Ancient City Bulletin

Monthly Newsletter of the St. Augustine Genealogical Society

December 2017

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The Story of Things

Editoral Notes

Included in my grandmother's personal archive was a straight razor and strop. I am assuming it belonged to my grandfather, who died when my mother was just a toddler. Why was it important enough for grandmother to keep? I'll never know.

Even everyday things like a razor can have a story so how can we insure those stories are told? I've found my journal app is the perfect platform for documenting the stories of our things.

This idea dawned on me just after New Years, as I was taking down and packing our Christmas decorations. It was a quiet day so before I wrapped and packed everything away I used the Day One journaling app on my phone to photograph the special ornaments and decorations we have collected over the years. Many of these things come from the early days of our marriage. We were stationed in Germany and bought many of these ornaments at nearby Christmas markets. These precious ornaments and decorations will be passed down to our younger generations and I want to insure that the stories about where they came from and how we got them are also included.

Christmas Treasures

Today I'm taking down Christmas decorations and using the time to also tell the stories of some of our special holiday treasures. This crèche was purchased Oberammergau - in Bavaria - in August

Each photographed item became a journal entry in Day One. Later those entries were updated to include their stories. Those stories included things like our vacation in Bavaria and finding the hand-carved creche in the town known for its passion play. Then there are stories about visiting the outdoor Christmas markets where we bought decorated tins of Christmas cookies to send home. It was in those markets that we found the beautiful wooden ornaments that have decorated our trees for years. And then there's the story about the Christmas pyramid we discovered at Kathe Wohlfahrt's famous Christmas store in Rothenberg.

Christmas decorations are just the beginning. Your journal is also a great place to tell the stories of heirlooms you inherited, souvenirs of trips or special events, artwork and other things that are part of your life.

How will future generations know the value of these items if you don't tell them?

The Joys of Geneablogging

Research Toolbox

The joys of what? Sometime back, the genealogy community discovered that blogging is an affordable and easy way to document and share the stories their research discovers. It made it possible to write and publish the "little stories" of our ancestors. We soon discovered that blogging had many advantages. The biggest advantage is blogs have legs. A blog is very search friendly so when a research cousin* Google's a surname or place mentioned in one of your blog posts, it is quite likely that cousin will find your blog in his search results.

Sometime back, I discovered an interesting newspaper clipping in the archive I inherited from my grandmother. It lead me on a research quest which I documented in a post called *Honoring a Family Hero*. It was about discovering that I had a cousin who had been a POW during the Vietnam War.

Sometime later I was contacted by Ingalls Shipyard outside Mobile, Alabama. They were about to christen the USS William P. Lawrence, a guided missed destroyer, named for this cousin. They had discovered my post doing a search and offered an invitation because I was a relative of the admiral. Sometime later, I was contacted by another POW who had written a book about their experiences and offered me a copy. It was an amazing gift providing a more personal view of my cousin than any of the biographies I had found about him.

This was an amazing experience but not the only time a blog post connected me with a research cousin. I also have a number of genealogy friends - many who I have not met face-to-face. This was because blogs are also quite conversational. They were designed to take advantage of a technology called

* A research cousin is someone researching the same surnames as you.

RSS (really simple syndication) that makes it possible for anyone to subscribe to a number of blogs without overloading their email inbox. They also support commenting features very similar to what you find in Facebook so your readers can easily start a conversation with you.

One other thing . . . Blogs aren't just words. They support photos, scanned documents, graphics, video and more.

How do you get started? The hardest part is choosing a blog platform that is right for you.

Posthaven [https://posthaven.com] is both affordable and easy to use. It will cost $5.00 a month but that includes up to ten blogs. What makes Posthaven worth the price? The developers aim to "create the world's simplest, most usable and most long-lasting blogging platform.

It is quite simple. Posting to your blog is as easy as emailing a message to your blog's address. The subject line in your message becomes the title and the body of your message is the content. If there are photos in your email message, they will also appear in your blog post.


