



Columbine Genealogical & Historical Society Newsletter

Vol. 39 No. 3

July August September 2012

July 2012

PROGRAMS & WORKSHOPS

Tuesday, 11 Sep 2012 at 1 pm
"What's New at Family Search?"

By Wallace Carroll, Director of Littleton FHC

Again Wallace will kick-start our year with the latest from Family Search.

Tuesday, 18 Sep 2012 at 9:30 am
Field Trip to History Colorado Center

All-day field trip to the new History Colorado Center in downtown Denver. We will carpool from the church at 9:30 a.m., spend the day, visit the library, buy/bring lunch, and return in mid afternoon. Admission fees will be about \$8.

Saturday, 22 Sep 2012 Fall Seminar at Bemis Library— Learn about Using Ancestry (10 am—12 noon) and Heritage Quest (1:30-3:30 p.m.) Websites by Aime'e Leverette, Customer Education and Genealogy Training Specialist for ProQuest

Sign-up will be online through Bemis Library: www.littletongov.org/bemis

Tuesday, 9 Oct 2012 at 1 pm
"Digital Storytelling for Genealogists"

A representative from the Center for Digital Storytelling in Denver will instruct us about this latest innovative idea for genealogy for the future.

Tuesday, 16 Oct 2012 at 1 pm
Topic to be Announced Later

By Janice Prater

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The Provenance of Our Family Cedar Chest

by Carol Johnson, CGHS Member

Later this summer at the age of thirty, our daughter will be getting married. Six months ago the idea came to me to fill my mother's cedar chest with homemade items for the couple as a wedding gift. My father bought the cedar chest for my mother when they married in 1938. It traveled with them on twenty-some moves around the United States and shows the scratches and scrapes of a marriage that lasted sixty-four years until my father's death in 2002. When I got married, I never had a "Lane Chest", which was quite a popular brand of hope chest back in the 60s and 70s. As an Army brat, a military foot locker would probably have been more appropriate for my hope chest. Now, my mother's cedar chest sits in my bedroom ready to be filled for another bride.

I remember the "cedar chest" from my childhood. It has dark brown wood on the outside and genuine Tennessee Red Aromatic Cedar on the inside which still has its aroma even today almost seventy-five years later. The inside lid identifies it as a Continental Cedar Chest, made by the Continental Desk Company in Rockford, IL. A sticker reads that "The entire contents of this Continental Cedar Chest will be insured against moth damage up to \$100 for a period of 3 years" with the "Insurance policy to be issued by St. Paul Fire and Marine Insurance Company, St. Paul, Minnesota". It measures 44 inches in length, 18 inches in depth, and 18 inches in height with its attached lid. When I was a child, I watched as my mother rearranged her mother's quilts, her wool blankets, and one of my felt baby outfits with booties in it.

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Columbine Genealogical & Historical Society, Inc.

Colorado Corporation (1976)
Cultural & Educational
Organization
(I.R.S. 501 C-3)

Member

Colorado Council of
Genealogical Societies

+++

National Genealogical Society

+++

Federation of
Genealogical Societies

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<http://www.columbinegenealogy.com/>



JoAnn LaGuardia

President of Columbine
Genealogical and Historical Society

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE State and National Membership

Making sure Columbine Genealogical and Historical Society had its place in the genealogical community, our society became members of four organizations:

First, **Colorado Council of Genealogical Societies** was established in 1980 as a non-profit organization to facilitate cooperation among heritage-related organizations. As **Mary Lou King**, CGHS President in 1992 and 1993, says, "If we're going to be a viable organization, we need to recognize the link with others and feel good about it." An active representative, **Cheryl Floberg**, attends CCGS meetings, informs, and involves our members in special projects. CCGS awarded a CGHS founding member the 2011 David S. Vogels award. The Council also maintains a Speaker's Bureau Directory to aid society program chairmen in finding qualified lecturers.

How is the **National Genealogical Society** different from other national organizations? For starters check out www.ngsgenealogy.org and view *Finding your Family at the National Archives* or *Paths to Your Past*. NGS was founded in 1903, and there are over 10,000 organizational and individual members. CGHS has been an organizational member since 1987. For our annual dues we receive four print issues of *National Genealogical Society Quarterly* and four print issues of *NGS Magazine*. Also, our society receives free event postings on the NGS website. Three officers can attend the Annual Conference (this year held in Las Vegas) at the membership rate. **Don Elliot**, CGHS President 2001 and 2002, praised the NGS sponsored newsletter competition and past recognition heaped on CGHS. He noted that Columbine was presented **The Award of Merit**, its highest recognition, for the **Littleton Church Preservation Records Project**. Quarterly Newsletters of CGHS won first place awards from NGS in 1992, 1994 and 1995.

