

First Landing

Newsletter

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February 2020

How I Caught the Genealogy Bug
 By Bob Bruce
 rebiv@outlook.com

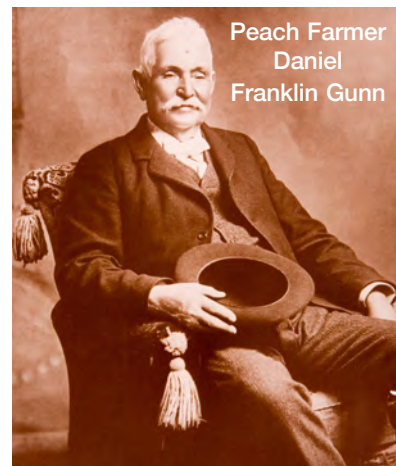


I have always enjoyed History. Even when young I would rarely read anything but histories or biographies. I majored in History in college. However, I don't think I ever gave genealogy a thought. Beyond knowing that great-grandparents on my mother's side were both farmers, one a big peach grower in central Georgia and the other a tobacco producer in Tobaccoville, North Carolina, I gave no thought of my forebears. My father's grandfather was a Richmond, Virginia merchant and my grandfather was an insurance adjuster and eventually managed the southeast office of The General Adjustment Bureau, Inc. in Atlanta, Georgia. I knew the Bruces were all from Virginia except my dad and me, but who was the first Bruce? Of course, with a name like Robert Bruce we "knew" we were of Scottish descent. My dad loved bagpipe music to my mother's chagrin and we would go to the Highland Games at Stone Mountain each year. We had tartan ties, but no kilt until I was on my own!

After college and a three-year stint in the Navy, homeported in Norfolk, I went back to Atlanta for a Master's in Hospital Administration. But my contacts drew me back to Norfolk and a job with Children's Hospital of the King's Daughters. While there, in my late twenties, my great uncle gifted me a book he had published on the Bruce family going back to George Bruce born Scotland about 1650. He was in Old Rappahannock, Westmoreland, and Richmond counties in the Northern Neck. Bruces eventually moved up the Neck and were last in Stafford County outside Fredericksburg before scattering.



Tobacco Farmer
Jonathan Wiley Speas



Peach Farmer
Daniel
Franklin Gunn

CONTENTS

- How I Caught the Genealogy Bug.....	1
- President's Message, Social, Writer's Group, New Members.....	2
- Upcoming Events.....	3
- VBGS Banquet.....	4
- A History of VBGS, VBGS February Meeting, New Officers.....	7
- How/Why I Got Hooked on Genealogy.....	10
- What's New.....	11
- Italian Roots.....	12
- How I Became a Member of the National Daughters of the American Revolution (NSDAR).....	13
- Note from VBGS Webmaster.....	15
- Online Tips for Genealogy.....	16

Now the book did not get me spending time in libraries and courthouses. I was too focused on career and personal life. I moved to Washington, D.C., got married, moved to the Atlanta area, had kids, and ultimately ended in Florida. It was not until my dad died in 1998 and I was going through a trunk in the Atlanta basement, helping my mom organize things, when I discovered my great uncle had written other books.

(continued on page 8)

VBGS is a member of these societies



Federation of Genealogical Societies was founded in 1976 and represents the members of hundreds of genealogical societies. <https://fgs.org/>



The National Genealogy Society is more than a century old! NGS was organized in Washington, DC, in 1903. <https://www.ngsgenealogy.org/>



The Virginia Genealogical Society was organized in 1960. <https://www.vgs.org/>

Leadership Notes.....

President's Message, February 2020

First, I want to thank those who have served as officers, board members, committee chairs and committee members in 2019. Thank you for donating your time and abilities. Our society would not exist without you! Next I want to congratulate the new officers and board members who were just sworn in January 2020! We are very happy to have you!



Check out the two ladies below who have volunteered their time and skills to bring back the Social Committee and Writer's Group. Bravo to you both! I promise everyone that 2020 will be full of fun events. Let Debby Christian know what you would like to see us do. Check out the events page for the dates the Writer's Group meetings!

Wendy Branson

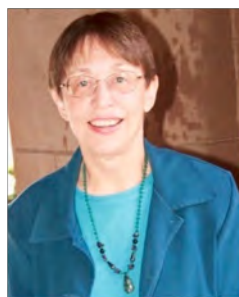
Social Committee - Debby Christian Chair

A Social Committee is being re-established because we have been receiving requests for more activities for members to get to know each other in a more relaxed environment. Debby Christian has volunteered to chair the committee and is looking for several members who are interested in organizing social gatherings and field trips. Some ideas are to visit local historical sites that we have learned about in our meetings, field trips to visit the Jamestown Archeology Tour, the Swem Library, a trip to the Library of VA and a historical Richmond bus tour, etc. Members have also been requesting to see the continuation of the Applebees get-togethers after our meetings. Contact Debby or Wendy if you are interested in being part of the committee. debrchrist@gmail.com



Writer's Group - Carol Johnson

We're also getting ready to restart the Writing Group on March 23. We will be meeting at the Joint Use Library which is on the Tidewater Community College Virginia Beach Campus. Do you have material about your family that you're thinking about writing down in some form, but could use some help getting started? Or have you already been writing something and could help others get started? If either situation sounds like you, let's get together and share ideas and experiences. If you're interested in this group, please contact Carol Johnson at cvjohnson@vuw.edu.



Welcome
To our new members

Nanette Emmerich
Ann & Cliff Gimbert
Dr. Stephen Mansfield
Barbara Smith
Patti Terry
Kelly McMahon Willette, CG®

John & Karen Ward
Mary Wilson
Heather Wright

The Virginia Beach Genealogical Society

Was Founded 1983
VBGS is organized for educational purposes

The objectives of this society are:

- To help individuals conduct their genealogical research and compile their family histories
- To aid individuals by educational means, including lectures, discussions, and workshops
- To create and foster an interest in genealogy
- To gather and preserve genealogical and historical data.