Aviles Street
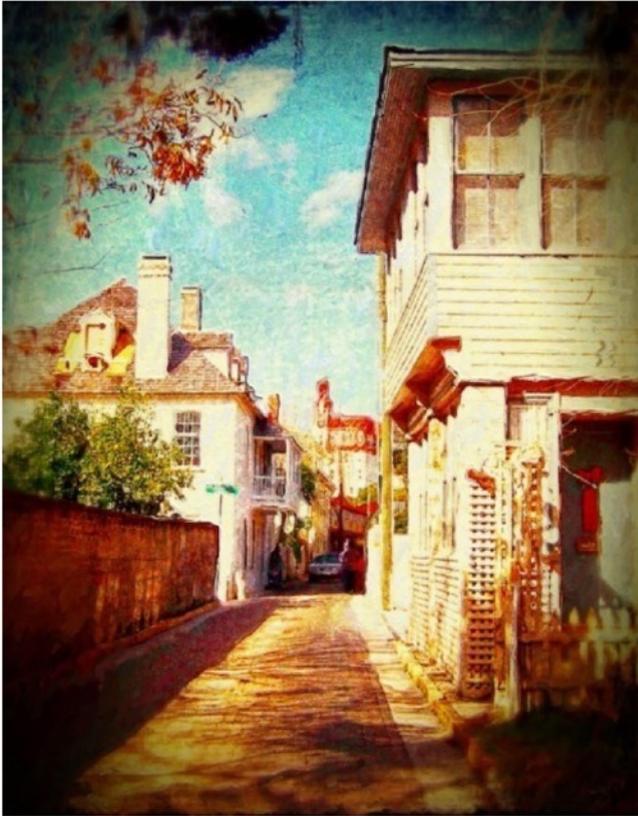
The house on the right is now a bed and breakfast, but in the late 1940s it was the boarding house where my aunts, Mary and Lin Barker, shared an efficiency apartment upstairs overlooking the convent swimming pool (behind the wall on the left) when they

If you are looking for an easy, affordable and private way to share news, photos and family history with your family, Posthaven may be just the thing. Posthaven doesn't have the whistles and bells offered by the major blog sites, but it does provide a simple and easy service for posting and delivering content.

Don't think you need ten blogs? Probably not, but that doesn't mean they can't be put to good use. I suggest you begin with two blogs - one public and one private. The private one allows your family to share news that isn't appropriate for public access. Posting this kind of information on a public blog or social network can result in identity theft, burglaries and other unpleasant incidents. This could include vacation pictures or announcing a new arrival.

The beauty of Posthaven for family networks is how easy it is. Subscribers don't need to remember passwords to see the latest post from a private blog. It's delivered to their inbox. When others comment on a post, those comments are also sent to all. In our family, we post a "birthday card" - a scrapbook style graphic created just for that person. Once posted and delivered, family members can reply with their own greetings.
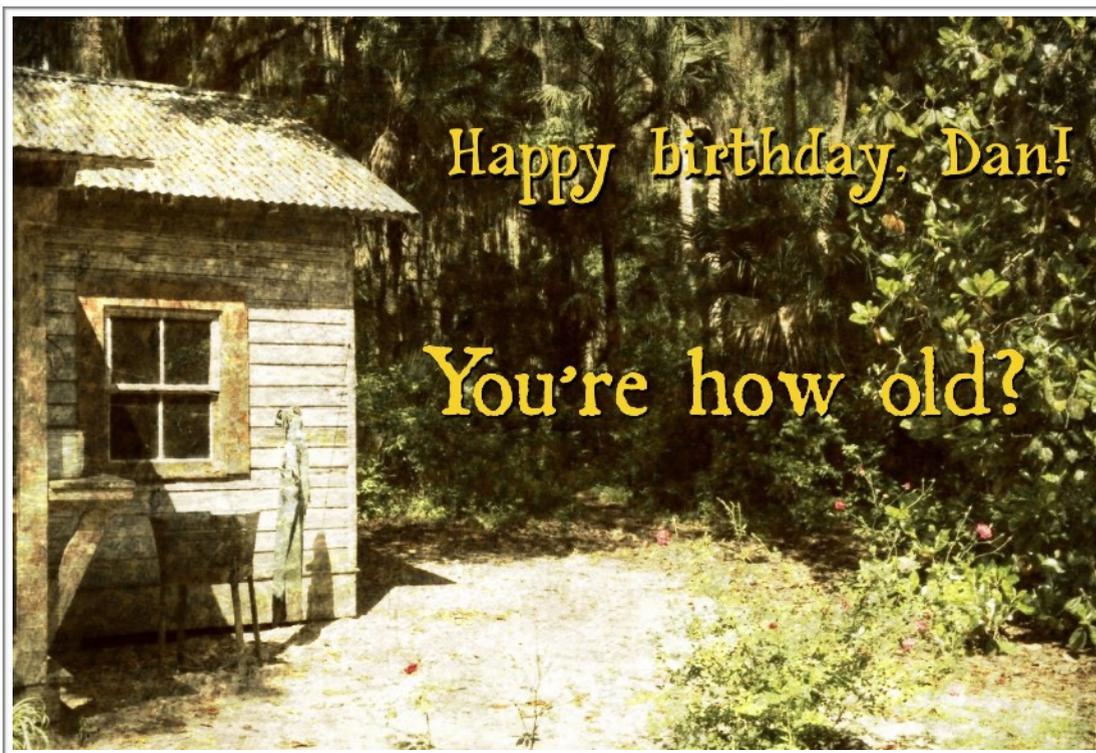
Take advantage of a public blog to post family history stories. This serves several purposes. First, it's a way to share your family's history with your family. Just as good, since your public blog is very search-friendly it's not unusual to meet a research cousin through your blog.

