

## Publishing Your Family History in a Day

By Leslie Klippel

October is Family History month and a good way to honor your ancestors is to publish their story. Since genealogical research is never finished, decide now to go ahead and publish the information you have. You can always publish a second edition later. Genealogy computer programs make publishing a relatively easy task and with some prior preparation, I maintain you can create a good-looking, readable, family heirloom book in one day. Here's how.

### Decide Which Family

The first step is to decide which ancestor to memorialize. I base that decision on the amount of information I have about a line and what I know about the individual lives of the people concerned. Your decision also depends on how many pictures you have for a family, since pictures make the book much more appealing to the reader. If you don't have ancestral photographs or if you only have a few, you can enhance the book with locality pictures downloaded from the Internet or copied from books. One of my most priceless pictures is of the church in Pennsylvania where my ancestors worshiped in the 1700s that I scanned from a book about Lutheran ministers. Using image editing soft-

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ware, I ended up with a good looking picture to put alongside the modern picture of the present church.

If your people lived in San Francisco, Jonestown or Galveston during the disasters in those places, there are lots of pictures on the Internet to download. Go to <http://memory.loc.gov> for the Library of Congress locality picture collection to download high resolution pictures from all over the United States.

Most places in Europe now have sites on the Internet where you can get pictures of the village church, nearby castle and other local places of interest. Explore the Internet a bit and you will come up with pictorial treasures to enhance your publication. Be careful about the resolution of downloaded pictures as it may not be high enough to print well. Sometimes you can order a nice print of the locale that would be worth the extra expense. It's cheaper than flying there!

### Decide Which Format

Next decide whether the book will contain ancestral information (Ahnentafel Book) or descendency information (Modified Register Book). I have created both types of books in

Family Tree Maker, Ancestral Quest, Roots Magic and PAF, and while the following instructions apply equally to the other programs such as Legacy and Reunion, their publication features are not included in the chart (see Table I). Whatever program you use, you need to check out its book creating functions and read the Help pages to know exactly how to create your book and what kinds of pages it can include. You also need to notice in what file format you can save your creation. Some programs allow more options than others.

Decide which forward pages you want to include. Preface and Dedication pages are optional, but you should have a Title page and Contents page. Some programs will include the picture you have attached to the individual and marked as Default. Others will not automatically print any pictures. In either case, you need to include some blank pages on which to print pictures later. Assemble your picture pages in your word processing program with captions and any other needed text. You can also include scanned documents such as marriage licenses and baptismal certificates. The more documentation you add, the more interesting will be your final

product.

### Print a Scratch Copy

When you have decided what to include in your book, create it in your program and print it on scratch paper. You need to do this in order to find grammatical and typographical errors, decide where Notes need to be changed into Sources, add or re-write biographical information and make any other necessary changes. Remember that long biographical passages should be broken into shorter paragraphs for easier reading. Biographical information regarding brothers and sisters of the ancestors is not included in the Ahnentafel layout, but can be added to the biographical notes of the parents of each family. Another hint is to not capitalize the cause of death since it appears as part of a sentence in the text. This cleaning up may take more than a day. It's a good idea to always enter your information with publication in mind.

### Add More Information

As you start writing the biographical information, you will probably think of more pictures you wish you had taken. If it is possible, plan a trip to go and take the pictures. Even pictures of the locale as it is today add color and ambiance to the story of your ancestors. It is really

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true that a picture is worth a thousand words

As you start to write the story of your family, you may also realize that there is other research you need to do. Stop the book, do the research and then continue with the added information. Since you probably won't create this book again, you won't be sorry if you stop and do it right. Hint: A lot of background material for your story can be found on the Internet such as historical timelines and history of the locality where your people lived.

### Notes and Sources

The book will look best if you put the sources into the program's source template and save the notes field for biographical

information. You need to decide whether to include the notes and sources in each chapter or place them at the end of the book. It's an individual personal preference since either way works well. Some programs allow headers and footers which enhance the look of the pages.

