

### Remembering Melinda Jones Lukei By Wendy Bransom and Jo Given

Melinda Jones Lukei, charter member and Hall of Fame Member of VBGS passed away at home on September 8, 2019. She was the daughter of Alvah Jones and Every Williams of Knotts Island, North Carolina. She is survived by her husband Reese Lukei, Jr., one daughter, 2 sons and 3 grandchildren.

Wendy made contact with Reese shortly after Melinda passed on to convey how very sorry VBGS was for his loss and Reese agreed to meet with her and Jo to talk about Melinda.

Reese greeted Wendy and Jo at his door, welcoming us into the beautiful house that he and Melinda had shared for 48 years. He started by telling about all the wonderful history they had in their home. Reese shared some of Melinda's interest in genealogy and showed us many items from his family.

Melinda's father was a farmer, she grew up spending lots of time outside, and learned to deal with her asthma which bothered her for her entire life. Melinda's family lived in the house at 2441 Princess Anne Road from 1944 to 1956, this is now part of the Virginia Beach Police Department. Melinda was very talented; she played the piano since childhood and was in the Princess Ann High School Marching Band. Reese and Melinda met in 1954 while performing in the band where Melinda played the bells and Reese the French horn. Melinda graduated from Princess Anne in 1956 and she and Reese were married in 1958. Reese joined the Navy after school and played in the Navy Band. In 1961, they made the decision to leave the Navy so that Melinda could continue her work in history/genealogy in Virginia Beach.



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Melinda had such a wonderful smile!

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## Leadership Notes.....

President's Message  
November 2019



This is November and the holiday season will soon be upon us and New Year's resolutions will soon follow. It is not too early to think about your genealogical resolutions. Do you want to write about your family in an interesting style which will help your family learn how your ancestors lived worked and resided? In 2020, VBGS needs to establish a "Writers User Group." Another resolution may be to learn a genealogical technique that you want to improve. Currently, I am taking a course on how to more effectively manage and conduct your genealogical research. The class is conducted by a daughter/mother team who are both professional accredited genealogists. The course title is "Research Like a Pro." There are 12 students in the course. As part of the lesson plan, the students review your work and suggest alternative approaches. I have learned a great deal. It was well worth the cost. What will you do to in 2020 to improve your genealogical skills?

*Craig Fenton*

## Attention All Members

It is that time of year again when we have to start thinking about new officers and members-at-large. This year, the positions of president, secretary, and two members-at-large seats are open. If any of you are interested in any of those positions or want to suggest a candidate or are willing to serve on a nominating committee, please contact me or see me at our next meeting.

I encourage each of you to consider volunteering for something. It helps to have a broad range of viewpoints on the Executive Board. It helps all of us get to know each other better. The better we know one another, the more enjoyable our meetings and activities and the better we can help each other on our family history journeys. No experience required.

*Diane Fenton, VBGS Nominating Chairman*



**Welcome**  
**To our new member**

**Margaret Anthony**  
**Carol Mear Green**

## Note From the Editor.....

The next First Landing Newsletter is February 2020. The focus will be on VBGS Members. We will ask several of our members to talk about their lives and their interest in genealogy. We will also ask them for memories they have for our society.

*Pat Eggleston sent an addition to the on-going History VBGS for 1994: "Melinda Lukej, Pat Eggleston and Herb Crane continued in their positions as President, Secretary and Treasurer, respectively."*

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

## 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  
Craig Fenton

Vice President  
Jo Ann Given

Secretary  
Diane Fenton

Treasurer  
Rachel Greenberg

Members at Large  
Brian Baldwin  
Bobbie Benton  
Barbara Murray  
Peg Niedholdt

Past President  
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## VBGS Annual Banquet

The VBGS Annual Banquet on January 23, 2020, will be here soon. If you have not bought your ticket, you might want to do it soon. Invitations to this event were mailed out in September 2019. If for some reason you did not get one or misplaced it, email [firstlanding.vbgs@gmail.com](mailto:firstlanding.vbgs@gmail.com). As a reminder, you must buy your ticket by December 16, 2019, sales end on that date. All sales are final, no refunds will be made.

We have a great group of VBGS members who are helping plan this event. Our volunteer group consist of Jackie Alcorn, Bobbie Brenton, Wendy Bransom, Linda Brown, Bob Bruce, Debby Christian, Craig and Diane Fenton, Rachel Greenberg, Jo Given, Barbara Murray and Kate Sandoval.

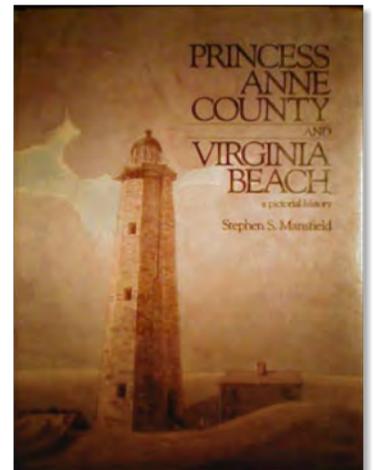


Pictured: Back row, left to right, Bob, Diane, Bobbie, Jo, Craig and Rachel. Front row, left to right, Debby, Kate, Wendy and Barbara. Not pictured is Jackie Alcorn.

We have gathered some nice items for the drawings for the event. So far we have gift baskets, books and several other items to help you with your genealogy research. We also have the *Princess Anne County and Virginia Beach, a pictorial history* by Dr. Stephen S. Mansfield, our speaker for the night. Everyone will have a chance to win this book. Dr. Mansfield will draw the ticket and will autograph the book for the winner. Read the *VBGS August 2019 Newsletter* if you want to know more about the buffet and the event.

This event will take place at the Honey Bee Golf Club in Virginia Beach; it has wheel chair access. There will be a brief business meeting towards the end of dinner, followed by a break. During Dr. Mansfield's speech, he will reflect on why, and from where, people have come over time to Virginia's "least-known, least visited county" that became "the world's largest resort city" and is now Virginia's most populous community.

We are so lucky to have Dr. Mansfield, he is a very well known historian and archivist in the local area. During his 52 years at Virginia Wesleyan University, he has served as history professor, academic dean, and now University Archivist. A long-time board member and past president of the Princess Anne County/Virginia Beach Historical Society, he also has written books on the history of the University and of the county/city. He chaired the Princess Anne County Tricentennial observance and the Virginia Beach Historical Review Board. He and his kindergarten-classmate wife, Dawn, have two daughters and four granddaughters.



