



RAMBLERS' RAMBLINGS

Volume XXI Number THREE FALL 2011

19th CENTURY INTERNET

What do you use to keep up with your friends, compare prices, learn the goings on in far-off lands, check travel schedules, and stay on top of politics? That sounds like the internet to us, but folks in 19th century Texas would see that as the description of a newspaper.



NEWSPAPER AS SOCIAL MEDIA (albeit in a very top down form)

Every town with a few hundred people had one. Bigger towns, with populations of 2000 or more, might have three. Newspapers back then would note the comings and goings of people, who was having visitors from other parts, who was currently away. Not to

mention marriages, deaths, major purchases and just plain gossip...things we would think of as an invasion of privacy today.

NEWSPAPER AS PRICE ENGINE

Newspapers in larger communities would compile an index of current local prices for a long list of consumer goods. These lists would note which items were scarce, which plentiful and which were in the greatest demand. This gave the public knowledge of what they should expect to pay, let merchants know where the greatest opportunities lay, and helped markets equilibrate more efficiently.

NEWSPAPER AS TRAVEL SITE

Each issue would also contain ads by stage lines, packet boats, and railroads giving schedules, rates and soliciting business.

NEWSPAPER AS COMMUNITY ORGANIZER

And finally, politics. Anybody who thinks the internet has inaugurated new heights in partisanship doesn't know the history of journalism. Nineteenth century newsmen made no pretense of impartiality. Most newspapers were publicly aligned with one faction or another.

19th CENTURY EMAIL

The nineteenth century also had its email equivalent. It was the penny postcard. Mail was delivered twice a day in Texas cities. You could send a postcard out in the morning mail inviting your friends to dinner and receive their replies in the afternoon mail.

TEXAS TRIVIA

What was the first newspaper in Texas?

Answer on another page.



BRAZOS COUNTY BLACK CONFEDERATES

BY JOHN PATRICK BLAIR PHD

According to Confederate Pension File #39643 "... Frank Sims (colored) served in the 13th Tex. Cavalry as a worker in the burying of dead, constructing breastworks, cook and washing. I was with him the entire time from said 1862 to the close of sad war and that the said Franks Simms did not desert. Further Frank Simms actually served in one engagement with his gun." Horatio Durst, Lt. Company A, 13th Tex. Cav. February 1, 1924.

PRIVATE HENSON WILLIAMS

From the New York Times, June 15, 1900

Negro Confederate Veteran Shot - - Dallas Tex. June 14 - Two negroes, Henson Williams and his son William, were shot from ambush in Brazos County, while they were plowing in a field. Officers are searching for a white man who is believed to have shot them. The elder Williams fought through the Civil War as a Confederate soldier and made such a good record that he was a full member of the Confederate Veterans camp at Milliken. The old white Confederate soldiers are enraged at the assassination and threaten vengeance on the assassin when captured.

FEEDBACK FROM SUMMER EDITION

BY SUE FOY

Joyce Louis' suggestion about keeping your e-mail address the same was a good idea, written in the past issue of the newsletter, I can testify to that. I was forced to change my e-mail address when I moved into the new house because Suddenlink did not have cable service in this neighborhood. I changed to Verizon and had that for a couple of years and then changed back to Suddenlink when they finally had cable available. Just recently I received a communication that had gone to Frances Martin, who is our website contact person, for anyone writing to info@texasresearchrambles.org. This person said that he had been trying to answer a query that I had posted **over ten**

years ago and he finally found me on the website. His e-mail referred to my old myriad.net address, which pre-dated several other addresses. This young man actually lives in Paris, France and is working on a research project. Thanks to the Internet and Google and our Rambler website, he finally located me!! We have exchanged family information and even old photos and I am very glad that he finally found me.

A CENSUS REVIEW

BY HENRY HANSON

One of the first items we learn as genealogist is to look for variant spellings when researching, especially using the Federal Census.