After you have all the notes, sources and biographical information inserted the way you want, create the book again. This time you might be able to use the preview feature to look over the book and see if it looks and reads the way you want. When using the preview feature, you will have to make a note of any changes you want to make, close the book function and make the changes in the program - an awkward procedure. That's why I advised printing the book on scratch paper the first time around and you may need to print it on scratch paper the second time also.

	FAMILY TREE MAKER	ROOTS MAGIC	ANCESTRAL QUEST	PAF
Charts to include	Various chart formats including fan, drop, ancestral, hourglass, time line, maps	Pedigree, Family group, box chart report, relationship, descendancy list, kinship list, box charts	No charts included - would have to add them separately and would not be in Contents	No charts included - would have to add them separately and would not be in Contents
Blank pages	Can add any number and can add a title to them	Can add but can't title them. Can add a text page	Can't add	Can't add
Cover page	No cover page	Cover page with title, font options and image	No cover page	No cover page
Title page	Yes with full editing	Yes with limited editing	No title page	No title page
Table of Contents	Yes with no font editing	Yes with font size editing	No table of contents	No table of contents
Index	Yes with some editing	Yes with full editing	Yes, no editing	Yes, no editing
Pictures	No pictures included	Disappointing; edit changes pic	One photo per person, no caption	One photo per person, no caption
Ease of compiling	Pretty easy	More complicated, but quite manageable	Very easy	Very easy
Ease of preview	Has to open Adobe Reader so it's a bit slow	Cannot preview until you generate the book, but it's fast.	Very easy	Very easy
Chapters	Allows you to start each chapter on an odd-numbered page	Starts each generation on a new page but have to add blank pages to get charts, etc. on odd #d page	Each generation on a new page	Each generation on a new page
Print options	Can print from FTM or export to Acrobat (*.pdf)	Can print or save as Acrobat (*.pdf) or wordprocessor file (*.rtf) (charts won't print in .rtf)	Print or save as .pdf, .txt, .rtf or .wpd. In wordprocessor, can add pic pages, but throws index off	Print or save as .rft. In wordprocessor, can add pic pages, but throws index off
What I don't like	No cover page, pedigree charts use too much paper	Printing two-sided didn't work well.	Not enough features	Not nearly enough features
What I like	Many optional charts to include, blank pages allowed	Photo tree and variety of possible chapters, blank pages allowed	Edit support sentences for other events such as cause of death	Simplicity for a quick book to send by e-mail w/o photos

**Table 1: Comparison of Publishing Capabilities of Various Genealogy Software**

## Final Preview and Print

Once you have done all the preparation, laid out your picture pages in your wordprocessor, edited and re-edited the contents, you are ready to create your book in one day! You can either print your book yourself or send the file to a book-publishing company. You can easily find one

that will print limited copies to order by searching on the Internet for genealogy publishing. If you print the book yourself, do it two-sided on 60 lb. acid-free paper. Bind it with comb binding, velobind or have it hard-bound at a bookbinding shop. Another option for all programs except PAF, is to save your book as a .pdf and send it to

your relatives on a CD. That's probably the most inexpensive way to publish and allows you to include other photos that you didn't put in the book. However you decide to distribute your creation, send the copies to your relatives and enjoy the thanks and congratulations for a job well done!

## Spider Webs: MacGenealogist.com, Homestead Records, London Historical Records, Canadian Immigration Records

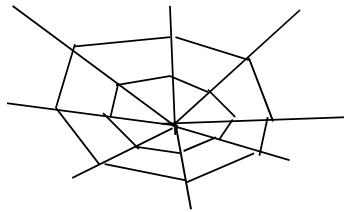
### MacGenealogist.com

Those who make their computer of choice for genealogy the Apple Macintosh will be pleased to know that Ben Sayer has created a web site for genealogists and family historians who prefer the Macintosh. The site is organized as a blog (Web log) with "how-to" articles, tips, news items, reviews and videos about genealogy and Macintosh software and hardware. The videos are instructional screen recordings showing step-by-step solutions to common problems. A few articles on the site include: *A Better Way to Locate Unconnected People in iFamily for Leopard*, *Restoring Family Photos with iPhoto*, and *Secrets to How to Name Files that Contain a Misspelled Name*. New content is added on a continuing basis. To visit the site, go to: <http://macgenealogist.com>

