



# The Geneline

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF

**Amelia Island Genealogical Society**

March 2010 - ISSUE 3

**COMING UP!**

**AIGS General Meeting**  
**March 16, 2010 at 7:00 pm**

**HELD: FERNANDINA BEACH POLICE DEPT.**  
**COMMUNITY ROOM**

## Family Legacy

### The Last Spanish Land Grant in Florida

Jean Mann's 150 page book is the story of Domingo Fernandez and Mary Mattair and their descendants. It includes the genealogy and history of each of their four children. Jean will discuss the methods she used to expand the genealogy from the few burials in the Fernandez family cemetery between St Michael Catholic Church and its school to almost 300 descendents some from as far away as Australia.

### About Jean Mann

**Our speaker for the March 16, 2010 meeting  
of the Amelia Island Genealogical Society is Jean Dixon Mann.**

Jean was born only a few miles from where her Dixon ancestors settled here in Nassau County in 1805. She grew up in Fernandina Beach which shaped her interest in history and intrigued her from an early age so that she learned all she could about the area and it's people.

When Jean and her husband returned to Fernandina Beach in 1992 she became involved with the Amelia Island Museum of History and was able to share her knowledge with the many visitors who came to the museum. She also served 11 years on the Historic District Council here in Fernandina Beach. While she was chairman of the HDC, the Old Town area was added to the Historic District. An application brought before the HDC was the genesis for this book which she will be discussing.

Jean has also published two other books on her family: *Dixon-A Pioneer Family in Florida* and *The Descendents of Patrick Phinney of Chester, South Carolina*.

Jean served as the editor of two of the volumes of cemetery surveys of Amelia Island and Nassau County as published by AIGS. She also has been the editor of *The Nassau County Genealogist*, the quarterly publication of AIGS since its inception in 1992.



## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

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**Your society has just completed the annual Beginning Genealogy Course.** We are happy to report that we had 30 people register for the course. It is the largest class we have had since I joined the society in 2003 - maybe the largest ever.. Of the thirty, we welcomed 24 new members. I want to thank my fellow instructors - Mike Toomey and Lori Miranda - for their fine work in preparing and presenting their course material and their dedication in mentoring these new members.

For the last several years, we have included some personal mentoring as part of the course. In addition to the examples of the various types of records presented in the classroom, we provide each student with help at the Fernandina Library in using internet and library resources, working to find records of their own ancestors. This has become a very popular portion of the course, and this year we added a 2nd mentoring session, i.e. we provided each student with a total of 4 hours of assistance in doing their genealogical research. It was interesting that in some cases, we hit the proverbial brick wall after working back several generations; that's to be expected when the internet is our primary resource and much of the remaining work to be done is pre-1850 and hidden in some corner of a courthouse. But it was also interesting that there were instances in which we switched our search to a collateral line and circumvented the problem. We should all keep that in mind as our first alternative in overcoming our brick walls.

**Along that line, when I became interested in my father's family history, there wasn't a lot known about that branch.** My father and his sisters all told me that their paternal grandmother was Isabelle Winters. I was glad that they knew that maiden name, since many researchers aren't so lucky; but when I finally got around to doing research on that line, I could not find her. That was back in the dark ages, before internet. I made the trip to Springfield, IL looking for a marriage record for Michael Santry and Isabelle Winters, but alas, no such record. I did, however, find a marriage record for Michael Santry and Isabel Graham. The date looked reasonable, but I wasn't completely convinced since there was another Michael Santry from another family in Illinois. So, I decided to trace this Isabel Graham and found her in Polo, IL - one of three daughters of George Washington Graham. If this was the right person, Graham was indeed the maiden name; so where did the surname Winters come from? A first marriage? I could not find any other marriage record for Isabel Graham in Springfield. I went to Polo, in Ogle County, IL - still no record of a marriage. I then went to an Illinois Regional Archive searching for marriages in counties surrounding Ogle County. No luck. *(Continued on pg. 3)*

I decided to trace the events in the life of Isabel's sisters. It wasn't long before I found a marriage record for her sister, Lillie. The sister had married Christopher Winters. Now I was getting somewhere. Was this the source of my father's confusion about his own grandmother? By the time I found this information, my father had passed away. When I presented this information to his three sisters, they had no recollection of a woman named Isabel Graham, although they did mention that they had never met her. "Our grandmother passed away long before we were born." Well, that was news to me.

They knew that their grandfather, Michael Santry, was buried in Chillicothe, IL. So, I went to Chillicothe and found the gravestone. Isabel was buried next to Michael and I saw that she died in 1898. That means her son, dad's father, was only 7 years old when she died. I phoned dad's sister and heard at the other end of the line "Oh yah, our

father was raised by grandpa's sister Mary O'Hara". Now, a picture starts to form. A seven year-old motherless child leaves his home in Chillicothe, IL to live with the Santry side of his family in Chicago. He probably has very little interaction with his mother's Graham family in Polo, IL. But, now and then, his Aunt Lillie Winters (who I now know moved to Chicago) comes to visit him. He grows up thinking that his mother's maiden name must be Winters.

Further research since has confirmed for me that my father's paternal grandmother was indeed Isabel Graham. And my conclusion as to how my father and grandfather came to confuse the maiden name is probably right. Researching the sibling Lillie Graham's marriage (i.e a collateral line) was my 1st clue that I was on the right track.

