

The Livermore Roots Tracer



Livermore-Amador Genealogical Society

P.O. Box 901, Livermore, California 94551-0901

<http://l-ags.org> & <http://facebook.com/Livermore.Amador.Genealogical.Society/>

Membership Report

July, 2017

New Member Information

James Stinecipher

Thanks to the generosity of the following L-AGS members:

Patrons

Sandy Clark, Dick & Jean Lerche, Kay Speaks, Duncan Tanner

Benefactors

Kristina Ahuja, Annette Breingan, Marilyn A Cutting, Linda Driver & Walt Crawford
Dick & Wanda Finn, Barbara Hempill, Arnold & Nancy Koslow, Cindy McKenna,
Patricia Moore, Bill & Marelene Silver, Peggy Weber & Bob Whitlock

Total L-AGS Members as of July 10, 2017: 103 Memberships and 125 Members

Meeting News

General Meetings — are held on the second Monday of the month at 7:30 p.m. at Congregation Beth Emek, 3400 Nevada Court, Pleasanton. Map: <http://www.L-AGS.org/maps/Pls-BethEmek.html>

The L-AGS Writing Group — Meets monthly in Livermore. The encouragement to write your ancestors' stories and your own comes from this enthusiastic group. To join the email list, please send a note to <mailto:changes@L-AGS.org> with "Add me to the Writing Group list" in the subject line.

Let's Talk Genealogy — Meets monthly in Livermore. To join the email list, please send a note to <mailto:changes@L-AGS.org> with "Add me to the Let's Talk Genealogy list" in the subject line.

The Master Genealogist Group — usually meets on the third Saturday of the month, from 9 a.m. to 12 noon. Location: Contact TV-TMG Chair (Kay Speaks) tvtmg.chair@L-AGS.org; TV-TMG Forum tvtmg.group@L-AGS.org

Pleasanton Genealogy Center — is jointly supported by L-AGS, the Friends of the Pleasanton Library, and the Pleasanton Public Library. A L-AGS docent is available each Wednesday from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Pleasanton Public Library 400 Old Bernal Avenue Pleasanton, California. Or by appointment, e-mail: docents.chair@L-AGS.org.

Livermore Family History Center — Several L-AGS members, both LDS and non-LDS, volunteer as docents at the Livermore FHC. They are available to assist you in your genealogy research. The FHC has several subscription research sites not readily available elsewhere and is open Mondays 9 a.m. – 3 p.m., Wednesday and Thursday evenings 6 p.m. – 9 p.m. and Saturday 1 p.m. – 4 p.m. If the parking in front of the building is full, there is a large parking lot in the rear of the building. [Map](#).

L-AGS Leadership for 2017

President	president@L-AGS.org	Tom Mathews
First VP and Program Chair	program@L-AGS.org	Kay Speaks
Second VP & Membership Chair	membership@L-AGS.org	George Fulton
Corresponding Secretary		Susan Davis
Recording Secretary		Leora Frise
Business Manager	business.manager@L-AGS.org	Duncan Tanner

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President's Message

June marked L-AGS' fortieth anniversary as a society and commemorated the occasion with a picnic attended by about thirty members and their guests. It was a delightful time and we all filled up on hot dogs, hamburgers and a wide variety of delicious dishes brought by those who attended.

We all owe a special debt of gratitude to Richard and Wanda Finn for making their lovely home available to us for the occasion. We could not have hoped for a more delightful setting or a more gracious host.



Several L-AGS members at 40th Anniversary picnic

There are many people whose efforts made this event possible but I particularly wish to thank Patrick Lofft for proposing the anniversary celebration and for researching and sharing with us what he learned of L-AGS' early years. Thanks also to Susan Davis who handled publicity and coordinated attendance and George Fulton who served as liaison between L-AGS and the Finns.



L-AGS past presidents, David and Jolene Abrahams, Patrick Lofft

The Livermore-Amador Genealogical Society (L-AGS) was formed by a group of students attending a Livermore Adult Education Class in 1977. They discovered that many of them shared a common interest in family history and genealogy and wanted to continue their research and help each other. On June 27, 1977 the charter members met to adopt by-laws and the L-AGS organization was founded with the following stated purposes:

- To help beginning genealogists get started.
- To exchange information with fellow members.
- To learn more about sources available for genealogical research.
- To undertake genealogy-related public service projects.