President
Wendy Branson

Vice President
Jo Ann Given

Secretary
Bob Bruce

Treasurer
Rachel Greenberg

Members at Large
Brian Baldwin
Bobbie Benton
Linda Brown
Peg Niedholdt

Past President
Craig Fenton

Membership
Duane Harding

Publicity
Barbara Murray

Computer
Linda Brown

Society Administrator
contactvbgs@gmail.com

Newsletter Editor
Wendy Branson
firstlanding.vbgs@gmail.com

Website
<https://www.vbgsva.net/>

Webmaster
Carmen Cross
webmaster.vbgs@gmail.com

Membership: \$25 Individual and \$35 Family: <https://vbgsva.net/membership/>
Mail applications, questions and address changes to: VBGS P.O. Box 62901
Virginia Beach, VA 23466-2901

Upcoming Events

2020 Meetings/Trips

- 7 March: More than Just a Pretty Picture: Maps and Research, LVA <https://www.lva.virginia.gov/news/calendar/>
- 12 March: VBGS VBGS Monthly Meeting, VA Bch Central Library, 7:00 pm, Speaker: Dr. Richard Brown, Topic: "Colonial Medicine"
- 13 March: Irish Ancestry Research, Workshop with the Ulster Historical Foundation, hosted at LVA <http://bit.ly/2O2DWoq>
- 16 March: VBGS Computer User Group at Joint Use Library 6:00 pm, Topic: Seven Deadly Sins of Digitizing Photos, video from Roots Tech 2018
- 23 March: VBGS Writer's Group at Joint Use Library, Room 102 at 5:30 pm.
- 26 March: TGS Bus trip to DAR Library, contact Peggy Lutton peggylutton57@gmail.com if interested. Here is information on DAR: http://services.dar.org/public/dar_research/search
- 31 March: Genealogy Class - "Advanced Genealogy 301" at Mary D. Pretlow Anchor Branch Library 111 W. Ocean View Ave. Norfolk, Virginia 23503, 11:00 am - 1:00 pm. <https://smcclass2020-03.eventbrite.com>
- 9 April: VBGS Monthly Meeting at VA Bch Central Library 7:00 pm, Speaker: Diane Richard, Topic: "Timelines"
- 18 April: Genealogy Class - "Genealogical Databases and Websites" at Mary D. Pretlow Anchor Branch Library 111 W. Ocean View Ave. Norfolk, Virginia 23503, 11:00 am - 1:00 pm <https://smcclass2020-04.eventbrite.com>
- 20 April: VBGS Writer's Group at Joint Use Library, Room 102 at 5:30 pm.
- 22 April: VBGS Computer User Group at Joint Use Library 6:00 pm, Topic: We will view a Lisa Louise Cooke video, "Genealogists' Guide to Dropbox"
- 25 April: English Impressions of "Virginia & Its Inhabitants before Jamestown: English Mapping & Iconography of the New World," hosted at LVA <https://www.lva.virginia.gov/news/calendar/>
- 4 May: VBGS Writer's Group at Joint Use Library, Room 102 at 5:30 pm.
- 8 May: How to Trace Your Virginia Roots - an Intermediate Genealogy Workshop, hosted by LVA <https://www.lva.virginia.gov/news/calendar/>
- 14 May: VBGS VBGS Monthly Meeting at VA Bch Central Library 7:00 pm, Show & Tell: Bring your old/historic items to share with VBGS members
- 18 May: VBGS Computer User Group at Joint Use Library 6:00 pm, Topic: TBD
- 5 June: Finding Her: Our Female Ancestors, a Genealogy Workshop, LVA: <https://www.lva.virginia.gov/news/calendar/>

Abbreviations

AAHGS - Afro American and Historical Genealogy Society of Hampton Roads
 APG - Association of Professional Genealogists
 FGS- Federation of Genealogical Societies
 IGHR - Institute of Genealogy and Historical Research
 LVA - Library of Virginia
 NGS - National Genealogical Society
 NCGS - North Carolina Genealogical Society
 NHS - Norfolk Historical Society
 SLIG - Salt Lake Institute of Genealogy
 TGS - Tidewater Genealogical Society
 VGS - Virginia Genealogical Society

11 June: VBGS Monthly Meeting at VA Bch Central Library 7:00 pm, Speaker: Wendy Bransom, Topic: "Researching Family History Without the Internet." This was given on August 20, 2019, at the Marian Manor University. It has been updated.

22 June: VBGS Writer's Group at Joint Use Library, Room 102 at 5:30 pm.

10 July: Genealogy Workshop: African American Research at the Library of Virginia: Reconstruction Through World War I, at LVA from 9:30 am- 12:30 pm, contact ashley.ramey@lva.virginia.gov

19 August: TGS Bus trip to National Archives, contact Peggy Lutton peggylutton57@gmail.com if interested. Here is information on <http://www.archives.gov/>

2020 Conferences/Banquets

17-18 April: VGS Spring Conference, Richmond VA, "Researching Communities: The Key to Unlocking Your Ancestor's Stories," Early Bird \$50.00, after April 1: \$60.00. Friday is at the LVA for Guided Research, Saturday is also at LVA. Seating is limited so buy your ticket soon. Register at www.vgs.org, click on Register on EventBrite. There is only one track, speaker is Anne Gillespie Mitchell. There are four classes, VGS Annual Meeting and lunch which comes from your fee.

20-23 May, NGS Family History Conference, "Echoes of Our Ancestors," at the Salt Palace Convention Center, 100 S. West Temple, Salt Lake City, Utah, registration is open now, <https://conference.ngsgenealogy.org/>

26-31 July, IGHR Summer Conference, University of Georgia Center for Continuing Education and Hotel in Athens, Ga. ighr.gagensociety.org



Institute for Learning in Retirement

Stimulating two-hour
classes, social activities
and travel
\$20 yearly + class fee

Meeting at Tidewater Community College, VB
 (757)756-4861, www.ilrvb.org, office@ilrvb.org

VBGS Annual Banquet

The annual banquet for 2020 was a great success at Honey Bee Golf Club. We must thank all of our wonderful volunteers: Bob Bruce, Wendy Bransom, Jo Given, Barbara Murray, Debby Christian, Bobbie Brenton, Brenda Bunting, Craig Fenton, Diane Fenton, Rachel Greenberg, Max and Linda Brown, Kate Sandoval, Jackie Alcorn and Joy Phillips. The 50 guests enjoyed visiting each other during the social hour while browsing through the 20 drawing items. Dr. Mansfield did a very interesting talk about early Virginia Beach. He enjoyed signing his book "Princess Anne County and Virginia Beach" for Beverly Tickell who had won the drawing for it. We enjoyed hearing what the board and committees had accomplished in 2019. The new board members elected were Wendy Bransom for President, Bob Bruce for Secretary and Members-at-Large Linda Brown and Brian Baldwin. We loved Star Spangle Catering's buffet. We really enjoyed the desserts made by Kate Sandoval, Margaret Anthony, Annalee Gregory, Belinda Asmussen, Cindy Meier, Debby Christian and June Martin. We thank Kate Sandoval for the wonderfully and delicious cake she made for everyone. Check out all the drawing winners and sponsors on the next few pages.