If you would like to volunteer to help out in any way for VBGS Banquet/Business Meeting, contact Wendy. We have many things we will have to do for this event, some small and some much more involved. Our group of volunteers are having a lot of fun planning this event, we would love to have anyone join us.

# Upcoming Events

## 2019 Meetings/Trips

14 November: VBGS Monthly Meeting at Marian Manor, Terrace Room, 7:00 pm, Speaker: Ronald Berkebile, Topic: "Discovering your Ancestors using the 1860 – 1880 Censuses."

16 November: Genealogy Class - African American Genealogy at Horace C. Downing Branch Library, 555 East Liberty Street, Norfolk, Virginia 23523, 11:00 am - 11:00 pm.

<https://smcclass1911.eventbrite.com>

18 November: VBGS Computer User Group at Joint Use Library 6:00 pm. Topic: "10 Ways to Add Volume to Your Family History with Video."

6-7 December: Murfreesboro Historical Association "34th Annual Candlelight Christmas Tour and Christmas Dinner" Murfreesboro NC Historic District, one block north of Main Street. Tickets are \$35.00; children under 10 are free. Get more information here:

<https://www.murfreesboronc.org/christmas.htm>

7 December: Genealogy Class - "Genealogical Databases and Websites" at Horace C. Downing Branch Library, 555 East Liberty Street, Norfolk, Virginia 23523, 11:00 am - 1:00 pm.

<https://smcclass1912.eventbrite.com>

12 December: VBGS Monthly Meeting at Marian Manor, Terrace Room, 7:00 pm, Speaker: Jay Gaidmore from William & Mary SWEM Library, Topic: "Special Collections." Learn about all the abundant resources available only a hour away from Hampton Roads.

16 December: "Learn how to effectively search the Ancestry.com genealogy/family history database" at Little Creek Branch Library, 7853 Tarpon Place, Norfolk, VA 23518, 2:00 - 3:59 pm. To reserve your seat, please call (757) 441-1751.

17 December: "Learn how to effectively search the Ancestry.com genealogy/family history database" at Larchmont Branch Library 6525 Hampton Blvd Norfolk, Virginia 23508, 2:00 pm - 3:59 pm. To reserve your seat, please call (757) 441-5335.

## 2020

15 January: VBGS Computer User Group at Joint Use Library 6:00 pm. Topic: TBD

18 January: Genealogy Class - "Beginning Genealogy 101" at Mary D. Pretlow Anchor Branch Library 111 W. Ocean View Ave. Norfolk, Virginia 23503, 11:00 am - 1:00 pm. <https://smcclass2020-01.eventbrite.com>

13 February: VBGS Monthly Meeting at Marian Manor, Terrace Room, 7:00 pm, Speaker: Kelly McMahon Willette CG, Topic: "Who's Your Daddy? How DNA will help you in non-paternal events in your family tree." Hang out with Kelly as she walks you through how she solved two non-paternal events from Colonial Virginia.

15 February: Genealogy Class - "Intermediate Genealogy 201" at Mary D. Pretlow Anchor Branch Library 111 W. Ocean View Ave. Norfolk, Virginia 23503, 11:00 am - 1:00 pm. <https://smcclass2020-02.eventbrite.com>

19 February: VBGS Computer User Group at Joint Use Library 6:00 pm. Topic: TBD

12 March: VBGS VBGS Monthly Meeting at Marian Manor, Terrace Room, 7:00 pm, Speaker: Richard Brown, Topic: "Colonial Medicine"

16 March: VBGS Computer User Group at Joint Use Library 6:00 pm. Topic: TBD

## 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  
 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

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 Marian Manor, Terrace Room, 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://smcclass202004.eventbrite.com>

22 April: VBGS Computer User Group at Joint Use Library 6:00 pm. Topic: TBD

14 May: VBGS VBGS Monthly Meeting at Marian Manor, Terrace Room, 7:00 pm, Show & Tell. Bring your old/historic items to share with VBGS.

18 May: VBGS Computer User Group at Joint Use Library 6:00 pm. Topic: TBD

11 June: VBGS VBGS Monthly Meeting at Marian Manor, Terrace Room, 7:00 pm, Speaker: Wendy Bransom, Topic: "Researching Family History Without the Internet." This was given on August 20, 2019 at the "New Ways to Explore Your Family History,," at the Marian Manor University. It has been updated.

## 2020 Conferences/Banquets

12-17 January: SLIG "Elevate Your Genealogical Education to New Heights" will be held in Salt Lake City. It will include 15 courses including "Virginia from the Colonial Period to the Civil War Records, Her People, Her Laws" with Barbara Vines Little and Victor Dunn. [Click here for more information.](#)

23 January: VBGS Business Meeting/Dinner at the Honey Bee Golf Club, 2500 South Independence Blvd, Virginia Beach, VA 23456, 5:00 pm, cost \$30.00, dinners must be paid for by December 16, 2019, check the VBGS Website for a flier and invitations early Fall 2019. See page 4 of this newsletter for more information.

26-29 February, RootsTech 2020, Salt Palace, Salt Lake City, UT. Registration is now open at <https://www.rootstech.org/salt-lake>. The schedule for it is still changing.

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 Library of Virginia for Guided Research, Saturday is also at the Library of Virginia. Seating is limited so buy your ticket soon. Register at [www.vgs.org](http://www.vgs.org), click on Register on EvenBrite. 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, [Click Here!](#)

26-31 July, IGHR Summer Conference, University of Georgia Center for Continuing Education and Hotel in Athens, GA. [ighr.gagensociety.org](http://ighr.gagensociety.org)

# What's New



ancestryHealth Ancestry now offers a new AncestryHealth®, you can discover how your DNA might influence certain health conditions and the steps you can take with a healthcare provider to chart a healthier path forward. It gives you this new perspective, all from the DNA sample you've already provided, click here to learn more <https://www.ancestry.com/health>



At Findmypast, you can now find ancestors buried in the Greater London area between 1399 and 1992. The records could reveal your relative's name, age, occupation, religious denomination and where they were buried. In these records are those of George Wombwell, the famous Victorian menagerie exhibitor, who was buried in Highgate Cemetery in 1850. The [Greater London Burial Index](#) is a collection of the Middlesex Burials and Memorial Inscriptions, South London Burials Index 1545-1905, City of London Burials 1754-1855 and Middlesex Burials 1538-1992.



