

The USGenWeb Project

NEWS

Volume 4, Number 4 May 2007

Notes from the Editor

Denise Wells

The month of May finds me thinking more about my father and brother who have passed on. I think of them often, but this month I think of them and what they did for our country as members of the armed services. Who in your family has served in the military? How did they serve? What memory of them comes to mind during this time? My father, George Pennelton Wells, served in World War II, as did my oldest brother, but they each served very different positions.

Since my father volunteered at an older age, they wouldn't send him to fight overseas. He made his contribution by training service dogs for the fields of war. As I glanced through old photographs, I found pictures of Dad with families who volunteered their dogs for the service. Later, he invented items and gave the patents to the U.S. Army; one item was the clip that holds officers' insignias on their caps, and he assisted in perfecting the gas mask. How do I know these things? The information is found on his Army discharge papers. Finally, his stint as a provost marshal brought him to Fort Benjamin Harrison, on the outskirts of Indianapolis. Fort Harrison became the Army's financial hub on the northeast side of Indianapolis; however, most people do not know that it was also a World War II prisoner of war camp. My father became the highest ranking provost marshal at this Fort, and Indianapolis became my birthplace.

My oldest brother, James Lawrence Gorman, also served in WWII. (He was 27 years older than me.) Jim was stationed in Okinawa. Don't know much about Okinawa? Check out http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Okinawa to learn more about our participation there. As I mentioned in an earlier edition of my Notes, my nephew, Jeff, died this past January. Among Jeff's things I found a notebook that belonged to his father, Jim. As I flipped through the notebook, I learned things that my brother never told me. He was involved with the rebuilding of villages on the island of Okinawa. What a surprise fifty plus years later! He never spoke much about his time in the service, and even though he is no longer with us, I am learning more about him each day.

It doesn't matter how your family member(s) serve or served. What matters is honoring them for the contributions and sacrifices they made or are making for their country. Today and always ... Celebrate your family!

Notes from the N.C.

Scott Burow - USGenWeb Project National Coordinator

I had initially wanted to share some humorous events and revelations that occurred during my research into my great-grandfather's military records that I finally received after almost 18 months of waiting. Spanish-American War records are not easy to come by, and his records were buried in a vault somewhere for decades. I had it all done and ready to submit and then I attended a meeting at the American Legion to help plan the dedication of the new local Veterans Memorial. I was given the following writing by a veteran - name unknown - that I want to share instead of my stories. To this, I can only add one word: Thanks.

"What is the meaning of Memorial Day? Is it merely a three day escape from our worldly duties? Or, is it the official beginning of summer?

Americans are always the first on the scene worldwide bearing their gifts of human spirit and abundance. This is why it is so puzzling that the meaning of Memorial Day seems to lack substance to many of our own people. Even with the day itself. Put back to accommodate a holiday schedule fixed by some organism no one knows, yet powerful enough to do so, the day itself lacks consequence to too many. Many who never knew a person who died in service to America are wrought with the invisible pain of not feeling for those who do. We take things for granted. We have so much. Endless choices. These options are not available worldwide. Our shelves are full. Unlike many in other nations of the world.... So many are empty or offer very limited selections. Those American fighting men and women killed in battle whose souls made available these wondrous choices we have every day of our American lives. Yet, most of our youngsters have no idea whatsoever what this means. They don't learn this in school. We must teach them. For without knowledge, they may end up thinking, or believing all these marvelous selections came without circumstance.

Our nation needs to halt and perceive the flags and flowers on our Veterans' graves on this consecrated holiday. We need to lift a common voice of adoration to those spirits of our onetime American Warriors, and extol them with a salutation. We have not come that far with our technological miracles of this millennium to become crass.... We still need respect. Our backs can not turn from formality. Our eyes can not look away from custom. Our voices must not resonate in silence against honor and glory. To do so will leave us hollow, only to fill us with that which is desolate and lacking potential. This is not the true meaning of Memorial Day.