### Homestead Records

Footnote.com, the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), the National Parks Service, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and FamilySearch announced a project to index hundreds of thousands of original Homestead Records and make them available online. Most of these records, primarily the case files which contain the applications and correspondence for the homestead, have never been microfilmed.

The Homestead Act of 1862 caused a significant change in the way Federal land was distributed. It came in the middle of a civil war that tore this nation into two opposing factions. Yet the Homestead Act caused a major shift in population to the sparsely settled West. It did not take long for people to see that the homestead was a great way to own land much sooner than they could if they saved enough money to purchased land.



The project has already started. Footnote.com has already digitized and indexed the Homestead Records from Broken Bow, Nebraska which includes almost 40,000 records. These records can be seen on the Footnote Web site. As more records are completed, they will be added to the Web site.

Recently Footnote.com released Footnote Pages, a new feature which can be used to create and share the following for an individual, group or event:

- Interactive timelines and maps
- Photo galleries
- Stories
- Links to other related Footnote Pages and Footnote Members

To learn more, go to: [www.footnote.com](http://www.footnote.com)

### London Historical Records

Ancestry.co.uk is adding the City of London's historical 'London records,' said to be the largest record collection in existence. The London records cover 500 years of the city's history. Ancestry has secured the exclusive rights to digitize and host key records from London Metropolitan Archives (LMA) and the Guildhall Library Manuscripts and make them available online. The LMA historical record collection, owned and managed by the City of London, is considered to be of internationally important, as London was the capital of the British Empire for about 300 years.

The collection includes parish records, school records, electoral registers, wills, lists of workhouse laborers from the Poor Law ledgers and a comprehensive list of those granted 'Freedom of the City'. The records begin with the early 16th Century and continue to 2006. To view the records, one must now visit LMA or the Guildhall Library, both located in Central London. The collection will take several years to index and image. The first records are expected to appear on Ancestry.co.uk in early 2009. The priority for indexing the records for the coming year is:

- Parish records: baptisms, marriages and burials dating from the 1530s to the 20th Century from more than 10,000 Greater London parish registers
- Poor Law documents: workhouse registers from 1834 onwards and other records - relating to the administration of poor relief
- London school admissions: records from 843 individual London schools dating from the early Victorian times through to 1911

To view the records, a subscription membership must be purchased at [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk)

### Canadian Immigration Records

Ancestry.ca, a subscription service providing access to Canadian records useful in genealogy research, has added the Canadian Passenger Lists, 1865-1935. The indexed records include more than 7.2 million individuals, and include name, estimated birth year, year of arrival, ports of arrival, port of departure, ship name, occupation, final destination in Canada and other family members listed with their relationship indicated. More than 310,000 pages of scanned images can be viewed. The ports of arrival include Halifax, Saint

John, North Sydney, Quebec City, Montreal, Vancouver, Victoria and even east coast ports in the US where many arrived before proceeding directly to Canada overland. The list also includes immigrants who came by land. Some individuals on the list were vacationers, businessmen, entertainers and foreign government officials who came temporarily.

It is estimated that 37 percent of all Canadians (11.6 million individuals) are descendants of these individuals in this collection. During this period, most immigrants were British, Irish, Ukrainian, Russian, German, Chinese and Polish. European immigrants usually came to Great Britain and changed to transatlantic ships leaving from ports such as Liverpool, London and Glasgow for Canada. Immigrants arriving at west coast ports were usually from Asia, Australia, or Honolulu. Some of the immigrants to Canada eventually made their way into the United States because it was easier to immigrate through Canada to the U.S.