Here are some ideas for putting those other eight blogs to work . . .

- Build a virtual museum of family heirlooms using the blog to post photos and scanned documents along with the stories associated with these artifacts.

- Posthaven makes a great travel blog. Take pictures with your phone and email them with supporting descriptions to your blog. Within minutes, those photos will be delivered to all subscribers.

- Tired of all those round-robin emails as you organize a large family event like Thanksgiving dinner, a special anniversary or a family reunion? Task assignments, who's bringing what dishes and other details are delivered to each person via email while the "master list" is always available at the blog.

- Give the kids in the family a blog and challenge them to learn about their family history - documenting what they've learned on the blog. As site owner, you can oversee their efforts and adult subscribers can offer encouragement and support.

- Want to learn more? Download a PDF copy of the Posthaven Primer [https://www.scribd.com/document/154916693/A-Posthaven-Primer] for details on how to get up and running.

GenealogyBank

In the Archives

GenealogyBank [https://www.genealogybank.com] is focused on historical newspapers, military records, government documents, modern obituaries, pamphlets and books. It's parent company, NewsBank, has been an information provider for more than 35 years. If you haven't visited GenealogyBank in a while, you will find their new interface design much easier to search, read and capture information.

GenealogyBank offers both a monthly membership at $19.95 and an annual membership at $69.95. New members are offered a 30-day free trial giving you an opportunity to try before you buy.

You will find an impressive learning center that not only shows you how to take advantage of the site's features but also offers some impressive articles and downloadable publications on genealogical research. Among these is an e-book copy of Thomas Jay Kemp's *Getting Started Climbing Your Family Tree.*

Their collection contains 7,000 newspapers from all 50 states along with 250 million obituaries. You can browse the various collections or take advantage of the site's search features (quick search and advanced search).

In this example, my search for Sinclair Gervais found 22 newspaper articles and 20 government publications. The sidebar offers additional tools to refine your search if needed. You can also choose how your results will be sorted and