The heartfelt significance requires reminding. Story telling. Wisdom being passed on from our Veterans to our younger generations. America in the 21st Century as the most powerful entity humankind has ever experienced. America permeates this next century with vast responsibilities. Our children must bear this promise. We can not turn our backs on these bygone descendants. Memorial Day offers us the opportunity to express a moment of solitude where each of us can personify in our own way what we feel. My father served, his father, and his father's father before him. There were those in my ancestry who did not return from war.

Let us all stop for a moment, whether it is on the traditional day, or the observed Memorial Day, or even at the end of May, and reach for the memories of our Veterans. Let us reveal to them how much we cherish their sacrifice for our free people. Let these memories harvest our recognition of the meaning of Memorial Day in a very simple word. And let that word, simply stated be: Thanks!

Elections Reminder

The deadline for registering to vote in the upcoming elections is midnight, May 31st. The Election Committee has been working to clear any data glitches, verified email addresses, and have attempted to confirm positions with the appropriate XXGenWeb and Special Projects over the last couple of months.

It would be prudent for all members to check their registration for accuracy, and for those new members who have not yet registered to vote in the annual election to do so promptly to secure your right to vote. There are important issues to be decided, and every vote is needed so that the views of the membership are known.

Register to Vote and/or Update Your Membership:
<http://www.usgwelections.org/USGenWeb/Register.cfm>

It is a simple process, takes less than five minutes, and it is your responsibility as members to insure your right to vote is protected.

Search Us Update

by Daryl Lytton, Assistant Editor

With <http://www.USGenWeb-Search.us> now having 1,379,336+ USGenWeb pages available for searching, and there being only one state left to finish, it is now time to look forward to what else Search Us can do for our CCs and our researchers.

Since <http://www.usgenweb-search.us/census/> will be finished (only four more states to complete) before the next issue of the News, it is being announced now. Other than the two census projects themselves, our loyal News readers are the first to know about the Search Us Census project!

This search features a companion Advanced Search for each state where you may search for surnames that sound alike, sort census records for browsing, or use other options.

Feel free to add a link to Search Us Census on your county page, and spread the work about this new search to the genealogy lists you belong to. Buttons for your Web site to link to Search Us are now available at <http://www.usgenweb-search.us/Buttons.html>

USGenWeb at FGS 2007

by Friends of USGenWeb at FGS 2007 Committee

Time is flying by and before we know it August will be here. Those of us who will be hosting a USGenWeb booth at the FGS conference in Ft. Wayne, Indiana are still in need of handouts and donations to help offset the cost of the booth. If you are interested in helping out in either area, please drop by: <http://homepages.rootsweb.com/~binkley/>

Success Story It has to do with a WWII soldier buried in the Netherlands and the efforts to locate relatives of the soldier for the man in the Netherlands that had adopted a soldiers grave. Check it out at <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~msattala/netherlands.html>

The County Coordinator for Attala County, MSGenWeb, Everette Carr, has gone above and beyond the call of duty, especially for a volunteer. This is not unusual, Everette frequently performs research for others, in addition to all of his other involvements.

Project Spotlights

by Darlene Anderson, Spotlights Editor

Yuma County, COGenWeb

<http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~coyuma/yuma.htm>

Yuma County, Colorado! Did you know that Yuma County was named after the ancient Yuma Indians who lived in the area? Or, did you know that Yuma County wasn't formed until March 15, 1889?

The Yuma County Web site opens with an explanation about the county coordinator, Lee Zion. Lee is a native of Yuma County! How cool is that? He made his living working for the U. S. Army and eventually retired to Yuma County. He is very proud to serve as the coordinator for the county in which he was born.

I believe the Yuma County Web site has two strong points, which are the "What's New" and "Subject Index Page" sections. Lee says the "What's New" section, "contains a running list of new pages, page updates and on-line data added during the last year starting with the most recent change." The "Subject Index Page" is just that, an index of information on this web site and also links to remote sites about Yuma County.

Of course, I shouldn't forget to mention the genealogy information found on this Web site. If you're looking for Yuma County information, you've come to the right place! Yuma County, COGenWeb! The "Online Data" section is chock full of information about cemeteries, church yearbooks, history, newspaper, schools and much, much more...