The records also include a number of ships that never arrived, including RMS The Empress of Ireland, a passenger ship which was rammed in dense fog on the St Lawrence River near Quebec on the 29th of May 1914 and sank in just 14 minutes. The 1,012 passengers and crew all drowned.

Ancestry.ca began in January 2006. It now has 400 million Canadian names in collections which include the 1851, 1891, 1901, 1906 and 1911 Censuses of Canada, Ontario and British Columbia vital records from as early as 1813, Quebec vital records (The Drouin collection), 1621-1957 and U.S. / Canada Border Crossings from 1895 to 1956. Ancestry.ca is part of the network of Ancestry websites owned by The Generations Network Inc.

The Canadian Passenger Lists, 1865-1935 will be available to Canada and World Deluxe subscribers and through a 14-day free trial period. Go to: [www.ancestry.ca/CAPassengerLists](http://www.ancestry.ca/CAPassengerLists). To subscribe to Ancestry.ca, go to: [www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca)

## Preserving Personal Experiences

By Allin Kingsbury

A group of teenagers in San Jose in the Willow Glen area of San Jose, California, have been recording the experiences of veterans, mostly from World War 2, on film and making these films available to the public on the Internet. The teenagers are paired with veterans and interview them, recording the interviews and making a short video of the interview. The stories not only tell the history of World War II as seen by the veterans participating in the war, but they also tell a lot about each person's personality and character. The interviews would be a big help in compiling a personal history of each individual, especially for a family historian for a family historian frustrated by the lack of information available about an individual.

Chelsea Mao joined the program as a fifteen-year old junior from Leland High School in San Jose. Instead of interviewing a World War II veteran, Chelsea interviewed the widow of a soldier killed in Iraq. The couple learned that they were expecting a child. The husband arranged a visit to the states to see his wife and the baby. His leave was delayed so the young soldier could serve another mission. He was killed before he could make that trip home. The baby was born two weeks after the father's death. The story deeply touched Chelsea.

Kartik Venkatraman, a sophomore at Harker School, interviewed Bernard Lewis, a World War II fighter pilot. He was shot down as he flew his 22<sup>nd</sup> mission over Germany. Toward the end of the war, Germany was running low on supplies, including food. Bernard was taken to a prison camp in eastern Germany where conditions were deplorable. Six months later the captives welcomed liberation by the Russians, and they finally got enough to eat. Lewis was 21 years old when he was liberated.

All of the students participating in the program were moved by the stories told in the interviews. The experience was unlike the history classes in school where they only learned of the dates and places of events in the war and the names of the leaders. They now saw how the war changed the lives of the individuals who

were in the war, and they shared the feelings related by the veterans of the war.

The students also developed skills in interviewing and computer skills as they prepared their videos of the interviews. A good interview not only covered the war experience, but it began with the early childhood of the veteran and the events leading to the War. The interview also covers life after military service, what it was like to come home and begin civilian life, marry and raise a family, and start a career. The videos were created using Adobe Premier, a professional level software package for making and editing video productions. Most of the teenagers had never heard of the software when they joined to project, but eventually they developed the computer and software expertise needed to produce a good video.

The interview project was created in 1998 by Warren Hegg, the Executive Director of the Digital Clubhouse Network. With a small number of high school students from the Rose Garden area in San Jose, they began interviewing veterans. According to Hegg, the World War II veterans are in their mid-eighties, and are dying at a rate of about 2000 per day. Many suffered debilitating diseases such as dementia and cannot achieve a good interview. Soon the opportunity to record this part of history will be lost.

Since the program began, the students have been recruiting friends. The program is expanding, not only in San Jose, but in other parts of the country. The group is well funded with equipment donated by Hewlett Packard and a \$75,000 grant to be paid over a three year period from The Morgan Family Foundation, a nonprofit organization founded by Applied Materials, another Bay Area Company. The group also receives support from The History Channel, The Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute, and Youth Service America. These organizations are active in promoting education and history projects.