Several past presidents and officers, including Patrick Lofft and David and Jolene Abrahams, shared stories of their years at the helm of L-AGS. During their talks, I was struck by what an amazing thing it is that an organization such as ours can exist for as long as it has. It began with a few friends with shared interests and a vision. Few of those charter members remain but L-AGS still exists. It exists because of the dedi-

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The Livermore Roots Tracer

The Roots Tracer is the quarterly publication of the Livermore-Amador Genealogical Society. The mission statement of the Roots Tracer is: **“Instruct. Inspire. Inform.”**

We encourage members to submit articles for publication. Material can be e-mailed to: rootstracer.chair@L-AGS.org or mailed to L-AGS, P.O. Box 901, Livermore, CA 94551-0901. Want ghostwriting help? Just ask!

The Roots Tracer Staff

Editor..... Patrick Lofft
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Composer..... Andi Winters
Printing and Distribution..... Sue Davis,Jean Lerche
G.R.O.W. Columnist.....Kay Speaks

Halloween and the Great Pumpkin

By Duncan Tanner

Halloween was fun when I was a kid, for about 50 years. Early in my career the “loot” collected included home prepared items such as cupcakes, fudge and popcorn balls. There were many kinds of candy, some I liked such as chocolate. Various nuts and fruit were not my favorites. I made several trips and ended up with 2 or 3 sacks full by the end of the evening. It was a rich time.

There were always the few places that had ghosts and scary skits. I always traveled with two or three friends in our collection of treats.

Going forward about 15 years the second phase of my Halloween career started. My wife and I and three-months-old son were living on the second floor of an apartment in Livermore. It was a garden type apartment building with an outside entrance. My occupation was a “kid” electrical engineer and I decided to apply my training to Halloween. We selected a very large pumpkin that ranged between 30 and 45 pounds. After the pumpkin was carved (never with a scary expression) some cloth was attached with pins inside to cover the holes. A light bulb and speaker was installed inside and the top attached with pins to keep the kids from looking inside. The wires ran inside the apartment.

The microphone was hidden outside the pumpkin to prevent feedback (screeching noise). The microphone was so sensitive that I could hear and talk to people on the ground level. The big problem was I could not see the children. I was dependent upon my wife to give me clues about the costumes the children were wearing. When a visitor arrived I would greet them with, “Hello, I am the Great Pumpkin. I came out of the pumpkin patch to visit with you tonight.” Once the child recovered from the shock of a pumpkin talking I would attempt to carry on a short conversation.

Later, we rented a house. The Great Pumpkin had a better situation as I could now see out of the living room window so the pumpkin could see and talk to the kids.

Two years later, when we prepared to move into our new house, GP planning was considered. While the house was being built, wires were installed to provide for the GP’s voice and hear-

ing. The amplifiers were installed in the den closet as part of the stereo system and speaker and microphone wires were installed between the den and the dining room and the front porch. An outlet was installed high up (for safety reasons) on the porch to light the pumpkin. The wires ran down the wall and were covered with a large black cloth. The microphone was placed in the mailbox a few feet above the pumpkin who sat on a small wood box covered with orange cloth. The porch was recessed with one blank wall and the dining room window on the opposite side. This gave me a good view of the children on the porch. The dining room window had Halloween decorations mounted on cardboard so they could be easily installed and removed. I used Halloween cards with cutout faces to see out. If there was a chance I would be detected the viewing hole could be covered with a black paper flap. The GP would operate for 2 to 3 hours from the dark dining room. At the peak of GP’s life we had over 100 children drop by for a visit each year.

The GP philosophy was to be a “nice” pumpkin but the atmosphere of Halloween was contrary to that. Every effort was made to convince the trick-or-treaters that GP was a nice pumpkin and just wanted to visit and talk on this special time each year. The best visitors were three to five year olds. Some would hold back until they were sure there was no danger or their parent coaxed them forward. There was one boy that initially was somewhat aggressive and did not want to talk to the pumpkin. About 30 minutes later he came back and sat down and carried out a long and friendly conversation with the pumpkin.

A four-year old neighbor girl just loved the pumpkin and the next day she came back and wanted to talk some more. We told her the GP was gone and only appeared on Halloween. She was upset until we gave her a small pumpkin and told her it was too young to talk.

The older (grade school age) children were suspicious but would usually talk some and try to figure out how it was done. We rarely revealed the secret. We asked the teenagers not to spoil it for the younger ones.

Some of the parents would stop and talk and one of them in jest asked what GP’s name was? The reply was that my first name was “The” and my

middle name was “Great”!

Before Halloween we asked neighbors and colleagues for the names of their children’s teachers, school, and recent events. This was included in the conversation when the kids arrived. The 6-10 year old kids were amazed that the pumpkin knew so much.

The oldest trick-or-treater was about 20. He was in his Army uniform and came to show a friend the Great Pumpkin. He had been here when he was younger.