If you're researching in Yuma County or just want to drop by to say "hey" to Lee, you'll find Yuma County interesting and easy to navigate. Thanks Lee! You've done a great job!

Sheridan County, WYGenWeb

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

When was Sheridan County, Wyoming created? Guesses, anyone? Well, Sheridan County was formed in 1888. Did you know that the Wyoming Territory was a mere 20 years old when Sheridan County was formed?! Twenty sounds so young, doesn't it?

Suzanne Leonard is the County Coordinator for Sheridan County. She has created a Web site that is easy to navigate; the look of the site is pleasing to the eye and has a lot of information about the county. Suzanne is proud that Sheridan County was chosen as the March 2000 Best of Wyoming Award site.

Now for the good stuff! A few of the Web site's sections are "History, Geography, Land," "Books and Lookups," "Immigration and Naturalization," "Birth, Death, Marriage," and the list goes on. The Sheridan Genealogical Society compiled a marriage index from original records, Books 1-9, which is on this site. Also, on this site and from the personal papers of Manville Kendrick, selected area obituaries from 1951 - 1987.

Suzanne has done a terrific job for Sheridan County, WY... Keep up the great work!

Learning to Fight in the Old West

by G. Lee Hearl, Guest Editor

It appears that about 1750 a new breed of men began to appear in southwest Virginia along the New River and the three branches of the Holston River. They had traveled to the "Point of No Return" in the wilderness of that area and were forced to adapt to the conditions they faced, and adapt they did! When the Indians attacked the New River settlements, some of the settlers retreated eastward but few of them returned to their former homes. They just moved to what they deemed a safe distance over a mountain range or two and waited for things to settle down and they could return to their new "homes."

Those who did not retreat began to learn more about the Indians and their methods of fighting. Some of them became Longhunters and visited lands never before seen by white men. They learned to deal with the Indians and learned much about their habits as they traveled the lonely trails into Kentucky and western North Carolina. These men became the Scouts who were called on to guide the militia units from one battle to another.... They were the ones who guided and protected the surveyors in Kentucky in 1774 while great quantities of land were claimed by the Loyal Land Company and others. These were the men who joined George Rogers Clark in the Indiana Territory to defeat the British there. They were a tough new breed of men who didn't need large trains of supply wagons to accompany them into the wilderness. A bag of parched corn, along with some wild game, could sustain them for

weeks. Their wives and children learned how to mold bullets for the long rifles and everyone helped as they prepared for the next battle, whether it be with Indians or the British.

I have been researching the Harroll, Harrell, Harold, etc. families for more than forty years and during that time have followed them into the wilderness of what became Withe, Washington and other counties of southwest Virginia. Although there were several Harrells who were early settlers, the earliest I have record of is James Harroll who brought his family to Wolf Hills (later Abingdon, Virginia) in 1770. Many families, like the Harold family, very likely had their eyes set on the lands of Kentucky and beyond and were moving in that direction, but as Daniel Boone proved in 1773, moving across the Clinch and Cumberland mountains was a very dangerous journey and it was more prudent to linger in southwest Virginia until the Indian attacks were stemmed. In 1774 the Indians became more aggressive and during the next few years many new forts were constructed on the frontier, including Blacks Fort at Wolf Hills where the first court of Washington county would be held.

The decade after 1774 was very hectic for the frontiersmen of southwest Virginia and east Tennessee; the militia units were constantly rushing from one place to another to thwart Indian attacks, especially after 1776 when the British began urging them to engage the pioneers and destroy their settlements. Even Reverend Charles Cummings carried his long rifle to the Sinking Springs Church at Wolf Hills and took part in some of the battles. Robert Harroll and James Harroll, sons of early settler, James Harroll, both took part in many of these skirmishes and it is believed that the younger James received severe wounds which led to his early death about 1800. Robert fought with Evan Shelby at the Battle of Point Pleasant and raids on the Cherokee Indian Towns in Tennessee.

