



# The Geneline

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF  
**Amelia Island Genealogical Society**  
FEBRUARY 2009 - ISSUE 2



*Clara White, born 1845 on Amelia Island, with her daughter Emma*

**Coming Up!**  
**AIGS General Meeting - Tuesday**  
**February 17 - 7:00 pm**

**From Slavery to Freedom:**  
**The Local African American Experience**  
**in Post Civil War Era**

**Presenter: Professor Carolyn Williams**

This presentation will focus on Clara White and several others who were slaves on Nassau County plantations and who began their odyssey to freedom during the years of the Civil War and the decades following it to 1900. Professor Williams will rely on U.S. census records, city directories and other documents, as well as historical narratives to tell her story.

## **About Presenter Carolyn Williams**

Carolyn Williams, a native of Jacksonville, is an Associate Professor in the Department of History, University of North Florida. Director of the Gender Studies Program, and Co-Director of the Bette J. Soldwedel Gender Research Center at the University of North Florida (UNF). She has received the following degrees: BA in Psychology from Immaculate College (Los Angeles), B.A. in History from UNF, M.A. in History from University of California at San Diego and, a Ph.D. in History from UCLA. At UNF Dr. Williams teaches classes in American History, Multicultural Studies, Gender Studies and Public History.

Her primary research is on women and reform in antebellum America. She concentrates on the relationship between religion and reform, and the connection between the struggle for racial equality and gender equity. Her most recent essay, "Women and Liberal Religion: Feminist-Abolitionists in Antebellum Philadelphia and Boston," is in the anthology, *The Meaning of Slavery in the North*, published by Garland Press.

She serves as the historian for the Durkeeville Historical Society, corresponding secretary of the James Weldon Johnson chapter of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH), historian for the Norman Studios Museum Board, a member of the Florida Historic Marker Commission, on the Executive Board of the St. Augustine Historical Society, a member of the Florida Task Force for African American History Curriculum, and a member of the advisory board of the Amelia Island Museum of History.

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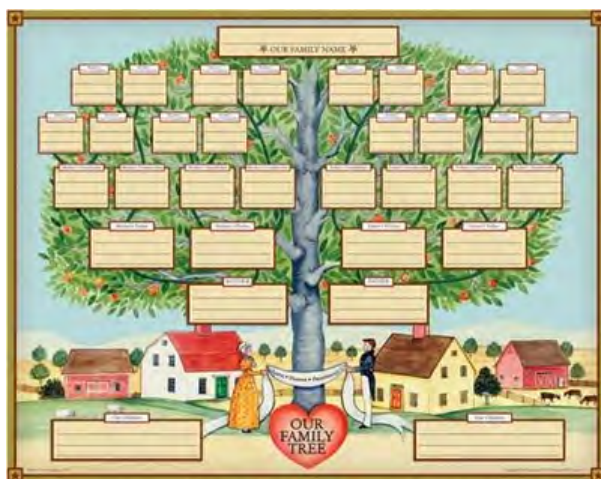
Marie Santry

**Geneline Editor**

Frances Bartelt

## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Marie Santry



The year has started well for our Society. The Beginning Genealogy Course that we offer each year in January brought us nineteen new members. Following the 1st session on January 10th, seventeen of these enthusiastic people took advantage of a one-on-one mentoring session at the Fernandina Library over the course of that week, where

each was able to use the census databases on ancestry.com to trace branches of their families back several generations.

I want to thank Mike Toomey and Lori Miranda for joining me in mentoring these new members. I think we were just as excited as they were when they were able to find their families in the censuses and in other databases at ancestry.

If you missed our monthly program in January, you missed a good one. Our speaker, Julia Nowlin, shared with us her mother's adventures as one of the first women in history to fly American military aircraft as a Women's Airforce Service Pilot (WASP) during World War II. Julia did not discover her mother's involvement in such a historic organization until late in her mother's life. And she found treasure troves of photographs, documentation, and artifacts of her mother's service that Julia continues to preserve and share with others.

There is a lesson for all of us to note here. If there is a dusty old box sitting in the back of your closet, left to you by a family member, now is the time to go through it. If you are lucky enough to have your parents or grandparents still with you, ask them if you can help them go through "memories" packed away in suitcases in the attic, jewelry boxes at the bottom of dresser drawers, postcards and scrapbooks; and listen carefully when they pause to tell you about the time when ....

You are the keeper of your family history. And while you continue to pursue your genealogical search for ancestors, don't forget to record your own history, for your children and your children's children. Your descendants, decades and centuries in the future, will be just as interested in you as you are in your ancestors today.

# The Orphan Trains

The following article was written by Dick Eastman  
It appeared in his on-line newsletter at [www.eogn.com](http://www.eogn.com).