A neighbor was walking her dog on the other side of the street. I said “Hello, Major,” to the St. Barnard. Major’s “mom” as we called her, brought him across the street and as they came up the walk I said again, “Hello Major.” Major immediately stopped and would proceed no further. Even with additional attempts Major held his ground. Although I did not intend to scare him it was some payback for an incident a few years earlier. One evening while our house was being constructed, I was working late (maybe installing the wires for the GP) and I heard a loud bang and was startled by a large dark object walking down the hall of the wide open house. It was Major. Since we had not yet been introduced to our future neighbor, I decided to beat a hasty retreat up a ladder and into the rafters.

The genealogy of GP was complex and limited citation documentation is available. Although it

was always said that GP came from a sincere pumpkin patch that must be attributed to folklore. In the last several years, GP came from Joan’s Farm, certainly as sincere as you can find. The pumpkin was chosen to be large enough for the speaker and light bulb installed inside. When some children found the pins holding the top of the pumpkin we switched to removing the bottom of the pumpkin for access. This made it safer as the children could not try to remove the top. Each generation of GP was handled with dignity, carefully slipped into the trash can on garbage day. One year GP exited somewhat violently when he landed broken in the street. This greatly upset our daughter. After that unfortunate incident we never left him unattended and were more careful to quickly remove him and all attachments at about 9 pm.

We have lived in our house for over forty years. Some of the neighbor children returned to bring their children to see the Great Pumpkin.

GP’s schooling was limited and in the later years it was difficult to identify some of the costumes and after about 35 years the Great Pumpkin retired. For two years we were gone on Halloween. We then resumed giving out non-candy item such as pencils, rulers, etc. There was a recent comment by a friend that they might picket the house for the return of the Great Pumpkin, but I just declined with a smile.

This generation of the Great Pumpkin has ended.

President’s Message, *Continued from page 3*

cation of people like Jolene, David and Patrick who contribute their time and efforts so that we all can meet every month, listen to talented lecturers and, most importantly, share with each other what we have learned about how we can uncover the hidden secrets of our past. Without their efforts and the efforts of hundreds of others over the years, I am convinced that L-AGS would no longer be here. It would have withered from neglect and be nothing more than a distant memory in the minds of a dwindling number of people.

We can’t let that happen. Each one of us must use this anniversary as an opportunity to rededicate ourselves to the vision of our charter members. We cannot think of L-AGS as a group that exists just one hour a month. We are a volunteer organization which means we need to volunteer. We need to share our family stories, research success-

es and failures with the Roots Tracer. We need to reach out to new members and guests and make them feel welcome. We need to learn research activities and tricks and share them with others. And last, but not least, L-AGS needs you to volunteer to serve on the board. There are positions that are unfilled and others that will benefit from added participation for lack of volunteers. For example, Kay Speaks, program chair, would profit from supplementary input in selecting speakers, Patrick Lofft, Roots Tracer editor, seeks help with formatting articles and George Fulton, Membership Chair, will accept your help with welcoming visitors and new members each month. We need your help to make sure that there will be a fiftieth anniversary.

Dedication.

Tom Mathews, President, L-AGS

Indexing Error Yields GGG Grandfather's Middle Name

By Dick Lerche

My GGG grandfather, Robert Washington Ogg (1775-1838), was born in Calvert County, Maryland and was an early Ohio settler. His middle name was stated in genealogy information received from my mother 35 years ago; it also appears in family trees at ancestry.com and familysearch.org. But, neither my mother's information nor any of the published family trees provided a source for his middle name. Various data records I had collected showed only his middle initial, W.

Recently, I found a source for his middle name entirely by accident. The much-welcomed discovery came during research related to Robert Ogg's will.¹ When he died in Belmont County, Ohio in 1838 he bequeathed a farm to each of his eight children² whose ages ranged between 5 and 26, five of the children were under the age of 21³. Civil war pension records photographed by Patrick Lofft and his sister Sheila at NARA showed that one son, Young Hance Ogg (1824-1905), lived in Kansas in 1889⁴. Census records further showed that two of Robert Ogg's sons actually left Ohio by 1870: Benjamin Hance Ogg (1812-1899) lived in Nodaway County, Missouri and Young Hance Ogg lived in Johnson County, Kansas. These were not young men seeking adventure; Benjamin was about 57 with a wife and nine children (six under 20 years old), and Young was about 45 with a wife and five children. Why did the two brothers move west of the Mississippi River in about 1869? I am curious about the details of the eight farms they inherited and seek answers to the following of questions:

When did Robert Ogg acquire his land?

How much land did he acquire?

How large were each of the bequeathed farms?

What did the children do with their farms?

