with. The site has no constraints on where the data resides, so you can provide links to your ancestors on whatever web sites host the information.

**We Need Your Help**

The following jobs need someone to help:

**Secretary: This is an elected or appointed SVGS board position. PLEASE VOLUNTEER.**

**DESPERATE NEED ! We are looking for a volunteer to assist as secretary for the board and for general meetings. This can be a shared position.**

**Newsletter Editor:** Need someone who is competent with spelling and composition who can elicit helpful information to share with our membership. Help is available.

**Refreshments:** Need a volunteer to supply and set up refreshments. Someone to oversee this activity for future meetings. No volunteer, no goodies at general meetings. Need a volunteer for the October meeting. Try it, you might like it. Currently no refreshments are planned for upcoming meetings.

**LAURA (SAGER) KENNEDY (1934 - 2010)****Laura is a current member of SVGS**

Laura A. Sager Kennedy, a native of Spokane, Washington, born July 25, 1934, was the third child of Hollis W. Sager & Mildred E. Leake Sager, who preceded her in death.

She crossed the mystic stream on 6th November, 2010, in Mount Vernon, WA. Cause of death was End Stage Lung Disease.



Laura had her schooling at Jefferson and Irving Elementary then Lewis & Clark High School. Her widowed mother moved her from Spokane to Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, where she graduated High School in 1952. She was confirmed as a young girl, by Rev. Joel Harper of Westminster Congregational Church in Spokane. She was married there by Dr. Clement Hahn on August 24th, 1952 to James Lee Kennedy, son of Robert Lee and Alberta Mabel Fidler Kennedy, both deceased. Laura became a member of that church's Lois Women's Chapter in 1961 and served as Treasurer in 1962-63. In 1964 she and her mother became Charter Members of Plymouth Congregational Church.

Laura and Jim owned several Spokane service stations and taverns until moving to Seattle in 1966. They lived in Lynnwood, Woodinville, Stanwood and Conway before moving north to Alger in 1974. Laura became a member of the Stanwood Fair Board and served as Horse Superintendent for two years. She was a 4-H leader for 20 years; leading the Boots and Saddles 4-H group, originally in Snohomish County, later called the Alger Roughriders. She was a member of the Skagit County Fair Board, representing the area horse clubs and served as Skagit County Fair Horse Superintendent one year. She formed the Alger Trail Blazers and belonged to the Northwest Appaloosa Club. She served several years as editor of the Alger Community Club Newsletter.

Laura worked with Jim ten years at their business, Big Jim's Automotive Center in Bellingham and Mount Vernon. They divorced in 1982 after 30 years of marriage. She lived on Lake Whatcom until 1991 when she moved back to Alger then to Mount Vernon in 2007. She learned to hunt elk near Ellensburg and fished for big Kings on the Skagit River. She was known on the river as "Eager Beaver" sidekick to "Peter Rabbit." The biggest fish she caught was 45 pounds in 1986 the same day Pete caught one weighing 49 pounds, she always said hers was prettier! In 1988 she joined the Skagit Valley Eagles, # 3242 in Burlington. She served in each officer's chair becoming Madam President 1992-93. She raised funds for Eagle's charities; Helmets for Eagle Kids being her favorite. She won many first place state awards for her charity work. She was a member of the Past President's group of Skagit County and the Eagle 25 Club of the State of Washington. She served as Eagle's District #4 Deputy in 2003-04 and was honored with being named Mrs. Eagle for 2006-07.

Laura loved compiling the family tree, extending all the branches. She was published in the Seattle Genealogy Bulletin, "BACK TO OUR ROOTS" in 1995. She served as Editor for the Skagit Valley Genealogy Society Newsletter for three years, and edited a novel of her pioneer family located at

Priest Lake, Idaho, begun by her mother in 1940.

