



QUESTING HEIRS
GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY
Newsletter
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Questing Heirs Genealogical Society, Inc., P. O. Box 15102, Long Beach CA 90815-0102
<http://www.qhgs.info>

Questing Heirs is a member society of the California State Genealogical Alliance and the Federation of Genealogical Societies.

MONTHLY MEETING: third Sunday of the month at 1:15 p.m. Resurrection Lutheran Church Parish Hall, 1900 East Carson Street, Long Beach

SUNDAY, JANUARY 17, 2010

1:15 Class INTERMEDIATE: Gerald Lunderville will tell us about his Civil War ancestor.

2:00 Business

2:15 Break Time for chatting, browsing, and refreshments

2:45 General Meeting SPEAKER: **Diane Wright**
The 1930 U.S. Census

4:00 Class BEGINNING: "Getting Started," presented by Mike Powers

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COMPARING JOHN HANCOCKS by Colleen Fitzpatrick PhD

Very few of us have ancestors with names like Marcus Welby or Jed Clampett – distinctive names that are rarely duplicated. Both first names and family names associated with specific ethnic groups can be quite common. For the Irish, saints names such as Patrick, Michael and John are popular, as are surnames like Kelly, Flynn, and Martin. For the Germans, common first names are Johannes, Frederick and Jacob. Common surnames include Schmidt, Meyer, and Krauss.

So if you find a certificate that you think was signed by an ancestor who had a common name, how can you be sure it is him?

How about comparing his signature on the document with one that you know he signed? Signatures do not change very much, even over decades. Recently, I helped a friend trace her family back to Europe by matching the signature on the will of her relative in New York State with the signature of a man by the same name in Switzerland. They matched exactly, even though the signatures were made 60 years apart. Through matching the two signatures, she was able to confirm that the two men were the same person, which led her to locate the village in Switzerland where her family originated.

Even if the content of a signature varies a bit because someone signed a variation on his name, there might still be elements in the signature that you can compare. Figure 1 is a photograph of the Seaman's Protection Certificate for a Peter Fitzpatrick, signed in Philadelphia in 1852. During most of the 1800s, American sailors carried these documents to prove they were citizens of the U.S. so that they would not be impressed into the British navy. This was especially important for the naturalized Irish who could easily be mistaken for British citizens. Each certificate carried a physical description of its bearer, with his signature and that of a witness.



Figure 1. Seaman's Protection Certificate signed by Peter Fitzpatrick in 1852.

My great-great-grandfather Peter Fitzpatrick was a seaman in the mid 1800s after he immigrated to the US from Ireland. I hoped that the Seaman's Protection Certificate was his, but I had no evidence that he was ever in Philadelphia. Furthermore, this document predated by six years any other information we had on him.

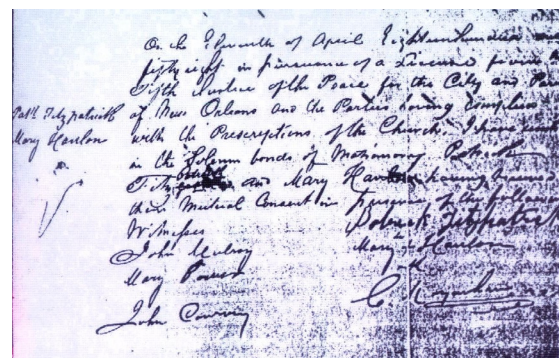


Figure 2. Marriage license signed by Patrick Fitzpatrick in 1858.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Happy New Year!

Wasn't that a fun reminiscence about the 1940s we had at our December meeting? I thought it was particularly interesting that Coca-Cola and Ritz crackers were popular at that time—and they're still with us. Now, it's already 2010. Can you believe that?

Questing Heirs Genealogical Society of Long Beach is an unusual society in that we are growing in membership! I know it's because we are a happy, friendly group of people. Maybe as we look back into our ancestors' lives, we realize that we are hardworking, ordinary people with our genetic background sometimes popping up in unusual ways.

One of our goals this year is to get the word out that Long Beach does have a genealogical society, and another is to update our library so it is something to brag about! Remember, we're having an annual planning meeting on Saturday, January 9, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at Terry Hamilton's home (2168 Vuelta Grande Ave., in Long Beach). All members are welcome to join us with their ideas.

I'm looking forward to the coming year as your President.

Liz

CSULB CLASS

Liz Myers will be teaching a Beginning Genealogy class at Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) at California State University Long Beach (CSULB). It was formerly known as Senior University. The Winter Session classes will be held on Tuesdays from January 26 through March 16, 2010, from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

The OLLI at CSULB is located in Building HS&D, Room 101. This building is located near the corner of Palo Verde and Anaheim at the southeast corner of the CSULB campus.

For further information, call (562)985-8237 or go to <http://www.csulb.edu/centers/olli>.