Robert Ogg's will provided an excellent starting point for this quest. His will lists each child and

¹Will of Robert W. Ogg, Will Records, Vol F-G, 1833-1845, p. 511-512, Probate Court, Belmont County, Ohio.

²If this sounds familiar, see the following: "Pension File Solves a Mystery" The Roots Tracer, vol. 37, no. 1, February 2017, pages 4-7, <http://l-ags.org>

³Birth years for Robert Ogg's children were determined from tombstones at Find-A-Grave, Ohio death records, and Federal census records.

⁴Pension File No. 698348 for Young Ogg: Records show Young Ogg's pension application and related documents beginning in 1889, NARA, Washington, D.C.

describes their bequeathed farms with detail such as township, range, and section information, or descriptions such as "the farm that I bought of Abraham Forshey" and "land that I bought of George Starbucks heirs."

I had documented that Robert Ogg was an early Ohio inhabitant from the 1820 federal census that lists his family as residents of Belmont County, Ohio. So I considered two starting points for my research: federal land patents and county court records. Land patents which are readily available

Accession	Names	Date	Doc #	State	Meridian	Twp - Rng	Aliquots	Sec. #	County
OH0030_348	OGG, ROBERT W	10/1/1834	1340	OH	Ohio River Survey	006N - 007W	SW1/4	30	Noble
OH0030_349	OGG, ROBERT W	10/1/1834	1341	OH	Ohio River Survey	006N - 007W	E1/2NW1/4	23	Monroe
OH0030_350	OGG, ROBERT W	10/1/1834	1342	OH	Ohio River Survey	006N - 007W	W1/2SW1/4	30	Noble
OH0030_351	OGG, ROBERT W	10/1/1834	1343	OH	Ohio River Survey	006N - 007W	W1/2NW1/4	30	Noble
OH0030_352	OGG, ROBERT W	10/1/1834	1344	OH	Ohio River Survey	006N - 007W	E1/2SE1/4	24	Monroe
OH0050_072	OGG, ROBERT W	10/8/1834	2072	OH	Ohio River Survey	006N - 007W	E1/2NE1/4	29	Noble
OH0430_103	OGG, ROBERT W	9/14/1835	4600	OH	Ohio River Survey	007N - 008W	E1/2NW1/4	9	Noble
OH0430_104	OGG, ROBERT W	9/14/1835	4601	OH	Ohio River Survey	007N - 008W	NEN1/2E1/4	9	Noble
OH0050_423	OGG, ROBERT W	10/14/1835	1969	OH	Ohio River Survey	006N - 007W	NE1/4	29	Noble
OH0060_055	OGG, ROBERT W	3/20/1837	2556	OH	Ohio River Survey	006N - 007W	W1/2NE1/4	30	Noble
OH0060_056	OGG, ROBERT W	3/20/1837	2557	OH	Ohio River Survey	006N - 007W	E1/2NE1/4	28	Noble
OH0060_057	OGG, ROBERT W	3/20/1837	2558	OH	Ohio River Survey	006N - 007W	NE1/2SW1/4	23	Monroe
OH1100_184	OGG, ROBERT W	8/21/1837	3220	OH	Ohio River Survey	006N - 007W	W1/2NE1/4	24	Monroe
OH1100_266	OGG, ROBERT W	8/21/1837	3303	OH	Ohio River Survey	006N - 007W	SE1/4NW1/4	24	Monroe

Table 1. Search results for Federal Land Patents in Ohio issued to Robert Ogg.

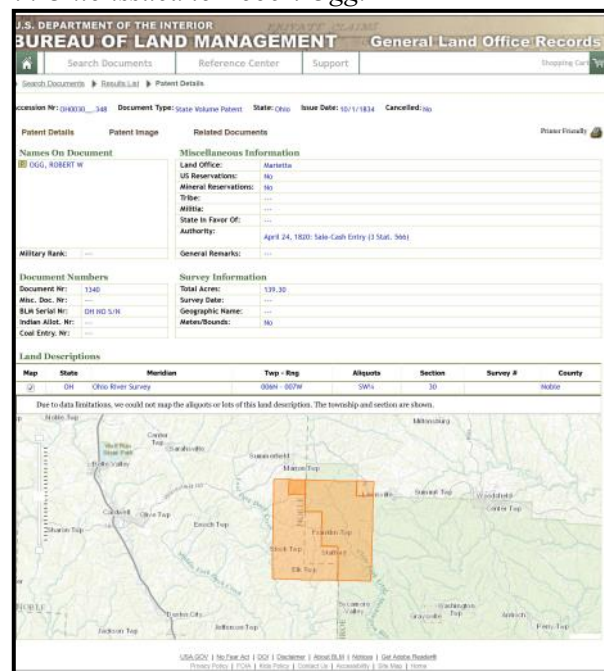


Fig. 1. Example of Federal Land Patent detail obtained from BLM web site. Map shows section (darkest orange) within the township-range (lighter orange) superimposed on a local area map. (A section is about 1 square mile or 640 acres.)