She is survived by her five children; Son Robert J. (Joni), Daughter Holly A. Maupin, Daughter Julie K. Bell, Daughter Peggy J. Schultz (Kim), Daughter Penny S. Nordby (Lucas), her sister Eleanor J. Rader, sister-in-law Beula Sager, sister-in-law Pat (Willis) Benson and her former husband and forever friend Jim. She was predeceased by her brother Stanley L. Sager.

She was a friend to many and a leader in whatever endeavor she pursued. An artist, writer, and a loving mother who raised five good children. She will be the little bird on our shoulders.

She requested the Eagle's Auxiliary conduct a memorial service with a gathering of her friends and family at the Burlington Eagles on Sunday November 14, 2010 at 1:00 p.m. Kern Funeral Home & Skagit Cremation in charge of arrangements. **Published in Skagit Valley Herald Publishing Company on November 10, 2010**

**JOYCE SLANGER LISTON (1930-2010)****Joyce is a current member of SVGS**

Joyce Liston passed away peacefully Tuesday, October 26, 2010 in Mount Vernon, WA. She was just 5 days shy of her 80<sup>th</sup> birthday.

She was born in Helena, Montana on November 1, 1930 to Joseph Slanger and Bessie Randles. Joyce married Merton ("Red") Liston on January 8, 1948 and was married 54 years before his death in 2002.

She was an LPN and worked at numerous hospitals in Skagit county and also worked for the LPN Assn negotiating contracts for nurses. She made a difference in that field. She retired in 1992.

Joyce was an active member of Skagit Valley Genealogical Society and served for several years on the Society Board of Directors and for a short period as our monthly prize coordinator. She had to resign her positions due to poor health. She was also active in AA since October 15, 1986.

She loved cats, miniatures, quilt making, scrapbooking and cooking for large family gatherings. She was the mother of six children, survived by Joseph of Mount Vernon, John of Anacortes, and Nancy Howard of Mount Vernon. She was pre-deceased by her husband, two sons: Michael in 1949 and Timothy in 1957. Her eldest daughter Christine Curow passed away in 2004. She is also survived by a brother Dr. Gary Slanger of Lynnwood; a sister Mickey Keys of Bothell; and numerous grandchildren and other family including nieces and nephews.

A celebration of life was held in the Eagles basement in Anacortes on November 7, with potluck. Her complete obituary was published on November 1, 2010 In the Skagit Valley Herald.



**CAROLYN A. RATHVON (1934 - 2010)**

**Carolyn was a recent former member of SVGS**

Carolyn Rathvon passed away after sudden illness on October 31, 2010 in Mount Vernon, WA at the age of 76 years.

She was born October 5, 1934, in Hoquiam, WA, the older daughter of Charlie and Muriel Parker Mickelson.

In 1938 the family moved to Wrangell, Alaska. Carolyn graduated from high school as class valedictorian in 1952. She came to Skagit Valley to attend what was then known as Junior College, now Skagit Valley College. Upon graduation two years later she began work in Sedro-Woolley.

She married John E. Rathvon on February 8, 1956, at the First Baptist Church in Sedro-Woolley. They established their first home in Burlington, living there 39 years before moving to Mount Vernon in 1994. They raised one daughter Barbara Ellen (Rathvon) Pickens.

After 21 years as Accounts Payable Coordinator for the Finance Office of the City of Mount Vernon, Carolyn retired in December 1999.

She did considerable traveling in the United States and had traveled on six continents. She fully enjoyed her family.

She was a long time member of First Baptist Church, Sedro-Woolley and had served as church clerk and Sunday School secretary at various times. She belonged to **Skagit Valley Genealogical Society**, taking a great interest in tracing her genealogy with a special pride in her Finnish heritage.

Carolyn is survived by her husband, John; daughter and son-in-law, Barbara and Ray Pickens; and a sister, Nancy Mickelson of Lewisburg, Tennessee.

Her parents preceded her in death. At her request there will be no local services. Her remains will be buried with her maternal grandparents in the family plot in Brooklyn, Connecticut.