Continued from page 3

I was finally able to identify the Peter on the certificate as my ancestor by comparing the signature on the Seaman's Protection Certificate with that on his marriage certificate with his second wife Mary Hanlon (Figure 2). (See the comparison in Figure 3 below.) Although the man who applied for his seaman's certificate signed his name as Peter, and my relative signed his marriage certificate as Patrick, I had no doubt that they were the same man. The two first names share a "P", a "t" and an "r", and appear to be identical. The two signatures of "Fitzpatrick" also appear to be identical. By comparing the signatures on the two documents, I could be certain that they were signed by the same man, my great-great-grandfather Peter Fitzpatrick.

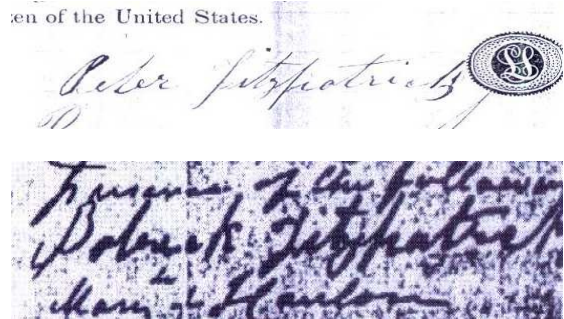


Figure 3. (Top) Signature from Seaman's Protection Certificate and (Bottom) from marriage license.

Human beings look separate because you see them walking about separately. But then we are so made that we can see only the present moment. If we could see the past, then of course it would look different. For there was a time when every man was part of his mother, and (earlier still) part of his father as well, and when they were part of his grandparents. If you could see humanity spread out in time, as God sees it, it would look like one single growing thing—rather like a very complicated tree. Every individual would appear connected with every other.

C. S. Lewis



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IS IT AN ORIGINAL REGISTER OR A TRANSCRIPTION?

Congratulations! You have just found a church record book for an ancestral location. Whether it is in “original” form, on microfilm or a digitized image, you need to look at it with a critical eye. In other words, is it the original record or one that someone copied either for easier reading or to preserve a disintegrating volume? Check to see if there is a title page giving the date the volume was published. Are there event dates that precede that publication date? If there is no such title page, then look for other clues.

The names in the event descriptions, such as christenings, should not be in alphabetical order. The church members did not show up in alphabetical order to get christened, married, or buried. Is the handwriting the same throughout a record book that spans from 1822 -1910? It is unlikely that one pastor or church member entering the events was around for all that time period. Does each family have its own page(s)? How did the record keeper know to save two pages for the christenings of the Johnson family’s eventual ten children and know that the next family, the Joneses, would have only two children?

Read the church history booklet or a county history entry to help determine if a smaller congregation was a mission or satellite church of a larger one. When the smaller church grew and had its own pastor, were the records pertaining to its members hand-copied from the larger church’s books? I found one church record book that stated “people baptized when they had no pastor.”

Were all the pages in the record book typed—including events that took place in 1845? Typewriters did not come into common usage until the 1870s.

Another comment found in a church record book is “perhaps the date is 1870—it is blurred in the original but comes first under the year 1871.” (That is a direct transcription, dates and all!)

Think about the church records you have consulted—what idiosyncrasies have you found?

A “Tip from the Pros” by Paula Stuart-Warren, CG, that appeared in the Ancestry Daily News on 13 April 2007. Copyright © The Generations Network, Inc.

CHECK OUT EVERY SPOUSE

Most of us have a few ancestors who had more than one spouse. Sometimes it can be tempting to ignore those “other” spouses of our ancestors—the ones from whom we do not descend. However, this may only serve to hinder our research. Many times a subsequent spouse will be a sibling of the first spouse, or perhaps a former neighbor from the old country or the old neighborhood. I even have an uncle by marriage who, after the death of his first wife, married her niece, thus making his children half-siblings as well as first cousins once removed.

Also remember that records of your ancestor’s “other marriages” may provide more details on your ancestor than did his marriage to your ancestor, particularly if those other marriages took place much later than the first marriage, or in a location that kept better records...

Another “Tip from the Pros” by Michael John Neill that appeared in the Family Circle on 16 Mar 2008. Copyright © The Generations Network, Inc.

MONITORING MESSAGE BOARDS

Although I had made several major discoveries by watching the message boards, it was something that I would forget to do for long stretches. I’ve found a great way to make sure I’m up to date at all times. I’ve customized my home page with Message Board Favorites near the top. While at an important family message board, I click the “Add to Favorites” button. Limit these favorites to 4 or 5, or they will take up too much of your home page...

This tip was submitted by Cheryl Parsons and appeared in The Weekly Discovery on 7 Dec 2009. Copyright © Ancestry.com 2009.



