



The Geneline

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF

Amelia Island Genealogical Society

August 2009 - ISSUE 8

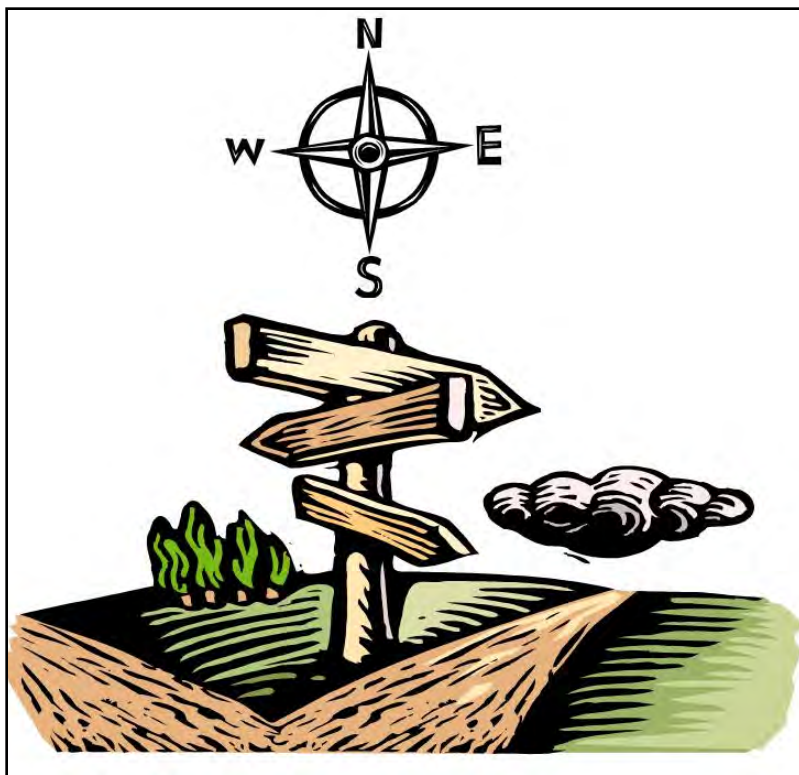
COMING UP!

AIGS General Meeting

Tuesday - September 15th at 7:00 pm

HELD: FERNANDINA BEACH POLICE DEPT. COMMUNITY ROOM

**Put 'Em in Their Place: Maps and Other Sources
for Exploring Your Ancestors' Environment.**



Our guest speaker will be

Lori Miranda

who will present a program titled
"Put 'Em in Their Place: Maps and
Other Sources for Exploring Your
Ancestors' Environment."

The central facts of genealogy - names, dates, locations - are undeniably linked; however, in haste to 'climb the family tree,' we may not look past these basics. By examining features and patterns of the historic and contemporary landscape through a variety of resources, researchers can strengthen their understanding of family relationships, uncover clues to brick walls, and further appreciate our ancestors' lives.

About Lori Miranda

Lori S. Miranda is a local architect and a first-generation Floridian. She received her maiden name Smith, from her father, who was adopted. In fortunate compensation she also inherited an overdose of tenacity from her maternal line. Lori has been a member of AIGS for several years and currently serves as AIGS Board Secretary. She has been researching her own genealogy for over a decade and was fortunate to have three generations' worth of notes - uncle, grandmother, great-grandmother - from which to start. She acknowledges that she has a benefit that her ancestors did not: the Internet, as it allowed a satisfyingly quick start to her work. She hasn't looked back since. As well as pursuing her own lines, Lori enjoys mentoring others. This month's presentation is a combination of some of Lori's favorite interests - genealogy and the built environment.

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Well, I survived my five-day research trip to Ohio and Indiana and it was a very successful search. My preparation was well worth the time spent BEFORE the trip. Of course, there were a few surprises that caused me to deviate only slightly from the plan; but with all the prior research that I had done, I was able to make quick adjustments and still get all the information I needed to prove a lineage that stretches back to the Revolutionary War.