The **Federation of Genealogical Societies** is unique in that it has no membership for individuals. Founded in 1976, it represents the members of hundreds of genealogical societies. *The Federation of Genea-*

logical Societies links the genealogical community by: 1) serving the needs of the member societies, 2) providing products and services needed by member societies, and 3) marshaling the resources of its member organizations. **Forum** magazine is filled with articles pertaining to society management and genealogical news. FGS has its own internet radio show at www.blogtalkradio.com/my_society. Our society's main link with FGS is the **Malcolm H. Stern-NARA (National Archives and Records Administration) Fund**. CGHS is part of the national support program to finance preservation and imaging of valuable materials now preserved at NARA in Washington, DC. These materials, produced without government funding, are then distributed to the 13 Regional Archives for use by researchers and placed online for access. FGS administers this fund, conducts fund raising, and campaigns to support record preservation. Currently FGS and NARA, with the genealogical community, have begun an exciting project to digitize the WAR of 1812 pension files. There are 7.2 million pages of 180,000 pension files that have never been available in any other form before. The **Preserve the Pensions Project** is in progress to digitize and make every page available for the bicentennial commemoration of this historic conflict.

Finally, **History Colorado** has reinvented itself with the opening of a major new museum. This dazzling facility is justly receiving statewide and national notice. **Mary Lou King** reminds us, "Support is an important connection to Colorado and part of our name is historical." CGHS is proud to have been a member since 1992 and today joins close to 8,000 others. We receive a bimonthly magazine, *Colorado Heritage*, and monthly email newsletters, *History Colorado Now*.

"Belonging to organizations, not only gives us an identity as a society, but it is our responsibility," says **Joyce Lohse**, Vice President/Publicity of CGHS.

Columbine Annual May Luncheon

Memorial Hall of Fame - David S. Vogels Award Presentation

Columbine Genealogical & Historical Society members celebrated spring at their annual May Luncheon and Used Book Sale on May 15th. Approximately 80 members attended the event which was a celebration in honor of Barbara J. Brown, a founding member of Columbine and recipient of the 2011 Memorial Hall of Fame - David S. Vogels award honoring a Colorado genealogist who has given outstanding service to the genealogical community in Colorado.

Invited guests for the event were Barbara Brown's son, Norman Brown, and his wife, Beth; Lou-Jean Rehn, Chair of the Awards Committee for the Colorado Council of Genealogical Societies; Patricia Roberts, representing the Colorado Council of Genealogical Societies; Beverly Nelson, dear friend of Barbara's and member of Mt. Rosa DAR who shared her memories of Barbara, as well as Barbara's contributions to the genealogical community, and members of the Mt. Rosa DAR chapter.

Prior to the luncheon, members enjoyed browsing the books and periodicals in our "Used Book Sale".



JoAnn LaGuardia, Beth and Norman Brown, and Lou-Jean Rehn

Cedar Chest Provenance—cont'd from page 1

My daughter's best friend visited the other day, and I told her about my plans for the cedar chest. She commented that her mother had just been telling her about "hope chests" the night before, and she had never heard of them. This led me to research them on the Internet. I found interesting social context information under the topic of "Hope Chest". Other synonyms include dowry chest, cedar chest, or glory box. It seems that a chest to store clothing and household items by an unmarried woman in anticipation of married life has several different names based on geography. In areas of the United States, like the Midwest or the South, this chest is referred to as a hope chest or cedar chest. In the United Kingdom this chest is called a bottom drawer because it is often one drawer containing the bride's trousseau in a chest of drawers containing her other everyday clothes. In Australia this chest is known as a glory box with items of the trousseau handmade by the bride-to-be. When the groom gives his bride a chest it is called a bridal chest, not a hope chest. Historical origins include "cassones" as Renaissance Italian hope chests, which were decorated and valued far more than their contents. Dutch "kask" or German "schrank" chests were wardrobe-type chests with double doors to be used in the new home and were larger than the typical hope chest. German and Scandinavian immigrants to America brought plain chests with a lot of painted folk art decorations. Some chests were intricately carved, especially by master wood craftsmen who often made them for their daughters.