While writing my family narrative, I was researching a collateral line, my grandmother's younger sister, Sarah Agnes (Chastun) Gernand and her husband Frederick Charles Gernand. Uncle Fred was a railroad carpenter and he supervised building the house that I knew as home in Ashwood, Texas.

Uncle Fred's parents were Wilhelm and Kristina Gernand, German immigrants living on 12th Street in Galveston and Wilhelm was a sailor serving on ships Bagby & Eclipse, according to the Galveston City directories. Even though I found Wilhelm Gernand in the city directory, I could not find him in the 1850 or 1860 Federal Census, until I found Uncle Fred's father in a cemetery near Hitchcock, where a family member commented on "Find a Grave," that the

family was spelled Gammott in the 1850 census and Gorment in the 1860 census.

Of course you know that the 1850 census is not indexed and you must use the "Browse" technique, but that is not difficult because there were not that many citizens in the 1850 Galveston County, Texas census.

Those two census years uncovered many interesting tidbits of information about the Gernand family in and around Galveston. The oldest girl Hannah Gernand married Lewis C. Dubree in Galveston in 1867, according to Galveston marriage records. Next oldest daughter Mary married Magnus Habermehl in 1868 in Galveston.

Death Record research using the LDS pilot search revealed that Mary and Magnus Habermehl, again variant spellings, were buried in the family cemetery at the San Jacinto battle grounds. Now that's interesting, did you know there was a cemetery at the San Jacinto Monument and State Park? Well there is and before the state bought the land from the Habermehl family prior to 1936, two generations of Habermehls lived and farmed this area and at one time a two-story house stood near the north end of the monument's reflection pool.

The Gernand family, at least the part that I'm related to, never heard this information.

But the family did know that Wilhelm and Kristina Gernand's youngest son, John Henry Gernand, became Fire Chief of

Galveston prior to the 1900 Hurricane and that John Henry lost his wife and six children on September 8, 1900, when the hurricane hit Galveston. Only John Henry and two sons, Henry and Fred, survived.

Proving the Gernand/Gormont/Gammott misspelling errors of the 1850 & 1860 census, the parents first names were accurate as were their ages and places of birth. There are plenty of good family stories out there, but first we have to get past their name spelling. **So what is your family story? Let all your fellow Ramblers know about your "Finds."**

TRIVIA ANSWER:

Gaceta de Texas: Published in Nacogdoches beginning in May of 1813. It was defunct by the end of the year.

"They who take no pride in the deeds of a remote ancestry, will hardly be likely to accomplish anything worthy to be remembered by a remote posterity." *Macauley*

GENEALOGY PALOZZA IN HOUSTON

GEORGIANNE BIGAM

Transportation Secretary Mary Elizabeth Dresser organized a Ramblers' genealogy trip to take advantage of Clayton Library's extended hours. Mary Elizabeth Dresser,

Georgianne Bigam, Bliss Wolfe, Vee Grimes and Henry and Nancy Hanson left B/CS on the 9th of August at 7:00 am for a three-day **GENEALOGY POLOZZA**. Wednesday we were met at the library by Novella Hornek, Pat Baron and Lillian Beasley and everyone enriched their files with more ancestral information from the library plus research tidbits shared at either Einstein's Bagel shop, IHOP, or at the Black Labrador.

Two nights' reservations were made on the Southwest Freeway, a few blocks from the library on Bissonnet. Regardless how much success we had with our genealogy, Houston temperatures were moderate compared to B/CS, at least for those three days.



RESEARCH TRIP TO CLAYTON

THE POWER OF GENEALOGY

JANE MCGILL

There were many entries in the LDS database for Oakes in Sheffield, England, and several were for my ancestors. These

entries had to be pieced together to make a pedigree by birth dates and churches and also fathers' occupations. My Oakes line is complicated by the fact that there are four successive generations of Edwards, three of whom married Anns. I hit a stumbling block when I came to my 3rd great grandfather Edward Oakes. He married an Ann, too. Apparently two Edward Oakes' were married on the same day, June 16, 1776 in Sheffield, one to Ann Gillott and the other to Ann Schmeld. I did not have a birth date for my Edward so I did not know which Edward was mine. So who was my 3rd great grandmother? Ann Gillott's husband was a scissorsmith and Ann Schmeld's husband was a silversmith.