The new operating system for macOS is 10.15, "Catalina." If you use RootsMagic, Catalina requires all applications to be 64-bits. The current wrap for RootsMagic 7 is for 32-bit applications. CodeWeavers makes the CrossOver software which allows Windows applications to run on Mac. Codeweaver is updating their software to be 64-bit so that it can run on Catalina and future versions of macOS. RootsMagic 7 for Mac will not be able to run on macOS Catalina until CodeWeavers finishes their update to 64-bit application. *RootsMagic recommends you do not update your Mac's operating system if you still need to use RootsMagic 7.* Wait until CodeWeavers finishes their 64-bit wrapper for RootsMagic 7 or for the official release of RootsMagic 8. For most users, there is no urgent need to install Catalina as previous versions of the operating system will continue to work and be supported for quite some time.



The NGS 2021 Family History Conference, Virginia: The Deep Roots of a Nation, will be held in Richmond, Virginia May 19-22, 2021. The call for proposals opens on January 7, 2020.

If a genealogical organization would like to sponsor a lecture, they must submit proposals to NGS using by clicking below, this link may not active yet. <https://www.ngsgenealogy.org/call-for-proposals>.



NGS has a new Continuing Genealogical Studies (CGS) on "The War of 1812 records." You can learn about the many records available from 1810-1855 for this war. It takes an in-depth look at how to access pension files and the records that followed the war; it can help you trace ancestors in this time period. [Click here for more information.](#)



Check out "A Wide Range of New and Updated Genealogy Records," article by Lisa Louise Cooke dated November 3, 2019. She lists the newest genealogy records available on the internet. Most websites listed are free.



NBC has a new show: "A New Leaf." It follows everyday people on the cusp of key life inflection points, using family history, genealogy and sometimes DNA analysis to help guide them on their journey of self discovery. It airs on Saturday mornings from 11:30 am to noon. Check it out <https://www.nbc.com/a-new-leaf>



Watch for the the "Who Do You Think You Are?" It is returning to its original home network NBC after 7 years. It is from executive producers Lisa Kudrow, Dan Bucatinsky, and Ancestry. The series returns to NBC at a time when ancestral and genealogical exploration is enjoying unprecedented popularity. New research tools and billions of digitized records from Ancestry will provide remarkable insights into each star's background and illustrate the cultural differences that connects us all together.

VBGS accepts ads now, great way to promote! Wallet size ad: \$25.00, Quarter page ad: \$50.00, Half page ad: \$100.00, Full page ad: \$150.00.

PAULINE "PEG" NIEDHOLDT  
Genealogist

GENEALOGY RESEARCH SERVICES

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## A History of VBGS

(continued from VBGS Newsletter August 2019 Vol 36, No 3)

After the election of officers for 1997, some VBGS members filled positions for the first time: Vice President Carolyn Barkley, Treasurer Phil Coulter and Members-at-Large Elizabeth Downs and Larry Pouttu.

Bonnie Dick as the trip coordinator scheduled many research trips in 1997. Trips to Washington, DC, the National Archives, the USDAR Library and the Library of Congress were held March 19, June 18 and November 19 for \$22.00. Trips to Richmond, VA, the Library of Virginia and the Virginia Historical Society were held April 16 and September 17, for \$15.00. Trips to Raleigh, NC, the North Carolina State Archives and Library were held May 20 and October 19, for \$25.00.

The Writers Interest Group (WIG) was started in April, by Malcolm Simmons. This group met monthly to work on their family history, genealogy or memoirs. This was free to VBGS members. Members met to discuss how to write, print and distribute their family history. They learned how to do writing overall and writing in genealogy.

The Computer Special Interest Group (COMSIG) was well attended in 1997. It provided members a great forum to discuss the use of the computer in genealogy. Bill Lenard developed this group for both beginners and the experienced, allowing both to improve their skills.

The VBGS annual dinner was on Thursday, June 12, at the Virginia Beach Resort Hotel off of Shore Drive.

The society launched a second group of students in the National Genealogical Society's American Genealogy: A Basic Course. Peg Cicirelli put together a group to take the National Genealogical Society correspondence course. The VBGS students included Fred Bright, Ellen Jones, Lois Link, Mary Nantz, James Toncray and Phyllis Wittsell. Since VBGS was a member of NGS, students received a substantial discount (\$95.00 - \$115.00) on the course.

### Quick Pot Roast Recipe

1/4 # sliced Roast beef (chicken or pork), 6-8 very small carrots (julienne option), 1 medium onion chopped, 2 sticks of celery (julienne option), 1/2 # very small red potatoes cut in half or quarter if bigger, soy sauce, romana/parmesan cheese (both is your choice), Shake and Bake Potato mix, Chef Paul Prudhommes' Magic Seasoning (poultry magic/veg. magic)

Par-boil cut potatoes on top of stove, until fork can be easily inserted. Remove potatoes from water, save liquid, place in Shake & Bake, add to water, cut carrots, celery and onions, cook until fork can be easily inserted, drain off water. Place in glass, sprayed baking dish, add meat and roasted potatoes. Sprinkle with soy sauce, Romano and Parmesan cheese or one if desired. Stir all of the above and bake 450 degree oven for 10-15 minutes more to marinate seasons.

This will make two large servings or four small servings. Serve with fresh tossed salad. My advise is to take a spoonful and sprinkle the Magic Seasoning on to get your desired taste. I hope you enjoy it, you can double or triple this by adjusting amounts. You can use any leftover meat, as desired.

Pauline C. Landrum

VBGS began their own web page on the Internet in 1997 at <http://www.tschoice.com/vbgs> (note this does not exist anymore). John Halstead created this informative website. This was the first time the VBGS Surname File was available on the web.

The annual picnic was Saturday, August 16, at Great Neck Park, Shelter #4. The event gave the VBGS members a chance to socialize and enjoy good food. It was attended by 51 members and friends. Pauline Landrum won best creation for her recipe of meat and vegetables with tantalizing flavor. Mamie Butler and Bill Stokes were thanked for arranging the enjoyable gatherings. On the left is Pauline Landrum's recipe which was published in VBGS Newsletter Vol. 14, No. 4 in November, 1997.