on the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) web site⁵ proved extremely useful. Table 1 lists 14 land patents in Monroe and Noble counties issued to Robert W. Ogg between Oct 1834 and August 1837. These patents represent holdings of 1100 acres. For each land patent the BLM provides a summary similar to Fig. 1 that includes the recipient's name, present-day county, survey township, range, section, acreage and a map showing the location of the section with county lines, township lines, towns and other features labeled. The web site also provides access to digital images of original land patent documents (see Fig 2). I now had a great starting point for locating each child's farm (but that is a future story, since this article is all about discovering a source for Robert Ogg's middle name).

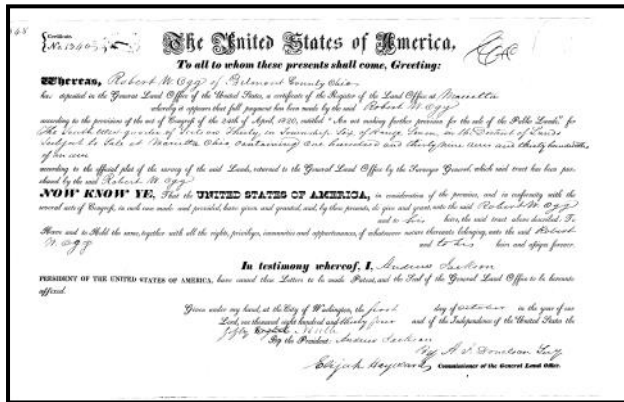


Fig 2. Image of original federal land patent issued to Robert W. Ogg.

Next, my search went to court records. I started by looking for land transfers to or from an Ogg

⁵Government Land Office records, 14 patents issued to Robert W Ogg in Monroe and Noble Counties, Ohio (1834 - 1837); BLM, Department of the Interior; viewed online at <https://glorerecords.blm.gov/default.aspx> (Note: Noble county was formed in 1851, 14 years after the last Ogg patent. BLM records show the current county for the location rather than the original county.)

⁶Court of Equity definition: n. originally in English common law and in several states there were separate courts (often called chancery courts) which handled lawsuits and petitions requesting remedies other than damages, such as writs, injunctions, and specific performance. Gradually the courts of equity have merged with courts of law. Federal bankruptcy courts are one example of courts which operate as courts of equity. From <http://legal-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/court-of-equity>

⁷Chancery Court case: Executors of Robert W. Ogg (Deceased) vs Heirs of Robert W. Ogg and James Coles, Monroe County, Ohio, Chancery records v.1, 1834-1842, pp 443-447, viewed online at <https://familysearch.org, FHL microfilm 505931>.

in Belmont, Monroe, or Noble Counties. Many Ohio land and court records are available on microfilm at the Family History Library in Salt Lake City. Even better, digital images of many microfilm reels are now available online at familysearch.org! Among the documents I identified as potentially useful was an 1842 Monroe County Chancery Court⁶ case in which the petitioners are the executors of Robert Ogg's estate and the defendants are his heirs and a James Coles.⁷ (Since Robert Ogg's two oldest sons are the executors, they appear both as petitioners and defendants in this case.) In 1836 James Coles had completed payment to Robert Ogg for 200 acres of land but never received a deed to the property. The executors were requesting the Chancery Court to convey title from the Ogg heirs to James Coles. And that is exactly what the court did. There were three parcels of land involved, each described as being in section 9, township 7, range 8 with 82.23, 82.23, and 41.11 acres, respectively. My BLM patent list (Table 1) shows only two land patents for Robert W. Ogg in this section: one with 82.23 acres and one with 41.11 acres. How and when did Robert Ogg acquire the remaining 82.23 acres?

The BLM web site is extremely useful for Ohio land patents in that it provides many ways to search land records. I did a quick search for all land patents issued for section 9, township 7, range 8 in Noble County. The resulting list included the two patents issued to Robert W. Ogg that were found earlier plus one issued to a Robert Washington (see Table 2, line 3). Robert Washington! Could this be the missing piece of land? A quick look at the original patent document showed that it was indeed issued to Robert Washington Ogg (Fig. 3). I had just found proof that my GGG grandfather's middle name was Washington!