About 1775, Robert continued the westward movement of the Harroll family by moving into Kentucky where he again encountered Indians and was Captain of the militia unit which rescued Margaret Montgomery after her family was massacred and she was taken captive. He later married Margaret and raised a large family in Warren Co., Kentucky.

When Ferguson threatened the overmountain settlers with destruction of their homes in 1780, the true frontier fighting spirit showed and men from all over southwest Virginia, east Tennessee and western North Carolina did not hesitate to answer Ferguson's threat. They came together and marched across the Blue Ridge Mountains to give him their answer, a solid defeat at Kings Mountain. The Battle of Kings Mountain is considered by many historians as a decisive battle in the Revolutionary War.

Many sons of these frontier fighters served in the War of 1812, and later descendants chose sides and fought brother against brother during the Civil War. My gggrandfather of Washington Co., Virginia, was on the Confederate side, while his brother in North Carolina fought for the North, and their choice was apparently based on their convictions, because neither of them owned slaves. This story could apply to many families whose ancestors endured the rigors of early settlement in western Virginia which, before 1777, included a great part of the old west.

Graveside Chronicles

by Linda K Lewis, Chronicles Editor

The Markers of Our Heroes

"Memorial Day is a solemn and sad occasion honoring the American soldiers who gave their lives in war. But it is also a hallowed day-because the values those men fought to defend form the essence of our country: freedom and the rights of the individual." -- Andrew Bernstein

At many cemeteries, Memorial Day is the busiest day of the year. Family members come to remember their loved ones and ancestors and decorate their graves. VFW Posts and Boy Scout troops commemorate the veterans' graves by placing flags. Somber ceremonies are held to honor our fallen soldiers.

Often times we see our veterans' graves marked in like style and pattern either in stone or on plaques provided by the government. How can you tell from the stone in which war they served or in which branch of the military?

Traditional Military Gravestones

Military gravestones are available in a number of styles and materials. Upright tablets and flat stone markers are available in both white marble and gray granite. Flat bronze markers for affixing to stones or other material are available in both a standard and small niche sizes.

These markers, typically ordered through the cemetery or funeral director, are provided free of charge for veterans. They are shipped to the cemetery and installed at no cost. All that is required for eligibility is proof of military service. The United States Department of Veterans Affairs will also provide replacements for markers that are damaged or unreadable with appropriate documentation and photos. (See Sources and Resources below for information and how-to).

At a minimum, these government-provided markers must be inscribed with the veteran's legal name, branch of service, birth and death years. As space permits, the inscription may also contain the veteran's rank, war service, decorations, award, month and day of birth and death, and an emblem of belief selected from the VA-approved emblem list. (See Sources and Resources below for markers styles and a list of approved emblems).

Memorial military markers are also available for those veterans whose remains were not recovered. Memorials can be identified by the phrase "In Memory Of" found inscribed at the top of the stone or marker.

Government-supplied gravestones may also include approved personalization such as nickname, military affiliations and veteran's groups, placed at the bottom of the marker, if space permits. Civilian titles may also be inscribed, but have to be placed at the bottom of the marker, not with the name.

Historic Civil War Union and Spanish American War Gravestones

Union Civil War and Spanish-American War markers share a unique design style that makes them easily identifiable. This historical gravestone is an upright marble tablet with a smooth rounded top. The tablet features a sunken shield with the arched name and abbreviated military organization inscribed in raised lettering inside the shield. Often these markers do not feature the veteran's birth or death dates, but for those that do, it is found imprinted below the shield.

It is also important to note that many original Union and Spanish-American veteran stones were made of varying widths, thicknesses, and materials, depending on availability of local resources.

Historic Civil War Confederate States of America Gravestones

The marker on the grave of a confederate soldier is another easily distinguished style of historical gravestone. Like the ones above, these markers were created in the upright tablet style and usually made of marble.... However, the top was pointed instead of rounded. The confederate gravestone features the distinctive Southern Cross of Honor inscribed at the top of the stone with the veteran's name etched below the cross, followed by the abbreviated military organization and possible birth and death dates.