The interviews can be seen on *Stories of Service*, a Web site that is owned by the Digital Clubhouse Network (DCN), a New York nonprofit organization which produces technology-based programs for children. In addition to the veteran experiences,

DCN has produced videos documenting African-American history, children with serious illness, and a video about coping with a death in the family.

The veteran interviews have received some attention and favorable publicity. The City of San Jose has recognized the participants and has played the videos of the interviews at City Hall to commemorate Veterans Day. To reach out, DCN has a kit for creating an interview of a veteran to be added to the Web site. For someone to far from a group that is preparing interviews, this is an excellent way to obtain the interview.

The project has an obvious limitation. It is only about veterans.

There are many others who have a fascinating story to tell. Someday, there will be someone who will wish that they knew more about that individual. Anyone with access to the person could do the interview. They would not even need high-tech equipment. A video camera on a tripod in the corner would do the recording quite well. Or a tape recorder on the table could get all the words. The interview need not be made into a professional quality video. A transcription of the interview could be typed on the computer.

In any event, you will want to look at the interviews on the Stories for Service Web site at: [www.digiclub.org/sofs/](http://www.digiclub.org/sofs/)

## Software of Interest: MacFamilyTree 5.3

A Beta version of MacFamilyTree 5.3 is now available from Synium Software of Mainz, Germany. The developers at Synium have completely redesigned two core components of the program and have added or improved many of the features. The kinship technology, a core component that defines complex relationships, has been rewritten to handle any complex relationship when making individually defined lists of persons, families, events and places. Users can also select which types of events are included in the various reports, and can refine the layout, look and feel interactively and see the results on screen as they type or drag data with the mouse. The entire Reports section of the software has been rewritten.

Those that carry their genealogy research wherever they go should take a look at the new version (1.2) of *MobileFamilyTree*, the companion application for the iPhone and iPod touch. With this software, users can browse the persons and families within the MacFamilyTree database. *MobileFamilyTree* also can display a family in a graphic chart on your iPhone. Information added on the road is then synchronized back to the users Mac when the trip is over.

New features and improvements in MacFamilyTree 5.3 Beta 1 include:

- Virtual Globe now has an "Events" list for easier navigation. A click on any event in the Events side pane causes an immediate jump to the highlighted geographic location.
- An improved Search now supports combinations of multiple search strings: search similar to searches with Google or Spotlight.
- New Family and Person Bookmarks can tag the various instances currently being changed, or accessed often. Users can quickly navigate between those Bookmarks while performing a complex research.
- Users can optionally downscale huge pictures while adding them to a tree. Users need not import digital photos in RAW format to the MacFamilyTree database.
- The new WebKit-based Reports can now interactively customize: Person, Kinship and Distinctive Persons Reports, Lists for Places, Events and Birthdays. Users define which information is required. The new Reports have the same flexibility in selecting font styles and sizes as before.

Other fixes and improvements include:

- Rewritten Kinship Report more accurately handles complex inter- and intra-family relationships over multiple generations.
- Improved quick navigation labels precisely define the context in which the user is currently working or browsing.
- There is better handling of date format inconsistencies and individual notations for incomplete date entries and/or modifiers.

During Public Beta testing, only U.S. English and German versions are available. More languages will be available with the final product. MacFamilyTree 5.2.6 supports the following languages: US English, Danish, Finnish, French, German, Italian, Spanish and Swedish. Many other language versions are due to be released as subsequent free updates.

MacFamilyTree 5 requires Mac OS X 10.4.9 or higher, a PPC Macintosh with 512 MByte RAM (1024 recommended), ATI Radeon 7500 or NVidia GeForce 4 MX graphics chipset or better and a minimum of 16 MByte video memory. All Macintosh computers with Intel processors and Intel's GMA 950 graphics chipset or better are supported.

MacFamilyTree 5 is fully compatible with Mac OS X 10.5 Leopard. Note: Safari 3.0 or newer, (available free at Apple's 'Downloads' section) must be installed for MacFamilyTree 5.3 to work.