The second annual Genealogical Fair was held by VBGS and Virginia Beach Central Library from 9:00 am to 4:15 pm, on October 11. The focus was on "From Continent to Continent Finding Your Immigrant Ancestor." Attendees were able to learn skills and resources and develop strategies to find elusive immigrant ancestors through research. They also received computer demonstrations, library tours and research assistance. The guest speakers were Craig R. Scott, CGRS and Maralyn Wellauer. Registration was \$8.00 in advance and \$10.00 at the door. Carolyn Barkley was the organizer for the event. There were more than 200 attendees, it was believed to be the largest Fair/Workshop held in Virginia.

( continued on page 7)

## A History of VBGS (continued from page 7)

In 1997, Sandy Fruit, Chair of the Telephone Committee began notifying members of monthly meetings by email. This innovation by Sandy saved many hours of phone calls and made a better-informed membership.

In 1997, VBGS increased the treasury to a level that allowed them to help in the effort to preserve the records and history of America. Two hundred and fifty dollars was given again to the Circuit Court in Virginia Beach for the preservation of records and \$100.00 was to Boykin's Tavern in Isle of Wight County for restoration and preservation. Stern NARA Fund also received \$160.00 from VBGS for preserving records.

The Virginia Beach Central Library agreed to be the permanent archive for printed genealogies and manuscripts that the Society collected. The details of this were to be developed in 1998.

## Online Tips for Genealogy

Have any of you been online with Ancestry looking for for new clues on your ancestor? Did one of the things that came up was SSN information possibility? Be very careful when you see this. Ancestry is not saying, "We found your ancestor's SSN information." Some people believed that there was SSN information so all you had to do was click "Request copy of original application." This would take you to [Social Security Online](#) where you would put information on your ancestor and get information in the USPS Mail.

This is not always true, you may be wasting \$22.00. Before you click on request a copy, go to a Social Security Index online. Social Security does not provide this information. There are companies that provide it but Ancestry will probably be the safest place for you to search a social security index. To search a social security index click here: [Social Security Index on Ancestry](#).

**U.S., Social Security Death Index, 1935-2014**

Search  Match all terms exactly

May Fildes

Exact...  Exact...

Birth: 30 Jan 1911  Exact +/-...

Death: 3 Feb 1992  Exact +/-...

West Salem, Edwards, Illinois, USA

Exact to...

Now, put the information you know about your ancestor and search. Below are the type of results you will get. If you are

### All U.S., Social Security Death Index, 1935-2014 results for May Fildes

Filters: May, Fildes, Born: 1911, Death: 1992, -In: west sal...

Results 1-20 of 1,522

View Record	Name	Birth Date	Death Date	Last Residence (City,County,State)
<a href="#">View Record</a>	Ethel M. Fildes	30 Jan 1911	3 Feb 1992	62476 West Salem, Edwards, Illinois, USA
<a href="#">View Record</a>	Audrey M. Fildes	24 May 1926	11 Mar 1992	61761 Normal, Mclean, Illinois, USA
<a href="#">View Record</a>	Mae H. Wolz	28 Dec 1906	Feb 1992	60501 Summit Argo, Cook, Illinois, USA

lucky, one of the persons listed is your ancestor. Go ahead and click view the record on the left.

You will see the results on the bottom right picture. The SSN has been blocked out. I would not save this information to your online tree. Anything with a SSN, someone might use for the wrong reasons. But this tells us there is information at Social Security for Ethel M. Fildes. You can go ahead and request copy of original document. The information you get back from Social Security may or may not be useful to you.

✓ Saved to: [Ulm, Ethel May](#) in tree "My Fildes Ancestors" [Remove](#)

No Image  
Text-only collection

[Request copy of original application](#)

[Add alternate information](#)

[Report issue](#)

Name: Ethel M. Fildes  
SSN: [REDACTED]  
Last Residence: 62476 West Salem, Edwards, Illinois, USA  
Born: 30 Jan 1911  
Died: 3 Feb 1992  
State (Year) SSN issued: Illinois (Before 1951)

[Save](#) [Cancel](#)

When you get a letter from Social Security, you will get a computer-prepared statement with an enclosed explanation of the information on the printout. Here is an example of results you can receive:

ACCOUNT SSN: XXX-XX-XXXX ETC: Entry Code, type of record RFN: Reference Number-Internal File Number

NAME NAA: Name on Security Card  
BIRTH DOB: PLB: (place) Sex: F, M, Unknown ETB: Race Code)  
PARENT MNA: Mother's Name at Birth FNA: Father's Name at Birth  
INTERNAL FMC: ? CYD:  
ACCOUNT SSN: ETC:  
NAME NAA: Name on Security Card  
BIRTH DOB: SEX: F, M, Unknown  
INTERNAL DOD: Date of death EDR: ? CYD: Date record established on SSA's Internal File

Bottom Line: Don't request a SSN application until you verify on a Social Security Index that in fact your ancestor had a SSN! SSN started January 1937.

## Remembering Melinda Jones Lukei (continued from page 1)



Reese and Melinda did a lot of hiking and mountain climbing, they were members of the Tidewater Appalachian Trail Club. Melinda and Reese together were Life Member # 1 since they joined as a family. They hiked in all U.S. States, every Province and Territory of Canada and in 60 other countries. They visited both the North Pole and Antarctica. Melinda was also a founding Life Member of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy. Melinda was employed for many years as bookkeeper for Kline Chevrolet. She had many other interests including scouting, she helped found Cub Scout Pack 481, and she knitted hundreds sweater sets for Newborns In Need South Hampton Roads.

Melinda was very involved in working with the Virginia Beach Courthouse in helping to preserve marriage, deed books and other documents. She convinced the staff that they needed to document and preserve all these old books, which up to that time, were handled by anyone who came into the Courthouse. She spent endless hours at the courthouse, transcribing these records. The Virginia Beach Central Library has the books she transcribed including *Princess Ann County, Virginia Death Records: 1853-1896, Marriage Records and Bible Records*.

Melinda was the author of over 137 books on histories and genealogy of families in Virginia Beach including *Cemeteries of Knotts Island, North Carolina; Old Families of Princess Anne County, Virginia and The Land Families; The Land Family Data*. (Note: You can look online at the Virginia Beach Central Libraries' website and look at the titles she has written. You may have to ask for a book, due to construction at the library, not all of the books are on shelves, some are in storage until the work is done.)

