

GENEALOGY POINTERS (05-08-07)

In This Issue:

Deciphering Old English Handwriting

What Are Mugbooks & Why Should You Know About Them? (CDs & Books)

Finding Your World War I Ancestor

Spotlight on West Virginia (CD & Books)

DECIPHERING OLD ENGLISH HANDWRITING

Just about anyone who takes genealogy seriously is destined to face the challenge of reading original (or microfilm copies of) records written in an unfamiliar cursive style. If your research takes you back to at least the 19th century, you'll encounter census records, wills, deeds, and multifarious other records that you'll strain to decipher. Records from the colonial period will elicit a double-take if you've never seen them before. You'll run into "ff" where you might expect an f," and an "f" will actually stand for "s." The ancient abbreviation "Maps" should be read as "Mass" for Massachusetts. The letters "U" and "V," as well as "u" and "v," were used interchangeably. On the whole, the following lowercase letters are most difficult to read, especially in 17th-century documents: "c," "e," "h," "r," "s," and "t."

Once you've figured out what the letters are, you'll need to bone up on old abbreviations for terms in common usage today. For instance, "o.s.p." is short for "died without issue"; "yt" stands for "that"; "als" signifies an "alias"; "d.v.m." means "died while mother was living"; while "d.s.p." means "died without issue." Did you know that "B.L.W." means bounty land warrant, or that "do" was short for "ditto, or the same as above," a notation you'll encounter repeatedly in census records?

The challenges don't end there. You'll have to learn to decipher numerals as well as letters. Even after you get familiar with a certain era's lettering, you may find that what was conventional in 1700 is unrecognizable 50 years earlier. Then, of course, there is the problem of individual styles of writing.

For the novice, decoding early handwriting can be an intimidating task. If you are a beginner, you may wish to get your hands on Kip Sperry's excellent handbook, **READING EARLY AMERICAN HANDWRITING**, the best tool we know of for teaching how to read and understand the handwriting found in documents commonly used in genealogical research. This guide explains techniques for reading early American documents, provides samples of alphabets and letter forms, and defines commonly used terms and abbreviations. Perhaps best of all, the volume presents numerous examples of early American records for the reader to work with. Arranged by degree of difficulty, from the relatively easy-to-read documents of the 19th century to those of the 17th, the documents showcase examples of handwriting styles, letter forms, abbreviations, and

terminology typically found in early American records. Each document--there are nearly 100 of them at various stages of complexity--appears with the author's transcription on a facing page, enabling the reader to check his/her own transcription. This strategy allows the researcher to attain proficiency in reading the documents at a natural rate of progression.

Listen to what the experts have to say about READING EARLY AMERICAN HANDWRITING:

"The further back in time our research takes us, the more 'plain English' looks like a foreign language. That's why Sperry's 'plain English' guide to not-so-plain English writing is an absolute basic book for every genealogical shelf," says Elizabeth Shown Mills, CG, FASG.

According to the "National Genealogical Society Quarterly," "'Reading Early American Handwriting' is a timeless reference whose value will increase as more early-American documents become available to researchers of many disciplines."

If you're planning to consult original records of the 19th, 18th, or 17th century, or earlier, we encourage you to let READING EARLY AMERICAN HANDWRITING be your guide.

http://www.genealogical.com/index.php?main_page=product_info&item_number=5513

=====

WHAT ARE MUGBOOKS & Why Should You Know About Them? (CDs & Books)

From the waning years of the 19th century through the first half of the 20th, thousands of mugbooks were published in the U.S. The term "mugbook" refers to a single- or multi-volume collection of genealogies/biographies of accomplished individuals from a particular city, county, state, or region. Each essay is usually accompanied by a photograph of its principal subject, hence the term "mugbook." Mugbooks differ from local histories in that they are generally unconcerned with political, social, or institutional history--except as those subjects had a place in the personal essays.

The creation of a mugbook was usually a subscription affair; in other words, the central figure of each sketch agreed to pay for the privilege of being included in the volume and, in turn, received a copy of the published work. The book's publisher assigned an editor (often a respected genealogist from the area) to the project whose job was to compile/edit the essays, many of which the subjects had submitted themselves.

By the end of World War I, publishers had released hundreds, and possibly thousands, of mugbooks, many of them from the local history publisher, Lewis Publishing Company (now defunct). Most, but not all, mugbooks are collections of family histories, containing an enormous number of potential clues for researchers. One must proceed cautiously,

however, because the genealogies have some age on them and because the submissions sometimes went unchecked.