An English Silversmith at Work

The entries for my 2nd great grandfather Edward Oakes show his father was a scissorsmith so I am assuming that Ann Gillott was my 3rd great grandmother.

After my initial euphoria at finding a whole new generation of Oakes, it dawned on me that the submitter indicated she was a relative of my great grandfather Edward

Oakes. This was a shock since I knew of no one in our small family doing any genealogy. I contacted the LDS library in Salt Lake to ask for the name and address of the submitter of this Oakes family data. The LDS let me know that Doris X* was the submitter and her address was given as simply Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada. No email or street addresses were given, nor a phone number.

I went to Google, to the white pages for Lethbridge, AB phone book and found all the X* names, nine of them. There was no Doris listed. After some hesitation, I decided to call the numbers hoping to find Doris. On the second call a very nice woman, Rhea X*, told me that Doris had passed away several years ago. I told her why I was trying to reach Doris and Rhea told me that Doris was her mother-in-law. Rhea said she had no idea how Doris was related to Edward Oakes or to any Oakes. Doris had left several boxes of notes, but had never published any family histories. I asked about her notes and Rhea put me touch with Faith Wood, a genealogist who now had all of Doris' data and notes.

Faith Wood contacted me a couple of weeks later by email and wrote that she had spent considerable time searching through Doris' old notes and writings and also in the Lethbridge genealogical library where she works. In short, she could find no family relationship between Doris and our Oakes (or any Oakes) family at all. The only suggestion was that either Doris' mother or

her first husband's mother were born in the same English village as another Oakes.

She did say that Doris greatly admired a fellow Mormon named Dallin Oakes, former attorney general of Utah and an elder in the Mormon church in Salt Lake City. Was she helping him with his genealogy? It is a mystery that may never be solved and sheds no light on my Oakes genealogy at all.

But by far the best story to come out of this genealogical tale involves my neighbor, Marie Y*. Marie and her husband were always interested in genealogy, but only seemed to be working on his family. I asked Marie several years ago why she didn't research her own family and she said she had been adopted at birth and knew nothing about her biological parents. Since she had grown up in Louisiana, I assumed that was where she had been born. But about a year ago she told me that she had been born in Alberta, Canada somewhere near Lethbridge. Last February, after some gentle prodding over the years, Marie asked me if I knew a genealogist who could help her find her birth mother and father's families in Alberta. I recommended Faith Wood.

In May Marie called to say she was so grateful to me for suggesting Faith Wood as a genealogist and she felt badly she had not kept me up to date on the progress. Faith found her birth families quickly, sending the information to Marie, including contact information for existing family members since both biological parents had passed away. Marie exchanged emails with her biological relatives at first, but after

receiving such enthusiastic responses they began calling each other. Then she told me that her husband had just booked flights to Calgary in August for her birthday. They just returned and could not be more excited. Apparently several get-togethers had been arranged and they had met Marie's relatives from all over Alberta and British Columbia, too. Marie said, "I knew those were my people. It was wonderful to look into someone's face and see some of what I see in the mirror. My cousin's son looked so much like my younger son it was unreal." The moral of this story is you can never predict where your data may lead you (or your friends X* and Y*). I withheld Doris and Marie's last names in case their families might be sensitive to this story being told.

TEXAS STATE GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

A reminder that the Texas State Genealogical Society is holding the annual conference November 4-5 2011 at the Houston Marriott South at Hobby Airport, 9100 Gulf Freeway. Present by TSGS and Clayton Library Friends. You can view online <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~txsgs/> You can register online at www.claytonlibraryfriends.org. There is a morning and afternoon session at the Clayton library on Thursday November 3rd before the conference begins at the Marriott.