Melinda became known as one of the leading regional genealogists having spent her life pursuing the history of the families that settled Princess Anne County, VA and Knotts Island NC where her ancestors first arrived in the 1630's. She was an active member of the Norfolk County Historical Society.

As a charter member of VBGS, she was active in the Society for many years. She held many positions in the Society: President in 1993, 1994, 2005 and 2006; Vice President in 1984; Treasurer; and Member-at-Large in 1992 and 1999. She taught many classes such as "Basic Genealogical Research at the Thoroughgood House" and "Research Techniques Class Concentrating on Deeds, Wills, and Probate." For the November 1999 newsletter, Melinda wrote "Some Interesting Stories from the Records about the Land Family of Princess Anne County." A lecture Melinda gave in 1999 was printed as an abridged article in the February 2000 Newsletter, "Pitfalls in Genealogy." A Member Close-up article was written about Melinda November 2000 as a way to honor Melinda for her service in the society.

At the Annual Dinner and Awards in June 2001, Melinda was the first recipient of the Hall of Fame Award. This award was designed to honor those individuals who have significant contributions to the success to VBGS over a period of years. **We will always remember Melinda and all the wonderful things she did for our society!**



# New Ways to Explore Your Ancestry

VBGS very much enjoyed working with Marian Manor to present a three part series on genealogy. Thanks to Linda Brown, Barbara Murray and Wendy Bransom for organizing all the classes at Marian Manor. They also performed the first class on August 6, for "Basic Ancestry," it was a great success. On August 13, Craig Fenton and his wife Diane presented a very informative class on "What DNA Can Tell You." Many questions were asked at the end of the class. For the last class on August 20, Wendy Bransom explained what to do when "Researching Family History without the Internet." This class was also well received, at the end of the class many of the students shared their own stories on how they found wonderful information by actually visiting places and countries. If you missed any of these classes, you can find Craig's handout on the VBGS website. Barbara and Linda also had a handout and they shared a lot of genealogy forms for their class. Some of the students suggested to VBGS that Wendy give her class for one of the society's meetings, schedule your calendar, it will be June 12, 2020.



# VGS Fall 2019 Conference

## Finding Your Hidden Ancestors Using Research Essentials

By Wendy Bransom

VBGS had several of our members at the VGS Fall 2019 Conference on October 19, 2019. This article provides a summary of the presentations. The conference was held at the Saint Bede Catholic Church in Williamsburg, a beautiful place. There were two tracks. Thomas W. Jones, PhD, CG, CGL, FASG, FUGA, FNGS was the speaker for Track 1: Finding Hidden and Disappearing Ancestors. Rebecca Whitman Koford, CG, CGL was the speaker for Track 2: Research Logs, Research Plans, and Timelines: Write or Regret It!



Diane Fenton attended track 1, here are her thoughts for that part of the conference. I attended Thomas Jones for sessions 2, 3, 4 but I rarely take notes. The topic, "Five Ways to Prove Who Your Ancestor Was" was about 4 incomplete ways and one right way, adherence to the Genealogical Proof Standard. The topic "Organizing Evidence to Overcome Record Shortages" was about the Genealogical Proof Standard, as well, but how to conduct an exhaustive search, including lesser known records, using the FAN club and surname searches, using timelines to help distinguish persons of the same name in a locality. He was not covering any of these exhaustively, but showing through a case study how all of these techniques are used together to further one's research and meet the GPS. The third topic was "Solving the Mystery of the Disappearing Ancestor." It really was a continuation of his earlier talks. He used his own research issues in all three of the talks and showed how he solved them. Thomas Jones is the author of two books with which some of our membership may be familiar, *Mastering Genealogical Proof* and *Mastering Genealogical Documentation*. He is a nationally known speaker. I have heard him speak at other genealogical conferences I have attended and find him an enjoyable and informative speaker. His is more of the process of researching, and documenting that research, and preserving it for future researchers, than about particular resources and how to use them.



The rest of this article will cover track 2, Rebecca gave a wealth of information to those who attended her track. The first class was on Research Logs, Plans, and Timelines. You may think your research is organized but you might not after attending this class. For example, a research log is one of the important tools for genealogy. For every project you should have a research log. You need to log all results of your research and how and where you found them. Every research attempt needs to be logged as you are researching. If you don't, later on you may not remember what you did, then maybe two weeks later, you are repeating this specific search. You must learn to stop when you find a new clue. Stop and read the information and make a note of that information in your research log.

**SEARCH - STOP - SUMMARIZE - REPEAT**

Timelines are also very important in research. They help you make connections between people and events. This will allow you see when you are missing a year or have conflicts. You also want to include local and national events. To start, use the information you already have. Make your timeline easy to read, include the date, place, event and source citation for facts.

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## 2 Sample Research Logs

Research Log & Plan for \_\_\_\_\_

Goal: \_\_\_\_\_

Background: \_\_\_\_\_

Research Plan & Idea

1. First most effective idea  
-search result info & citation
2. Second most effective idea

Research Log & Plan for \_\_\_\_\_

Goal: \_\_\_\_\_

Background info - info with citations

Research Log & Plan

1. Census Records
2. Obituaries in
3. Church Records
4. Children Records

Research Plans must be effective to ensure you find the answers to your questions.

1. The first thing to do is write your goal, be very specific such as "Find birth record of John Brown."
2. Describe the background with citations you have found. Make a timeline.
3. What records will give you a direct answer?
4. What records will give you an indirect answer?
5. Research the area, what records have been lost, which ones are available?
6. What repositories that are online and/or offline are best for research?
7. Write the plan with 5 to 10 ideas.
8. Revise the plan based on what you find in your research.

*For a table to help you decide which records to search, [click here](#). It is from FamilySearch wiki. It is most helpful for post-1800 research in the United States..*

The second class for track two was "Land Records: Rich Resources For Your Research." Rebecca continued to impress everyone with her knowledge. Did you know your ancestor did not have to own land to be recorded in deeds and land records?

State-Land States were colonial land that the U.S. granted in Connecticut, Delaware, Georgia, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina and Virginia. Proprietors bought from the crown then sold portions to settlers. Maine, Vermont, Kansas, Tennessee and West Virginia were formed from the original 13 colonies and were created as State-Land States. Hawaii and Texas plus these 18 states are "State-Land" or non-public land states. State-Land States used the older [metes and bounds survey system](#).