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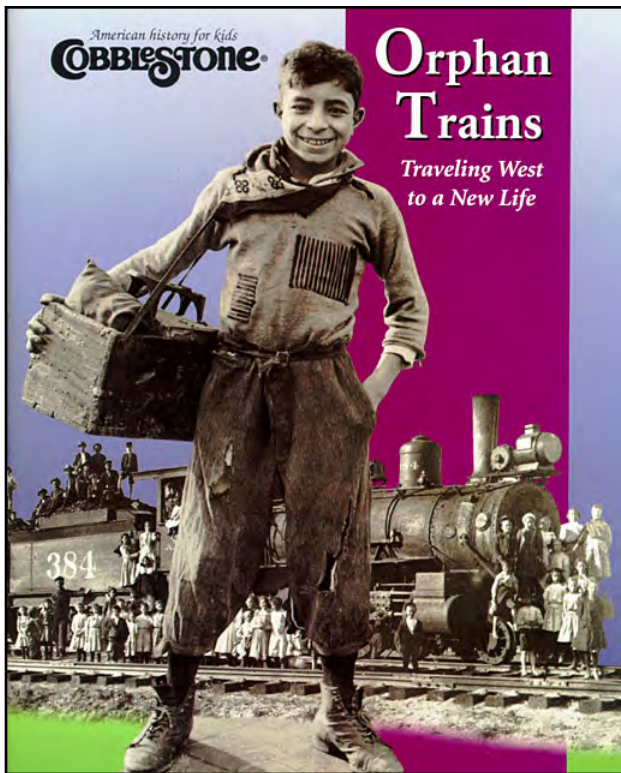


**F**rom the 1850s through the 1920s, New York City was teeming with tens of thousands of homeless and orphaned children. To survive, these so-called "street urchins" resorted to begging, stealing, or forming gangs to commit violence. Some children worked in factories and slept in doorways or flophouses. The children roamed the streets and slums with little or no hope of a successful future. Their numbers were stunningly large; an estimated 30,000 children were homeless in New York City in the 1850s.

Charles Loring Brace, the founder of The Children's Aid Society, believed that there was a way to change the futures of these children. By removing youngsters from the poverty and debauchery of the city streets and placing them in morally upright farm families, he thought they would have a chance to escape a lifetime of suffering. Brace proposed that these children be sent by train to live and work on farms out west. They would be placed in homes for free, but they would serve as an extra pair of hands to help with chores around the farm. They wouldn't be indentured. In fact, older children placed by The Children's Aid Society were to be paid for their labors.

The Orphan Train Movement lasted from 1853 to the 1920s, placing more than 120,000 children. Most of these children survived into adulthood, married, and had children of their own. Several million Americans today can find former Orphan Train children in their family trees.

Orphan Trains stopped at more than 45 states across the country, as well as Canada and Mexico. During the early years, Indiana received the largest number of children. There were numerous agencies nationwide that placed children on trains to go to foster homes. In New York, besides Children's Aid, other agencies that placed children included Children's Village (then known as the New York Juvenile Asylum), what is now New York Foundling Hospital, and the former Orphan Asylum Society of the City of New York, which is now the Graham-Windham Home for Children. Not all the children were from New York City. Children from Albany and other cities in New York state were transported, as were some from Boston, Massachusetts, where the Boston Children's Services merged with the New England Home For Little Wanderers, which also is still active today.  
*(Continued on pg. 4)*



boy, even though he already had two daughters, ages 10 and 13. "He'd just bought a Model T. Mr. Deger looked those boys over. We were the last boys holding hands in a blizzard, December 10, 1926," Cornell remembers. He says that day he and his brother stood in a hotel lobby.

"He asked us if we wanted to move out to farm with chickens, pigs, and a room all to your own. He only wanted to take one of us, decided to take both of us. Life on the farm was hard work. "I did have to work and I expected it, because they fed me, clothed me, loved me. We had a good home. I'm very grateful. Always have been, always will be." Cornell eventually got married. He and his wife, Earleen, now live in Pueblo, Colorado. His brother, Victor Cornell, a retired movie theater chain owner, is also alive and living in Moscow, Idaho. Stanley Cornell believes he and his brother are two of only 15 surviving Orphan Train children.

Only a few of the Orphan Train children are alive today, and most were too young at the time to remember their experiences. However, a few elderly Americans can recall their experiences on the Orphan Trains.

Stanley Cornell and his brother are amongst the last generation of Orphan Train riders. When asked about his experience, Mr. Cornell replied, "We'd pull into a train station, stand outside the coaches dressed in our best clothes. People would inspect us like cattle farmers. And if they didn't choose you, you'd get back on the train and do it all over again at the next stop."

Cornell and his brother were "placed out" twice with their aunts in Pennsylvania and Coffeyville, Kansas. Unfortunately, these placements didn't last, and they were returned to the Children's Aid Society. "Then they made up another train. Sent us out West. A hundred-fifty kids on a train to Wellington, Texas," Cornell recalls. "That's where Dad happened to be in town that day." Each time an Orphan Train was sent out, adoption ads appeared in local papers before the arrival of the children.