CHECK THIS OUT

WHO IS THIS MAN?



CHEROKEE CHIEF
KANAGATOOGA

CHEROKEE CHIEF KANAGATOOGA was whose ggggg grandfather? And what is his story? Which Research Rambler is his ggggg granddaughter? See the Winter 2011 issue of the Rambler Newsletter and read his family story.



CLAYTON LIBRARY PALOZZA

MIDWESTERN ROOTS FAMILY HISTORY & GENEALOGY CONFERENCE 2012

Where Do You Think You Find It?

I N D I A N A P O L I S

**Midwestern Roots 2012:
Family History and Genealogy Conference
July 20 and 21, 2012
Pre-conference activities July 19**

Mark your calendar for Midwestern Roots 2012: Family History and Genealogy Conference, presented by the Indiana Historical Society in Indianapolis. Building on the theme *Where Do You Think You Find It?*, a wide range of nationally known speakers gather to help you continue on your journey to find your family story. We are excited to bring to you Dick Eastman, Shamele Jordon, J. Mark Lowe, Dan Poffenberger, Megan Smolenyak Smolenyak, D. Joshua Taylor, Patricia Van Skaik, Curt Witcher and more.

The pre-conference activities include a workshop for librarians and volunteers who work with genealogy sources, computer labs, writing workshops, tours and other research opportunities. The day concludes with panelists featured on *Who Do You Think You Are?* sharing their experiences and insights from working on the television program.

NOTE OF INTEREST

Allen County Library in Ft. Wayne is only 132 miles from Indianapolis.



LILLIAN BEASLEY & HENRY HANSON SWORN INTO OFFICE

AUSTIN HISTORY CENTER NEWSPAPER INDEX

BY JOYCE LOUIS

Headlines of articles on loss of life in Texas in the 1870s have been compiled by the Austin Genealogical Society and the Austin History Center staff, listed in order of publication date. The index of articles from the Austin newspaper (it doesn't say which Austin newspaper) is online and includes locations over a good part of Texas., On just two pages, there were stories from Montgomery and Burleson counties, Boerne, Waco and Rockdale.



The 14 - page index is fascination reading, aside from its genealogical value. Some

entries include "Deaths from Brain Congestion of Whiskey and Suns," "Philip H. Coe killed by Wild Bill," "No Effort to Get Man Who Shot 8 Year Old," "J.R. Know, Here for Health, Died," and "Barney Fowler Accused of Another Murder."

The time period covered is July 26, 1871 through December 21, 1877; the url is www.austintxgensoc.org/records/ahcnewsaper.php. It includes reports such as ox gorings, drownings, funerals, shooting in the state legislature and suicide by morphine.

Deaths were reported as far away as San Francisco and Mexico, and the causes show the hazards of life in the 1870s. One entry says, "Austin Coroners Doing Lively Business," and death was so frequent that it was news on November 24, 1877 that "Doctors Report No One Killed Yesterday."



NEWSLETTER STAFF

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SCRAPBOOK CORNER

1994

1st Rambler Trip

SALT LAKE CITY



Ten of the Texas Research Ramblers left College Station on September 27th for Salt Lake City. Under the leadership of Mary Cooper, the group spent a week in that beautiful city and made good use of the family research information in the LDS Family History Center. The Howard Johnson Hotel where the group stayed was just in front of the library so all they had to do was step out the back door, cross the alleyway and they were at the library. The weather was unseasonably warm and they did have a day or two of rainy but the flowers were beautiful and the people were all very friendly. The group attended the choir rehearsal in the Mormon Tabernacle on Thursday evening and took a Grayline tour of the city on Sunday morning. They ate Sunday dinner at the Olive Garden.



The Mormons were attending their semi-annual conference and Temple Square was crowded with LDS members.