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GRETNA GREEN RUNAWAY WEDDING RECORDS GO ONLINE

The wedding records of more than 10,000 couples who eloped to Scotland to get married in the 18th and 19th century are set to be published online on Ancestry.co.uk. Gretna Green became a popular venue for weddings in the 18th century.

The town became a popular venue after the Marriage Act of 1754 in England, outlawing marriage without parental consent if either party was under 21. Many younger couples simply traveled over the border to Scotland, which had more lenient laws. Gretna Green became the most popular spot for couples who eloped.

The Gretna Green Marriage Registers cover the period from 1795 to 1895. The collection contains the marriage records of Gretna Green's most prolific minister, David Lang. Each record details the full names of both husband and wife, their respective locations of residence, and the date of their wedding.

Gretna Green remains a popular wedding venue to this day. However, the number of "runaway" marriages fell after an act of parliament was passed in 1856.

This article appeared in Dick Eastman's blog of 25 Nov 2009 at <http://blog.eogn.com>. Copyright © 2009 by Richard W. Eastman.

STATE CENSUS RECORDS ONLINE

Miriam Robbins Midkiff writes a blog called *AnceStories*. On December 13, 2009, she wrote an article on the importance of state censuses in your research—pointing out that:

- they were often held in years between the federal censuses,
- they asked questions not included in the federal censuses, and
- they were also taken for territories prior to statehood.

You can find a complete list of the state censuses that are online at:
<http://ancestories1.blogspot.com/2009/12/state-census-records-online.html>.

CASEFILE CLUES <http://www.casefileclues.com>

Michael John Neill is a popular speaker at national genealogical conferences and a well known writer. He has contributed to Ancestry publications, Dick Eastman's blog, and has his own website at the URL listed above.

He distributes a subscription-based weekly newsletter from that site that is sent to your e-mail address as a PDF file for \$15 per year or \$6 for three months. Each article analyzes a particular document, record type, or focus person.

His focus is on Sources, Methodology, Citations, Reasons "Why," and Where to Look Next. A few upcoming topics include:

- Hiring a Researcher
- Why the Will was Denied
- Homestead Record Update
- Another Pre-1850 Census Analysis
- City Directory Analysis

You can sign up for a subscription at:
<http://www.casefileclues.com/subscribe.html>.

SANBORN FIRE MAPS ONLINE

The Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County's Virtual Library has full color Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps online, available for download. These large scale street plans include building outlines, property boundaries, and building use, dating back to 1904...

The maps are a highly useful resource for historical research, planning, preservation, genealogical research, sociological studies and research of urban growth.

At this time, the first volumes of the Insurance Maps of Cincinnati, Ohio are currently online and more will be made available as the collection is digitized.

You can view them at the following url:
http://virtuallibrary.cincinnati.library.org/VirtualLibrary/vl_Maps.aspx.

The entire article, including sites in CA, FL, GA, and UT where the maps are available, is on Dick Eastman's blog of 23 Nov 2009. Copyright as above.



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NATIONAL ARCHIVES MOVE

The following is information from Kerry Bartels, Archives Specialist at NARA Laguna Niguel, forwarded by Liz Myers.

“We will be moving to a building near the Cajalco Road exit to I-215 now occupied by the NARA Federal Records Center. At one time the regional archives and the Federal Records Center shared quarters at Laguna Niguel so, in effect, we are just rejoining them. They have been located in this building since 2005. There is currently a picture of the front of the building, along with more specific location information, at the Federal Records Center portion of the National Archives website if you care to visit the site (www.archives.gov/pacific/riverside).”

Mr. Bartels indicates that tentative plans are to close the current main research room on January 4, 2010, and to reopen it in Riverside on March 1, 2010.

He continues, “Our entire operation at Laguna Niguel will be moving to Riverside County. We will operate a research room for original records in Riverside in virtually the same manner as we have in Laguna Niguel. We will also operate a genealogy and microfilm research room in virtually the same manner as we have in Laguna Niguel.”

SUPERIOR COURT CLOSURES

Liz also passed along information that the California Superior Courts will be closed, due to the statewide financial crisis, on the third Wednesday of each month in 2010 as follows: January 20, February 17, March 17, April 21, May 19, and June 16.

RootsMagic ESSENTIALS

On November 18, 2009, RootsMagic, Inc., announced the immediate availability of RootsMagic Essentials, a free desktop genealogy software based on their RootsMagic 4 system. It contains many core features found in its namesake that allow the public to easily start tracing their family trees.

Users of other genealogy software products will find it easy to experiment with RootsMagic Essentials using their own data. This program can directly import data from PAF, Family Tree Maker (through 2006), Family Origins, and Legacy Family Tree. It can also read and write data using the popular GEDCOM format.

RootsMagic Essentials is available now for free at <http://www.rootsmagic.com>.