MacFamilyTree 5.3 Final is expected to begin shipping in early October of 2008 and it will be a free update for all owners of MacFamilyTree 4 or later if they have a valid registration key for their current version of the program. MacFamilyTree 5 is priced at \$49.00 and upgrades are \$25.00. A demo version is also available for download. The companion application *MobileFamilyTree*, which allows users to link iPhone or iPod touch with MacFamilyTree on a Mac is available separately from the Apple Application Store for \$4.99.

Although this Public Beta of MacFamilyTree 5.3 has been submitted to heavy internal testing, crashes and even the loss of data are possible. Beta versions of MacFamilyTree 5.3 should not be used in a live, or in a production environment, and users are advised to test at their own risk. The Beta version can be downloaded at: [www.versiontracker.com/dyn/moreinfo/macosx/8672](http://www.versiontracker.com/dyn/moreinfo/macosx/8672)

# Of Interest

Australian Watchdog, Online Genealogy Courses, ProQuest & Google to Offer Newspapers Online, MyHeritage Raises \$15 Million, Vigo County Indiana Records

## Australian Watchdog

The Australian consumer watchdog is investigating 141 Australian Web sites suspected of scamming the public. The suspicious sites include genealogy/family history services, online DNA testing, lotteries, premium mobile services and arbitrage betting providers. The investigations are a follow-up after an international sweep of the Internet conducted by consumer protection agencies. A total of 751 Australian sites were monitored in the sweep and the 141 sites were selected for in-depth investigations. Web site operators must be able to substantiate claims they make on the Internet, and those who are unable to substantiate their claims will be forced to correct the problems or cease operating on the Internet.

We wish the watchdog success and wish that similar watchdogs would actively pursue similar criminals all over the world. Criminals are attracted to the Internet because it allows them to cross boundaries and operate anonymously. At least the Australians feel that the same rules apply to doing business online as offline.

## Online Genealogy Courses

The International Society for British Genealogy and Family History (ISBGFH) in Salt Lake City and Pharos Teaching and Tutoring, a British company, are now partners in a venture to offer online courses to those researching their roots in the British Isles. ISBGFH has presented the British Institute in Salt Lake City since 2001. The group wants to offer educational opportunities to those who cannot travel to Salt Lake City to the class room sessions each year due to rising costs for fuel and lodging. Pharos has worked with distance learning and offers a selection of programs in British and Irish research. Sherry Irvine, an instructor for Pharos, has taught for five years at the British Institute.

The instructors for the courses are Sherry Moore and George Morgan. Sherry has taught family history classes for more than 20 years for college adult education and credit programs. She has also taught for the Institute of Genealogy and Historical Research (IGHR), Samford University, Birmingham, Alabama, and at the British Institute, Salt Lake City. She also has led study tours to England and Scotland for IGHR from 1996 to 2006. She has several years of experience teaching on the Internet. Sherry is the author of *Your English Ancestry* (2nd ed. 1998) and *Scottish Ancestry: Research Methods for Family Historians* (2003), and co-author of *Finding Your Canadian Ancestors* (2007)

George G. Morgan is president of Aha! Seminars, Inc., a company that provides seminars for library personnel and genealogical seminars to societies worldwide. He has been a corporate training manager for both Sears, Roebuck & Co. and IBM/Advantis/IBM Global Network. He is the author of five books and hundreds of articles and columns in magazines. His most recent book, *The Official Guide to Ancestry.com*, was released in May 2007. He also wrote *How to Do Everything with Your Genealogy*. George is the co-host on *The Genealogy Guys*<sup>SM</sup> Podcast.

