Preserving Your Family History

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HOSTED BY ALCTS, THE ASSOCIATION FOR
LIBRARY COLLECTIONS AND TECHNICAL SERVICES
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Kenyatta D. Berry
Overview

- It’s important to know your family history
- My genealogy journey
- Interviewing family members
- Records available
- Resources for research
- DNA
- Telling your family story
The importance of family history

- Creates a connection to your past
- Discover common family traits
- Medical/Health History
- Everyone has a story
- Once you connect to your past, you become a student of history
- It’s fun!
George Henry Dwelle (1833-1928)
George Henry Dwelle - Biography

“He was born in Columbia County on January 26, 1833. His father was a white man, C. J. Cook. His mother was Mary Thomas, but was living at the time of Dr. Dwelle’s birth with a family by the name of Dwelle, whose name was given to the Negro boy. It sounds strange and far away, especially to the young people of this generation, but our subject remembers having been sold twice, first when a small boy he was carried by his master to Columbus, and later to Alabama. Changes in his master’s circumstances rendered it necessary for him to sell his slaves, and out of consideration for those who had formerly lived in Augusta, he sent a number of them back to Augusta to be sold.”

History of the American Negro and His Institutions, Georgia Edition edited by A. B. Caldwell (1917)
Top Genealogical Myths

- I can find everything related to my family online
- I have Native American ancestry (the Cherokee Princess)
- Enslaved individuals often took the names of their enslavers
- Records do not exist for the enslaved
- Our family name was changed at Ellis Island
- Family trees on the internet are accurate
Interviewing your family members

- **Individuals to contact**
  - Parents, Grandparents, great-grandparents
  - Aunts, Uncles, Cousins
  - Family Historians
  - Town Historians
  - Clerks
  - Librarians
Interviewing your family members

- **Forms of interviewing**
  - Formal or informal personal interviews
  - Telephone interview
  - Skype interviews

- **Tools**
  - StoryGlory
  - iPhone or Android
  - Video conferencing
Questions?
Documents for Research
Census Records

- Available from 1790 to 1940
- 1940 Census is free and available online at
  - [http://www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com)
  - [http://www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
- Lists the members of the household
  - 1790 to 1840 only lists the head of the household
  - 1850 to 1870 lists all individuals in the household but no relationship
  - 1880 to 1940 lists all individuals in the household and relationship to the head of the household
  - 1890 Census most of it destroyed because of water damage after a fire.
Vital Records

- **Birth**
  - Available by state
  - Standardized around 1911/12

- **Marriage**
  - Available by state
  - Copies are either at Department of Health, State Archives and court records

- **Death**
  - Available by state
  - Family bibles
  - Standardized around 1911/12
Sample Death Certificate

TOWN

LONGVIEW

15

TOWN

LONGVIEW

3. NAME OF

DECEASED

GREGG MEMORIAL HOSP.

5a. FULL NAME

OF HOSPITAL

OR INSTITUTION

6. COLOR OR RACE

NEGRO

7. MARRIED, NEVER

MARRIED, DIVORCED, WIDOWED

8. DATE OF

DEATH

05-20-1953

9. AGE

YEARS

MONTHS

DAYS

13. MOTHER'S MAIDEN NAME

LOUISIANA ROSSETTA KILORE

14. DISEASE OR CONDITION

DIRECTLY LEADING TO DEATH

15. SOCIAL SECURITY NO.

4956-03-7911

16. MEDICAL CERTIFICATION

17. CAUSE OF DEATH

ONSET AND DEATH

18a. DATE OF OPERATION

18b. MAJOR FINDINGS OF OPERATION

20a. ACCIDENT SUICIDE

HOMICIDE

20b. PLACE OF INJURY

20c. (CITY, TOWN, OR PRECINCT NO.)

21. HOW DID INJURY OCCUR?

22a. SIGNATURE

22b. ADDRESS

26-1953

20-1953, 1953.

20-1953, 1953.

EXAMINER

ATTACHMENTS

BUREAU OF VITAL STATISTICS

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

RECEIVED JUN 10 1953
Immigration & Naturalization

- Naturalization Records – National Archives & Administration
- United States Passport applications 1795-1925
- Passenger Lists
- Resources available online
  - Familysearch.org
  - Ancestry.com
  - https://www.libertyellisfoundation.org/pasenger
Immigration record Ellis Island

First Name: Eunice
Last Name: Mundell
Nationality: British West Indies, British West Indian
Last Place of Residence: Kingston, Jamaica
Date of Arrival: June 11th, 1923
Age at Arrival: 19y 10m
Gender: Female
Marital Status: Single
Ship of Travel: Princess May
Port of Departure: Kingston, Jamaica
Manifest Line Number: 0007
Military records

- Draft registrations
  - Civil War
  - World War I
  - World War II
- Pension Files
  - Available from the National Archives
- Revolutionary War & War of 1812
  - DAR applications
- Draft registrations and service records for the Civil War are available online at familysearch.org, ancestry.com and fold3.com
DNA

- MtDNA – deep, distant maternal lineage
- Y-DNA – paternal lineage
- Autosomal DNA – ethnic ancestry, plus relative connections on all branches of your family tree.

Companies
- AncestryDNA – Autosomal
- 23 and Me – Autosomal, MtDNA and Y-DNA
- FamilyTreeDNA – Autosomal, MtDNA and Y-DNA
Questions?
The Art of Storytelling
“Stories engage people at every level - not just in their minds but in emotions, values and imaginations.”
Storytelling in Genealogy

- Names, dates and locations and all the things that we as genealogists think are fun actually don’t stick in the minds of our relatives or friends.
- The stories we tell create “sticky” memories by attaching emotions to things that happen.
- They inspire others to research their family history
Telling a great story

- **Start with a message**
  - Who is my audience and what message do I want to share?
  - Example: Genealogy Roadshow Season 3 - hometown tour
- **Mine your ancestor’s experiences**
  - What events in their lives do you want to share?
  - What are the most compelling?
Telling a great story

- Find your hero
  - What lessons did they learn?
  - What events did they witness?

“One of the main reasons we listen to stories is to create a deeper belief in ourselves.”

Jonah Sachs, author of Winning the Story Wars
Telling a great story

- Highlight a struggle
  - A story without a challenge isn’t very interesting
  - Good storytellers recognize that a story needs conflict
  - People love to be part of the journey
- Keep it simple – less is more
  - Don’t let needless details detract you from your core message
  - Transport your audience with interesting, well-placed details.
    - Examples: Humble beginnings or how an experience might have impacted your ancestor
Practice makes perfect

Practice with genealogy buddies, friends or colleagues to fine tune your message

“Stories are the original viral tool. Once you tell a very compelling story, the first thing someone does is think, ‘Who can I tell this story to?’”

*Jonah Sachs, author of Winning the Story Wars*
Thank you