Needless to say, I have spent the past six months working on the items to include in the cedar chest. I embroidered various herbs on dish towels because the groom likes to grow herbs. I cross-stitched cupcakes on an apron, as my daughter has opted for the groom's favorite dessert of cupcakes instead of the traditional wedding cake. I will include four pillow-cases my mother started to embroider with daisies and

roses that I finished. I will put in a quilt from my grandmother and one from my mother, along with one of my mother's damask tablecloths with matching napkins still in its unopened original wrapping, and pot holders my mother crocheted before arthritis set in. I will include a rolled-up copy of our daughter's family tree so she doesn't forget her roots. I will tape a copy of this article on the inside lid of the cedar chest, in case the bride and groom don't know what it is. That way they will know its provenance. I will tie a big ribbon and bow in the wedding colors around the cedar chest, which I will place in our living room, on display with the other wedding gifts to be opened by the newlyweds the day after their wedding. I can hardly wait!



Answer to the Genealogy Puzzle on 3 Books distributed at our May 8th meeting:

\$35 Dotty Black The Ramsey History

\$40 Susan Cribbs The Descendants of George Jacob Poe

\$45 Mike Chambers The Finfrock-Rhoades Story



Lou-Jean Rehn, Patricia Roberts and CJ Backus



May Luncheon



Beverly Nelson and Cheryl Floberg

Thank YOU

Many thanks to all the Columbine members who gave of their time to make our May Luncheon a wonderful event! Applause to a committee of enthusiastic planners which included Bert Norton, Elaine Zimdars, Ed Randall, JoAnn LaGuardia and Nedra Fortune!! What great ideas these people came up with!

I would also like to thank the many members who arrived early to help set up and stayed late to help clean up. I hesitate to list names here for fear I would miss someone but I appreciate each and every one of you!

Thank you to Richard Evans for setting up our sound system and to Steve Johnson and Mary Lou King for their excellent photos.

In addition, I would like to thank Ron Floberg, Harold Vogel and Sandi Klein for their efforts to assure that our Used Book Sale was a success!

Thanks to every one of you who assisted in making this a wonderful celebration!

Cheryl Floberg



Book Sale

World War II – Service Records and Replacement Medals

By Marilyn Elrod, CGHS Board Member

My father and father-in-law were in the service during World War II. A few years ago my husband and I became interested in getting information about our fathers' World War II service and found that many of the men and women never got their awards or medals while still in the service. In some cases, the service members never knew they were entitled to receive awards or medals because the Act to create them was enacted several years after the War ended. We also found out that the service members or family members could apply for replacement medals. Generally, there is no charge to receive the service records or replacement medals from the Government. We decided we would go through the process of getting the records and medals for our fathers. Detailed information and online forms can be found at the National Archives and Records Administration site at: <http://www.archives.gov/>

My father, Forrest Hughes Kern, served in the Army Air Corp from January, 1942, until March, 1946. At the start of the War he was one of the first to enlist from his area of Brown County, Kansas. By the end of the War he had advanced to First Lieutenant. He was never sent overseas and spent most of the War years at bases in Texas. He trained as a pilot, bombardier and eventually became a bombardier instructor until the end of the War.

My father-in-law, Jesse Lee Elrod, served in the Army as a private from April, 1928, until April, 1931, at Camp Marfa, located at the south city limits of Marfa, Presidio County, Texas. He was a member of the Machine Gun Battalion of the 1st Mounted Cavalry Regiment. Since he had previously served in the Army and because of his age he was exempt from the World War II draft. However, as the War continued

he felt the importance of re-entering the Army. He trained at Ft. Hood, Texas and was sent to Europe on November 1, 1944. During the War he served as a rifleman in the 333rd Regiment of the 84th Infantry Division as a Private First Class. He was in the Battle of the Bulge, Battle of the Ardennes and was with his Division as they crossed through Germany to the Elbe River, where they met up with the Russian Army toward the end of the War. He was discharged in November, 1945.

If you decide you would like to get replacement medals from the Government, there are several steps you will need to take. The first step is to prove World War II service. The easiest way is to find the service records at home. Look through old papers and documents at your home or a relative's home. Most servicemen had to prove service at some time during their lives and saved their discharge papers. However, in many cases over the years the papers were lost. Then, you will have to get proof at the Government level.

Check at the Federal level: It may be very difficult to get service records at the Federal level because of a disastrous fire in 1973. The fire occurred at the National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis, which housed all of the servicemen's records. There were approximately 16-18 million Official Military Personnel Files lost in the fire. The records that were affected:

Army - Personnel discharged November 1, 1912 to January 1, 1960 – 80% loss.

