

JPL Genealogy News

Jacksonville Public Library Genealogy Collection Newsletter

VOLUME 11, ISSUE 11

FEBRUARY 2007

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UPCOMING PROGRAMS & CLASSES

2/10: Genealogy for Beginners

2/20: Ancestry LE

3/10: Census

3/24: Immigration

LIBRARY HOURS

Mon: 9am-8pm

Tues: 9am-8pm

Wed: 9am-8pm

Thurs: 9am-8pm

Fri: 9am-6pm

Sat: 9am-6pm

Sun: 1pm-6pm

We will be closed:

Monday, 2/19 for Presidents' Day

Epitaphs: The Last Word

The literal meaning of epitaph in ancient Greek is "on the gravestone"; words inscribed to honor the deceased. Although scholars still debate the origin of the epitaph, the earliest examples can be found on Egyptian sarcophagi.

As common burial grounds became prevalent in most societies throughout the world, over-crowding soon became a problem, with confusion as to who was buried where. Thus names and dates were inscribed on gravestones for identification purposes.

The oldest American grave markers lacked any type of sculpture or carved design. Only one or two lines were inscribed – usually the persons' initials or name, age, and year of death. As time went by, additional information was included; pious thoughts, words of wisdom and warning, perhaps some insight into the person's character or deeds. Curses to discourage grave robbers, occupations, and warnings to the living as to their own impending doom began to appear. Professional epitaph writers were hired; amateur poets wrote for friends and relatives; or other literate individuals composed them when necessary. Tombstone inscriptions were at one time published in a wide variety of

books, for those who either might need one, or for the



family searching for words of comfort, warning, or any sentiment in between.

Today, epitaphs seem not to be as commonly used. Gravestones have generally become smaller in most cemeteries, due to lack of space or cost. More recent burials now, once again, only inform of the deceased's name, dates of birth and death, and family relationship, noting father or mother, grandparent, son or daughter.

There are many well known epitaphs, serious or silly, collected by aficionados of the art form over the years. Some of the most enjoyable:

Here lies Ann Mann,
Who lived an old maid
But died an old Mann.

Here lies Ezekial Aikle
Age 102
The good
Die young.

Here lies Lester Moore
Four slugs from a .44
No Les. No More.

Sacred to the memory of my
husband John Barnes
who died January 3, 1803
His comely young widow,
aged 23, has many qualifications
of a good wife,
and yearns to be comforted.

To the Memory of Abraham
Beaulieu
Born 15 September 1822
Accidentally shot 4th April 1844
As a mark of affection from his
brother

If you are interested in further reading on this topic, the following books can be found at the library:

Granite Laughter and Marble Tears by Robert E. Pike

Gravestone Inscriptions
Mrs. Josiah Carpenter, comp.

Tombstones of Your Ancestors
by Louis S. Schafer

Stories on Stone: A Book of American Epitaphs by Charles L. Wallis

Living History: The U.S. Census

The Federal census is one of the most valuable resources genealogists have. It enables us to not only trace our roots back through the decades, but to see our ancestors as a dynamic, three-dimensional family: fathers, mothers, aunts, uncles, grandparents, and others, all living and working together.

Barbara Kiersh will teach a new program at the library on March 10th. The program focuses on the Federal Population Census in the context of the times and events of each decade in which it was taken. On each subsequent census, not only were more questions asked,

but questions that probed more deeply into the everyday lives and circumstances of those living within the country. Why did the United States government want to know how many children a woman bore and how many were still living? Why did couples have to reveal their ages at first marriage? Was it important to know whether or not the family had a radio?

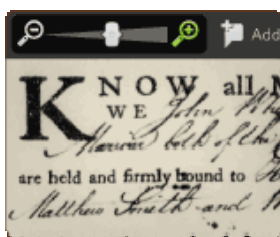
In this class, we will also discuss the census index: the difference between the index and the actual census, the Soundex Code, how to determine the correct code for each name, and how to find

people on the index film.

Class participants will then have the opportunity to locate people within the actual census records. There will also be time for online searching using Ancestry Library Edition.

The class will be held on Saturday, March 10 from 10:00 am—12:00 pm at the Main Library in the Electronic Classroom on the first floor. Pre-registration is required and space is limited. Please call (904) 630-2409 to register.

National Archives Digitization Project



On January 10, the National Archives and Footnote, Inc. announced an agreement to digitize selected records from the vast holdings of the National Archives. The 4.5 million pages that have been digitized so far are now available at www.footnote.com/nara.

This non-exclusive agreement will enable researchers and the general public to access millions of newly-digitized images of the National Archives historic records on a subscription basis from the Footnote web site. By February 6, the digitized materials will also be available at no charge in National Archives research rooms in Washington D.C. and regional facilities across the country. After an interval of five years, all images digitized through this agreement will be available at no charge through the National Archives web site.

The digitized records currently available at www.footnote.com/nara include:

- * Papers of the Continental Congress (1774-89)
- * Mathew B. Brady Collection of Civil War Photographs
- * Southern Claims Commission
- * Name Index to Civil War and Later Pension Files
- * Investigative Case Files of the Bureau of Investigation, 1908-22

Spotlight on the Collection: Revolutionary War Rolls

On the 138 rolls of Revolutionary War era microfilm, are muster rolls, payrolls, strength returns, and other miscellaneous personnel, pay, and supply records of American Army units from 1775 through 1783. A manuscript register of this series is filmed on roll 1.

American Forces during the Revolutionary War included many types of military organizations created by the Continental Congress, States, towns, and counties. Regular units that were authorized by Congress formed the Continental Army, but was supplemented by units of

militia, volunteers, and others who served with them.

The records are arranged by numbered folders ("jackets") under three broad categories: individual States (arranged alphabetically), Continental Troops, and Miscellaneous. Units arranged under Continental Troops consist primarily of specialized units created by the Continental Congress. The section designated Miscellaneous is reserved for the returns of units larger than a regiment and for special returns not easily classified under another designation.

The index for the Revolutionary War Rolls microfilm collection is at the Florida/Genealogy Reference Desk in the Map Room. The 138 rolls of microfilm are in the film cabinets near the City Directories in the Genealogy Department.



Start Here. Go Anywhere.