Arrangements are under the care of Hawthorne Funeral Home, Mount Vernon, WA. **Published in Skagit Valley Herald Publishing Company on November 3, 2010**

**Sources for Family History Books Online**

By [Kimberly Powell](#), About.com Guide (see Below)

**1. [BYU Family History Archive](#)**

The BYU Family History Archive, a free collection of over 17,000 family histories, local histories, city directories and other genealogy books online.

**2. [Google Books](#)**

Select "all books" to include books which allow viewing of over a million books, many out of copyright, but also others for which publishers have given Google permission to display limited book previews (which often includes the Table of Contents and Index pages, so you can easily check to see if a particular book includes information about your ancestor). See Find Family History in Google Books

**3. [HeritageQuest Online](#)**

HeritageQuest is a genealogical resource offered for free by many libraries across the United States and Canada. Most participating libraries even offer their patrons remote access from a home computer. The HeritageQuest book collection includes about 22,000 digitized family histories and local histories.

**4. [Internet Text Archive](#)**

The nonprofit Archive.org, which many of you may know for its Wayback Machine, also hosts a rich text archive of books, articles and other texts. The biggest collection of interest to family historians, is the [American Libraries collection](#), which includes over 300 city directories and 1000 family histories free for searching, viewing, downloading and printing. The [U.S. Library of Congress collection](#) and [Canadian Libraries collection](#) also include genealogies and local histories.

**5. [Canadian Local Histories Online](#)**

The Our Roots project bills itself as the world's largest collection of published Canadian local histories. Thousands of digital copies in French and English are available online, searchable by date, subject, author or keyword.

**6. [Hathi Trust Digital Library](#)**

The Hathi Trust Digital Library hosts a large online (and free) Ancestry and Genealogy collection with searchable text and digitized versions of thousands of genealogy and local history books

**7. [Their Own Words](#)**

A digital collection of books, pamphlets, letters, and diaries, dating from the latter eighteenth through the early twentieth century, that reflects the history of the United States. The 50+ books in the collection include a few biographies, autobiographies, and military journals and regimental histories.

***Search and View Family Histories Online for Free (see above)***

By [Kimberly Powell](#), About.com Guide

Published family and local histories offer a potential rich source of information about your personal family history. Even if a family genealogy has not been published for your ancestors, local and family histories can offer insight into the places your ancestors lived and the people they may have encountered during their lifetime. Before you head to the local library or bookstore, however, take time to explore the hundreds of thousands of genealogies, local histories and other items of genealogical interest available online for free!

## Is It Unverified Data and Will It Always be Unverified?

By Dick Eastman excerpted: read complete article at EOGN.com

Warning: this article contains personal opinions . November 03, 2010

Editor's note: This is possibly one of the best and most important information for anyone, especially to beginners!

I have been fascinated with comments concerning "unverified information on the Internet" and comments about linking to family trees without verification. I agree with some of the comments and disagree with some others.

First of all, I believe in verification of every bit of information I obtain. I don't care if a fact came from the Internet, from a book, or even from an original record. I still want to verify every bit of information I read. (Most original records are correct but you will even find occasional errors in original records.) Always look to see who reported the information or who wrote the book I am reading. Even if I recognize the author as being a leading genealogy expert, I still want to verify the claim independently. I don't believe anyone!

So you think I would be against unsourced, unverified information on the Internet? Wrong!

When I am looking for genealogy information about my ancestors, I want to see **EVERYTHING**. I want to see the sourced information, the unsourced information, the verbal claims from someone's Aunt Lydia, and even the guesswork. If I don't know where great-great-granddad was born, I want to see every hint and every bit of guesswork. I want to know what everyone else is thinking. I am hoping that someone, somewhere has an idea that I have haven't thought of so far. Sure, when I read someone else's guesswork or facts, I'll check them out and I will ask questions, but I still want all the hints.

The proof is always up to me, regardless of where I found the claimed information.