Banquet Drawing Winners & Sponsors



The Green Family

10 Piece Family E-Deal
donated by
LEGACYBOX



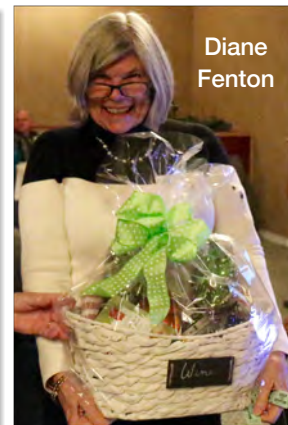
Rachel Greenberg

Dutch Family
Tree: Donated
by Cindy Meier



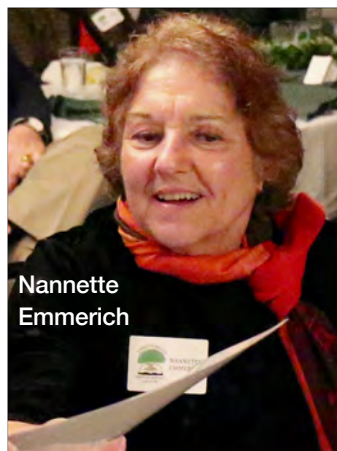
Patti Terry

Lemon Pound
Cake: Donated by
Barbara Murray



Diane Fenton

Wine Gift Basket:
Donated by
Barbara Murray



Nannette Emmerich

One year
membership Donated
by VBGS



Craig Fenton

\$30.00 Gift Certificate Donated
by Jigsaw Genealogy



Cindy Meier

Fold subscription
Donated by
Ancestry



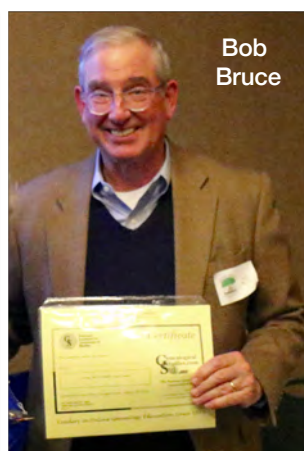
Rachel Greenberg

Cuba Census: Books
Donated by
Genealogical.com



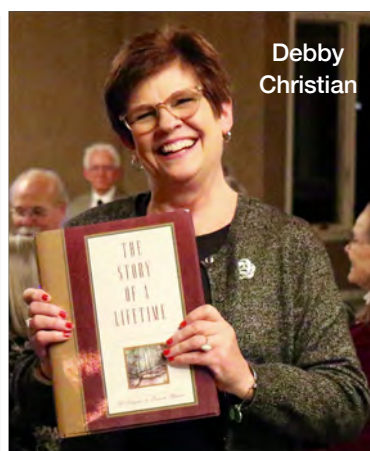
Diane Fenton

Picture of Virginia
Beach 1912, 17th
Atlantic Avenue by
Casy Holtzinger:
Donated by
Wendy Bransom



Bob Bruce

National Institute
for Genealogical
Studies Course
Gift Certificate.



Debby Christian

The Story of a Lifetime
Personal Memoir Book:
Donated by Barbara
Murray



The Green Family

Internet Genealogy
Subscription: Donated by
Moorshead Magazines, Ltd.



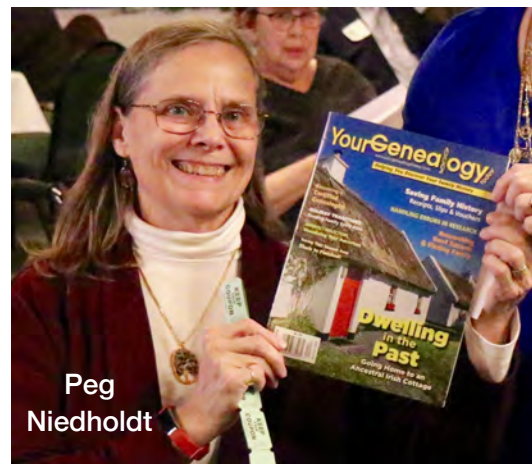
Lori
Sherwood

Genelaogy Gift Basket:
Donated by Wendy Bransom



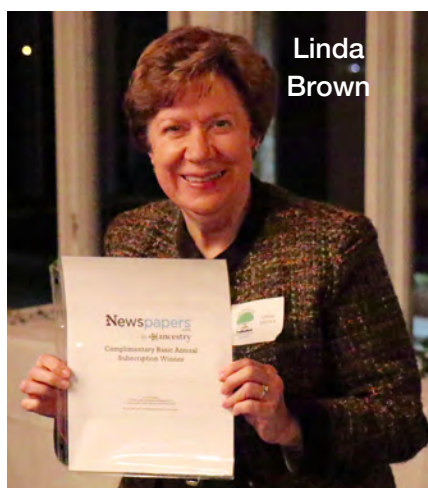
Jane
Martin

TableTopics- Ancestry:
Donated by Rachel Greenberg



Peg
Niedholdt

Your Genealogy Magazine
subscription: Donated by
Moorshead Magazines, Ltd.



Linda
Brown

Newspapers.com subscription:
Donated by Ancestry



Barbara
Hancock

RootsMagic 7 Software
with upgrade/ebook



Janet Tetterton

Tracing your Ancestors, Organize
Your Genealogy Research: Donated
by Moorshead Magazines, Ltd.