Air Force - Personnel discharged September 25, 1947 to January 1, 1964 – 75% loss.

As a rule, names alphabetically "A through most of H" are available at the Federal level. The names alphabetically at the end of "H through Z" were destroyed in the fire with a few exceptions.

A searchable database online at the National Archives

site lists over nine million names. Because of the fire an additional 16-18 million names are missing from the database. However, if you find the name of your serviceman of interest in the database, the National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis will have his Official Military Personnel File. The database includes the full name of the serviceman, serial number, place of enlistment, and date of enlistment, which you will need to complete the form when applying for the official military records before you can request medals.

In most cases, the veteran is no longer living, but the next-of-kin can get service records and medals. Each branch of service has different rules for determining the next-of-kin, so check the website for all the details. The Army requirement was that only the eldest child could get the service records. However, in our case neither my husband nor I are the oldest child in our families, but we still got the service records and medals. If you are not next-of-kin, you can still purchase the World War II service records from the Government through the Freedom of Information Act, but you will only get basic information.

You can download the form for the military service record from the website, complete the form and follow the mailing instructions online. You can also complete the form online.

Once you have proof of service (Official Military Service File), you need to write to the specific branch of military in which the veteran served to request medals. Again, you need to be the veteran or next-of-kin to get replacement medals from the Government at no cost. The general public can purchase the medals from private sources.

Since my father-in-law's surname started with "E", his service record was not a part of the missing records from the St. Louis fire; therefore, my husband and I were able to send to the National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis for verification of his service

record and a list of awards and decorations he was entitled to receive. After we received copies of his Official Military Personnel File, we requested the replacement medals.

We received five replacement medals from the Government: the Bronze Star (with his full name engraved on the back), Combat Rifleman Award, Victory Medal, European Campaign Medal with three battle stars, and Honorable Service Lapel Button. When we sent for the medals, I thought we would receive the small bars, but we received the bars and medals attached to the ribbons.

Since my father's surname started with "K" his records were among those destroyed in the St. Louis fire. Fortunately for me, my father had saved his service records, but I decided I wanted to see what records still existed for him, so I went through several more steps before I requested replacement medals.

Check at the Federal level: I sent a request form to the National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis for verification of his service record and a list of awards and decorations he was entitled to receive. I got a letter back from the Center informing me that my father's records had been destroyed in the 1973 fire and they had no records for him.

Check at the State level for draft and enlistment records: I found a record of my father's enlistment information at the state level. The information had been transferred from the county to the State Historical Society, and this information had been added to their website. This was only an index, with no detail about his service record, so I still needed more information to get the medals.

Check at the County level for draft and enlistment records: I found a record of my father's enlistment information at the county courthouse, where

my father entered the Army in January, 1942. Again, this was basic information with no information about his service record.

Check at the County Level for discharge information:

The important information will be in the serviceman's discharge papers. I was able to get copies of my father's discharge papers at a county courthouse. However, it was more difficult than it sounds because I didn't find the papers in the same state, where he entered the service. During the War my father's parents moved to another state. I think my father went to visit them, when he was discharged, and filed his papers in that state. Not all of you will be able to find the records in county courthouses, but if the records were burned in the fire, they are a good place to look.

Other sources: If you can't find the service records at home, or at the Federal, State or County level, try the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), Veterans of Foreign War (VFW) organizations, or State Adjutant General offices.

Once I had copies of the discharge papers from the county I had the records I needed to prove service for my father. I sent copies of his papers to the National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis, and I received replacement medals.

I received three replacement medals from the Government: Victory Medal, American Campaign Medal, and Honorable Service Lapel Button.

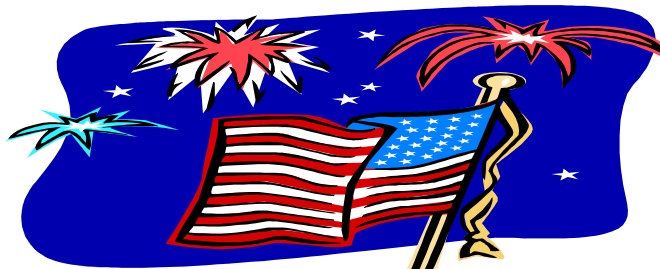


Jesse Elrod's Medals



Forrest Kern's Medals

As you can see, we did go through several steps to get these medals, but they are mementos that I will proudly save for the next generation. It was well worth the time and effort to get them.