The courses being offered are open to everyone, regardless of ISBGFH membership. There is a substantial discount in price for members of ISBGFH. Currently, three courses are available:

- *US Immigration and Naturalization*, taught by George G. Morgan
- *England, Scotland and Wales Online: Transfer Your Skills*, taught by Sherry Irvine
- *British Isles Research – Solving Problems, Planning Strategies*, taught by Sherry Irvine

The online classes begin on dates between October 2008 and September 2009. You can read about the contents of each course, schedule, and cost of the courses at the Web sites of the two organizations at: [www.pharostutors.com](http://www.pharostutors.com) or [www.isbgh.org](http://www.isbgh.org)

## ProQuest & Google to Offer Newspapers Online

ProQuest and Google have formed a partnership to digitize hundreds of millions of pages of local newspapers and post them on the Web. The old local newspapers are a good source of information for genealogists, and often have information about births marriages and deaths of individuals. According to ProQuest, the ProQuest/Google partnership does not impact ProQuest's other digital newspaper offerings such as ProQuest Historical Newspapers. In the partnership, ProQuest will provide the newspaper content and Google will provide the access to the information. ProQuest currently holds more than 10,000 newspaper titles, most of which are pristine master film copies. This high level of microfilm quality allows better scanned images, which will ultimately deliver more accurate OCR results for users. The work of the partnership will begin immediately and is expected to be ongoing over multiple years.

## MyHeritage Raises \$15 Million

MyHeritage, a family tree Web site with a network of more than 25 million family members worldwide, has acquired Pearl Street Software, the creator of the GenCircles web site and Family Tree Legends, a genealogy program. The company has announced automatic photo tagging technology that is expected to change the way people interact with, store, and share, digital photos. The company has raised another \$15 Million in venture capital. The company plans to use the investment to expand the staff, establish commercial operations in London and continue translating advanced technology into a consumer-friendly service. Index Ventures led the financing, and its partner Saul Klein will join Simon Levene of Accel Partners on the board. For more information, or to visit their Web site, go to: [www.myheritage.com](http://www.myheritage.com)

## Vigo County Indiana Records

Pat Mansard, the county clerk at Vigo County Indiana announced plans to destroy the old records in her custody. Legally she has responsibility for the management and safeguarding of the records. The records in question are from the treasurer, the sheriff, and the coroner. They fill a room on the first floor of a building in downtown Terre Haute.

Any genealogist with roots in Vigo County would automatically oppose the destruction of the records. The Wabash Valley Genealogy Society seems to have remained calm as the local news media carried pieces of the story. They contacted the county clerk and after analyzing the circumstances, they are going to review the records and provide storage of any of the records that have any genealogical or historical value. Of course all old records have some historical value.

The problem seems to be that the records have been stored in a place not suitable for preservation in the past. The present location has excellent conditions for storage. However, the records have water damage and mildew from earlier times. As time goes on, the state of the records will deteriorate. The records need to be digitized which has two major benefits to anyone interested in the records. First, the digitized images will not be subject to further deterioration, and second, the information could easily be made accessible to those interested in them.

The Wabash Valley Genealogy Society said they would make digital copies of the records with any genealogical or historical value. For a small county historical society, this is a formidable task. However, it is necessary if the records are to be available for future generations. Vigo County has one of the most complete set of records in Indiana. There has not been a courthouse fire or any other major disaster to affect the records. It is hoped that the society will have a working relationship with the county clerk to preserve the records.

## Recently Published: The Jews of Sing Sing



*The Jews of Sing Sing : Gotham Gangsters and Genuvims*, by Ron Arons, is exactly what one would expect from the title. Some may think that Jewish families practicing their religion would have no criminals, but these families have their "black sheep" just like every religious and ethnic group. The book is a collection of biographies of Jewish criminals, and is of interest to family historians because the stories are well-researched and well told. The book is of interest to almost anyone who likes

a good detective story. It is a serious book which analyzes the individuals and their lives. Historians, criminal justice professionals, and sociologists will find the book useful on a professional level

Ron Arons provides insight into the backgrounds of these criminals, selected primarily from Jewish criminals living in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Arons traces a pattern of dysfunctional families, alcoholic parents, and peer pressure in the high-crime ghettos of New York City where many of these criminals grew up. The entire book is a well-written social study as well as a collection of criminal biographies. He relates his stories with great detail, but with little sympathy for the criminals.