**Wishing you success in your  
family history search,  
MARIE SANTRY**

## **NET NEWS**

**Pennsylvania State Archives On-Line Databases** <http://www.digitalarchives.state.pa.us/>  
The Archives Records Information Access System (ARIAS) is designed to facilitate citizen access to archival records created by all branches and levels of Pennsylvania State Government. Records series currently online are:

- PA National Guard Veteran's Card File, 1867-1921
- Civil War Veterans' Card File
- Revolutionary War Military Abstract Card File
- World War I Service Medal Application Cards
- Spanish American War Veterans' Card File of United States Volunteers
- Mexican Border Campaign Veterans' Card File
- Militia Officers' Index Cards, 1775-1800

### **Satellite and Topographic Maps**

Thank you to AIGS member Bill Lawson for suggesting the following websites he has used to search for cemeteries and other landmarks.

MSR Maps (formerly Terra Server-USA) at <http://msrmaps.com>.

USGS Maps at <http://nmviewogc.cr.usgs.gov/viewer.htm>.

Flash Earth at <http://www flashearth.com> (Click on Search and enter town, city, island, etc.).

This viewer is absolutely great.

Bill also recommended a "Drive By" website called VPike (Your Virtual Turnpike). You can drive through your old neighborhood (or any address you enter) and see what that old neighborhood looks like today. [www.vpike.com](http://www.vpike.com).

# Documenting Family History

BY BOB LOVELESS



## A Treasured Wedding Picture of my Father and Mother

*From left to right:*

*Ruth Cowen, Betty King nee Cowen, Ed King, William E. Loveless, Helen Grace Loveless, Tom Cowen, Helen Grace Bowden nee Cowen, Betty Hunter nee Cowen, Lois Merriman nee Cowen, Dorothy Cowen, F. Stanley Cowen, Fred Cowen (seated).*

It is amazing sometimes where you will stumble across a few pieces of your family history. But have you ever considered what legacy you are leaving to your children's children children? Sometimes we get so caught up in researching the past that we forget we are making history every day. Perhaps we should take some time to document our own life stories so that some unknown and yet to be descendent also experiences a "Eureka" moment.

I'd like to say that I am a serious student of genealogy. Alas, I look forward to the day when I won't be limited by vacation days and I'll have more time to actually do genealogical research. Time to go to a library in Prince George County, Maryland and time to sit there for several days tracking down my father's family. But to my current story. And to

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some tips as we progress that you may want to consider. The story begins when my second cousin, Judy Pribish nee King, came through Fernandina Beach about two years ago. My cousin, Judy, is from my mother's side of the family. She came with her youngest son, now in his mid-thirties and his wife and two daughters. Tim is a third grade teacher in St. Louis. I hadn't seen Tim since he was a child. The memorable part of their visit to our island was getting to Fort Clinch State Park just before closing. The ranger informed us they were about to close so I pulled up and was turning the car around when Tim called out, "Girls, look there's a deer!" Of course I couldn't see the deer because I was focused on driving the car out of the park.

I tell this story only because we had lived on the island for 13

years at that point and had never seen a deer on the island. Here Judy, Tim and his family had been on the island less than 8 hours and they had seen one! And I still hadn't! Anyway...

A year later I was in St. Louis and got in touch with Tim. He invited me over for dinner and after dinner he said, "I have something to show you." Tim pulled out a trunk. I mean one of the real old ones with leather straps. Opening the trunk I found a heaping treasure trove of family memorabilia.

We spent the next several hours extracting random newspaper articles, pictures and letters from and about the family. In particular I remember a letter between two brothers written in the 1850's. I felt I should put on gloves just handling the letter.

*(continued pg.5)*



The writer was telling his brother that it would be best if he did not come home for a while. His girl friend was “in the family way” and there were still several months to go before the baby would be born. Her family, father and brothers, were still quite upset and it would be best to stay clear. “And keep clear of the bars and other places of ill repute while you are out there,” his brother warned. It would be fascinating to research more of that family story sometime.

Near the end of the evening Tim pulled out an 8 x 10 photo and gave it to me. “Here, I think you should keep this.” I was immediately struck by two facts. The first was that this picture was taken before I was born. The second was that I knew the exact day the picture was taken even though there was no date on the photo. I was holding a wedding photo of my parents and my mother’s family taken on their wedding day of April 7, 1951.

The picture is included below with names. A notable omission is my grandfather, my mother’s father. My mother’s family was, and are, staunch Methodists. My father is Catholic. My grandfather did not approve and did not attend the wedding. I’m glad to say that he softened his stand when I showed up 1 year and 2

days later. I fondly remember my grandfather, his cigars, and his dedication to listening to the Detroit Tigers games on the radio, especially from the swing on the front porch of their home in Plymouth, Michigan.

The point of my story is that writing these stories down can form an invaluable resource to your descendents. This story took about 30 minutes to write down.

NOTE: I’ve included some names, dates and places which are dropping small clues to future genealogists. Is this a primary source? Not really, other than my own birthday. But, suppose you had a letter like this? Would you really worry about primary source? I suspect not. And for those dedicated few, it might lead to the real primary sources as you fill in the details of your family history.

Do your descendents a favor and write down some of your own stories. At least one of your grandchildren or great-grandchildren will thank you.

“Imagine, Great-Grandpa and Great-Grandma lived in the old days of 2010!”

**Happy story telling!**

## **Bob Loveless’ Story Quiz**

Now, as a quiz, and to illustrate the value of why you might want to tell stories to leave clues for your family, can you answer the following?

1. How many surnames are identified in the story?
2. Even without the surnames, if you were doing a family tree, how many generations are identified in the story?
3. How many places are identified in the letter to pursue further research?

Answers:

1. Seven surnames: Loveless, Pribish, King, Cowen, Hunter, Bowden, Merriman,
2. Four generations even though we don’t have all the names.
3. Three places: Plymouth, Michigan, Prince George County Maryland, St. Louis Missouri

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

Find Information about Amelia Island Genealogical Society

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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/>