Sources and Resources

"Available Emblems of Belief for Placement on Government Headstones and Markers." Burial and Memorials United States. Department of Veterans Affairs. 29 Apr 2007: <http://www.cem.va.gov/cem/hm/hmemb.asp>

Bernstein, Andrew. "The Purpose of Memorial Day: Honoring Virtue." Andrew Bernstein, Philosopher and Novelist. 2 May 2007: http://www.andrewbernstein.net/articles/14_memorialday.htm

"Fact Sheet: VA's Headstones and Markers." Public and Intergovernmental Affairs. April 2005. United States Department of Veterans Affairs. 29 Apr 2007: <http://www1.va.gov/opa/fact/hdstns.asp>

"Pre-World War I Era Headstones and Markers." Burial and Memorials. United States Department of Veterans Affairs. 29 Apr 2007: <http://www.cem.va.gov/cem/hm/hmcivil.asp>

"Types of Headstones and Markers Available." Burial and Memorials. United States Department of Veterans Affairs. 2 May 2007: <http://www.cem.va.gov/cem/hm/hmtype.asp>

"VA Form 40-1330." Application for Standard Government Headstone or Marker. United States Department of Veterans Affairs. 29 Apr 2007: <http://www.va.gov/vaforms/va/pdf/VA40-1330.pdf>

Census Schedules Provide Clues of Military Service

by Anne J Lex - Records Editor

Census records are a good resource to verify military service for an ancestor. Veterans of the Revolutionary War and their widows living in households in 1840 are recorded on the Sixth Census of the United States. Union veterans who served during the Civil War in the Army, Navy, Marines, and their widows, are listed on a Special Schedule of the Eleventh Census in 1890. In addition, the Thirteenth Census of the United States in 1910 will identify Civil War service and military personnel on ships and in naval hospitals. The Fifteenth Census of the United States in 1930 will identify veterans of "major wars" up to the year 1918. These census schedules can be very helpful in gathering information in your search of an ancestor's military and pension records.

The 1840 census schedules can be found by locating the head of household and census page number in the appropriate hardbound state volume index for the census year. The state volumes could consist of more than one volume for each state broken down according to geographic area. The index would include the name of the head of household, county, age and census page number. The census reel number would be located by checking "the 1790-1890 Federal Population Censuses: Catalog of National Archives Microfilm." The page numbers are typically numerically arranged. The name of the veteran would be listed under the column entitled "Pensioners for Revolutionary or Military Services, included in the foregoing." Although the veteran may not be the head of household in 1840, elderly veterans usually resided in the households of other relatives.

<http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~census/help/1840.htm>
http://helpdesk.rootsweb.com/get_started/charts/US1840CensusForm.pdf

The Special Schedule of the Eleventh Census 1890 Veterans' Schedule was a special census enumeration that documented Civil War Union veterans and their widows. The 1890 Veterans' Schedules consist of 118 microfilm reels (series #M123). Most of these records were destroyed in a fire. However, it is worth researching "the 1790-1890 Federal Population Censuses: Catalog of National Archives Microfilm" to see if the appropriate schedule is available. These schedules are arranged by state, then county and then subdivision. If the schedule is available, the entry will list the name of the Civil War veteran or widow, rank, company, regiment, enlistment dates and length of service.

http://helpdesk.rootsweb.com/get_started/charts/VeteransSchedule1890.pdf
<http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~wiozauke/censusrecords/1890Vets.html>

According to an article entitled "Clues in Census Records, 1850-1930" by Clair Pretchel-Kluskens, column 30 on the 1910 census schedules provide information about a survivor of the Union or Confederate Army or Navy. The abbreviations listed in column 30 represent the following: Union Army "UA", Union Navy "UN", Confederate Army "CA", and Confederate Navy "CN." Additionally, Pretchel-Kluskens' article reports that column 31 of the 1930 census indicates military service in the Civil War (CW), the Spanish American War (Sp), the Philippine Insurrection (Phil), the Boxer Rebellion (Box), the Mexican Expedition (Mex) and World War I (WW). The 1910* and twelve states of the 1930 Census Schedules can be researched by locating the head of household on the Soundex reels first. The Soundex will provide the enumeration district and sheet numbers that are needed to locate the corresponding census record. States that do not provide Soundex indexes can be searched geographically. For more information, see <http://1930census.archives.gov/searchStrategiesGeographic.html>

*Note: The 1910 Soundex is commonly referred to as the 1910 Miracode.