Nannette
Emmerich

Families of
Southeastern
Georgia: Donated
by
Genealogical.com



Wendy
Bransom

DNA Tracing Your
Ancestors & Your
Genealogical
Research: Donated by
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**Thank You to all our VBGS members and
Sponsors who donated drawing items!**

VBGS and Members

Wendy Bransom
Rachel Greenberg
Cindy Meier
Barbara Murray

Sponsors

Ancestry: Fold3 - <https://www.fold3.com/> and
Newspapers.com - <https://www.newspapers.com/>
Genealogical.com: <https://genealogical.com/>
Jigsaw Genealogy: <https://jigsaw-genealogy.com/>
LegacyBox: <https://legacybox.com/>
Moorshead Magazine: <http://moorshead.com/>
National Institute for Genealogy Studies
<https://www.genealogicalstudies.com/>
RootsMagic: <https://www.rootsmagic.com/>

A History of VBGS

(continued from VBGS Newsletter November 2019 Vol 36, No 4)

In 1998, new Board Officers were elected. Carolyn L. Barkley became President, Elizabeth Downs became Vice-President and Bobbie Nantz became Secretary. The new Members-at-Large were Davis Brewer, Sandy Fruit, Bonnie Dick, Melinda Lukei and Nancy Norton. There were also some new committee chairs appointed. They consisted of Nancy Norton for Membership, Joan Akers for Newsletter Editor, Elizabeth Downs for Program and John Halstead for Webmaster. The new Special Interest Group Leaders were Mamie Butler for Computer Group and Malcolm Simmons for Writers Group. On April 29, the VBGS Board voted to approve the use of reserve funds if there was not enough people to fund research trips. They also voted to approve the sale of genealogical materials donated by members at society functions with the approval of the Executive Board. The annual dinner was held June 11.

In the summer, VBGS finished a revision of the handbook. It had updates on job descriptions for the officers and committee chairs. It also clarified some administrative details of the society's operations. The Board recognized that there had been very few revenue raising projects the previous year except for the fall fair. For the very first time, they had a comfortable amount of money in their bank account. They did decide to raise the dues on January 21 and to keep one year's operating budget held in reserve. Their annual budget for 1998 was \$13, 873.00; their estimated revenues were \$14,275.00. An increase in newsletter costs and a fair which did not result in a profit caused the increase in dues. Individual membership was \$12.00 and family membership was \$20.00. The Annual Picnic, also known as "The Gourmet Country Club Feast," (indoors), was held Saturday, August 15, at the Great Neck Recreation Center. Bill Stokes planned and arranged the location. Attendees provided the food. Thirty-five members relaxed in air-conditioned comfort as they visited with each other. Everyone was happy, there was no heat, no humidity, no rain and no bugs.

The third Annual Genealogy Fair was on October 17. It was sponsored both by VBGS and the Virginia Beach Central Library where it was held. The topic for the fair was "Steps to Effective Genealogical Processes." There were exhibits, book sales, vendors, computer demonstrations, research assistance, library tours and door prizes. Admission fee was \$10.00, early registration was \$8.00. The two main speakers were Elizabeth Kelley Kerstens, CGRS and Marie Martin Murphy, CGRS. On October 28 the Board approved \$155.00 to have the handbook copied and notebooks provided with the money to come from the Administration Line Item funds. They also approved the definition of Honorary Membership. Additionally approved was the practice of giving a \$20.00 honoraria to individuals speaking at Society meetings who do not otherwise have a specific fee. On December 10 the Board approved \$1,700.00 for a computer and \$150.00 annually for the subscription to the LDS database service.

We had a huge crowd (74) at our February Meeting.

Thank you Kelly McMahon Willette CG® for telling so much about Y-DNA and how to use it to find our lost daddies! If you missed the meeting, we will be putting some notes on our website about the topic Kelly shared with us. We could not video tape the meeting. Check out our 2020 VBGS Board Officers & Committee Chairs!



Front row: Peg Niedholt, Barbara Murray, Linda Brown, Wendy Bransom & Brian Baldwin Back row: Bob Bruce, Bobbie Brenton, Jo Given & Rachel Greenberg, see page 2 for more information.



How I Caught the Genealogy Bug (continued from page 1)

This trunk was my grandmother's and must have sat unopened since she had died in 1984. In it were books written by other compilers on branches of our family – the Beverleys, the Corbins, and one on the life of Henry Bruce, a cousin who was a pioneer to Kentucky. Then I found three books by John Goodall Bruce, my great uncle. One was the same Bruce book I had received twenty years earlier that had gone to my grandfather. Another covered the life and ancestry of John Goodall, a War of 1812 veteran and Baptist preacher in Virginia, my third great grandfather. The last book I pulled out was on the ancestry of my great uncle's mother, Anna Byrd Reeve, titled "The Reeve Family of Southold, L.I. New York and Virginia." It begins with the progenitor of the Reeve family, a Thomas Reeve, who came in the "Matthew of London" in 1635.



Henry Bruce, pioneer to Kentucky

When we were married, my wife and I both knew we had great-grandparents who were Reeve, but we didn't think anything of it. My family was from Virginia and hers from New York. So, as I sat with this book, I called my wife at home in

Florida. I asked her what ship her Reeve had immigrated on as her grandmother had told her. Well, it was the "Matthew" in the 1630's she said. So, we are cousins.

Cindy's second great-grandfather was Timothy Wines Reeve and in my book my fifth great-grandfather, Isaac Reeve, had a brother, James Reeve, who married Anna Wines. So, my start in genealogy was closing the two generations between James and Timothy Wines Reeve. My wife and I are not only husband and wife, but also sixth cousins once removed as her Reeves married later than mine.