displayed. Notice the My Folder link in the top right corner of the screen. You can use it to save articles and clippings your searches discover. You can also save searches and search history. These could be useful to show where you have searched and what you found.
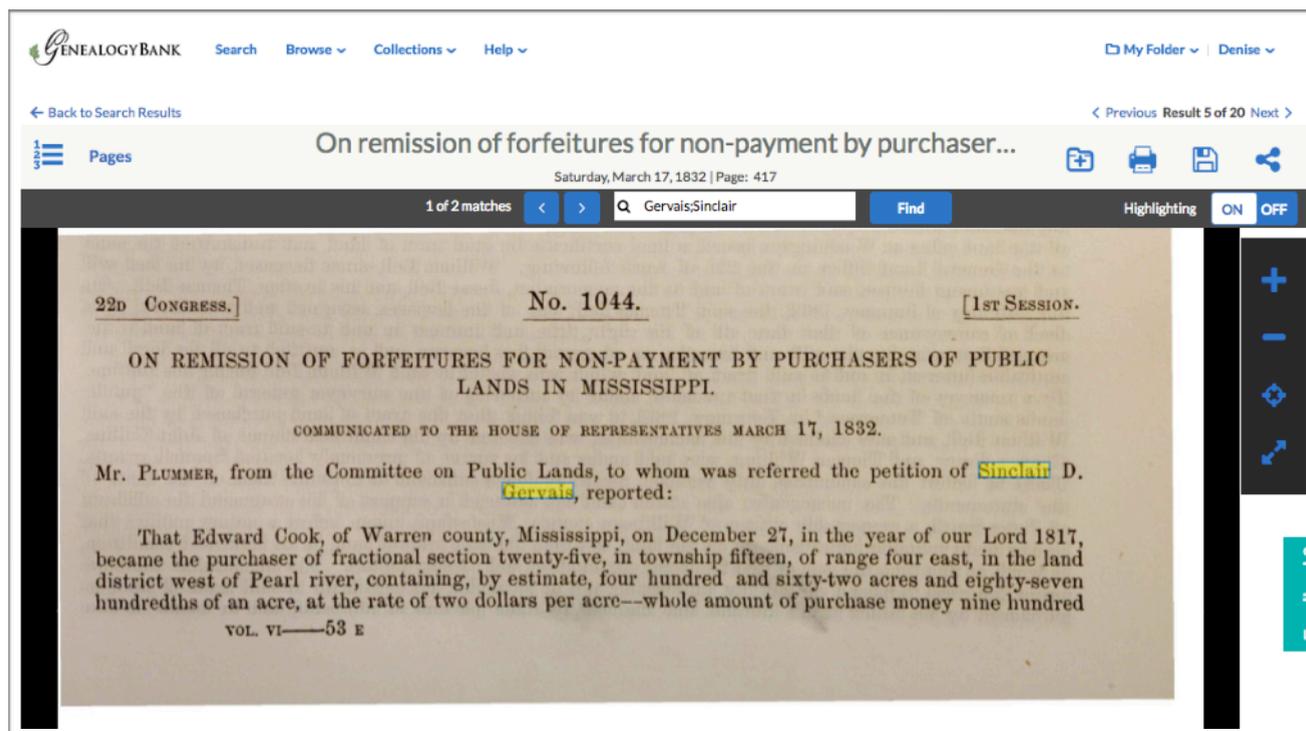

When you click on one of the thumbnail entries found in your search, GenealogyBank presents the article or document in a well-designed reader view. Use the tools on the right to enlarge or reduce your view, reset the image view or go full screen. There are five matches in this document. The forward and back buttons just above the document make it easy to move to each match. The four icons at the top right of the page viewer make it possible save it to your GenealogyBank folder, print it, download it or share it via email. The download option will allow you to save it as a PDF document or an image file.

You can also browse through the many newspaper collections along with recent additions. I found the St. Augustine Record obituaries section and used the search box to find obituaries for my Barrett family. The recent obituaries include a source citation at the bottom of each obit. Historical obituaries show the

source newspaper and date the obit was published as part of the header. When saved to your folder, that information is part of each news item's details.

Visit the Learning Center to view several webinars discussing how to use GenealogyBank and how to put newspapers to work in your research. GenealogyBank also offers a monthly email newsletter and a blog. Both are full of interesting articles - many written by well-known genealogists like Gena Philibert-Ortega and Thomas Jay Kemp.

While GenealogyBank is focused primarily on newspapers, obituaries and publications, it is an impressive resource to help you discover more about your ancestors then just vital records.