Ron Arons is a master storyteller and a skilled researcher. He

## Quotable Poet

Henry got me with child,

Knowing that I could not bring forth life

Without losing my own.

In my youth therefore I entered the portals of dust.

Traveler, it is believed in the village where I lived

That Henry loved me with a husband's love,

But I proclaim from the dust

That he slew me to gratify his hatred.

*Amanda Barker*

from *Spoon River Anthology*

By Edgar Lee Masters (1869-1950)

American Poet

has the details to make the biographies complete. This book is filled with source citations, listing documents and other sources of information for the biographies.

Arons interest in Jewish criminals began with his own family history research. He learned that his great-grandfather did time at Sing Sing. It had been a family secret, but Arons found it fascinating to learn more about his family. Eventually, he traced his roots to England, Poland, Romania, Ukraine, Belarus, and Lithuania.

Arons comes with excellent credentials as an author. He won a Hackman Research Residency Award from the New York State Archives to continue his research of New York Jewish criminals in 2005. He was invited to appear on PBS television series, *The Jewish Americans*, as the acknowledged expert on Jewish criminals of New York's Lower East Side in January 2008. Arons has toured the United States, giving educational presentations and lectures on Jewish criminals and Jewish genealogy. Recently he was a guest speaker at the California Genealogical Society where he discussed *Best Bet Web Sites for Genealogical Research*.

*The Jews of Sing Sing* is available from the larger online bookstores, as well as from the author's web site at <http://www.jewsofsingsing.com/store.php>, or from RootsBooks.com at <http://www.rootsbooks.com/shop.php?i=1569803331>. It can be ordered at your local bookstore by specifying ISBN 1569803331. The book retails for \$22.95 in hardcover but a good shopper can find discounted copies for about \$15. For more information, visit the book's Web site at: <http://www.jewsofsingsing.com>

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## Silicon Valley Computer Genealogy Group

[www.svcomputergenealogy.org](http://www.svcomputergenealogy.org)

Richard D. Rands, President rrandse@earthlink.net (650) 969 6567

Please send inquiries, address changes, new memberships, and membership renewals to:  
SV-CGG, P.O. Box 23670, San Jose, CA 95153-3670 or leslyk@comcast.net

SV-CGG meets monthly, except December, on the second Saturday of the month from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints building, 875 Quince Avenue, Santa Clara, CA. We offer classes and sponsor guest speakers at meetings to help family historians with computer technology and research techniques. Membership dues are US\$15 per year (US\$20 for Canada and US\$25 for other international). Members are offered classes at meetings, mentor help, *Silicon Valley PastFinder* (a monthly newsletter published each month there is a meeting).

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*Silicon Valley PastFinder* is the official publication of the Silicon Valley Computer Genealogy Group, a nonprofit organization. Published monthly except December, *Silicon Valley PastFinder* is distributed at the door to all members attending the meeting and mailed to others after the meeting. Members may elect to receive the newsletter by e-mail and get the PastFinder Bulletin too..

Articles contributed by readers are welcome. Articles may be submitted as a text file on PC-compatible disk, CD-ROM, or as an e-mail attachment. The editors reserve the right to accept, reject, and edit articles. Articles are not returned.

The following can be ordered from [www.FamilySearch.org](http://www.FamilySearch.org) or at 1-800-537 5950:

Personal Ancestral File 2.3.1 Macintosh (diskette or CD version)	US\$6
Personal Ancestral File 4.04	US\$6
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The following can be ordered from [www.svcomputergenealogy.org](http://www.svcomputergenealogy.org) or the group address (see above):

Newsletter back issues if available, per issue	US\$1 (order by mail or purchase at meetings)
Videos of classes; syllabus copies	See Web site for titles, prices
<i>Family History Documentation Guidelines</i>	Available at meetings and on Web site
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### CLASSES FOR 8 NOVEMBER 2008

#### Software Classes

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For more details or changes, go to: [www.svcomputergenealogy.org](http://www.svcomputergenealogy.org)



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