So, with this trip behind me, this month I'm going to use this space in the newsletter to convince you that you **MUST** take the opportunity to hear one of the most popular and dynamic speakers you'll ever run across in the genealogical world. **We are excited to work with the Amelia Plantation Chapel membership to bring John Colletta to Amelia Island. "An Evening with John Colletta" will be presented on Thursday night, October 1st, at the Chapel Fellowship Hall, 36 Bowman Road.** The program will start at 7:00 and conclude around 9:30 pm. John will talk to us about "Breaking Through Brick Walls: Use Your HEAD!", sharing techniques for overcoming our most difficult genealogical problems, and "How To Prepare for Successful Research In European Records." The most amazing thing about this program is that it is absolutely FREE. But, because of limited seating, we are requiring pre-registration. You will find the registration form and information elsewhere in this newsletter. Register NOW; don't let this opportunity pass you by. *(see pg. 4 for registration form)*

You may have seen John when he was featured on the PBS series that aired in 2000 or the sequel in 2001 or on NBC's "Today" show or CNN. He is based in Washington, DC and conducts workshops at the National Archives and teaches courses at the Smithsonian Institution and Georgetown University. Or you may be familiar with his published genealogical manuals: *They Came in Ships: A Guide to Finding Your Immigrant Ancestor's Arrival Record* and *Finding Italian Roots: The Complete Guide for Americans*. His articles on various genealogical topics are often published in the most popular genealogical magazines and journals, including *Ancestry*, *Family Tree*, *Family Chronicles*, and *National Genealogical Society Quarterly*. In addition to the evening program, there is another opportunity to hear

“Turning Biographical Facts into Real-Life Events: How to Build Historical Context.” In eight of the remaining workshop sessions, Mike Toomey, Lori Miranda, and I will teach some of the basic genealogical research skills including Census & City Directory Research, Constructing Your Ancestor’s Timeline using Social and Local History, Finding and Utilizing Military Records, Research in Newspapers and Digital Books, Courthouse Treasures in Land, Deed, Probate, & Tax Records, The Immigration Experience, and Fact vs Fiction: Finding Truth in Family Lore. The sessions also include the opportunity to share examples of your own memoirs or family history stories with fellow participants.

You may pre-register for either the John Colletta Lecture on October 1st, OR the entire 10 session workshop by calling the Chapel Office, 277-4414, by September 17th.

I want to thank the Amelia Plantation Chapel for making all of this possible and providing these programs FREE to the public. I also want to personally thank Mike Toomey who brought this opportunity to work with the Chapel to the AIGS Board and to thank Mike, Lori Miranda and Bob Keane for helping plan this program and to Mike and Lori for their time and effort in preparing and presenting programs as part of the workshop series.

Researching Your Ancestors in Their Backyard

BY GLORIA TOOMEY

Peter Casper, my seventh great-grandfather, has been an interest of mine for a number of years. I had information that he had emigrated from Germany in the mid 18th century and settled in the Culpeper, Virginia area. I had genealogical data that showed he married Mary Huckleberry and they had five children. That was about all I knew. When I decided to see if I had an ancestor who was involved in the American Revolution so that I could apply for membership in DAR, I immediately thought of the autobiography of his daughter-in-law. She reported that she had met him in his 80th year and that he told her he had fought in many battles in the American Revolution.

Eventually, I was able to prove his service in the Culpeper Militia, when he was drafted in 1783, and was listed in “The Culpeper Classes”. Two years ago I decided that I wanted to know more about him than this and that perhaps if I did some careful research, I might be able to write a short book about his life and his numerous descendants.

I had searched the usual websites: Ancestry.com, FamilySearch etc. and had come across the same information over and over. I had several reports from a professional genealogist from the 1980’s, and there was some interesting information there. I had spent several days in the Family History Library in Salt

Lake City during trips made there. I attended a seminar on German research at the NGS Conference in Orlando and got some good suggestions from that instructor. I made contact with a distant cousin from a message board. She shared information with me. I had viewed reel after reel of microfilm at the Family History Center and found some clues there. I had purchased three very expensive books from dealers that specialized in information on Germany, Virginia, and military records at FSGS conferences I had attended.

In short, I had pretty well combed the evidence in print available to me, but I still didn’t have what I needed to write my book. I decided it was time for a “road trip” to Culpeper, Virginia to see what I could find there. Mike and I drove there in July of 2008 and we planned on staying for four days. I had found information on-line on possible sources in Culpeper, including the addresses for the Culpeper County Courthouse, Culpeper Historical Society, Culpeper Museum, Germanna Foundation, and Culpeper Public Library so I had a place to start.

Wow, what an amazing four days! Information was found at such a pace I could hardly keep up with it. My flash drives filled up. My laptop battery started to die. My fingers went numb from typing so much. Thank goodness I had Mike to lift the huge books in the courthouse so we could cart them to

the copy machine. Fortunately, the Clerk of the Court allowed visitors to view the court records and make copies of them on their legal paper for \$.50 a page. We tried transcribing them onto the laptop directly from the books, but the process was too slow, and the Clerk refused to allow use of the digital camera to photograph the pages. I spent over \$70 on copies in three days, but that was the best \$70 ever spent to obtain the most data.