While the majority of mugbooks are no longer in print--which means you need to find a library or used/rare book dealer in order to use them--we have reprinted a number of the most sought-after mugbooks within this vast literature. You'll also find that the page images of a number of mugbooks also appear on some of our Family Archive CDs, making an otherwise inaccessible body of information available to the researcher with the click of a mouse and at a fraction of the cost on the used-book market. Here are three samples of mugbooks that are in print and three CDs (one of which is on sale at the moment) whose mugbook images comprise part of or the whole of the contents.

NEW ENGLAND FAMILIES #2 (CD)

This Family Archive CD contains electronically searchable text of the First and Third series of William Cutter's popular compendium, "New England Families, Genealogical and Memorial." The eight volumes that make up these two distinct series contain about 2,000 genealogies and refer to approximately 20,000 related individuals.

http://www.genealogical.com/index.php?main_page=product_info&item_number=7159

CONNECTICUT LOCAL AND FAMILY HISTORIES (CD)

This two-disc Family Archive CD contains the largest collection of Connecticut genealogies available--in this format or in any other. Naming some 450,000 individuals, the CDs are based on a collection of books published by GPC that cover the early families of the towns of Fairfield, Guilford, Hartford, Milford, Wethersfield, Windsor, Woodbury, and others, as well as books that cover the genealogical history of the entire state.

Was \$39.99 Now \$29.99

http://www.genealogical.com/index.php?main_page=product_info&item_number=7515

EARLY NEW YORK FAMILIES (CD)

This two-disc Family Archive CD contains images of the pages of 16 volumes of New York family histories. Naming as many as 350,000 individuals in histories, biographies, and genealogies that cover the entire state of New York, this massive family history collection is accessed by means of a single electronic index. As collective genealogy goes, this CD compilation is at the very top of the league.

http://www.genealogical.com/index.php?main_page=product_info&item_number=7157

GENEALOGICAL AND FAMILY HISTORY of the State of Vermont. In Two Volumes (Very low in stock)

This is an authoritative two-volume collection of illustrated biographical/ genealogical essays of noted Vermonters and their families. In all cases, the lines are traced forward from the oldest known ancestor of the line to the family member (living or memorialized) featured in the sketch, for whom, in turn, a biography--often with a photograph--is provided. Additional collateral lines linked to the subject of the essay frequently follow. Many of the lineages go back to 16th-century England, while others brim with connections to Massachusetts and the other New England states. The work as a whole contains upwards of 30,000 references to kith and kin.

http://www.genealogical.com/index.php?main_page=product_info&item_number=9322

NEW ENGLAND FAMILIES, Genealogical & Memorial. Third Series. In Four Volumes (Low in stock)

Between 1913 and 1916, William Richard Cutter published four separate 4-volume series entitled, "New England Families, Genealogical and Memorial." The First Series, published in 1913, features genealogical and biographical essays on nearly 1,000 New England families. The Second Series (1914) is substantially similar to its predecessor, while the Fourth Series is essentially a collection of biographies and, thus, does not command the same interest among genealogists. The Third Series (1915), however, comprises nearly 1,000 additional New England genealogical and biographical essays not found in the First Series, enabling researchers to investigate nearly 10,000 New England ancestors unique to it. (This series also appears on the CD-ROM, NEW ENGLAND FAMILIES #2, described above.)

http://www.genealogical.com/index.php?main_page=product_info&item_number=9174

FAMILIES OF SOUTHEASTERN GEORGIA

This work is a reprint of the third and final volume of the 1964 publication, "Georgia's Coastal Plain: A History," the volume that holds greatest importance for genealogists. Each of the roughly 1,000 sketches arranged here gives the subject's place and date of birth, educational background and military service, career, civic interests, church affiliation, hobbies, and so on. In almost every case, the author furnishes the names of the subject's parents, spouse, children, and spouse's parents, usually citing the subject's date of marriage and the dates or places of birth and death of at least these three generations of family members.

http://www.genealogical.com/index.php?main_page=product_info&item_number=9409

=====

FINDING YOUR World War I Ancestor

Suppose family legend has it that your great-grandfather served in the Polish army during World War I. If his service records have survived, you assume you will be able to find them without any trouble. In reality, however, it is not quite that simple.