This exercise highlighted two common research

Accession	Names	Date	Doc #	State	Meridian	Twp - Rng	Aliquots	Sec. #	County
CV-0071-443	KELLER, JOHN	11/2/1830	1723	OH	Ohio River Survey	007N - 008W	W55SW6	9	Noble
OH0380_469	KELLER, JOHN	2/10/1831	2462	OH	Ohio River Survey	007N - 008W	E55SW6	9	Noble
OH0430_102	WASHINGTON, ROBERT	9/14/1835	4599	OH	Ohio River Survey	007N - 008W	W56NE6	9	Noble
OH0430_103	OGG, ROBERT W	9/14/1835	4600	OH	Ohio River Survey	007N - 008W	E56NW6	9	Noble
OH0430_104	OGG, ROBERT W	9/14/1835	4601	OH	Ohio River Survey	007N - 008W	N56NE6	9	Noble
OH1550_211	BURTON, SHADRACH	8/5/1837	9272	OH	Ohio River Survey	007N - 008W	SW56SE6	9	Noble
OH1560_346	BUCKINGHAM, ALVAH ASKREN, DAVID	8/10/1837	9899	OH	Ohio River Survey	007N - 008W	N56SE6	9	Noble
OH1560_435	BATES, DANIEL	8/10/1837	9988	OH	Ohio River Survey	007N - 008W	W56NW6	9	Noble
OH1560_465	STANBERY, JONAS	8/10/1837	10019	OH	Ohio River Survey	007N - 008W	S56NE6	9	Noble
OH1560_466	ROBERTSON, DANIEL	8/10/1837	10020	OH	Ohio River Survey	007N - 008W	S56SE6	9	Noble
OH1600_257	STANBERY, JONAS	9/1/1838	11800	OH	Ohio River Survey	007N - 008W	NW56SE6	9	Noble

Table 2. Land patents found for section 9, township 7, range 8 in Noble County, Ohio. Three Robert Ogg patent records are shown in bold type with names in red.

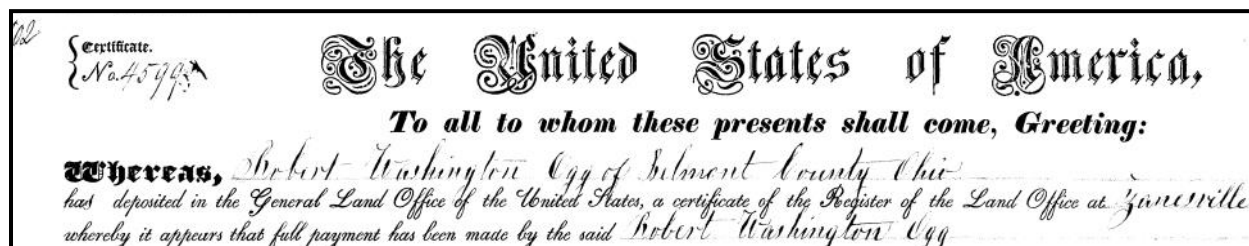


Fig. 3. Images of original federal land patent issued to Robert Washington Ogg.

errors that I had committed. First, I was lazy; I had failed to check ALL available original source documents! Initially, I had found 14 Ohio land patents each indexed as Robert W. Ogg. The half dozen original documents that I actually reviewed were issued to Robert W. Ogg just as they were indexed. Because the summaries are much easier to read, I didn't carefully review the other original documents. After discovering the indexing error, I then reviewed each of the 14 land patents on my original list (Table 1). Of the 14 documents, two were actually issued to Robert Washington Ogg and are sources for his mid-

dle name. I had missed my first opportunity to discover a source! My second error was relying on indexing. I had forgotten that while indexes can be very helpful, they also can be incomplete or in error. Of the 15 land patents, 12 were issued to Robert W. Ogg, only the three parcels sold to James Coles were issued to Robert Washington Ogg. For those three patents, the indexing listed Robert W Ogg for two parcels and Robert Washington for the third. That's two incompletes and an error! It was the error that finally led me to the source for Robert Ogg's middle name.

Two Questions Genealogists are Most Often Asked

By Gene R. Block

I suspect that anyone who does genealogy for any length of time has been asked two questions at one time or another by friends and acquaintances. The first is "How did you get started doing genealogy?" That question is easy for me to answer. I clearly remember one evening when we were living in Ottawa, Illinois, back in the late 1970's. I came home from work one evening and my youngest daughter asked me if I would help her with a homework assignment involving family immigration. I told her that I would help her after we ate dinner. When the time came to provide her with the information she needed I realized for the first time that I didn't know the names of any of my great grandparents. I also realized that I didn't have any idea when my ancestors came to this country nor did I know what countries they had lived in before coming to America. The bottom line was that I could not provide my daughter with any information to help her with her assignment.