John Goodall Bruce, my great uncle



John Goodall, the preacher with 2nd wife Lucy Beverley Corbin



John Goodall, the preacher in later years



Anna Byrd Reeve, my great grandmother

As I know, with all who endeavor to find their ancestors, I have many interesting stories of surprise "finds" and memorable explorations that I treasure. I am most fortunate to have a great uncle who gave me a head start in genealogy. When I bought Family Tree Maker and entered the data, I had hundreds of names without going to the library, courthouse, or cemetery. But the memories come from the explorations. With my mother, I travelled to Georgia courthouses and historical societies and discovered my fourth great-grandfather had a town, Davisboro, named after him when he came from North Carolina after the Revolutionary War. We also went to Forsyth County, North Carolina, met my first cousin once removed, and visited the area where the Speas, Hauser, and other German families grew their tobacco after moving from Lancaster Pennsylvania in the early 1800's. My oldest son and I traipsed through woods to find the cemetery where Bruces were buried on their farm, "Springfield," in Stafford County. I stopped once in Fork Union, Virginia to see the site where that Baptist preacher had died suddenly during a revival and was buried outside the private, stone walled graveyard of a church lady who lived nearby.

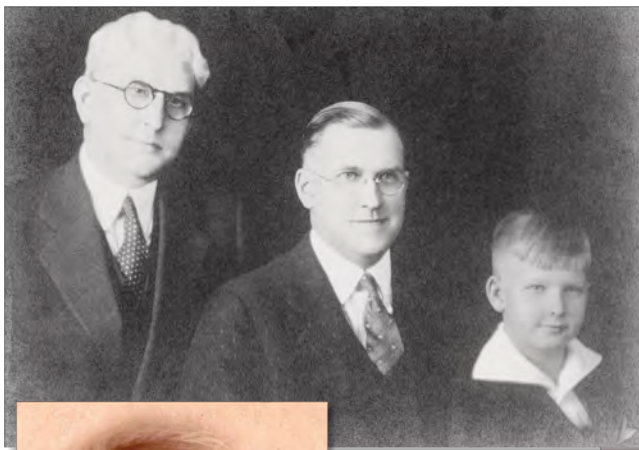
(continued on page 9)

How I Caught the Genealogy Bug (continued from page 8)

One of the most interesting events occurred while vacationing on Lake George, New York and we discovered that my wife's fourth great-grandfather's powder horn was on display at Fort Ticonderoga. We also stopped at Fort Edward, county seat of Washington County, New York and found this ancestor's house was still standing near Cambridge, New York. This Hezekiah King was the great grandfather of Grandma Moses who did a painting of his house and farm. It was also here that we discovered this King family goes back through the Reeds and Tomsons to Francis Cooke on the Mayflower.



There are so many other stories including the ones I've discovered since moving to Norfolk five years ago. I have to thank the Slover Library, Sargeant Memorial Collection, and the research of Alice Granbery Walter for making it so easy to trace my roots to this area going back to Francis Mason, Henry Seawell, Thomas Willoughby, Anthony Lawson and others. It's like my great uncle said in the forward of the Reeve book, "It (genealogy) is an interesting study and like a good spring, never runs dry..."



← Three generations of Bruces, my great-grandfather, grandfather, and father as a young boy

John Flavel Reeve, my third great grandfather who came to Virginia from New York. When Civil War broke out he and his wife went to DC and they had sons that fought for the South and North. →

John Flavel Reeve



Corinna Reeve,
Cindy's
great-grandmother
who was a Reeve



Why/How I Got Hooked on Genealogy...

By Lori Sherwood
lqriann13@gmail.com



Everyone has their own reasons for starting genealogy. Perhaps one of your grandparents may have ignited your curiosity by telling stories of historical events they lived through, or maybe a friend sparked your interest by finding that elusive relative or hiding a famous fugitive, or maybe even family stories about a military hero who fought for our independence. I can honestly say that none of these things started my quest. Yes, a long time ago my grandfather asked me to do our family tree in calligraphy, but as ashamed as I am to admit it, that didn't do it for me.

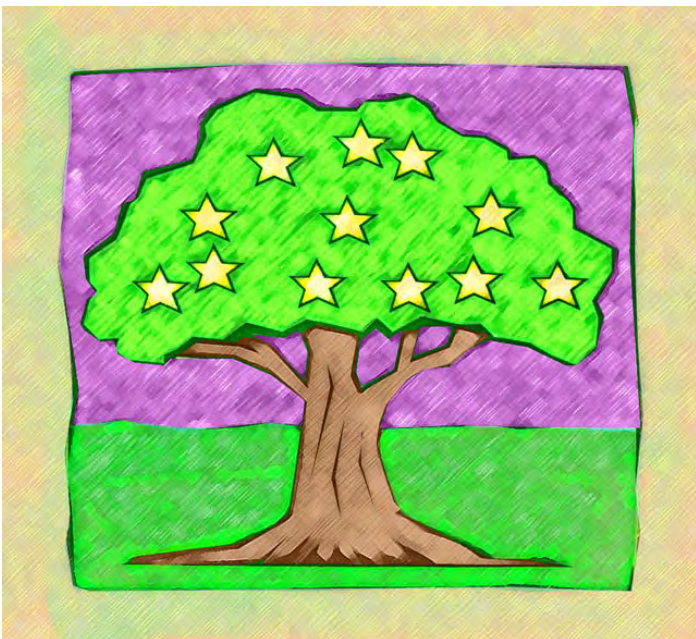
What started my quest really began September 9, 2011. Yes we ALL know that historic date. I can look back at that date as a happy day, in spite of the horrible tragedy that happened. This was the day my dad told my sister and I that we had a half-brother. Shocked, I was trying to grasp what I had just been told while I was watching other people witness their loved ones perish. On that day my family grew tremendously as I now had many more nieces and nephews than I ever imagined (I joked that I was going to have to carry index cards with names and pictures to remember them all).



October 2011: (L-R) Lori Sherwood, Dave Burgess, Belinda Sherwood

This is the day that started my quest into the Sherwood family tree. What a great thing I could do - to give a man who until that day did not know who the Sherwood's were, a history of the rest of his family. To me this would be the greatest gift that I could give him.

I am STILL researching the Sherwood family tree. Brick walls are in everyone's path, and that illusive Grandma Boswell (1st name Grandma) is haunting me, but at the same time I am also learning more about my family's history. I can't wait to share this information with my brother. To be able to give someone, who for 40 years of his life, knew nothing about where he came from, still brings a butterfly feeling in the pit of my stomach. All those years of wondering who you are and where you came from...I just can't imagine. I know this will be something he will cherish, and will share with the rest of our family.