Federal-Land States were lands that were first controlled and dispersed by the US government. In 1786, a [Rectangular Survey System](#) for public lands began which divided most of the land in the public domain into townships and sections. The US government owned the land in public-land states before they entered the Union; the National Archives and Records Administration has records of federal government land sales.

Military Bounty-Lands served as both an incentive and reward for military service. It was issued to eligible veterans or their heirs by the Continental Congress and federal government through congressional acts passed between 1776 and 1856. Most early federal bounty land was in military districts like Ohio and other parts of the former Northwest Territory. Later, land was set aside in the territories of Michigan, Illinois, and Louisiana. Post-1847, land anywhere in the public domain qualified. Bounty-lands were not offered after the Act of 1855 when the program was discontinued, and five years later, in 1863, the rights to locate and take possession of bounty lands ceased.

Rebecca recommended use of *Black's Law Dictionary* to understand deed terminology. A digital version of the 5th edition is available at this [link](#). When accessing deeds, get originals, FamilySearch has the largest database but it is not indexed. It is best to check with county courthouses and town clerks. The state archives will have some deed records and most are indexed. Maryland is the only state that has all their deed records online, <https://mdlandrec.net/main/>. You must register, but it is free.

The genealogical value of land and deed records is very high. Due to no indexes at times, research can be tedious but some search results can be valuable. Some records will reveal residences, first name of wives, occupations, neighbors and death/marriage dates. Deeds of gift or consideration can indicate a relationship. Lands very frequently are sold during probate. When this happens, you might find names of heirs and their relationship to the deceased. This information may not be in the probate documents, it only may only be in the deed record.

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The Federal-Land Homestead was a series of enactments beginning with the Act of May 20, 1862. This was created to distribute public lands to those that were without property. Federal-land Homestead documents contain purchaser name, property location and purchase date. They can also include applications, patents and receipt books. A land settler had to file application papers, pay filing fees (\$18.00), improve the land in 5 years (a dwelling and the start of a farm) and lastly file for the deed of title. Applications and related papers are available at the National Archives if there is a legal description of the land for which the homesteader applied. [Click here for more.](#)

Deed records also included other sales such as the sales of livestock, tools, slaves, bastardy cases, theft complaints and probate. Tax records should be compared with land records, they help build a neighborhood. Check out Family History Daily article "[Tax Records Could Offer Surprisingly Rich Details About Your Ancestors.](#)"

It is also helpful to make a plat of a land and compare it with historic maps. Maps can show geography that would have affected your ancestors such as rivers, mountains, ports and much more. The [DeedMapper](#) application can help with this but it only runs on Windows XP, Vista, and Windows 7 and 10 (32-bit and 64-bit). Take the time to check all deed and property for your ancestor and others related to them. It is a tedious job with wonderful results!

"State-Land State Deed Records" was the third class Rebecca Whitman Koford taught for track two. She had discussed a little about this earlier in the day but wanted to focus on them in more detail. She recommended everyone do a search on FamilySearch Wiki for state-land vs federal-land deed records.

For state's land records, the description uses local features, usually called 'metes and bounds,' which requires the 'measuring' and 'naming' of boundary features. The distances in patents and deeds were usually in poles, rods, or perches, 16 1/2 feet.

Rebecca went over in detail state-land map platting and deed terminology. She recommended the book by E. Wade Hone, *Land & Property Research in The United States*, which would be helpful to understand this terminology. She went over in detail Circular Measurements, you have to think about a clock when measuring direction. One minute = 60 seconds, one degree = 60 minutes, one quadrant = 90 degrees and one circle = 360 degrees or quadrants.

Next you need to know how linear measurement is done. Rebecca actually brought her Gunter's chain with her that she had bought. It is a distance measuring device used for surveying which was designed by an English clergyman and mathematician Edmund Gunter in 1620. It enabled plots of land to be correctly surveyed and plotted for legal and commercial reasons. The actual chain measures 100 links. The class had fun helping Rebecca unfold it and take it around the classroom. The chain was 66 feet, divided into 100 links, marked off into groups of 10 by rings or tags.

Lastly, you make the conversion to decimal. Another good source to help you understand this process is an article which originally appeared in "[Land Records](#)" by Sandra Hargreaves Luebking, FUGA in "[The Source: A Guidebook to American Genealogy](#)" both links are at [wiki.rootsweb.com](http://wiki.rootsweb.com).

- 1 mile = 80 chains = 320 poles, rods, or perches = 5,280 feet
- 1 chain = 4 poles, rods, or perches = 66 feet = 100 links
- 1 pole, rod, or perch = 25 links = 16 1/2 feet
- 1 link = 7.92 inches



Investigate the area you are researching, check local guides, look for changes in the land and law and record loss. Local historical societies could be a big help.

Rebecca covered briefly how to do platting. E. Wade Hone's book mentioned above is the best source to help you

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The last class that Rebecca covered was "Military Bounty-Land Records: Revolution to the Mexican War." Military bounty-land can lead to service and pension records. Public-lands in America began in 1785 and were given out by the government. There were three main reasons they were created. The government needed to raise funds due to the Revolutionary War. It was hard to pay the soldiers so the government wanted to grant them lands instead and they wanted to start westward migration. Congress intended to get their military warriors out west but this failed. Most veterans were too old or too well established in their own town. A few did migrate but most patents were established by young immigrants wanting a new life. After 1855, bounty-lands ceased being offered to the military. Bounty-land patents were given out for the Revolutionary War, Frontier Conflicts, War of 1812, Indian Wars and the Mexican War.

The Revolutionary War bounty-lands have a very complex history and laws. The Continental Congress in 1776 created laws that many of the original states did not honor. An article at genealogy.com "["Revolutionary War Bounty Land Grants Reasons for Issuing Bounty Land Grants"](#) by Lloyd DeWitt Bockstruck explains this process. You can buy his book, *Revolutionary War Bounty Land Grants / Awarded By State Governments* available at Amazon and <https://www.alibris.com/>.

More about about this is available in Christine Rose's book, *Military bounty Land, 1776-1855* in chapter 2 and 3. Chapter 6 of E. Wade Hone's book mentioned earlier also has information about this.

