

Benton County Genealogical Society Newsletter

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From the Desk of the President

April 2015



When it seems we're sailing smoothly under favorable conditions, the unexpected sometimes appears before our eyes!! This wonderful photo of a shipwreck off the coast of Nova Scotia in the late 1800s is part of ongoing research to compile a work on Acadian ancestors; it serves as well to illustrate the resilience of our lives, trials come yet we go on, stronger for the experience. Posted as well to illustrate a point learned at a Family History Fair in Forest Grove two weeks ago, that we take care lest we unknowingly pilot ourselves upon the rocks in our own research! An

Ancestry.com employee, Crista Cowan, provided 6, one-hour long talks on the use of Ancestry in our research, each of them incredibly helpful. A single point which she taught clearly is that the abundant online tools in Ancestry, FamilySearch, Fold3, etc. may cause us to become "searchers" instead of "researchers", the tendency to believe what is posted is **your** family, and/or **accurate**, and the temptation to copy data without checking sources and verifying a relationship. Crista Cowan has a series of helpful YouTube videos of Ancestry techniques and is known as the "*Barefoot Genealogist*". This FH Fair was a goldmine; in addition to these 6 talks there were a few dozen on other topics, one I found quite helpful on the use of land and tax records. If you haven't attended a FH Fair, you might find treasures there as well. See the listing for these free fairs later in this issue.

The newsletter will be compiled by the president for a season, Brad is unable to continue his excellent service due to work constraints; we appreciate his skills shared for the past 6 months and wish him well in his new role! Please forward newsletter articles and items of interest to the president's email.



Spring in the Oregon



March Program: Genetic Genealogy with Emily Aulicino was a helpful presentation, very well attended and judging by the many books she sold, well received! A copy of her 2013 book, "*Genetic Genealogy, The Basics and Beyond*" was purchased for our library collection and will be available for checkout; I find it well-written. Kudos to Katie our program chair for a timely topic and educational opportunity!

Researching in Benton County Oregon

by Linda Olsen

Originally written for publication in the Genealogical Forum of Oregon Bulletin in June 2011.
Updated for publication in the Benton County Genealogical society Newsletter March 2015.

Exploring genealogy records in the places where my ancestors lived in Benton County is an amazing experience. Luckily, I now live in the same area where several generations of my relatives were born and raised. Collecting bits and pieces of family history became a hobby that grew into a more serious genealogy inquiry. Deciding to trace back more generations required purposeful documentation of what I already knew or what I thought I knew. The oral family history and a few written accounts just needed more thorough research.

I made plans to visit several historical facilities and contacted the clerks and volunteers there who could help me locate information in their records. I joined the Benton County Genealogical Society. As a member, I had access to invaluable records, their extensive library, reference books, cemetery volumes, marriage records and family history files. Were any of my ancestors mentioned in the WPA interviews? To my delight there were two relatives who were interviewed. I could hug them for the historical treasure they left. These women had stories to tell of their families who traveled across the plains in covered wagons which just made me want to search for more information. A cousin had posted a journal online which was written by our 2nd Great Grand Uncle, James Madison Coon. (I had to look that up.) Another cousin wrote an article for our Corvallis newspaper and asked, "Who put the new tombstone on John Lewis's grave?" When I read that article, I couldn't wait to make a phone call. Making connections with someone living in the same town with the same genealogical interests who just happens to be a distant relative is so very rewarding. Another "small-world" moment was the realization that I am related to another member of the Benton County Genealogical Society, and a whole long-story of discovery later, we still haven't completely resolved our Allen connection. But that's all part of the challenge of unraveling the mystery. <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~orbentgs/>

A close relative to the Benton County Genealogical Society is the Benton County Historical Society and Museum in Philomath. These two historical sites are conveniently located next door to each other. The largest collection of information for Benton County resides with the Benton County Historical Society and Museum. <http://www.bentoncountymuseum.org/> I could have spent days lost in the records in these two buildings. Telephone directories, business directories, newspapers, obituaries, family files, photographs, maps and much more are easily found at the Benton County Historical Society and Museum. With their extensive Past Perfect database and helpful staff, the museum can easily locate information and photos they have on individuals who lived in Benton County. In their library, I found two ancestors mentioned in Fagan's History of Benton County published in 1885. They definitely had fought in the Rogue River Indian Wars of 1855-1856. That prompted me to send for their military records at the National Archives. One Great Grandfather, William F. Allen, was born in New York, raised in Ohio, and ended up in Oregon just prior to 1855. The other military record was for my Great Great Grandfather, Winfield Scott Gibbs, who was born in Ohio and made his way to Oregon in time to participate in the Indian Wars in Southern Oregon, and eventually settle in Benton County. Living in the same county, it's possible these two men and their families knew each other. Generations later, my father who was descended from the Allen line and my mother who was descended from the Gibbs line were married in Benton County. Documenting the oral stories from my family has added substance and meaning to my genealogical study.