Yes, I constantly look at unsourced databases and I look for clues every time I see an ancestor of mine mentioned, especially if that claim is different from what I believe to be factual. A couple of times the "facts" that I determined in past years have later been proven wrong when new evidence was shown to me, evidence that I was later able to verify.

**NOTE:** I "lost" more than 100 ancestors one evening when I was able to verify a new claim I found in an online database. It contradicted something I previously believed to be true. Using the new claim as a hint, I followed a new path of investigation and found that the new "fact" was, indeed, correct. The information I previously believed to be correct had a significant error: two men of the same name lived in the same small town, something I didn't know previously. I had researched the ancestry of the wrong man!

I would never have recognized that error and been able to later determine the truth if I hadn't looked at an unsourced claim that was different from what I believed to be the truth.

Bring on the Internet databases! I want to see Ancestry.com's user-contributed family trees. I want to see the I.G.I. I want to see the Ancestral File. I want to see OneGreatFamily.com's database. I want to see New FamilySearch. I want to see the handwritten notes of every professional and amateur genealogist who shares ancestry with me. I want to see more of every bit of conjecture that I can find.

What I do see is an education problem. A lot of newcomers will believe "I saw it on the Internet so it must be true." That is a problem. In fact, it is a huge problem but we will not solve it by sticking our heads in the sand and pretending that nobody else has information that can be trusted or is even worth evaluating. The ostrich approach doesn't work very well for ostriches, it certainly does not work well for genealogists who seek the truth.

What we need is a warning label: "**Warning: the information contained here may include erroneous data.**" That disclaimer should be in a big, bold font on the top of every genealogy web site, followed by a hyperlink to an article about why we want to verify every scrap of information we obtain.

We also should encourage our newcomers to document their sources and to include that documentation when posting information online. Of course, this is not a one-time effort. Newcomers appear all the time. We are watching a parade of newcomers. Some will drop out, some will slow down, and others will follow the parade route for years. Our challenge is to educate all of them early in the parade.

Do source citations "prove" anything? I would suggest they do not. Instead, I believe source citations are useful only as a courtesy to others that say, "Here is where I found the information I believe to be correct. You should check this citation and other sources for yourself."

A source citation simply is an example of being polite, trying to help others save time and effort. We still want others to verify the same information defined in the source citation. The genealogists who read the source citations can also offer valuable feedback: if 10 or 50 or 500 other genealogists look at these same source citation that I did and they all came to the same conclusion that I did, that's valuable feedback for me. Then again, if they all looked at the same source citation that I did and many of them came to a DIFFERENT conclusion, that's even MORE valuable feedback! Please let me know of any errors you

**The information you contribute can help another person. Maybe dozens of others.**



P O Box 715  
Conway, Washington 98238-0715

*Have you re-newed your dues?*  
**It's Time, Do It Today**

### ***Tracing Ancestors in Voter Records***

Posted by [Diane](#) Haddad of Family Tree Magazine (EMagazine)

Hopefully, many of you cast your vote in the recent election. After you first rejoice over the imminent disappearance of political ads, you may wonder if you can use voter records to track down your ancestors.

Maybe you can. State and local archives and libraries, town halls, and the [Family History Library](#) (FHL) may have town or county lists of registered voters or those who paid poll taxes.

Search your ancestral state archives website for *voting*, and try running a keyword search of the [FHL online catalog](#) on the town, county or state name and the word *voting*. You can rent promising microfilm by visiting your local [FamilySearch Center](#). Subscription website [Ancestry.com](#) has some voting-related records and digitized books, so if you're a member, run the same search of [its online catalog](#).

*Editor's note: Try searching your State Library for voter registration lists. Many have been microfilmed or digitally restored. This is a great resource for placing your ancestor in a location at a given time.*

[You'll find more resources for US counties in the Family Tree Sourcebook: Your Essential Directory of American County and Town Records, available from ShopFamilyTree.com.](#) Try looking for this resource book in our society collection at the Burlington Library.

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