From 1780 to 1800, New York, Virginia, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Georgia, North Carolina and South Carolina gave back their portions of land in the Northwest Territories to the federal government. States created by the Northwest Territories are Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Michigan and Wisconsin.

The War of 1812 brought the need for more enlistments due to the British embargo. Congress responded by making new military land districts for new enlistees which were in Michigan, Illinois and Louisiana. There were 6 million acres for this and enlistees had to select ahead of time which district they preferred. A lottery was held to see who would get what parcels of land, which could not be assigned until a patent was issued. There was a lot of fraud involved.

In 1847, the threat of war with Mexico caused Congress to consider bounty-lands again for much needed new enlistments. The government was much better in making sure land assignments went to soldiers, fraud was reduced. With changes in the land system, purchasable tracts were reduced to forty acres. This was a major change, Revolutionary War warrants had been four-thousand-acres.

Veterans of the War of 1812 were not happy with the land given to Mexican War veterans. Congress created the Act of 1850 which offered bounty-land to soldiers of past service, from 1790 to present, not to new enlistees. This was also available to widows of veterans and their children. Warrants could not be assigned but a new Act of 1852 removed all assignable clauses and extended bounty-land to militiamen who were in service after 1812. The Act of 1850 gave 160 acres for nine months of minimum service, 80 acres for four months of minimum service and 40 acres for one month of minimum service. By 1855, time of service was reduced to 14 days. Persons who marched or traveled 1,200 miles but had not served 14 days were also eligible. Anyone who had received warrants less than 160 acres could receive additional warrants to make up the difference.

For bounty land applications, here is a summary of indexes and non indexed files. Some of these could be filed with pension records. However most are only in text form at the National Archives, RG15 records. The Revolutionary War and Mexican War, bounty-land warrants are held with pension indexes for those conflicts.

- [Revolutionary War Pension index](#) is at Ancestry
- [U.S. Revolutionary War Pensioners 1801-1815, 1818-1872](#) is at Ancestry
- [United States Mexican War Pension Index 1887-1926](#) is at FamilySearch

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Partially indexed at Fold3 are the War of 1812, Indian Wars and some Mexican War files; they are up to the letter L. These records are the "Unindexed Bounty-Land Application Files;" they are not digital and only are available at the National Archives (NARA). If you have an ancestor with no pension and no bounty-land application, you still want to search for a record at NARA. To order online, go to [Archives.gov](https://www.archives.gov) and use [NATF-85](#) to order copies. You must provide the name of your ancestor with any additional spellings along with any names if awarded to a widow or heirs. You need the service unit: company, regiment and unit type along with the state and the name of the conflict. If you actually take a trip to NARA, you will need form 14027 in the Microfilm Search Room. On the form, for the box bounty-land, provide the name of your ancestor, service unit, state and conflict as stated above. You also need the bounty-land warrant number, such as 4011-6314. This number goes in row F under "Other Numbers." If you don't have a warrant number, you can still ask for a search, write "Unindexed Bounty-land application" in row F.

Here are some additional Information

- Some pension and bounty-land applications were merged, but not all. Make sure you look for both pension and bounty-land applications
- There is the [War of 1812 Pension Digitization Project](#) between FGS and iArchives, they are digitizing 180,000 pension applications and around 7.2 million pages of War of 1812 Pension and Bounty Land Warrant Application Files. These military records will be available at iArchives and Fold3; they are 76% complete so far. They are available now to search and are free. [https://www.fold3.com/title/761/war\\_of\\_1812\\_pension\\_files/description](https://www.fold3.com/title/761/war_of_1812_pension_files/description)
- Don't forget the Bureau of Land Management <https://gloreCORDS.blm.gov/search/default.aspx> they have records on Public Land-States and much more.



Christmas is just around the corner, which means you should start writing your letters to Santa soon! Where should you send them? Well, some people send their letters to the North Pole. And others send them to Himmelpfort. The tiny German village of Himmelpfort is located 60 miles north of Berlin. Although it has a population of only 500, it has one of the busiest post offices in Germany (relative to its population, at least). For the last 35 years, the town has been receiving letters to Father Christmas.

By this time last year, the Himmelpfort post office had already received more than 12,000 letters to Santa. Hundreds of thousands of letters come in every holiday season – so that was just the beginning. Father Christmas and his 20 volunteers in Himmelpfort promise to personally answer every letter that arrives before December 16. But why are these letters arriving in Himmelpfort in the first place?

It all began in 1984, when a few children mistakenly sent their Christmas wish lists to Himmelpfort. The translation of the village's name is "Heaven's Gate," and the kids assumed that this is where Father Christmas lives. When the local postwoman saw the letters, she decided to send back a reply "from Santa." Once the children received a response, more children excitedly started to send letters to Himmelpfort, starting a trend that continues to this day. Today, the Deutsche Post (the German Post Office) sets up an official Christmas Post Office in Himmelpfort for two months each year, bringing in volunteers to answer letters from children in 16 different languages. If you or your children would like a response from Santa, don't send a letter to the North Pole - send it to Himmelpfort instead!

Nicole Glass

Editor, The Week in Germany

Note: Letters are to be addressed to: An den Weihnachtsmann, Weihnachtspostfiliale, 16798, Himmelpfort, Germany. A return address is also necessary.

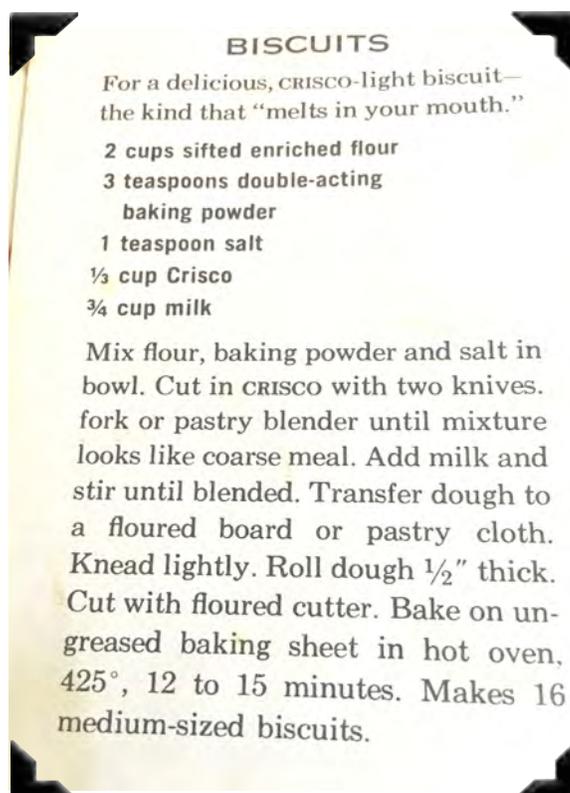
This article is from German Genealogy Group Newsletter 2019-11