The Government Land Office, (GLO) records are a rich source of information. If you suspect your ancestor came early enough, 1850 to 1855, to have a Donation Land Claim, (DLC), you are indeed in luck. These DLC records contain a wealth of information and can be found online as well as in printed volumes in several locations afore mentioned in Benton County.

Go to <http://www.glorerecords.blm.gov/default.aspx> or Google Government Land Office records and click on “Home-BLM GLO Records Bureau of Land Management” and then click on search documents. DLC records give the name of the spouse plus the marriage date if the applicant is already married and wanted additional land for his spouse. My William F. Allen’s wife is listed on his DLC record, adding one more piece of evidence that this was truly the correct Allen document as there were two other Allens listed who were both married before Benton County started keeping marriage records. The applicant had to have witnesses who vouched for the marriage as well as other personal information he may have known. A witness was often a neighbor or a relative. Using the DLC information, I found a number of my ancestors on maps of the area using the old Metzger maps. Armed with maps and cameras, visiting the actual old home sites is still a great summertime excursion.

Taking time to look through the various rooms in the historic museum that was once a school and a church, I walked where my ancestors walked and climbed the same stairs and looked through the same windows at the town below. One of my cousins was married in the museum when it was a church in the 1950s. Several other relatives attended school there when it was a college. My aunt, who was a clerk, then post master in Philomath in the 1920s to 1940s, kept many of our Green family records. Some of these I had copied long ago and some I discovered in the museum files. Verifying what I already knew about my ancestors and discovering new gems of information along the way helped validate my history.

When you are planning a day to do research, check the times of the week the historical resources are open and what fees may be required. Letting the contact people know when I planned to arrive, helped them plan ahead too, and in some cases, they had gathered together some items for me to peruse. Volunteers may be available to assist with research also.

The Benton County Genealogical Society Newspaper Project is a great place to look for an obituary, marriage, or birth announcement and other articles of interest such as legal notices and pioneer reunions and celebrations. These all-important old newspaper microfilms are available at the Benton County Historical Society and Museum, and also at the Corvallis-Benton County Library and the Oregon State University Library which have many other genealogical resources. Checking the index of surnames listed in Corvallis newspapers between 1865 to 1925 saved me some time and even added some surprises. The index lists the surname, given name and which newspaper the information came from. <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~orbentgs/newsproj.html>

Next, I visited the gleaming white, historic Benton County Courthouse in downtown Corvallis which still looks like its pictures in old history books. Walking through these halls is visiting the place where my ancestors surely walked. My father remembered coming to town as a child hand-in-hand with his father treading up the front steps of this stately old courthouse to pay taxes about 1918. The Benton County Records and Licenses office in the courthouse stores older records. Four generations of marriage records in my family are documented there. I found homestead information for my grandfather and great grandfather dated 1889 and 1892. Both lived and farmed on the slopes of Marys Peak, another historic landmark. Exploring the family homestead often pulled together several generations of relatives for a summer afternoon of clambering over thick brush where there once was a house and barns. A few fruit

trees that my grandmother Green planted still stand up there as lonely sentinels. This is now in a restricted forest area and requires permission to hike there although hiking around the trails on Marys Peak is open to the public.

Clicking on the Benton County Inventory link at the Oregon Historical County Records Guide tells me if the records I want are at the Benton County Courthouse in Corvallis or if they are stored at the State Archives in Salem. Knowing ahead of time what records are actually at the courthouse, saved me lots of time and frustration. Again, I've found that calling ahead and talking to the clerks and explaining what I wanted helped make the trip worthwhile. Google Oregon Historical County Records Guide to select any county in Oregon.

Another tremendously helpful resource in Benton County is the Benton County Pioneer Database online at <http://wc.rootsweb.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/igm.cgi?db=benton>

If your ancestor is listed here, part of the research work may already be done for you. Checking the Benton County Oregon Gen Web page will give you additional links around the area.

<http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~orbenton/>

I found information on my ancestors in other counties surrounding Benton County as well. Something tells me that I'm not quite finished yet.



The Season of Mowing!