Since both my parents and my wife's parents were still alive and living in the St. Louis area where both my wife and I were born and raised, I suggested that my daughter contact her grandparents for help with her assignment. She did and

her grandparents were able to provide her with enough information to complete her homework.

My realization that I knew virtually nothing about my family's history or my wife's family history was what got me started doing genealogy. I knew at the time my daughter asked for help with her homework assignment that we would be moving to California several months later. Since my parents and my wife's parents were as the expression goes "getting up in years," I knew if I didn't start to gather information on my wife's and my family histories, that information would be lost forever when our parents passed away since no one else in either family was recording this information.

My goal when I first started was just to go back in our respective family's history only as far as the first ancestor who came to America in each family line. Of course, as most genealogists can relate to, after that information was obtained and verified, my objectives changed and I wanted to find out more information about each ancestor. I wanted to know not only the country where they were born, but what city, town or village they came from. I also wanted to find out as much personal information about each ancestor as possible. I

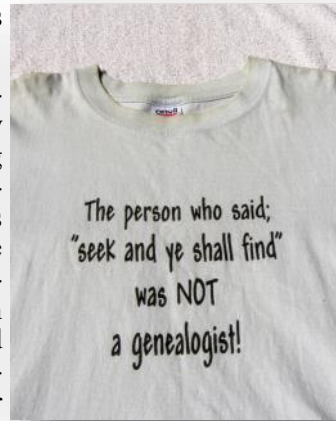
have been in the process of doing this ever since.

The second question that most genealogists get asked sooner or later is, "Why do you spend your time researching dead people?" The answer to this question varies with each person who gets involved with genealogy. Some people in this country research their past hoping that they can find someone within their family who was considered "royalty." I suspect that the vast majority of people who pursue genealogy for this reason end up being disappointed

as so few people with royal connections ever left their homeland and traveled to America unless they were either seeking adventure in a new land or for some reason found themselves on the wrong side of a family squabble. Otherwise why would a person with royal blood purposefully choose to come to a sometimes wild and developing country? Their lives certainly would have been much easier if they had stayed in their homeland.

Some people have a deep desire to find out where their ancestors came from and to discover their "roots." Some people pursue genealogy to discover if there are illnesses in their family that have been passed from one generation to the next. And some people like the challenge, and it can certainly be a challenge, of piecing together the past. I have a tee shirt with the inscription "Whoever said, 'seek and ye shall find' certainly wasn't a genealogist."

There are also unexpected benefits that occur when researching one's family history. Genealogists often find interesting traits that seem to be found in successive generations of some family lines. One line of my wife's paternal side is an example of this. There are quite a few people on her father's side of the family who speak at least one other language besides English. What is so interesting about this is that even though these people have common ancestors, most of them never had any connection with each other growing up. In fact many grew up in different parts of the country so it certainly wasn't the environment which accounts for this language ability. I certainly am not a genetic scientist but it seems possible that there is some type of gene present in that family that is responsible for this. Interestingly enough the trend seems to be continuing. My wife was a Spanish major in college and worked for a number of years as a bi-lingual



teacher. Our son who just retired from a position with the U.S. government speaks four languages besides English. And his daughter who will be a junior this year in college is taking Russian as an elective! My son and granddaughter seem to have inherited the language "gene" from my wife's side of the family. They certainly didn't get it from me. My high school Latin teacher, if he were still alive, would certainly concur with that.

Something else I never expected when I started tracing my ancestors in St. Louis was how much I would learn about the city where I grew up. Even though I went to grade school, high school and college in St. Louis, I really never took any courses about the history of St. Louis. All the history courses I took in grade school and high school focused on the United States, such as our War of Independence and the Civil War, etc. In college when I took history, it focused on the history of Western Europe. But as I researched my ancestors who settled in St. Louis I learned a great deal about the city where I was raised. This was very unexpected and very interesting.

Other unexpected benefits of tracing one's family history are social. After I finally discovered where my wife's maternal grandmother's family came from in Germany, we visited the village in 2002 and discovered a number of my wife's third cousins who still live there. We went back to the same village in 2011 with a granddaughter. We have had four visits in this country with some of these relatives. It has been an enriching relationship.

I think that many people who pursue genealogy get a great deal of satisfaction when they start with just a name and subsequently discover enough information to be able to piece together an ancestor's story. I also find it very interesting to take a step backwards and see how each generation generally lives longer, obtains more education and often fares better financially in life than the preceding generation. While this is not true for everyone, I think it is the case for most people.

So in summary, I believe there are many reasons why genealogists spend so much time "researching the lives of dead people." So the next time someone asks you that question, ask them how much time they have to listen to your response because it will take you awhile to answer the question.