Between October 1914 and September 1917, for example, some Polish combatants served in the Russian Army. Why? Because prior to the Russian Revolution, Poland existed as the Duchy of Warsaw within the Russian Empire. Following the establishment of a Provisional Polish Government in September, 1917, the Poles serving for Russia were regrouped into a new Polish army. Or, your ancestor could have been a member of the insurrectionary "Polish Legion" established in Vienna to serve the Empire of Austria-Hungary. Still other Poles served with the German army in Upper Silesia and East Prussia as the Polnische Wermacht, or with a Polish army on the side of France. In short, great-grandpa's service records could conceivably be in Russia, Germany, France, or Hungary, as well as in Poland.

The dispersion of Polish military service records for "The Great War" was not altogether unusual. Following the armistice, the victorious powers carved up the defeated nations and/or their territories. For example, if your Alsace-Lorraine ancestor fought for Germany, his records would have come under French jurisdiction after the Treaty of Versailles. For its part, Denmark acquired Jutland and Schleswig-Holstein from Germany. Similarly, the nations of Finland and Lithuania achieved their independence at the Soviet Union's (Russia's) expense.

Clearly, anyone on the trail of a World War I service record is more likely to be successful if she/he is equipped with a roadmap to the records of that tragic conflict. And roadmap, indeed, is exactly what genealogist Christina K. Schaefer has created in her magnificent guidebook, *THE GREAT WAR: A Guide to the Service Records of All the World's Fighting Men and Volunteers*.

Organized by country, *THE GREAT WAR* provides at-a-glance information on the existence of records and how they can be accessed. Each chapter begins with an outline history of a given country's involvement in the conflict as it impacts on the records. The author then lists all extant record groups for that nation's army and navy. So, for example, we are provided with a list of every German army regiment, followed by another list of the capital ships and U-boats that served the Kaiser. The lengthy U.S. chapter lists the national repositories and then record holdings state by state. Each chapter concludes with a breakdown of that nation's military archives and their holdings and a bibliography of suggested further reading.

For researchers who can profit from a brushing-up on their World War I history, Mrs. Schaefer begins the book with a detailed timeline of events from 1914 to 1918. The volume concludes with a number of very useful features: (1) records pertaining to the aftermath of the war (e.g. service records of the Red Cross); (2) a table of the political changes ushered in by the war; and (3) a list of World War I sources available on the Internet at the time of the book's original publication in 1998.

http://www.genealogical.com/index.php?main_page=product_info&item_number=5178

=====

SPOTLIGHT on West Virginia (CD & Books)

The western portion of the state of Virginia broke with the eastern counties over the issue of secession in 1861, and by 1863 it was admitted into the Union as the state of West Virginia. Since by that time all but five of West Virginia's 53 present-day counties had been established--and since President Lincoln was happy to welcome it into the Union--admitting the Mountaineer State ensued immediately after a small Confederate army had been driven off.

Significant homesteading of [West] Virginia began in the 1730s, when all of contemporary West Virginia lay within the boundaries of Augusta County, Virginia. By the time the Constitution had been ratified, Virginia's western counties contained more than 50,000 inhabitants, many of whom had entered the region from Pennsylvania and Maryland. While the majority of colonial [West] Virginia was English, fully a third of the population was German. As was generally true along the colonial frontier, the Scotch-Irish inhabited [West] Virginia's least accessible and mountainous terrain. Since the local economy was dominated by subsistence agriculture and, in any case, would not support a plantation economy, scarcely any persons of African-American birth resided along the Blue Ridge until after the Civil War.

Do you have 18th- or 19th-century West Virginia forebears? If so, you might find them among the following selections:

EARLY WEST VIRGINIA SETTLERS (CD)

Containing the records of 200,000 early West Virginia settlers, this CD is based on the images of the pages of 14 West Virginia reference works. The contents consist of wills, land grants, marriage records, military records, family histories, and local histories. Every page can be accessed by means of the electronic index to the entire collection.

http://www.genealogical.com/index.php?main_page=product_info&item_number=7520

WEST VIRGINIA GENEALOGY, Sources and Resources (Temporarily out of print)

This detailed guide to genealogical sources and resources in West Virginia covers what records to look for, what is available, and where it can be found.

http://www.genealogical.com/index.php?main_page=product_info&item_number=3527

WEST VIRGINIA ESTATE SETTLEMENTS

This is an index of wills, inventories, appraisements, land grants, and surveys up to 1850. It covers the 13 [West] Virginia counties that were formed before 1800 and names about 25,000 individuals.