From the Editor: This article first appeared in VBGS First Landing February 2013 newsletter. Lori has given us permission to print it again.



(L-R) Lawrence Sherwood, Lori Sherwood, Richard Sherwood and "Grandma" Boswell

What's New

Real IDs in Virginia is a compliant license or ID card. It is a federally accepted form of identification. You need to provide a federally-approved ID when boarding an airplane, going into a military base, or stepping into a federal building. **This is important to genealogy researchers because that includes courthouses and legislative buildings.** After October 1, 2020, standard licenses will not be federally accepted as identification. The only other way to enter a federal building after October 2020, is with a valid passport.

The process to get a Real ID is not simple. You must apply in-person, pay a one-time fee of \$10.00 with standard fees, and provide the DMV with **physical original documentation**. There are five types or documentation you have to bring with you when you go to the DMV.

1. Primary Proof of identity (e.g. Unexpired U.S. Passport or U.S. birth certificate)
2. Legal Presence (e.g. Unexpired U.S. passport or U.S. birth certificate)
3. Social Security Number (e.g. Social Security card or W-2 form)
4. Residency, two proofs required (e.g. utility bills, mortgage statements, Virginia driver's license displaying current Virginia residential street address)
5. Proof of any name change (e.g. marriage certificates, divorce decrees) *Important: If the name on your identity document is different than your legal name, you must show proof of your name change.* To view a list of proof documents that Virginia currently accepts on "Obtaining a Virginia Driver's License or Identification Card" click here [DMV 141](#) or click here for the DMV's [Document Guide](#).

GEDmatch Partnered with Genomics Firm: GEDmatch announced on December 9, 2019, that it joined with forensic genomics firm Verogen, Inc. to ensure ongoing privacy protections and enhance the customer experience for users of its website. GEDmatch users will begin to see improvements to the website, such as an enhanced homepage that offers increased functionality. Verogen will also bolster the GEDmatch platform, resulting in increased stability and optimal search-ability. These changes won't disrupt the experience for users and they will make searching the database easier. GEDmatch customers who have questions about the partnership or how their privacy is protected are encouraged to contact customer service at gedmatch@verogen.com.

Track Your Contributions to the Family Tree with a New Feature, Article by Annelie Hansen, February 7, 2020: There is now a contributions feature for the Family Tree application. You can now keep track of the individual contributions that you have made to the Family Tree. Currently, the My Contributions feature is available only on the mobile application, but keep checking back for updates! [Click here for more information.](#)

23andMe Family Tree has a new feature. It predicts your family tree based on the DNA shared with your relatives in 23andMe. You can find this feature listed in the Family & Friends menu. [Click here](#) for more information.

Geni.com new Consistency Checker constantly monitors changes to profiles in your family tree to detect common errors or inconsistencies. This enables you to make changes to improve the accuracy of your family tree on geni.com. [Click here](#) for more information.

FamilySearch announced in January 2020, release of a new tool to view recently digitized record images. This tool will help you find images that have not been indexed. Dates and places in record indexes will soon be editable. You can learn what else is new for FamilySearch by clicking [here](#).

MyHeritage added 50 million records in the month of January 2020. Some of these records included the addition of 21 million records to the existing Sweden Household Examination Books, 24.7 million records from a French Death Index, and 4.5 million records from a New York State Birth Index. To see a more detailed list [click here](#).

Editor Note: If you filled out the National Institute for Genealogical Studies course form to start your class in February you won't begin until March 2020. The forms were received too late to begin in February.



PAULINE "PEG" NIEDHOLDT
Genealogist

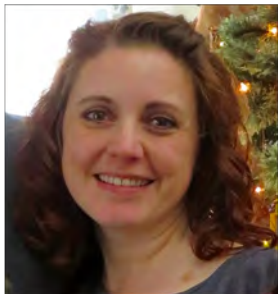
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Italian Roots
By Heather Wright
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I've always had a curiosity about history and how people lived in the past. Growing up, I'd ask questions about my family here and there, but it wasn't until my late college years that I really got interested...and, of course, I wish I'd started a little sooner because by then, both grandfathers had already passed.

Initially I was most interested in my maternal grandfather's parents Domenico (Dom) and Mercedes, and why they chose to leave Italy for America. I knew they came from the same town in Italy but at different times; he immigrated in 1912 and she in 1920. They married eight months after her arrival and raised four kids in rural southwest Pennsylvania; they even managed to purchase a farmhouse too. I always imagined them as an old Hollywood movie: grainy film footage of him arriving on a ship from Italy, cut to him working eight long years in the coal mines to establish himself in America, and finally him sending word for his love to join him. I even scrapbooked it!

Yeah, I may have jumped the gun on that one.

I asked my grandmother (their daughter-in-law) about Dom and Mercedes' immigration. She said Mercedes only came to visit her brother (who came over with Dom) but was seasick the entire trip and couldn't bear the thought of getting back on that boat. So, instead of enduring the long journey back to Italy, she stayed and married Domenico. While my grandmother was telling me this, all I could think about was the film reel with my great-grandparents' romantic Hollywood movie, it's not playing anymore, it's not even changed to a new story, it's just in a pile at my feet, smoldering to ashes.

I don't know how true my grandmother's version of the story is though, Mercedes' ship manifest lists Uniontown, Pennsylvania as her Intended Future Permanent Residence. I do know Dom and Mercedes have always been one of my favorite couples I've never known. I think it's because everyone speaks so well of them and they saw their American Dream come true; and their smiles, they are infectious. I've been lucky enough to inherit one of her steamer trunks she brought over and their kitchen table and chairs.

So, after learning a little more about them, I started a family tree, found some stuff, finished college, got a job ...and stopped for about twelve years. I dove back into my family history in late 2013, and it's been full speed ahead. I've made some amazing discoveries, connected with cousins, and had conversations with family that probably would never have happened otherwise. I found Italians like to give their children lots of names, and that Dom and Mercedes were no exception:

Domenico Lorenzo Agostino Berti and Mercedes Seconda Alfonsina Zurbetta Bisogni. No one had heard their full names before, nor did anyone know she was Mercedes, not Mercedes --- and she was Mercedes Seconda (the second) because her sister (the first) died as an infant just three months before her birth.