J.L. Deger, a 45-year-old farmer, knew he wanted a

Some of the children struggled in their newfound surroundings, while many others went on to lead simple, very normal lives, raising their families and working towards the American dream. Although records weren't always well kept, some of the children placed in the West went on to great successes. There were two governors, one congressman, one sheriff, two district attorneys, and three county commissioners, as well as numerous bankers, lawyers, physicians, journalists, ministers, teachers, and businessmen.

The Orphan Train Movement and the success of other children's aid initiatives led to a host of child welfare reforms, including child labor laws, adoption and foster care services, public education, and the provision of health care and nutrition and vocational training.

The Orphan Train Heritage Society of America in Concordia, Kansas, serves as a clearinghouse of information about the estimated 150,000 children who were "placed out" from 1854 to 1929. It helps members establish and maintain family contacts, retrace their roots, and preserve the history of the Orphan Train Movement. The Society did maintain a web site although that appears to be offline at the moment.



# 2009 Spring Genealogical Seminar

Jacksonville Genealogical Society, Inc.  
PO Box 60756  
Jacksonville, FL 32236  
<http://jaxgen.home.comcast.net>  
Email: [jaxgen@comcast.net](mailto:jaxgen@comcast.net)  
Phone: 904-781-9380

Date: 28 February 2009

Time: 9:00 a.m.—4:00 p.m.

Registration begins at 8:30 a.m.

### Place:

Crown Point Baptist Church  
10153 Old St. Augustine Rd.  
Jacksonville, FL 32257  
-free parking  
-handicap accessible

Directions: Take I-295 to Old St. Augustine Road, Exit 3. Turn North and go 3 miles (go past Hartley/Hood Rd). Watch for church sign on right-hand side. Turn into driveway and go to the back of the church. The church is next to Tillman's Meat Market.

### Cost:

JGS Member \$30.00  
Non-member: \$35.00  
Price includes lunch if registration is postmarked by 18 Feb 2009  
After 18 Feb 2009, no refunds; however, a syllabus will be given.

## Amy Larner Giroux, CG<sup>SM</sup>, CGL<sup>SM</sup>

Genealogy lecturer, author, and researcher

Amy Larner Giroux, CG, CGL, is a professional genealogical researcher, lecturer and writer, specializing in New York City and the Lower Hudson Valley. She is an award-winning author with articles published in the *National Genealogical Society Quarterly*, the *New York Genealogical and Biographical Society Record*, the *Association of Professional Genealogists Quarterly*, and *The Genealogist* (ASG). Amy is a past Trustee for BCG, faculty member of the Institute of Genealogy and Historical Research, and treasurer of the Florida Chapter of APG. She is webmaster for BCG, APG, the Ohio Genealogical Society, and the International Society for British Genealogy and Family History.



### Topics:

- **Cemetery Research – A City of Stones** – Walking a cemetery's stones to find your ancestor's grave can be a rewarding experience. Learn how to locate your ancestor's burial site.
- **Pre-1850 Census Research – Determining Parentage** – How do you determine parentage from early records when no direct evidence exists? A case study using the Genealogical Proof Standard will show you how to analyze the evidence found in pre-1850 census records to help determine parental relationships.
- **Listen to the Land – Understanding Your Ancestor's Property Records** – You may not find a lot of names, birth dates, or vital record information in property deeds. However, you can determine relationships and other helpful items from property records.
- **Internet Research Techniques and Resources** – The Internet has become a virtual library for most researchers. There are innumerable sites containing genealogical and historical data. Each site usually has a search engine. Learn how to get the results you want and to find out more information than just names and dates.

## Registration Form

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

*Registration must be postmarked by 18 Feb 2009 to have lunch included. Lunch cannot be guaranteed after that date.*

*Make check payable to JGS, Inc.*

*Mail registration form and check to:  
Jacksonville Genealogical Society, Inc.  
Attn: Seminar Registration  
P. O. Box 60756  
Jacksonville, FL 32236-0756*

**Visit our Website: <http://www.aigensoc.org/>**

Find Information about Amelia Island Genealogical Society

Access old and new GENELINES.

A special reminder to our members: GENELINE is your Society's publication.

Each member is encouraged to contribute material to it

All GENELINE articles are indexed by PERSI

Send GENELINE comments & submissions to Frances Bartelt - [Francesbartelt@gmail.com](mailto:Francesbartelt@gmail.com)

**The Amelia Island Genealogical Society**

**P.O. Box 6005**

**Fernandina Beach, FL 32035-6005**

**The Society's Library Collection is housed in the Fernandina Beach Library**

The membership packet includes AIGS information and all current year issues of Society's quarterly

The Nassau County Genealogist, and the GENELINE, AIGS's monthly newsletter.

Family history research training is offered through classes, workshops and ongoing programs

**Membership dues are \$20.00 per person and \$25.00 per two-person family.**

The membership year is January 1st through December 31st

To join, send application form, along with the appropriate fee to:

**The Amelia Island Genealogical Society**

**P.O. Box 6005**

**Fernandina Beach, FL 32035-6005**

To print an membership application or for more information check our web site:

<http://www.aigensoc.org/aigs/meetings.asp/>