Editor's Message

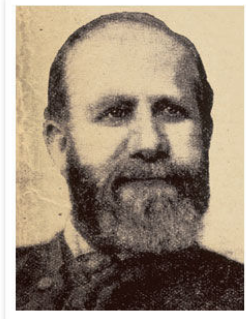
In 1957, relatives of my great Aunt May came to Colorado for a visit. Stephen Merritt, V, and his wife, Helen, also brought along their daughter, Madge. I was eleven years old at the time. Madge was the same age, and we hit it off immediately. Madge was deaf. I had a hard time remembering to face her when I talked to her. Many times over the years I have thought about Madge, especially when I was working on her branch of our family tree.

One of the only notable people in my family tree is Stephen Merritt, Jr. He was born in 1833 and died in 1917. The family business was undertaking. He was the one that undertook Ulysses S Grant. He also handled the funeral for Daniel Webster, Salvation Army Commander Emma Booth Tucker, Major General William S. Worth and Methodist Bishop S.M. Merrill of New York. It is estimated that 50,000 burials were handled by the family business which lasted until the historic business closed in 1967.

Besides the undertaking business, the Reverend Stephen W. Merritt, Jr. preached in several New York City churches and personally established a mission next door to his business that fed up to 2,000 people a day. More info at:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/drmo/4209595557/>

After 1893, the Reverend Stephen W. Merritt, Jr. began burying those that could not afford it in plots he owned at the Maple Grove Cemetery. He was not buried at Maple Grove, but he was an integral part of its history. He is buried at Woodlawn, Bronx, New York.



Stephen Merritt

A few months ago I contacted someone else searching the Merritt family on Ancestry, and he forwarded my query to Stephen Merritt, VII. When I asked about Madge, he told me that his Aunt Midge was living in California. He gave me her email address, and I sent a message to her. A few days later, she called me. Since she is deaf, she has a machine that translates back and forth so there is a delay when I say something and she replies. We have since then Skyped and visited with each other face to face for the first time since 1957.

Hopefully we can find a way to meet in person before too long. Times like this make me happy that I do genealogy.

LOST AND FOUND

The post office found some loose papers in the mail and sent them to Columbine because the Family Group Sheet had the Columbine address on it.

1. The typed Family group sheet has: August Bergman born 1828 Prussia d 1908 Schuyler, Missouri, his wife Caroline Gettler b 1828 Prussia and d 1905 Schuyler, Missouri and lists 6 children.. 2. A glossy photo print showing two separate pictures. One a man and the other a woman. 3. A paper showing the copied newspaper obituaries for Caroline Gettler and August Bergman.

Please contact Mary Lou King at 303-795-1150 or marylouki@aol.com.

Warning! GENEALOGY POX!

Very contagious to adults. Symptoms: continual complaint as to need for names, dates and places. Patient has blank expression; sometime deaf to spouse and children. Has no taste for work of any kind, except feverishly looking through records at the libraries and courthouses. Has compulsion to write letters. Swears at the mailman when he doesn't leave mail. Frequents strange places such as cemeteries, ruins and remote desolate country areas. Makes secret night calls. Hides phone bills from spouse. Mumbles to self. Has strange, far-away look in eyes.

NO KNOWN CURE!

Treatment: Medication is useless. Disease is not fatal but gets progressively worse. Patient should attend genealogy workshops, subscribe to genealogical magazines and be given a quiet corner in the house where he can be alone.

REMARKS: The usual nature of this disease is...the sicker the patient gets, the more he enjoys it!!

By Mrs. Penny Durham Beeney, as printed in The Genealogical Helper



Colorado Frontier Forts

Prior to 1902

Submitted by Mary Lou King

Adams, Alva, Camp, Colorado - At Denver.

Alva Adams, Camp, Colorado - At Denver.

Brent, Fort, Colorado - Same as Bent's Fort.

Cajon Camp, Colorado - Fifteen miles from Cajon Pass.

Collins Fort, Colorado - Now town of that name, Larimer County

Colorado State Soldiers' Home, Monte Vista, Colorado.

Crawford Fort, Colorado - On the Uncompahgre.

Garland Fort, Colorado - On Utah Creek, Costilla County; now town of that name; first called Fort Massachusetts

Lewis Fort, Colorado - At Pagosa Springs, San Juan River.

Logan Fort, Colorado - Ten miles from Denver.

Lupton Fort, Colorado - Weld County; now town of that name.