Dom and Mercedes did not continue the tradition with my grandfather, he's Daniel, just Daniel. They didn't give him even one middle name! Ha!



Wedding party - Dom and Mercedes seated at center, also seated are her brother and his wife.



My favorite photo of them, they look so happy! (at the table I inherited)



How I Became a Member of the National Daughters of the American Revolution (NSDAR)

by Wendy Bransom
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On September 20, 2019, I was talking on the phone with my father in Florida. He asked me why I never tried to become a NSDAR member. He told me he had an aunt that was in the NSDAR (I have not found that aunt yet). He remembered I had started an application around 30 years ago, before the Internet became useful. I already had many shelves of binders on family surnames for both my husband and my families. Most of this data came from the Mormon Church, the National Archives and the NSDAR.

After I got off the phone, I went online and started trying to find a database I could search to see if any of my ancestors were involved in the American Revolution. It was not easy to find the website, but I found it at services.dar.org. Here is the [link](#) that will take you to the ancestor search on this website. I was quite surprised that I found 4 patriots from my father's mother's Ulm line. They included John Reel from North Carolina and Stephen Noble, Martin Root Sr, Martin Root Jr. from Massachusetts. The last patriot that I searched for was Gershom Gard from New Jersey. I knew he fought in the American Revolution, since the NSDAR application I started 30 years ago was for him. I was so excited that I went ahead and filled out a [DAR membership Interest Form](#) online. I also searched for local NSDAR chapters and decided to apply to the Princess Anne County Chapter. Having a lot of knowledge on computers and the Internet, I chose them because I found their website to be most up to date. Plus, they looked like they would be a lot of fun.

That same evening I received an email from Virginia NSDAR Membership thanking me for my interest. They had several things to tell me but I immediately noted that they had asked the Princess Anne County Chapter to contact me and invite me to their meetings as a prospective. Also given was this [link](#) to guide me through the beginning stages of my research, find a DAR chapter nearby and provide an overview of their online genealogical resources. Later that evening, Carmen Cross, the VBGS Webmaster, emailed me. She told me she had just received a message that I was interested in joining the Princess Anne County Chapter. She expressed her surprise and happiness that she had received my application. I had no idea she was in NSDAR, so I was also surprised. We made plans to meet the next Sunday at the Virginia Beach Central Library. She told me to pick one patriot and bring all the information I had on that line. I chose Gershom Gard since I had already started a NSDAR binder on him. We met at the library for several Sundays in October.

Carmen helped me tremendously. I already had several vital records that I had gotten from the Mormon Church. Most of this was for the older generations. However, I had not worked much on the 3rd and 4th generations. I was missing birth, marriage and death records. I went online and found the county clerk's websites for Edwards, Richland, Woodford and Wabash counties in Illinois. The county clerks need as much information as you can provide for each person. I actually called each county clerk and received precise directions. Prices varied for certificates anywhere from \$6.00 to \$25.00. The older records were cheaper while the most recent records were more expensive. Woodford County was the hardest from which to obtain information. They had a PDF I had to fill out along with providing a copy of my driver's license and a certified cashier's check for payment. Carmen and I had to search hard for a missing record from the fifth generation, we could not find a death record for Mary Ellen Wiggs Reel. Carmen finally figured it out. Mary had married George Higgins when her husband William Wiggs died, she outlived George. Her death was reported by her son David Wiggs April 10, 1935, in Edwards county. We had seen this Mary Higgins in different places online but did not realize she was also Mary Ellen Wiggs Reel.

We met on November 2 at the Virginia Beach Central Library to get my signature on the application. On November 9 I was invited to the Princess Anne Chapter meeting as a prospective member.



(continued on page 14)

How I Became a Member of the National Daughters of the American Revolution (NSDAR) (continued from page 13)

The speaker was Congresswoman Elaine Luria, Virginia 2nd Congressional District. She recognized all the members and prospective members that had been in the military. I was very impressed with this chapter, I hoped my application would process quickly.

The application was received by the NSDAR on November 22. I received a letter on December 21 from NSDAR requesting documentation to establish the parentage of Wendy Renee Fildes Bransom. Neither the birth or marriage certificates had this information. I thought Carmen and I had talked about this. We knew we had to include the certificate of baptism I received from the Catholic Church. Carmen was not available so I drafted a letter back to NSDAR sending a copy of the baptism record. This is the only document listing my parents, I hoped they would accept it.

On January 3 I received an email from Deborah Paxson Brewer, Regent, Princess Anne County Chapter NSDAR. She congratulated me for having my application verified. I was very surprised this happened so fast. Having received the letter in late December on missing information in the 1st generation, how could this be? I thought they had just began looking at my application. I found out that they wait to contact you concerning any issue with your application until after they have reviewed it all. So, the baptism was the only thing they needed. I was inducted into the Princess Anne County Chapter on January 11, 2020, at the Princess Anne Country Club. This was a very nice ceremony, each inductees' biography and information on her ancestor was read to all the guests. We received a rose and a little packet that had important information on the Princess Anne County Chapter.

After being inducted, I wanted to learn more about the NSDAR. I was told there was a new member course that I should take. I also found out I would not get my NSDAR number until early February. National Numbers are issued by the Office of the Registrar General, following the monthly vote of the National Board of Management. The applications are voted on at the beginning of each month. My application had been proven but it still had to be approved. I could not go into the NSDAR website or do other things until I had my number. Meanwhile I was able to



Inductees into Princess Anne County Chapter NSDAR, January 11



Hungars Parish Church



NSDAR members from different local chapters

meet more members of various local NSDAR Chapters. I went on a trip to Hungars Parish Church in Machipongo, VA which dates back to 1742. Carpooling enabled me to meet other NSDAR members from different local chapters. We learned the history of the Church and also heard the organist play a Holtkamp organ, absolutely beautiful. We also were able to view the old silver service for Holy Communion which has been used ever since the current building was built. The pieces have an inscription showing that they were the gift of "John Custis, Esquire, of Williamsburg," to the lower church of Hungars Parish, 1741.