Census records can be researched on microfilm at the National Archives and at local Family History Centers. Many images from these schedules are available on subscription based Internet Web sites like Ancestry and Heritage Quest as well. These census schedules can be very helpful in gathering information in your search of a military ancestor.

<http://www.archives.gov/genealogy/census/1850-1930.html>

<http://www.archives.gov/publications/microfilm-catalogs/census/1910/general-info.html>

http://helpdesk.rootsweb.com/get_started/charts/US1910CensusForm.pdf

<http://1930census.archives.gov/searchStrategiesGeographic.html>

The Importance of Viewing Original Records

by Christine Sweet-Hart, Contributing Editor

Good research involves looking at all of the records available for a particular research project. Great research questions those in secondary or tertiary formats, and quests for the originals. Beware of compilations, indexes, and other secondary sources of information whether electronic or paper, especially those that contain no citation showing where the information was obtained. Although these sources can provide clues to other records, they are themselves not good documentary evidence of relationships.

Often the choice of what information is translated into an electronic database, index, or list format is largely left to the discretion of the organization, project manager, or individual that is creating the compilation. Valuable information may be left out due to space or time constraints, or incorrectly indexed due to ignorance on the part of the individual transcriber. Many times, this information is the difference between a brick wall in research and a clue to solving a family history mystery.

While it is valuable to know when your ancestor died, it is even more valuable to know the circumstances surrounding their death and who was left behind. One database of early town death records eliminated the cause of death and coroners notes. When viewing the originals, it was found within those notes indications that some people had died by drowning or accidental falls. Deaths by epidemic illnesses were also in the original records, along with notes about next of kin and other relations of the deceased. This information is invaluable when searching for pathways to additional records for research, and would have been lost without viewing the originals.

In another example, one compiler's zeal to make information available to the general public for no charge resulted in a large index of vital records from a well known collection being put on-line but eliminated the actual town where the event happened, book and page numbers where the original information was located. It was this information that had made the collection valuable. Researchers using this information at face value could possibly be misled into following an incorrect line with no differentiating town associations for people with the same name.

The "Massachusetts Vital Records to 1850" collection is a great example of why finding original records or supporting documentation for your findings is important. Many people fail to read the "front matter" in these books that explains that the information is taken from a variety of sources, not all from civil records which did not exist officially in Massachusetts until 1841. Many of these records are taken from church, bible, and other family papers. While these original sources may not exist anymore, they provide clues to further records or family members, in the case of the owners of the bibles recorded, that can be pursued.

When using any secondary or tertiary record source, it is important to look for pathways to the original records, read any information that tells what the compilation contains and does not contain, and if the original records are not available, obtain other documentation to corroborate your findings. Viewing the original records can also bring unexpected benefits.... Imagine the surprise of one researcher when browsing microfilmed copies of actual census records and realizing that the enumerator, not listed in the abstracts of the records, was actually a relative! There are many reasons to view original records when researching, but the most important one is that it is just good research practice.

Tid-Byte

The Library of Virginia has a large and very valuable collection of Confederate pension records as well as records for some Confederate veterans' homes and for disabled veterans. Go to the Library's Web site at <http://www.lva.lib.va.us> and open the "Site Index" in the left margin, and from the alphabet select the letter M for Military Records.

Prose & Poetry

**God and the Soldier,
all men adore
in time of strife,
and not before.**

**When the danger is past,
all wrongs arighted
God is forgotten,
the Old Soldier slighted.**

--An anonymous soldier under the Duke of Marlborough circa 1705

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