Lyon (old). Fort, Colorado - On Arkansas River, near Bents Fort; name changed to Fort Wise.

Lyon (new). Fort, Colorado - On the Arkansas River, 3 miles below Purgatory River.

Massachusetts Fort, Colorado - On Utah Creek, 2 miles from Fort Garland.

Morgan Fort, Colorado - South fork of Platte River, Morgan County; now town of that name.

Pagosa Springs Fort at, Colorado - Fort Lewis.

Pikes Peak Reservation, Colorado - Signal Service Reservation.

Pueblo Fort at, Colorado - Fort Reynolds.

Rankin Camp, Colorado - At Julesburg; name changed to Fort Sedgwick.

Reynolds Fort, Colorado - On the Arkansas, 2 miles from Boonesville.

Roubideau's Fort, Colorado.

St. Vrains, Fort, Colorado - South fork of Platte River; present site of town of same name.

Sedgwick Fort, Colorado - South fork of Platte River; first named Camp Rankin.

Uncompahgre Cantonment, Colorado - Name changed to Fort Crawford.

Union Camp, Colorado - At Denver.

Wardwell Camp, Colorado - Name changed to Fort Morgan.

Williams Fort, Colorado - On Arkansas River.

Wise Fort, Colorado - Name changed to Fort Lyon.

Programs and Workshops—continued from page 1

13 Nov 2012 1 p.m.

“Those Dastardly Deeds: Using Criminal Records as Genealogy Resources” By Christie Wright, author and retired probation officer. Christie will enlighten us about checking for our ancestors in the often-neglected category of criminal records. Were some of our ancestors lily-white or did they have a record of unscrupulous behavior?

20 Nov 2012 1 p.m. Columbine Goes to the Movies

Take a break from Thanksgiving preparations to watch a DVD called Return, which was shown on PBS and which Columbine member, Margaret Weiland, highly recommends. “After escaping from Nazi Germany before WWII, Colorado College professor Fred Sondermann returned to his homeland in 1969. This first person narrative, based on his memoirs, takes us along on the journey.” Did any of your ancestors return to their homeland for a visit?

11 Dec 2012 12:00 Noon Holiday Luncheon & Program

5th Annual German Fest

**Colorado's only real German Fest is now in Aurora for 2012.
Produced in partnership with the Colorado Folk Arts Council at
Helga's Restaurant Parking Lot • 14197 E. Exposition Ave.**

Friday, July 27
5:00 PM - 11:00 PM

Saturday, July 28
2:00 PM - 11:00 PM

Sunday, July 29
2:00 PM - 8:00 PM



**\$10 / day advance purchase tickets at
www.GermanFestDenver.com**

German Gemuetlichkeit • Food & Drink • Prosit

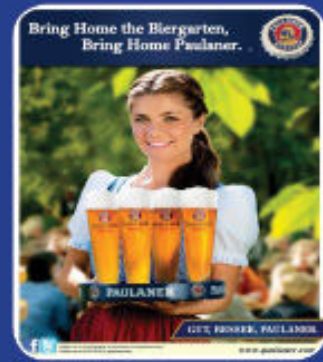
**Featuring live entertainment by four German Bands,
Denver Kickers, Edelweiss Schuhplattlers and Folk
Dancers plus other entertainment for kids!**

**Paulaner Beer & Wine
at the Beergarden**

**Authentic German food by
Helga's German Restaurant**

Participants

- Denver Kickers
- Swiss American Friendship Society
- Germans from Russia • Palatines to America
- Rocky Mountain BMW Car Club • Colorado Rapids



Sponsored by



Obits: A Writer's View

By Joyce B. Lohse, CGHS Board Member

My family's motto has always been, "When the going gets tough, the tough get going." Mom's framed needlework of this saying now hangs in my kitchen. Although the words leave little room for sympathy, and no margin for tears, they are a reminder to face difficulties without hesitation.

The motto was the last thing on my mind when my sister and I dragged ourselves into the Starbucks coffee shop in our hometown in the suburbs of Chicago early last August. The temperature and humidity were both in the high 90's, and we were dying for iced coffee drinks. More importantly, Starbucks had free WiFi, and I had an obituary to write. As the elder sibling, my sister, Judy, takes charge and gets things done. I am the methodical one, who attends to details. We are a good team. She is the executor. As the genealogist and journalist, I accepted the task and challenge of writing Mom's obituary.