Where to Donate Records to Make Them Available to Everyone?" (by Dick Eastman)

"A newsletter reader sent an interesting question this week, where to donate newly-found documents that may be of interest to many other genealogists?"

My suggestions: Founded in 1894, the **FamilySearch Library** in Salt Lake City began to acquire genealogical records and continues to do so today. The Library is now the repository for more than 2.4 million rolls of microfilm, 742,000

microfiche, 310,000 books and other materials such as journals, maps and electronic resources. The Library presently accepts the following materials:

- Autobiographies and biographies containing genealogical material
- Family histories with genealogical information
- Indexes to records
- Local histories (limited)
- Well organized collections of genealogical and research materials

The FamilySearch Library also accepts other items although there are some guidelines as to what can be accepted as well as a list of items that cannot be accepted. Details may be found in the FamilySearch document, *Gifts, Donations, and Loans to FamilySearch*, at

<https://familysearch.org/sites/default/uploads/Donations-Guidelines-REVISION-12-July-2012.pdf>."

The rest of the article is here: <http://blog.eogn.com/2015/02/01/where-to-donate-records-to-make-them-available-to-everyone/> (Dick Eastman, 1 Feb 2015)”

Ron D's comment: I will share my research there as well for it will be archived and available to others long after I am gone! To have my work saved, digitalized and backed up, I will be able to rest in peace!



Ohio Opens Adoption Records: Ohio birth certificates and court decrees, some sealed as long as 51 years, are now available to adoptees or to their direct descendants for the first time without a court order. As many as 400,000 documents will now become available. The new law went into effect Friday, March 20, 2015. For more information,

check here: <http://www.msn.com/en-us/news/us/ohio-set-to-open-adoption-records-sealed-for-50-years/ar-AA90S8X>

Upcoming classes and conferences

Beginning Genealogy: Instructor: Danell Aukerman, through Corvallis Parks and Recreation: Saturdays, 11-Noon, April 11 - May 16, Fee: \$38, Location: Walnut Community Room, and/or, Tuesdays, 2:30 - 3:30, June 16 - July 7, Fee: \$28, Register by phone: [541-766-6918](tel:541-766-6918)
“Delve into your family history research, use data from a wide variety of resources, piece together your family tree and extend your knowledge of 'Where I came from.' Record keeping, library and internet research also covered.”

Family History Fairs scheduled Free family history fairs, open to the public, routinely scheduled and vary between half and full day classes. For a list of where these are located and to register online, go to: <https://www.lds.org/topics/family-history/host-a-family-history-fair/search?lang=eng> (4 currently listed, May – Sep, Ron D)



Try again, try differently!

Many of the genealogical websites announce frequent additions to their database (FamilySearch: 18+ million, Ancestry and FindMyPast, 1+ million, each this month alone) and many other new online sources come available that might be your solution.

If you haven't checked recently, check again! Is it time to check again? Time to plan a research trip, do careful preparation homework and travel? There are sources in communities, local historical societies and the residents that will be found nowhere else!



Benton County Genealogical Board Contacts

[Names, email and phone numbers have been removed for security reasons.](#)

Remember: “Genealogy without sources is Mythology“, Do document sources!



It’s the first of the month, back up your files!!

Do you have a backup plan for what happens *when, not if, your computer dies??*

March 31 was **World Back Up Day** (OK, you missed it!) but you can learn some techniques here:

<http://www.worldbackupday.com/en/>

Want some help with or training on a back up plan? Contact the board!



Honoring the Fallen, 70th anniversary of the Netherland’s Liberation: “Thousands of white marble crosses and Stars of David, row after row. This is what one sees when overlooking the American War Cemetery in the town of Margraten, the Netherlands. The markers are testimony to the sacrifices made by many young American men and women for the freedom of Europe during World War II. In the Faces of Margraten project in May 2015, the Dutch will pay special tribute to these soldiers by decorating their more than 10,000 graves and names on the Walls of the Missing with personal photos of the soldiers.” For more on the article or contribute a photograph of a family member, go to:

<http://degezichtenvanmargraten.nl/index.php/en-US/news/44-the-netherlands-to-give-a-face-to-10-000-killed-u-s-wwii-soldiers>



General Meetings held on the 2nd Saturday in the month September through June. The April 11 meeting will be at 10am in the Social Hall of the College United Methodist Church, Philomath, everyone is welcome!

The April program follows at 11 am and will be on **German and Prussian research**.

Board Meetings are held the Tuesday before the general meeting; in April it will be on Tuesday the 7th in the Philomath Community Library meeting room from 10am to noon. All members are invited.

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