On February 5 the Regent Princess Anne County Chapter NSDAR, Deborah Paxson Brewer, sent me an email congratulating me again and giving me my NSDAR number. The next day I received a letter from NSDAR congratulating me and welcoming me to the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution! I was happy to see this letter had the website for the new [NSDAR member course](#). This video will help me learn more about the Society and how I can become an active participant in the NSDAR at all levels, chapter, state and national. You need your DAR Number (continued on page 15) to view this course.

How I Became a Member of the National Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) (continued from page 14)

The letter also told me I would receive a complimentary issue of the American Spirit magazine and its companion Daughters newsletter. I get those in about 4-6 weeks. I now have more ways to research, which I have yet to learn. I also can get more involved in helping my local community. I am the co-chair for the Princess Anne Chapter, District 1 Service Project, Vethouse: Adopt a Room. This project is for female veterans who need help in transitioning into productive lives in their community. The National Society Daughters of the American Revolution selected Vethouse, Inc. for an award of \$40,000.00 toward their incredible work to shelter homeless women veterans. Vethouse Inc. is located in Virginia Beach. These funds will help to renovate a duplex to house homeless female veterans. Once one of these ladies enters a Vethouse, they have 30 days to find a job. Then when they have the job, they live at the Vethouse until they are ready to live out in the community on their own.

Construction is about to begin on this duplex. Local NSDAR Chapters and other charity organizations are adopting a room in the duplex. Princess Anne County Chapter has chosen one of the living rooms. Madelyn Reass is chair for Princess Ann County Chapter Vethouse and I am her co-chair. We have members donating money and furniture items for the duplex. The goal is for all the chapters to work together sharing donated items with each other. Being a veteran myself, this project means a lot to me.

*The
certificatate
with my
DAR
Number*



If you want to become a member of NSDAR, you have work to do. You need to start working on a family tree, finding your ancestors all the way back to at least the American Revolution. If you get stuck, local NSDAR chapters are there to assist you. All you have to do if find a chapter that you would like to join as a prospective member, then do what I did in the beginning of this article. I wish you luck in becoming a NSDAR member!

As many of you know, the Virginia Beach Genealogical Society's webpage was hacked about two years ago. Luckily, we were able to recover most of the information with the Wayback Machine. We are now back online with a new website address <https://vbgsva.net/>. We have also redesigned the site to make it easier for you to find information about our society our meetings, scheduled speakers, special events and more. You can even join us on Facebook and/or Twitter right from the home page. Since the site is constantly being updated, please let me know if you have any comments or suggestions for content to add. I would love to hear from you! I can be reached at webmaster.vbgs@gmail.com.

Carmen Sue Cron

Online Tips for Genealogy

Are you getting tired of paying money when you research online. How about saving time and money by using free online libraries and resources. Here are a few for you to try out.

1. **ArchiveGrid**: ArchiveGrid includes over 5 million records describing archival materials, bringing together information about historical documents, personal papers, family histories and more. With over 1,000 different archival institutions represented, ArchiveGrid helps researchers looking for primary source materials held in archives, libraries, museums and historical societies. To search on this website click here <https://researchworks.oclc.org/archivegrid/help/>.
2. **The Family History Library** sponsored by FamilySearch is the largest genealogical library in the world. It is actively digitizing its family histories, local histories, and other collections to make them searchable and available online to researchers worldwide. Together with other world-renowned genealogical research partner libraries, the Family History Library is pleased to make its collections and its partners' collections available together in the new online digital library. Click here for more information <https://www.familysearch.org/library/books/>.
3. **The Library of Congress** has one of the world's premier collections of U.S. and foreign genealogical and local historical publications. The Library's genealogy collection began as early as 1815 with the purchase of Thomas Jefferson's library. Click here for more information <http://www.loc.gov/rr/genealogy/>.
4. **Genealogy Center Free Databases** is at the Allen County Public Library. Some of its resources and records include, besides Indiana, Family Bible Records, African American Gateway, Genealogy Center Surname File, Native American Gateway, Our Military Heritage, Other States Resources, and much more. Click here to learn more <http://www.genealogycenter.org/Databases/FreeDatabases.aspx>.
5. **Digital Public Library of America (DPLA)** connects you to resources held within America's libraries, archives, museums, and other cultural heritage institutions. All of the materials are free. It has photographs, books, maps, news footage, oral histories, personal letters, museum objects, artwork, and government documents immediately available in digital format. To look at 36,478,842 images, texts, videos, and sounds from across the United States click here <https://dp.la/>.
6. **Europeana Collections**, <https://www.europeana.eu/portal/en>, is Europe's digital library, museum, gallery and archive. From books, photos and paintings to television broadcasts and 3D objects, Europeana Collections provides online access to a vast store of cultural heritage material from across Europe. They recently released their new fulltext **Newspaper Collection** <https://www.europeana.eu/portal/en/collections/newspapers>.
7. Explore 884,351 items digitized from The **New York Public Library's** collections. This site is a living database with new materials added every day, featuring prints, photographs, maps, manuscripts, streaming video, and more. Click here to check it out <https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/>.
8. **The Newberry Library** has been collecting genealogy and local history materials since 1887. They have a **Genealogy and Local History** online section <https://newberry.org/genealogy-and-local-history>. You can check out their catalogs and guides for more information <https://newberry.org/catalogs-and-guides>.
9. **BAV Online Catalogue** enables you to search for any holdings of the **Vatican Apostolic Library**: Archives, Manuscripts, Coins & Medals, Printed Materials, Special Catalogues (Incunabula, Visual Materials) and the General Catalogue. *Google will translate their website* <https://opac.vatlib.it/>.
10. **Digital Archive Ontario (DAO)** was previously known as the Virtual Reference Library until September, 2018. Developed and managed with resources from the Toronto Public Library, DAO provides free access to digital material of historical importance to Ontario and Canada. DAO has a vast digital collection of high quality images including Ontario maps, fire insurance plans and views of towns and cities over time, pulled from the Library's collection and dating back to the 1880s. Click here to view their website <https://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/dao/>.