Genealogists are often cautioned to beware of facts in obituaries, because they are sometimes not correct. How hard could it be to write an obituary, I wondered. While we sat there, hot, tired, and heavy-hearted, with our chilled coffees, I flipped open my mini NetBook computer. It came to life as people bumped among the packed tables in the busy little bistro. Conversations and laughter against a background of cool jazz was punctuated by the abrupt noise and whirl of coffee machines and grinders. By the time my underpowered little computer settled into work mode, I was rattled, depressed, and had no idea where to begin. This was not going to be so easy after all.

To get started, I visited the *Chicago Tribune* web site, and soon learned that obituaries in big city newspapers are expensive. The rate was calculated by number of lines. How many words per line ... should I

abbreviate everything? Should I list the grandkids? What to do.

The noises coming from the straw at the bottom of Judy's cup told me she was finished with her drink. I needed to step up my pace, but the NetBook was not cooperating. It was painfully slow, I had no mouse, and I was afraid of making an error online. I decided to gather information about newspapers, then go home and write the text in a different way, and try again the next day. Also, some phone calls might help.

A combination of methods took care of the job. The *Tribune* obit ended with a phone call, which gave me answers to questions about abbreviations and number of lines, and got things rolling so the message I sent online would be published quickly. An office visit in person was the best way to handle the small community weekly newspaper. Their obit was the most effectively written piece, and benefited from their editing. Most publications preferred typed data submitted online, which placed the burden of accuracy on the writer of the information.

Thankfully, only one typo slipped through. Mom's favorite charity for donations was the Hooved Animal Humane Society. Her obit will go down in history with it listed as the Hooved Animal "Human" Society. I chalk that one up to a hyperactive spell checker on the NetBook, but would have preferred to correct it. The *Chicago Tribune* graciously sent me a small plaque with Mom's obituary printed on it as a memento to hang on my wall. As much as I like obituaries, I do not think I will display that one by my writing desk, unless I need a reminder to watch out for errors.

Unfortunately, I did not complete my duties without another more embarrassing typo. For a memorial gathering at the house to honor our Mom, I created a flyer for friends with some data, a quotation, and a photograph on it. Sometime during the winter, Judy asked me if I had any more of those flyers with the typo on it. My heart skipped a beat, and I said, "... the WHAT??"

I had no idea the flyer contained a typo. In my scramble to have it printed at Office Depot before the gathering, I typed Mom's birth year as 1932 instead of 1923. When Judy realized this would make me crazy, she calmly told me that Mom would have been thrilled to have nine years shaved off her age! Many of her friends will never know the difference.

My confidence was shaken by the time we pursued the biggest challenge of all, the headstone. We planned to bury my parents' remains together in a historic family pioneer cemetery in Illinois and create a combination headstone for them. As historian and writer, it was again my duty to design and order the gravestone. Was I up to the task? How should I arrange the names and dates? What about artwork? If I messed up this time, it would be chiseled ... in granite!

I am pleased to report that the stone looks splendid. It is stunningly beautiful, and to my knowledge, has no errors. It is a fitting centerpiece for a ceremony in the heartland this summer where our families will gather to honor our parents.

Decisions for writing the obituary and related tasks were amazingly difficult under challenging, uncomfortable, sad, and stressful circumstances. I now better understand and have compassion for those who fumbled facts in obituaries of the past, and will in the future. However, I also better understand and embrace the meaning of that old family motto: "When the going gets tough..."

Joyce B. Lohse writes biographies about Colorado pioneers and serves on the CGHS Board of Directors. She can often be found lurking in cemeteries in Colorado, while seeking stories and research material.

www.LohseWorks.com

In Memoriam

“Elizabeth E. “Betty” Brown passed away peacefully in her sleep on Thursday, May 17, 2012, in Mesa, AZ from complications of a second stroke from which she never regained consciousness. According to her wishes she was cremated and interred next to her parents in Traverse City, MI.”

“Charles Richard “Dick” Spielman Jr. passed away on May 28, 2012 in Littleton, CO. Following retirement as an engineer, Dick discovered his passion for genealogy and pursued writing and speaking at several events. He loved the visits with the many people that he met along the way. He was the past president of Palatines to America and a member of the Columbine Genealogy Society. Dick was laid to rest at Ft. Logan National Cemetery.”

BEST WISHES

Rhea McCoy, our Recording Secretary this year, suffered a stroke on June 7, 2012. You probably remember Rhea for playing the piano for us at our Holiday Luncheon in 2011 and for playing “Where the Columbines Grow” at our May 8th meeting. Best wishes for a speedy recovery, Rhea!