## Family Recipes

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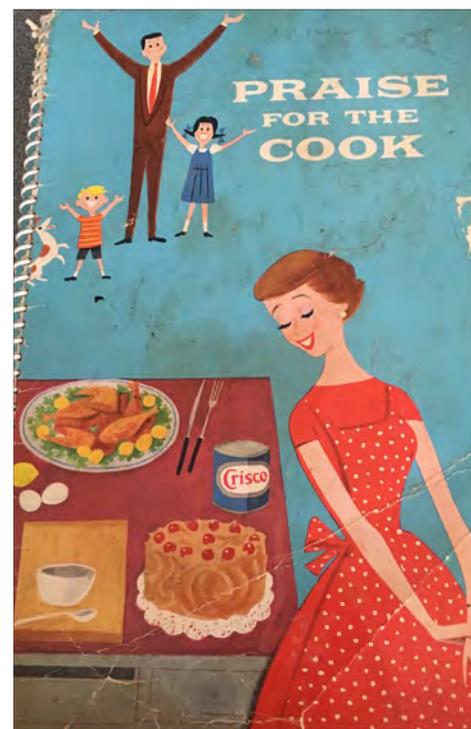
Finding out more about ancestors and their lives can be done through old recipes passed down through generations. Antique cookbooks owned by your ancestors can help you connect to what was popular and available to them during that time period. I grew up in Richmond County, North Carolina. My parents, Benjamin Thomas McNeill, and Annie Marie Hudson McNeill, grew a garden with many different fresh vegetables each year. My Mother cooked from scratch using recipes given to her by my Grandmother.



I can see my Mother in kitchen now rolling dough and making her delicious biscuits. My Mother started preparing biscuits when she was little girl standing on a stool. She was the oldest girl of four sisters and three brothers. Preparing biscuit dough for cooking was an art, which was passed down from generation to generation. When Mother was very young, she used lard as one of the ingredients. When she was older she replaced hard Crisco vegetable shortening as one of the ingredients instead of lard. Without any effort, she would roll dough into ball and then place it onto a well used baking sheet pan. The smell of Mother's biscuits would bring my brother and I to kitchen immediately. We loved to taste warm biscuits right out of the oven. When Mother was much older, she used dough rolled into a square, dipped a round glass in flour and cut each biscuit from the dough.

Finding recipes passed down to you by your ancestors gives you many memories, with many stories to share.

The attached picture was the last time Annie Marie made biscuits, she passed away shortly thereafter, her cooking will truly be missed by her family!



A Family History Reunion  
 Bobbie Brenton  
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Our family reunions had always been held at the old Wade Farm house in Halifax County, VA or at a cousin's vacation home in Lake Gaston. We would bring pictures and take pictures and laugh and catch up on family.

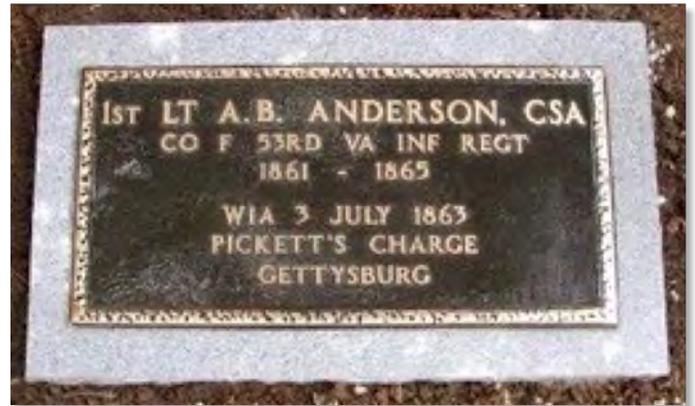


By using the computer, I was able to host a very special reunion full of family and American history. By chance, I met long lost cousin #1 over the Internet (I have yet to meet him in person) and through him another cousin #2 who wanted a copy of a picture that I have of my great grandfather, 1st LT Andrew Broaddus (AB) Anderson, Co F 53rd VA Infantry Regiment.

Cousin #2 came to my house in Virginia Beach and we spent the afternoon having lunch and getting to know one another. He took the picture to a restorer in Pennsylvania, where he lives, who did an invisible job of repairing damage that had occurred over the years. During our conversation, I learned that he was a retired Naval Officer, teaching at the Army War College in Carlisle PA, and had done extensive research of our great-grandfather's 4 years of service in the Civil War. He also applied for, and placed, a Civil War Service Plaque at the foot of AB's grave in the Anderson family graveyard in Halifax, VA.

We continued our connection and he returned the original restored picture to me and offered to share AB Anderson's civil war service with our family. AB had fought in all four years of the Civil War in the Army of Virginia and was injured in Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg.

I chose a weekend in May when cousin # 2 could meet with us and I planned a Friday arrival with an all-day Saturday at Gettysburg. I found a hotel over the Internet that could accommodate 32 family members and also had a small conference room where my cousin could give us a talk about how Lee's Army ended up in Gettysburg and AB Anderson's participation in Pickett's Charge under General Armistead. Following the two-hour presentation, we walked the Battlefield and traced the steps of Pickett's Charge. Because of his military background and deep study of the Civil War, my cousin was able to identify where AB was wounded, at the Stone Wall at the top of the hill.



Family came from California, Wisconsin, Massachusetts plus all of us from Virginia; our ages ranged from 14 to 80. By using Fold3 I had assembled a 3-ring binder with AB Anderson's war history that including almost every month of the war. It showed where he was, each of his rank changes, and pages including his signature when he ordered clothing, tents, etc. for his men. I also brought many Anderson family pictures our family had collected.

My brother from California hired a professional videographer who compiled a documentary of our day. She recorded the presentation by our cousin, followed us over the Battlefield, and interviewed family members. Never did I dream that a weekend like this would be possible. We have relived it many times and we are looking for another chance to see our family and history together.