Family . . .
Like branches on a tree we all grow in different directions, yet our roots remain.
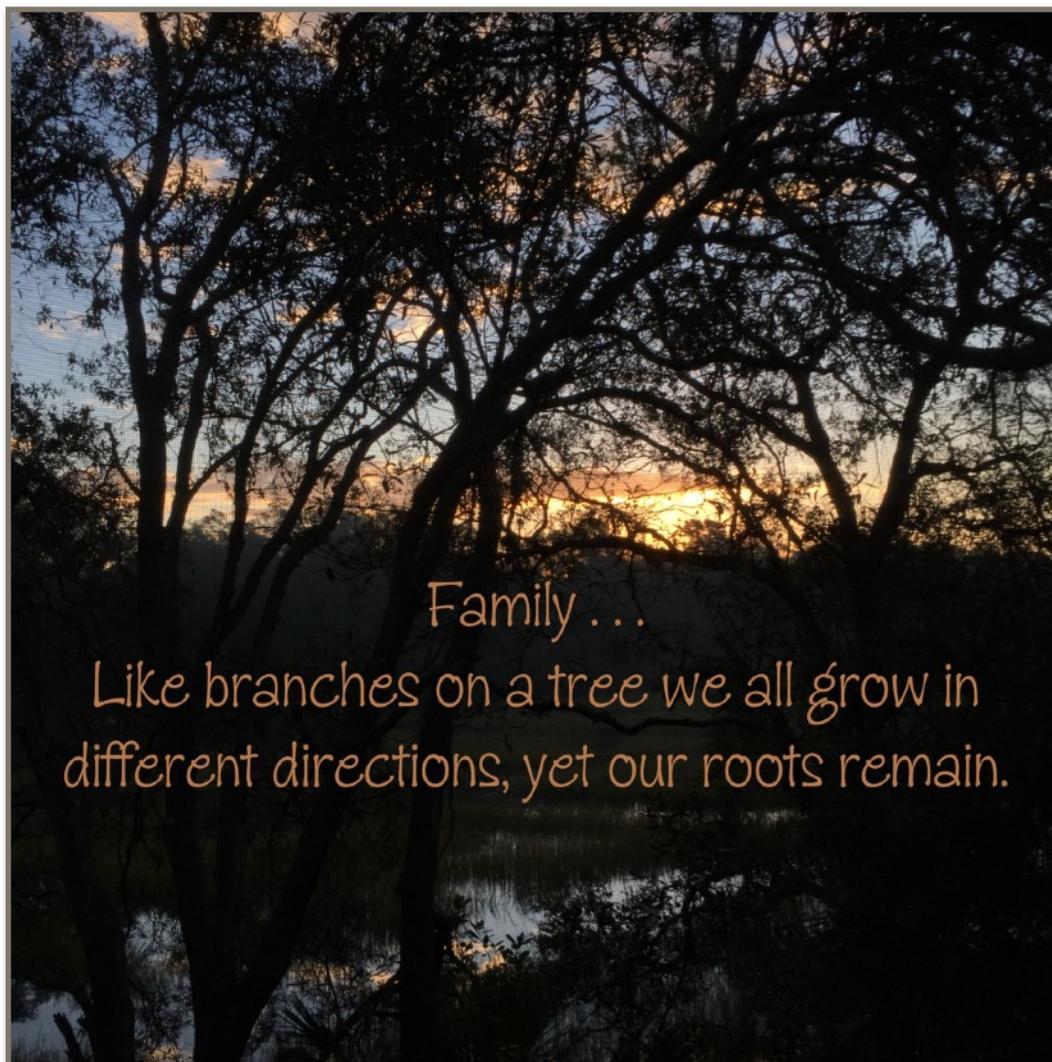
Society Services

The Research Help Desk has been replaced with the SAGS Community Research Center. It's a members-only Facebook group and it is accessible any time from just about anywhere. The first time you visit you will be asked to join. It is a closed group - open only to SAGS members - so group administrators must approve your request. Once that's done, you will have full access. Our focus is to create a place where members can visit any time to get the latest news from the genealogy community, ask for help, offer tips and share successes.

Members with research experience are encouraged to volunteer on the Research Committee.

There are a number of ways SAGS members can connect online. These include:

- SAGS Online - The society's public web site and records archive.

- SAGS Support - The society's members-only site offers weekly news updates, research support, 24/7 access to our publications library along with social networking features making it easy for members to stay connected between meetings.

- SAGS Facebook Page - Our Facebook page is the digital equivalent to a billboard. It's purpose is to introduce the public to our society, promote our monthly meetings and attract new members.

- SAGS Community Research Group - This is a private Facebook group designed to give SAGS members the ability to connect between meetings. It's a great place to ask for help, share useful research resources or share a success story. In addition, it's also a resource for news from the genealogy community. From the latest deals to software updates and new additions to the genealogy archives, you'll now be able to get this information in a timely manner.

Publishing Guidelines

We accept articles related to genealogy, family history and research methodology from our members for publication in the Ancient City Bulletin.

Submissions should be sent as an electronic file in either rich text format (.rtf) or MS Word (.docx) format via email to sags.publications@gmail.com. Please keep formatting to a minimum as the article will need to be styled to match the Bulletin's design. The article title should be on a separate line at the top of the page with the author's name listed immediately below. Photos included as part of the article are welcome, but please also send a copy of each photo as a separate file. Captions are always welcome and please include the photographer's name for proper credit. Including a list of sources is also encouraged.

Articles will be edited for grammar and style and any edits will be reviewed with the author prior to publication.

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