New at the Pleasanton Genealogy Library

Courtesy of Tim Johnston, Administrative Librarian

The History and Antiquities of Every Town in the State Of New York; John W. Barber and Henry Howe; Call No. – Genealogy 979.3747 BARBER

Barber and Howe's collaboration, originally published in 1841, opens with a general history of the state, followed by the details of each town, arranged alphabetically by county, then town, then

city or village. Entries contain geographical and architectural descriptions, original Native American place names, political and religious history, population statistics, and interesting anecdotes about the activities of certain residents. Generously illustrated with Barber's fine engravings and often accompanied by a verbal description of his impressions of the scene.

Book Review by Patrick Lofft

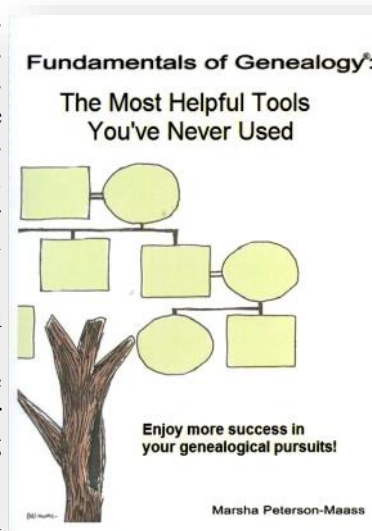
Fundamentals of Genealogy: The Most Helpful Tools You've Never Used

Author, Marsha Peterson-Maass

For those of us who seek fresh approaches to revitalizing their Genealogy tool box author, Marsha Peterson-Maass provides a first-rate assemblage of 44 tool groups divided into 5 categories: Research, Analysis, Educational, Presentation, Health and Organizational tools.

Each 'tool' is thoroughly exposed through extensive bulleted lists. Most of the listed bullets include Internet address links (URL) for additional information regarding that individual element.

Among the 28 groups of research tools are a group of 8 tools to improve your use of Ancestry.com, 4 to facilitate crowdsourcing, 8 to assist in utilizing maps and land records and a group of a dozen to advance your research planning etc. The Presentation tools include more than a dozen recommendations for graphic representations most of which include URL links to free charts and forms. Within the



topic Gifts of Research author Peterson-Maass suggests impressing someone who is not yet keen on the subject of genealogy with a set of multiple census pages for their beloved ancestor. Some of the groups of Educational tools are tutorials online, blogs and pod casts etc.

While the book begins with an alphabetized Table of Contents it lacks a cross referenced index which would have been very helpful. This author has another book in print: *Fundamentals of Genealogy: Basics for Everyone*.

Disclosure: Author, Marsha Peterson-Maass, sent L-AGS a copy of

this book to review. The reviewed copy will soon be available for circulation at the Pleasanton Public Library. With the gift season on the horizon, this would be a perfect gift idea for those who seek to improve their genealogy. You may purchase this book through Lulu.com, Amazon.com and Barnes & Nobel for \$24.99.

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The Livermore Roots Tracer

The Livermore-Amador Genealogical Society's Quarterly publication.

Editor Patrick Lofft is willing and able to help you format your information to share with others. Contact Patrick at [PMLofft@comcast.net](mailto:PMLOfft@comcast.net)

L-AGS First Seminar Recalled

By Patrick M. Lofft

Saturday, April 20th, 1991 was selected as the date for L-AGS first *All Day Seminar for Beginners and Experts*. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints and L-AGS cosponsored the discussions.

Twenty Class Selections were available. There were multiple presenters from L-AGS as well as from the Oakland Family History Center, Contra Costa County Genealogical Society, Concord

FHC, and Santa Clara PAF Users Group. Topics included German, Scandinavian, Scottish & English, Irish and French Record Research. Other subjects were: Census Records (1790-1910) & AIS Indexing, Using the Family History Centers and three sessions related to Utilizing Your Computer to Do Your Genealogy.

Genealogy topics of continuing interest have not changed appreciably during the intervening decades have they?



Jolene Abrahams was President of L-AGS at this time [1991].



Marilyn Fullam with some of L-AGS publications



David Abrahams with some L-AGS memorabilia



Rosemarie Wade and Marge Harter registering attendees

Future General Meetings

Congregation Beth Emek, 3400 Nevada Court, Pleasanton

Visitors are always welcome.

September 11, 7:30 p.m.

Grant Din

Angel Island Stories

October 9, 7:30 p.m.

Christine Bell Green

Immigration to the U. S. Before 1920

November 13, 7:30 p.m.

Martha Wallace Land Reports in Public Land States

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