RootsTech 2012

Conference Review

By Deena Coutant, CGHS Member

I attended my first RootsTech conference February 2-4 in Salt Lake City, and it was a wonderful experience. I was amazed at the number of enthusiastic participants that flocked to the event—4300+ participants that more than doubled the 2000+ attendees at the first RootsTech conference in 2011. The program was packed with hundreds of educational sessions that participants could attend, offering tracks focused on both technology (user and developer) and general genealogical topics. It was easy to stay on schedule thanks to the RootsTech Android app that I downloaded on my smartphone to track the sessions I planned to attend. Even after deciding my agenda in advance, I was often torn between competing sessions of high interest, and wished I could have cloned myself to be in 3-4 places at once. Perhaps the technology developers will determine a way to make that happen by next year's conference!

The vendor expo hall was large and vibrant, and I felt like a kid in a candy shop. Many of the vendors offered live mini-demos so attendees could really get a feel for their products and services. Of course, many offered conference discounts, which is normally a perk of attending a large national conference. My only complaint about the expo hall was that I didn't have enough time to spend at each and every booth, because I opted to attend all of the scheduled sessions. There's that cloning thought again!

A unique aspect of RootsTech was its "unconferencing" sessions. Strategically placed around the expo hall were large whiteboards where participants could schedule impromptu meetings on the fly. I attended numerous unconferencing sessions,

including one for genealogical society webmasters, which resulted in us forming a Facebook group to keep in contact after the conference. The unconferencing sessions were smaller, more interactive, and resulted in the opportunity to network with other like-minded attendees.

FamilySearch was a major sponsor of RootsTech, and offered a "Late Night at the Library" event where the Family History Library stayed open until midnight. I squeezed in as much research as possible and, thanks to this opportunity, worked through about 16 microfilm rolls which were pertinent to my professional genealogy education curriculum. I did not budget time for lunch or dinner, but thankfully the library provided pizza to its late-night patrons, which was a lifesaver.

I was impressed with the overall forward-thinking nature of the RootsTech conference program. Even some of the non-technical sessions I attended offered an honest assessment of the state of the genealogy industry and how it can improve. Joshua Taylor lectured on the need for a universal metadata standard that would encode key elements into the genealogical information we find online: imagine downloading an image of an original record and not having to write the source citation because the information was already embedded in the image metadata, easily extracted by any genealogy software program. There was much discussion around the new GEDCOM X format which will replace the previous outdated version and offer better integration and sharing. A new international Family History Information Standards Organisation (FHISO) was announced, and is already working on encapsulating key elements to develop a standard for the digital representation and sharing of genealogical information. Last, there was an emphasis on emerging mobile technology and its attractiveness to the users of the future. More than a dozen of the sessions were recorded, and are freely available to view online at <http://rootstech.org/#video-player>.

The RootsTech conference embodied all the positive

changes that will bring forward our industry and open up the world of family history to the tech savvy children and grandchildren of tomorrow. I am inspired to be part of this movement and cannot wait to attend next year's conference, scheduled for March 21-23, 2013 at the Salt Palace Convention Center, and I encourage you to consider attending, too.



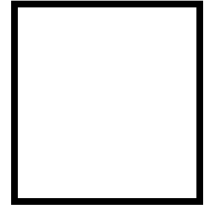
Deena Coutant is a professional genealogist who resides in Highlands Ranch, Colorado and is owner of DigiDeena Consulting: Where Genealogy + Technology Unite. Contact her at deenacoutant@yahoo.com.





**COLUMBINE GENEALOGICAL &
HISTORICAL SOCIETY, Inc.**

P. O. Box 2074
Littleton, CO 80161-2074



**Columbine
Genealogical &
Historical Society, Inc.**

Meetings
1:00 p.m.
2nd & 3rd Tuesdays
January thru May
and
September thru November

No Meetings in June, July & August

Social only in December

2nd Tuesday

South Wing, South Entrance

Lutheran Church of the Holy Spirit

6400 S University Blvd

Centennial, CO

Annual Dues

Individual.....\$15.00

Individual and Spouse....\$20.00

VISITORS ALWAYS WELCOME

BAD WEATHER PROCEDURE

If the President postpones a meeting due to an emergency or bad weather, the VP of Publicity will send emails to members, and a sign will be put on the door of the church. Board Meetings begin at 9:30 am on the second Tuesday of the month. Please **do not** call the Church office.

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