From a press release issued by RootsMagic on 18 Nov 2009 that appeared on Upfront with NGS on 2 Dec 2009.

THE GRAVESTONE PROJECT

This project makes a new use of gravestones. It aims “to map the location of graveyards around the globe and then use marble gravestones in those graveyards to measure the weathering rate of marble at that location.”

Rain drops pick up chemicals from the atmosphere as they fall, and this ‘acid’ rain can weather materials such as the marble from which many gravestones are made. The calcite in marble gradually dissolves from this rain.

“This project aims to measure how fast the marble gravestones...are weathering and see how that may be changing over time. This could be an indicator of changes in pollution or climate.”

Two methods will be used, one involving lead lettering and the other the thickness of the gravestone. There are also two levels of participation in the project.

- ◆ The first level involves visiting graveyards using a Global Positioning System (GPS) and finding marble gravestones there.
- ◆ The second level involves measuring the gravestones, which requires calipers and a tape measure in addition to the GPS.

If you’re interested in helping, you can find more details at <http://www.goearthtrek.com/Gravestones/Gravestones.html>.

The Gravestone Project is run by The Geological Society of America, Inc. Copyright © 2008-2009. All right reserved.



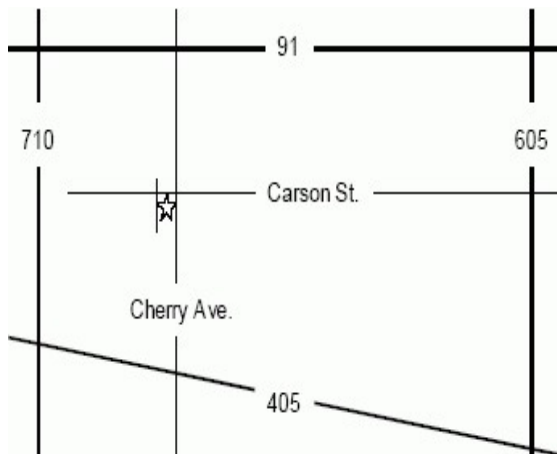
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Saturday, January 9, 1:00-2:30 p.m. Southern California Genealogical Society monthly meeting at 417 Irving Drive, Burbank. Program: Charlotte Bodge will present a visual aid class on the basics of research organization.

Sunday, January 10, Noon-5:00 p.m. Immigrant Genealogical Society monthly meeting at 1310B Magnolia Blvd., Burbank. Program: Members of the Pommern Special Interest Group will teach attendees how to access the Pommern website for best results and to use the library's books and queries.

Saturday, January 16, at 1:00 p.m. Whittier Area Genealogical Society monthly meeting at the Masonic Lodge, 7604 Greenleaf Ave., Whittier. Program: "Court Records, particularly Probate and Divorce Records," by Anita Cheek Milner.

Sunday, January 17, 1:15-4:00 p.m. Questing Heirs Genealogical Society monthly meeting. Parish Hall, Resurrection Lutheran Church, 1900 East Carson Street, Long Beach. Parking and entrance on Gardenia Avenue, one block west of Cherry Avenue. See map below. For meeting information, please see page 2.



Upcoming Events

THE HEMET-SAN JACINTO GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

Saturday, February 13, 2010
9:00 a.m. to 3:45 p.m.

Hemet Public Library, Upper Floor
300 E. Latham Ave., Hemet

Leland K. Meitzler will be the speaker for this event, covering the following topics.

- * State & Territorial Censuses & Substitutes
- * Using Tax Records to Extend Your Genealogy
- * The Lay of the Land—Using Directories, Maps and Gazetteers
- * Newspaper Research in the 21st Century

Pre-Registration (by February 3) costs \$25 or \$30 at the door. A catered lunch is available for \$10 if ordered in advance. Registration begins at 8:30 a.m. Books, DVDs, CDs, and genealogical materials will be sold.

For more information, visit their website at <http://www.hsigs.org>.

*FHC stands for Family History Center of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. FHCs are open free of charge to members of the general public interested in doing genealogical research. Volunteers are on hand and will gladly give you assistance. Regular hours for the Los Angeles Regional FHC are Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, 10 am to 9 pm, and Friday and Saturday 9 am to 5 pm. The LARFHC is located on the grounds of the Los Angeles Temple, 10741 Santa Monica Blvd. in West Los Angeles; their phone number is (310) 474-9990. Their web page at <http://www.larfhc.org> provides details of their extensive collection. [Note that this facility is currently closed for renovation. We will notify you when it re-opens.] There are smaller FHCs nearby—in Long Beach at 3701 Elm Avenue in Bixby Knolls, phone (562) 988-0509, in Los Alamitos, phone (714) 821-6914, and in Cerritos, phone (562) 924-3676. We recommend calling the local centers before you visit, as their hours may change from time to time.