http://www.genealogical.com/index.php?main_page=product_info&item_number=3050

WEST VIRGINIANS in the American Revolution

The Revolutionary War soldiers identified in this work lived at one time or another in what is now the state of West Virginia, their military duties having been discharged in the service of other states. The data given for each soldier typically includes name, age, date of birth, service record, date pension applied for and granted, place of residence, names of wife and children, and comrades-in-arms.

http://www.genealogical.com/index.php?main_page=product_info&item_number=3055

THE SOLDIERY OF WEST VIRGINIA

This is a comprehensive compilation of West Virginia soldiers in the French and Indian War; Lord Dunmore's War; the Revolution; the Later Indian Wars; the Whiskey Insurrection; the Second War with England; the War with Mexico, and, to a lesser extent, the Civil War, containing rosters and, in many cases, service records of thousands of soldiers, with narratives on the various wars. The rosters and rolls, here collected for the first time, are drawn from both published and unpublished sources, the original records being, in many cases, in the Department of Archives and History of the State of West Virginia.

http://www.genealogical.com/index.php?main_page=product_info&item_number=3375

SIMS INDEX to Land Grants in West Virginia

This facsimile reprint of SIMS INDEX lists land grants that were made by Lord Fairfax prior to the creation of the Virginia Land Office in 1779, as well as grants issued by the Commonwealth of Virginia for land now located in West Virginia and by the state of West Virginia under its first Constitution. The information contained in this exhaustive work was compiled by Edgar Sims, the State Auditor of West Virginia, from copies of land grants filed in his office. More than 50,000 entries are included, each referring to the name of the grantee, amount of acreage, location and date of grant, and grant book and page number.

http://www.genealogical.com/index.php?main_page=product_info&item_number=5401

GENEALOGIES OF WEST VIRGINIA FAMILIES

This work is a consolidation of all the family history articles that appeared throughout the complete run of "The West Virginia Historical Magazine Quarterly" from 1901 to 1905. Though a rich source of West Virginia genealogical data, this short-lived periodical is very scarce and, moreover, has never before been indexed. Clearfield Company is delighted to rectify both of these shortcomings by reprinting the genealogical meat of the magazine and by adding a complete name index of more than 5,000 entries.

http://www.genealogical.com/index.php?main_page=product_info&item_number=9489

TRANS-ALLEGHENY PIONEERS. Historical Sketches of the First White Settlers West of the Alleghenies, 1748 and After (Low in stock)

This work is, without question, one of the most celebrated accounts of life on the Virginia frontier ever written. The author's focal point is the region of the New River-Kanawha in present-day Montgomery and Pulaski counties, Virginia. This book is essential reading for anyone interested in frontier history or the genealogies of mid-18th-century families who resided in the Valley of Virginia.

http://www.genealogical.com/index.php?main_page=product_info&item_number=9733

A HISTORY OF MIDDLE NEW RIVER SETTLEMENTS and Contiguous Territory (Low in stock)

This expansive history by David Johnston, spanning the years 1654 to 1905, focuses on the early settlements along the New River--the area that encompasses present-day Mercer and Monroe counties, West Virginia, and Tazewell and Giles counties, Virginia. Of particular interest to genealogists are the biographical and genealogical summaries of the following 39 families: Bailey, Bane, Barnes, Belcher, Black, Bowens, Burke, Calfee, Capertons, Cecil, Chapmans, Christian, Clay, Cloyd, Davidson, Emmons, French, Gillespie, Hale, Hare, Hoge, Howe, Johnston, Kirk, Lybrook, M'Clagherty, M'Comas, M'Donald, Meadow, Napier, Pack, Pearis, Peck, Peters, Shannon, Smith, Snidow, Straley, and Witten.

http://www.genealogical.com/index.php?main_page=product_info&item_number=9738

To browse all of our West Virginia publications, please access the following link:

<http://www.genealogical.com/states/West%20Virginia.html>

CONTACT US

www.genealogical.com is the online home of Genealogical Publishing Company and its affiliate, Clearfield Company. For general information about our companies and their products, e-mail us at info@genealogical.com. To order on-line, e-mail us at sales@genealogical.com.

To order other than online, you can:

1. Order by mail: 3600 Clipper Mill Road, Suite 260 - Baltimore, Maryland 21211-1953
2. Fax your order to 1-410-752-8492
3. Call toll-free to our sales department at 1-800-296-6687