The people at the Courthouse were helpful, as were those who run the Museum and the Historical Society. I found an invaluable book at the Museum with pictures of historic homes in the area including the mansion house owned by Peter's grandson. The librarian at the public library brought us several books and historic maps that included information on his family, and I'm still in touch with them hoping some other researcher will visit them so they

can give them my contact information. The deeds at the courthouse plus the information I already had gave us the final directions we needed so that we were able to pinpoint the location of the Casper farm. We took numerous photos of the area and then made a google.earth map of it after we returned home.

Returning home, I spent a month transcribing the 75 most important property transactions from the 475 in the courthouse books; then began the arduous job of writing a history of the area over the years to include tidbits about the family and their participation in the life of this small rural town. I then researched the new LDS website new.familysearch where I found nine generations of descendants listed in family pedigree charts.

Transferring that information to my PAF program took four more months and finally I spent a month reviewing, editing, fixing

typos, and indexing the 600 pages I had accumulated. Finally, I had accomplished my goals: find out more about Peter Casper and his descendants; pinpoint the location of his family farm; obtain additional evidence of his Revolutionary War service; and organize the descendants into family groups with source information to prove the accuracy of the data.

My books (2 books of 300 pages) were printed at Staples and I have donated several copies to various libraries and sold and donated the rest. Sometimes you just have to go to the home place of your ancestors, you will find information that you can't find anyplace else. You may get lucky and find people who know things about your family that aren't in print. You will be able to get a sense of their life as you visit the places where they once lived. It's definitely worth doing.



An Evening with John Colletta

Thursday, October 1st, 7:00 pm

Amelia Plantation Chapel

Hurry! Register NOW! Seats are filling up fast.

Name(s) _____

* Phone # _____ * Email _____

- Confirmation will be provided by phone or email
- If neither provided, registration cannot be processed.
- Submit registration by email to: aigswebmaster@comcast.net OR
- Mail registration to: AIGS, P.O. Box 6005, Fernandina Beach, FL 32035

If, after receiving a confirmation number, you find that you are unable to attend, please call (904) 321-3460 to notify AIGS so that someone from the wait list may have the opportunity to attend.

Mormon Church's Web Site Changes

Michael A. Toomey

All of us I think use the genealogy resources provided by the Mormon Church, and particularly those on **the website:**
www.familysearch.org.

The Church has been experimenting with several new formats on this website to provide and on a new ancillary site www.pilot.familysearch.org now has 137 free access online searchable databases which cover a significant range of topics ranging from Census data (both federal and state) to vital records.

About 93 of these provide US data while the others are European and South American. In addition, the Church is continuing to digitize family histories, 39,000 online at <http://www.lib.byu.edu/fhc/index.php>.

There is a third site which so far is useable only by Church members which has a dramatically improved presentation of the lineage linked data currently in familysearch.

While this new direction has been encouraging, there has never been a clear statement to the broad genealogy community about the direction of this effort until now.

Dick Eastman (Eastman's Genealogy Blog) recently had a chance to interview David Rencher, Chief Genealogical Officer at FamilySearch. David is

responsible for guiding much of FamilySearch's planning and coordination efforts, but his new responsibility also includes providing an outreach to the genealogy community to indicate the Church's direction and to take input on what we would like to see happen.

As part of this interview, David Rencher made the following points:

1. Microfilm is a dying technology and the Church is abandoning microfilm as a distribution method and moving to a complete digital system. Microfilm demand is shrinking and already two of three suppliers have stopped supplying film.

2. A huge effort is underway to digitize the 2.4 million rolls of microfilm in the Family History Library and the sizeable book collection.

3. A key part of this work involves volunteers who are indexing the data so it can be installed in databases and searched live from our homes, and Family History Centers. At last count about 100,000 volunteers are working on this effort, plus a major effort to digitize, and enhance the companion images.

4. The combination of searchable records plus the ability to view, and obtain the companion image of the original document and

save or print it locally is of great value to the individual genealogist

5. This new technology is much easier to supply to the user, and it can be access from home 24 hours a day.

On his blog, Dick Eastman summarized the interview:

"What fascinated me about this interview was David's comment of "Microfilm is a dying technology and most people don't know it." He then went on to explain why the Church is being forced to abandon microfilm as a distribution method and he described what is being used in its place. The bottom line is a much better service for all genealogists: the ability to view and save copies of original documents in your own home.

If you want to watch the entire interview, go to:

http://www.rootstelevision.com/players/player_conferences3.php?bcpid=6933799001&bclid=27965007001&bctid=28901999001.

If you interested in the projects family search is currently working on, go to http://www.familysearchindexing.org/projects/current_projects.jsf. You can volunteer to help the indexing work at the same site.

Michael A. Toomey

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

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/>